



Lincolnshire POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

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The work of the PCC in supporting the prevention and reduction of substance misuse in Lincolnshire

1 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to respond to the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) raised by Members of the Lincolnshire Police and Crime Panel (PCP) in relation to the work of the PCC in supporting the prevention and reduction of substance misuse in Lincolnshire.

2 National Context

- 2.1 Dame Carol Black was commissioned by the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care to undertake a 2-part independent review of drugs¹, to inform the government's thinking on what more could be done to tackle the harm that drugs cause. Part one was published on 27 February 2020 and provides a detailed analysis of the challenges posed by drug supply and demand, including the ways in which drugs fuel serious violence. Part 2 was published on 8 July 2021 and focuses on drug treatment, recovery and prevention. The report's aim is to make sure that vulnerable people with substance misuse problems get the support they need to recover and turn their lives around, in the community and in prison. It contains 32 recommendations for change across various government departments and other organisations, to improve the effectiveness of drug prevention and treatment and to help more people recover from dependence.
- 2.2 The 10 Year Drugs Strategy 'From Harm to Hope'² was published in December 2021 as the formal, substantive response to the Independent Reviews of Drugs led by Dame Carol Black and accepts all of her key recommendations. It includes an ambition to reduce overall drug use towards a historic 30-year low and has 3 core priorities:
1. break drug supply chains,
 2. deliver a world-class treatment and recovery system, and
 3. achieve a shift in the demand for recreational drugs

¹ [Independent review of drugs by Professor Dame Carol Black - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

² [From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)



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2.3 Guidance for local delivery partners was published in June 2022. The guidance sets out the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework³ to monitor progress across central government and in local areas towards delivery of the commitments and ambitions of the 10-year drugs strategy. It identifies key principles and structures to support the formation of Combating Drugs Partnerships (CDPs), asking local areas to:

- form a clearly defined partnership based on a geographical extent that is logical to local residents and consistent with existing relevant arrangements
- select a senior responsible owner (SRO) who can represent the partnership nationally, reporting to central government for its performance, and who can offer challenge and support to local partners to drive improvement and unblock issues when necessary
- involve all those people and organisations affected by drugs in developing joint solutions to these issues

2.4 There is no single agreed definition of substance misuse within the independent review or the Drugs Strategy. The term 'substance misuse' is primarily associated with drugs, however it encompasses drugs and alcohol, and both are separately referenced within the national documentation. At the request of the Panel, two definitions have been included below for context:

- *Substance misuse is formally defined as the continued use of any psychoactive substance that substantially affects a person's physical and mental health, social situation and responsibilities (Public Health Wales).*
- *The continued use (misuse) of any mind-altering substance at a level which is harmful and/or problematic, that severely affects a person's physical and mental health, ability to function in social situations and carry out everyday responsibilities (Drug Wise, 2021).*

2.5 The most recent Government Alcohol Strategy⁴ was published in 2012 and a new Alcohol Strategy is anticipated in 2024, although this could be impacted by the General Election.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drugs-strategy-national-outcomes-framework>

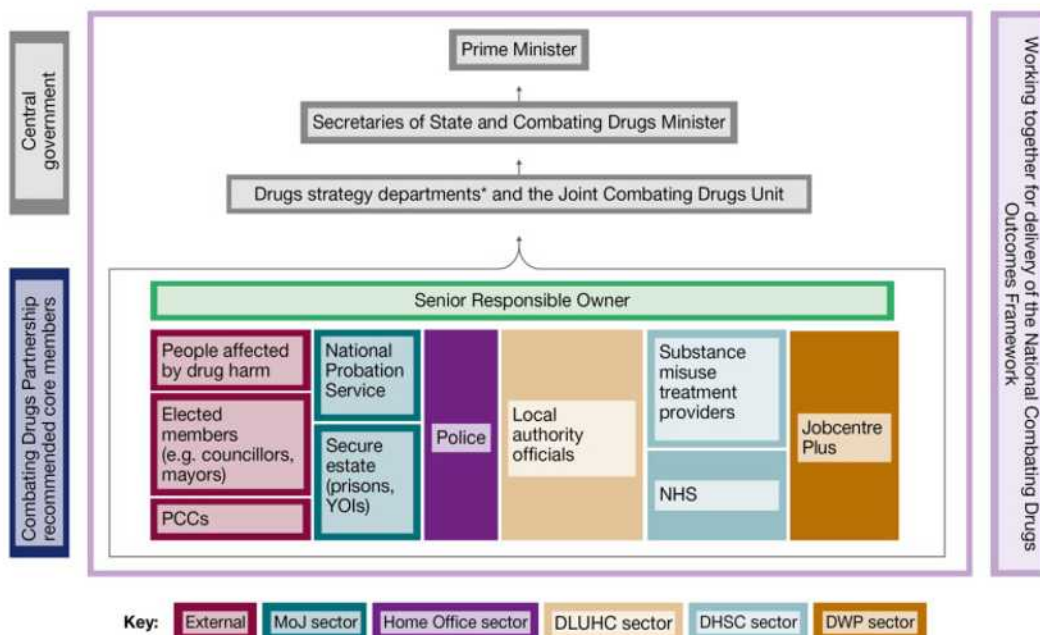
⁴ [Home Office Alcohol Strategy \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)



3 Local Landscape and Governance

- 3.1 Substance misuse is a public health led issue with policing traditionally taking a lead role in pursuing offenders. The Drug and Alcohol Core Priority Group (CPG) is our local Combating Drugs Partnership which sits within the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership. There are 104 such partnership areas in England and around half of police forces have a single partnership. The geographic area covered by the Lincolnshire partnership is co-terminus with the Force and County Council.
- 3.2 The Senior Responsible Owner is Derek Ward (Director of Public Health); this is the model adopted by the majority of partnerships (70% Directors of Public Health, 13% PCCs/senior police officers, 17% Council Chief Execs or Local Authority Directors).
- 3.3 The CPG is chaired by Derek Ward, with Lucy Gavens (Public Health Consultant) as vice-chair and there is a Combating Drugs Partnership Strategy and supporting Plan in place. The PCC is represented on the CPG by his Research and Performance Officer.
- 3.4 The SRO has a direct line to government and is the first point of contact to understand local performance. The Combating Drugs Minister and Joint Combating Drugs Unit (JCDU) hold SROs to account for local cross-system performance tracked against the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework while departments retain oversight of their delivery partners and specific programmes.

Figure 1: Reporting and support structure for CDPs





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3.5 Following the Dame Carol Black report supplemental funding was allocated from central government to increase the Public Health budget from £5,400,000 to £8,000,000 in 2023/24 across treatment and recovery services

In Lincolnshire this enabled the employment of 55 extra people across all areas of substance misuse and 12 substance misuse criminal justice drug workers across the county working with Police, Probation and the courts consisting of:

- 1 x Team leader
- 6 x drug workers (Including colocation with Integrated Offender Management (IOM))
- 4 x probation specific workers from April 2024
- 1 x young persons criminal justice worker

Health Grant funding is confirmed until March 2025 however beyond that will not be notified until the government spending review in the autumn of 2024.

3.6 A report covering the position in respect of local prevalence, treatment access and outcomes in Lincolnshire, updating on the six priorities that the Partnership is currently working together to deliver and providing a short update on LCC commissioned services related to substance misuse was presented by Lucy Gavens to the Integrated Care Partnership in December at Item 8: [Agenda for Lincolnshire Integrated Care Partnership on Tuesday, 5th December, 2023, 3.30 pm \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

3.7 Since this report was written, Lincolnshire County Council have concluded their procurement exercise to commission treatment and recovery provision. The contract will commence as of 1st April 2024 and has been awarded to a partnership which includes Turning Point, Double Impact and Framework. Recommissioning of family support services in the context of substance misuse is ongoing.

4 Lincolnshire Drugs Strategy

4.1 Deputy Chief Constable Jason Harwin (since retired) led the development of the current Lincolnshire Drugs Strategy⁵ (aligned with his role as National Police Chiefs Council lead for drugs). The strategy was written during Covid, which was understandably a period of considerable demand for Health and Public Health colleagues, and which limited their capacity to input to the strategy. It has been

⁵ [Lincolnshire drugs strategy 2021-25](#)



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agreed that the strategy would benefit from further partnership input and that the scope should be expanded to include alcohol misuse.

- 4.2 A proposal is therefore being taken to the Combatting Drugs Partnership in February 2024 requesting that work commences on a new strategy covering drugs and alcohol across all partnerships. A new Police Market Profile and a Health Needs Assessment will be undertaken to inform the new strategy which is planned to launch in Quarter 1 of 2025.

5 Lincolnshire Police

- 5.1 In line with the National Strategy the force have reviewed their approach. With an increased impetus on dealing robustly with those who commit trafficking and supply offences they also recognise the need to divert people with dependencies into treatment. They have now established lived experience input to officers which allows officers to gain a broader perspective of complex issues rather than being entirely 'pursue' focussed.
- 5.2 The Force are working in partnership with the local treatment provider to use community resolutions to divert people found in possession of cannabis into treatment; the potential to expand this to other substances is being explored. Community resolutions can be used for adults or youths and are a non-statutory resolution (disposal). Resolutions can be offered when the offender accepts responsibility for offending behaviour and, in most cases, where the victim has agreed that they do not want more formal action taken. By encouraging offenders to face up to the impact of their behaviour and to take responsibility for making good any harm caused, a community resolution can reduce the likelihood of their reoffending.
- 5.3 There is also a new focus on increasing the use of Community sentence treatment requirements for drug and alcohol in Lincolnshire. Community sentences can be issued by courts where the offender has consented to complete treatment for mental health problems, drug and/or alcohol misuse problems. Treatment is arranged as part of the sentence which can last for a maximum of three years as part of a Community Order and two years as part of a Suspended Sentence Order. If the individual does not complete a treatment or programme, or fail a drugs test, they can be sent back to court and their punishment could increase.
- 5.4 The Drug Testing on Arrest (DTOA) program will commence in force on 1st March 2024 with mandatory testing taking place for persons in custody who are over 18 years



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who have been arrested for trigger offences. These are predominantly acquisitive crimes, such as burglary, theft and robbery. Police also routinely test suspects in certain drug-related crimes, including possession and intent to supply. Research reveals 2,746 people came into Lincolnshire custody last year for trigger offences, all of whom could potentially be tested. The testing will reveal whether they have Class A drugs in their system and if so, mandatory attendance with the local treatment service will be arranged.

Home Office and PCC funding has been used to purchase the equipment and training required to implement DTOA, and to recruit a program co-ordinator. The Force have since bid into the Home Office for £149k for specific Authorised Professional Practice (APP) guidance, plus salary costs for the co-ordinator post (from April 2024 onwards) and testing kits. Bid results are due to be announced in April 2024, although there has been an indication from the centre that the available funding for DTOA may reduce by up to 75%.

- 5.5 County Lines has become a well-established national offending model. Detective Chief Inspector Stephen Knubley holds a monthly County Lines meeting in which all current activity, proactive plans and line ownership is reviewed. This is a formal meeting with attendance from across the force and region at which activity is discussed and tasked to support and prevent vulnerable people from becoming victims of the lines (Cuckooing) and locations for increased policing focus are highlighted.
- 5.6 Following the provision of assurances on matters relating to liability, clinical governance and training, the Chief Officer Team has recently given approval to implement the voluntary issuing of the nasal spray form of Naloxone to officers. Naloxone is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid overdose. Naloxone can quickly restore normal breathing to a person if their breathing has slowed or stopped because of an opioid overdose but has no effect on someone who does not have opioids in their system (i.e. it cannot be wrongly administered). Naloxone can be given as a nasal spray or it can be injected into the muscle, under the skin, or into the veins. The anticipated benefits of this implementation are:
- Preservation of life. Naloxone has been made directly available to existing 'service users' and in August 2023 it was successfully administered 15 times in Lincolnshire i.e. potentially 15 lives saved from fatal overdose



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- Protection for officers accidentally coming in contact with synthetic opioids (especially 'Nitazenes' which are extremely potent drugs with no medical uses – recently included in a new tranche of controlled substances (Class A drugs)).
- Anticipated cost and time savings to public services associated with overdose and death.

5.7 There have been some significant operational successes this year with both force and regional drug related operations:

- An increase in reported drug trafficking (+83%) is a result of proactive policing operations / activity against trafficking including 'county lines' involvement.
- Positive outcomes (charges) have increased; in 2022-23 there were 145 people charged compared to 68 in 2021-22
- Operation 'Stabilise' was a Lincolnshire led operation against drug trafficking conducted in July 2023 which resulted in 40 people arrested and £420K of cash and assets seized.
- An 'intensification week' of counter trafficking activity in October 2023 (in East Coast areas) resulted in 21 arrests

5.8 Following new legislation, on 8th November 2023 a ban came into force which made Nitrous Oxide a controlled Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Under the new legislation possession could result in a two-year sentence with up to 14 years for supply. There have been a number of drugs deaths across the country linked to the use of Nitrous Oxide and it can also cause long term nerve damage and lung damage from inhaling. The force have circulated internal and external communications and officer training is being undertaken.

6 Lincolnshire PCC

6.1 The main responsibilities of PCCs are to:

- secure the maintenance of an efficient and effective force
- hold the Chief Constable to account
- hold the police fund and other grants from central and local government
- set the local policing precept; and
- issue a Police and Crime Plan



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Although not specifically referenced within the Police and Crime Plan, both drugs and alcohol are associated with offending, particularly shoplifting and serious violence in the night-time economy. There is also a wealth of public feedback that the presence of people under the influence of drugs and alcohol adversely impacts on their feeling of safety. Under the 'Community safety and prevention in partnership' pillar of the Police and Crime Plan is a commitment to working in partnership to tackle system wide issues to prevent and reduce crime.

- 6.2 It is well evidenced that simply arresting and imprisoning offenders will not prevent continued criminality. Substance misuse is a public health issue but more than a third of people in prison are there for drug related offences. They serve short sentences and are highly likely to reoffend. The whole systems approach is the greatest opportunity and essential to delivering an effective response to reduce substance misuse.
- 6.3 In addition to the work already referenced, the PCC ensures through his officers that drug and alcohol related issues are picked up in cross-cutting agendas, such as the Reducing Reoffending and Serious Violence CPGs. Through the Serious Violence CPG, the PCC has recently approved £54k to purchase two drug itemisers. Itemisers are valuable equipment that can identify residue of drugs on people, premises, furnishings etc. Swabs are used and tested and will identify the substance, as well as levels of drugs above what may be expected in a public place. The itemisers will be used across the County by police and Licensing Authorities to target customers attending late night licensed venues such as bars and nightclubs. They can be used for specific operations as well as targeted inspections to check for general drug use in premises.
- 6.4 The PCC seeks to influence national policy by inputting to consultations on this subject, such as the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) research into a whole-system response, nationally and locally, to prevent and reduce drug use and harm amongst 11–24-year-olds. ACMD have themselves noted that evidence regarding the effectiveness of available treatments or engagement with relevant service providers is limited. The response stressed the need for this to be addressed so that commissioners can make evidence based, informed decisions as to what to fund to achieve the best impact for young people.



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6.4.1 The PCC is committed to supporting the whole system approach to address substance misuse in Lincolnshire and will continue to work with partners through the Drug and Alcohol CPG to implement the strategy.

With thanks to the following for their contributions to inform this report:

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Simon Gladwin, Programme Manager, Public Health Division, Lincolnshire County Council

Detective Chief Inspector Stephen Knuble, Lincolnshire Police

Aubrey Williams, Research and Performance Officer, OPCC