

Follow-up visit to WDP Havering (Drugs and Alcohol Rehabilitation Service)

This follow up visit was undertaken by a Healthwatch member who has had extensive professional experience in the field of Drugs and Alcohol Rehabilitation. It took the form of a one-to-one interview with WDP Havering's Recovery Hub Team Leader and Psychosocial Interventions Lead, who had been working in this field for some years and was well established in the Romford branch.

The values of the WDP are Entrepreneurial, In Partnership, Community Focused and a Strong Belief in Service Users. As this was a follow up visit, the interview reviewed the original report from October 2016 and updated it.

There had been some staff changes since the original visit but the client group remained the same, with under 18s being referred to Addaction (now known as Change, Grow, Live). The budget was still in place, running until September 2018, with an option for a two year extension (which it was hoped would be exercised).

A new, part-time medical Consultant was in place, with staff comprising an alcohol nurse and two other nurses (one of whom was a prescriber), the service manager, 2 team leaders, 7 support workers (one of whom was based in Queens Hospital to provide a link), and 20 volunteer counsellors. There were posters and notices in the reception area giving details of opening times and services offered. WDP continued to rely on various electronic contacts and were also involved in multidisciplinary meetings with Police, NOMS, Probation, Women's Aid, Family Mosaic, Bereavement Support, Victim Support and Churches. This system seemed to work well as their referral rate had doubled from 501 to 1,058 with an average of 88 per month, and a current caseload of 539 comprising 344 Tier 3, 183 Tier 2 (tiers are different levels of treatment) and 12 others (family, carers or prison release).

The annex at 36 Ballard Chambers nearby remained available and was used as a Clinical Hub for assessments, usually within 2 weeks of referral but with scope for emergency appointments if needed.

WDP had a dedicated member of staff who would be notified by the Police when a person has tested positive and has been taken to the Police Station. There was also a staff member who attended the local Court. Both were interviewed in the course of this visit, and talked about their work. There was a specific link with the Probation Service on Fridays in Victoria Road, Romford.

There was still a Family and Carers Service in the Recovery Hub and a number of user support groups and mutual groups met there. There was a SMART structured group (a link with Alcoholics Anonymous) and service users were encouraged to attend those various support networks.

There was a monthly service representative who met the Service Manager with feedback of the experiences which can influence change, and a quarterly forum for all groups. Links with GPs in the area were open to improvement. Service Users were followed up on a 3 monthly basis for 6 months to try and avoid relapse, and 60% of these contacts were worthwhile.

Detoxification and Rehabilitation was still being managed in partnership with the local authority commissioners. There was a monthly panel for decisions, with reviews at 6 weeks and again after 12 weeks. There are preferred providers to meet the budget. In the last 12 months, there had been 289 successful completions, comprising 21 opiate, 124 non-opiate and 144 alcohol.

WDP were part of a Task and Targeting Meeting made up of different services to look at Homelessness and Rough Sleepers in Havering.

The Healthwatch member was shown around both premises used by WDP, which were well-appointed and equipped, and very suitable for purpose. There was even a small courtyard at the back of the premises that was being used for gardening as part of the rehabilitation process. Three PCs were available for service users to practice on and to compile CVs.

The member concluded that WDP had made good progress in the past 12 months and was meeting a real need in the Borough.