

# Drug and Alcohol Support: Update on commissioned services and supporting people experiencing homelessness

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Emma Stubbs and Lisa Luhman

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# Commissioned Substance Misuse Services

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## CGL Camden

On 1 April 2023 Camden's new integrated drug and alcohol service started. The service:

- Is provided by CGL
- Is available to all adults (over 18) who live in Camden or who are registered with a Camden GP and their loved ones
- Offers a range of interventions to support people with drug and/or alcohol needs including: counselling, group work, access to detox and rehab, peer support, recovery support, and medically assisted treatment.
- Provides a specialist employment support service for people accessing drug and alcohol treatment. The Individual Placement Support (IPS) service started earlier this year.

## INROADS

Camden also has a specific drug and alcohol service to support rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

The service is called INROADS and is provided by Via. INROADS work in partnership with the Routes off the Streets service and hostel pathway providers.

# Adult integrated drug and alcohol services – CGL Camden

- CGL are a large, national third sector organisation who have been providing drug and alcohol services in Camden for a number of years. They are also the current provider of Camden's street outreach service – Routes off The Streets.
- The service is available to Camden residents (or those registered with a Camden GP) over 18 who are struggling with their drug and/or alcohol use as well as providing advice to friends and family. The service also provides advice and information about reducing the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol for those who may not be using dependently or who feel they are not yet ready to start treatment.
- Treatment options include:
  - Advice on reducing risk of overdose or other physical and mental health harm
  - Emotional support and counselling delivered in group or 1:1 settings / online courses
  - Medically assisted treatment / access to different detox and rehab options
  - Peer support
  - Recovery support, including education, training and employment advice
- As a newly commissioned part of the service, CGL are expanding on their advice offer to friends and family and are developing a model of support for children, young people, parents, carers, or any other loved ones affected by someone's substance misuse. This is being developed in collaboration with colleagues working on developing family hubs.

# Drug and alcohol support for people who are sleeping on the streets or in open spaces (INROADS) – Via Care

- Via Care are the provider of Camden's designated drug and alcohol service for people who are sleeping on the streets or in open spaces. The service is funded by the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG).
- INROADS provides person-centred, trauma informed treatment and support to rough sleepers in Camden in a range of settings. The team works peripatetically and can offer assessments and support at locations chosen by the individual. This can include sleep sites, the Routes off The Streets Hub in Camden Town (Camden's rough sleeper outreach service), the Women at the Well service (a women's-only support service) and hostels/other accommodation sites.
- It is a small team of 7 staff covering a range of professional backgrounds and areas of focus including but not limited to: Nurse Prescriber; Specialist Doctor; Women's Worker; Community Engagement Worker.
- The team work in partnership with the Routes off The Streets outreach team to support people with their drug and/or alcohol use and offers a full range of treatment options.
- The service works with a small number of people at any one time to ensure that the support these individuals receive is more assertive and more intense than that offered in a community service. As a result, the team have between 20 and 30 people on their caseload at any one time. Case studies provided by the service often demonstrate the consistent approach needed to engage with people, sometimes taking months to build trust and relationships with people experiencing homelessness.

# The First Year of CGL Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service

- After spending the first 8 months of the new service focussing on safely transferring service users from previous providers and establishing a new site at Kings Terrace, CGL have been concentrating on planning the development and implementation of all aspects of the commissioned service model and developing: the family service; a programme of peer-delivered interventions; and expanding the range of locations to enable access to support from community venues.
- The CGL Camden management team have been arranging site visits and presentations with partners such as community mental health teams, VAWG partners and GPs, raising awareness of the new service and ensuring that partners are aware of referral routes. The service has recently recruited a Partnership Lead who will be responsible for further developing and maintaining the working relationships between the various mental health teams, GPs and acute health services.
- Delivered training for hostel teams across the borough in response to an increased overdose risk. The newly established “hostel in reach team” are working hard to increase the number of hostel residents accessing our service for treatment and support via a range of pre-contemplative/pre-treatment activities.
- Delivering a peer-led and peer-delivered naloxone project.

# Three Years of InRoads

- The service started work in Camden in the summer of 2021, and since then have established themselves as a key delivery partner amongst other services and organisations providing support to people experiencing homelessness.
- They receive referrals from a wide range of partner agencies including but not limited to: probation; RTS; Women at the Well; Domestic Violence and Abuse Navigators; hostel providers; and UCLH.
- Since 2021 the service has undertaken 160 assessments which has resulted in 139 people starting treatment.
- Other successful indicators include:
  - 100% of service users not registered with a GP were supported to register
  - 100% of all service users are offered Blood Borne Virus screening
  - Of those with a positive blood test result, 100% have been referred to treatment/vaccination.

**Supporting people without stable  
accommodation or  
accommodation that they don't  
want to live in**



# Adult integrated drug and alcohol services – CGL Camden

- CGL offer treatment and support to people experiencing homelessness in a number of ways:
  - They offer a comprehensive in-reach offer to the hostel pathway including on-site prescribing clinics which provides a more accessible opportunity for people to access pharmacological interventions.
  - Recently CGL developed a specific hostel in-reach team which provides a consistent single point of contact to the service for hostel staff.
  - The in-reach team are delivering a programme of pre-contemplative/ pre-treatment activities. The aim of the activities is to build trust and relationships between CGL staff and pathway residents so supporting people to engage with treatment is more effective when the time is right for them.
  - CGL offer naloxone and harm reduction training to hostel staff and distribute naloxone kits to pathway providers and to grassroots organisations such as Streets Kitchen.
  - CGL work in close collaboration with the Camden Adult Pathway Project (CAPP) team (a nurse-led healthcare service provided by UCLH which offers health clinics within the adult pathway to support engagement with planned healthcare) and CAPP are frequent referrers to the service.
  - Recently CGL have begun offering supplies of nitazene (synthetic, high strength opioid) testing strips to distribute during outreach shifts.
  - Bespoke women's pathways are in place to enable access to treatment and support including designated women's workers. Appointments are offered in women only venues.

# Drug and alcohol support for people who are sleeping on the streets or in open spaces (INROADS) – Via Care

- INROADS are a delivery partner in the NHSE funded Homeless Outreach Pilot (HOP) project. HOP aims to support people experiencing homelessness to access and engage with mental health support. The pilot has formed a Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) including RTS, INROADS, Focus (the mental health outreach service), working alongside the HOP team which includes a psychologist, a physical health nurse and a mental health support worker.
- INROADS and RTS work together to deliver joint, targeted outreach shifts and to identify and engage Target (T) 1000 clients. The Target 1000 (T1000) client group are individuals with histories of rough sleeping and multiple complex needs, and often are recorded as rough sleeping across a number of boroughs. The Department of Housing, Levelling Up, and Communities (DHLUC) monitor each local authority's performance related to their engagement with the T1000 cohort.
- The service works closely with CGL to ensure that when ready people are safely transferred to their services for more extensive support.
- Bespoke women's pathways are in place to enable access to treatment and support including designated women's workers. Appointments are offered in women only venues.

# New investment

# Grant Funding

- Prior to the 2021 publication of the 10-year national drug strategy, [From harm to hope](#), drug and alcohol support services were funded via the public health grant. As a result of the drug strategy a 3-year grant programme was established which saw substantial levels of investment made in drug and alcohol care. This initial 3-year investment (2022/23 - 2024/25) has been made via 3 grants: the Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant; the Individual Placement and Support Grant; and the Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant. These grants have been allocated on a 12-month basis each year often with confirmation of funding being received at late stages in the financial year.
- The 3-year funding period has focussed efforts in Camden with the intention of meeting the Drug Strategy's ambition of a world class treatment and recovery system but this is taking time to bed in due to an increasingly complex landscape and with the instability of short-term funding cycles. The sector needs a longer-term funding agreement to be able to adequately plan and rebuild capacity and quality, as well as respond to new emerging challenges and changes in service user need as they arise.
- As we are now in the final year of this initial funding period it is critical that local authorities are provided with early guidance on the future funding plans to deliver the 10-year Drug Strategy, a position supported Public Accounts Committee, Home Affairs Committee and National Audit Office who have made recommendations that government should provide greater certainty over future funding for the whole lifespan of the strategy. Cllrs Wright and Callaghan have helpfully supported this call for clarity on future investment with a letter to the OHID London and the Joint Combatting Drugs Unit.
- Without adequate notice Camden faces an abrupt end of circa £3million in March 2025. The withdrawal of this funding the associated services will be catastrophic for local residents.

# Current challenges

# Additional Current Challenges

- As a result of the economic and social challenges everyone has experienced, the level of need in the borough has increased substantially over the same period. Drug and alcohol services are working to support more people with increasingly complex needs at the same time experiencing their own increased costs in delivering care and are managing services with a greater degree on staff instability who are by necessity employed on short term contracts due to the nature of current funding.
- Whilst drug and alcohol services employ staff with mental health expertise including psychiatrists and psychologists, they cannot replicate the support people access through mental health services.
- To go some way to addressing these challenges our local adult drug and alcohol services have adopted of the 'team around me' way of working which is a recognised approach to support people who have experienced or were experiencing multiple disadvantages. Whilst the team around me way of working is much more beneficial to staff and residents it is still dependent on all partners making contributions to planning the care of people with a range of support needs.
- The last 12 months have seen the emergence of high strength opioids supply across the country. Camden experienced a spate of non-fatal overdoses and 1 overdose death in the summer of 2023 which have all been attributed to high strength opioids. Since then police intelligence and further non-fatal drug harm related incidents have indicated that there continues to be adulterated supply in the borough, across London and nationally. There is also growing patterns of adulterated supply across other drug groups including benzodiazepines (some of which are purchased on-line).

# Conclusion

Although Camden's drug and alcohol treatment and support offer is comprehensive, there are a number of areas of development:

- Increasing the number of people accessing drug treatment
- A very specific focus is needed on encouraging people to understand the impact of their alcohol use and to seek support as early as possible if they have any concerns about their drinking
- Ensuring that the Camden response to high strength opioids is robust and comprehensive (noting the potential legal limitations around initiatives such as drug testing and overdose prevention rooms)
- Developing a better understanding of the drug and alcohol need of groups typically under-represented in treatment services and continuing to develop the service offer to meet these needs
- Developing closer relationships with mental health services in order the needs of residents with co-occurring mental health and substance use are effectively met in both services
- Developing approaches to better support people with no recourse to public funds such as refugees and asylum seekers
- Developing closer relationships with homelessness prevention services to identify drug and alcohol needs and offer support at an earlier stage.



# Considerations

Officers would like Members/colleagues to consider how they might support the service and the delivery of the above priorities by:

- Visiting the service to meet staff and service users and find out more about how drug and alcohol treatment and support works.
- Taking part in peer-led naloxone training and carry a naloxone kit.
- Encouraging services and organisation they come in to contact with to ask questions about drug and alcohol use in non-judgemental ways and signpost people to local services for more info or support (*NOTE: CGL Camden will provide awareness training on request to interested services/ organisations*).
- Consider joining the [Anti Stigma Network](#) which aims to to improve understanding of the stigma and discrimination experienced by all people affected by drug and alcohol use.