

**Report to:** Safe Newcastle Board For Information and Comment

**From:** Gillian Tullock Community Safety Co-ordinator

**Report Title:** Newcastle's Alcohol Strategy

**Date:** 24 November 2008

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## **Background**

1. The launch of the North East Alcohol Misuse statement of priorities in February 2007 and the Government's national alcohol strategy "Safe, Sensible and Social" allied with a range of concerns that were surfacing locally in respect of alcohol, focused attention on the need for the development of an alcohol strategy for Newcastle.
2. A joint Project Board was established in 2007 comprising representatives from the following delivery partnerships of the Newcastle Partnership to develop the strategy.
  - Health and Wellbeing Board
  - Children and Young People
  - Safe Newcastle
  - Housing and Environment

## **Alcohol Strategy**

3. "Safe, Sensible and Social in Newcastle upon Tyne" (Attached at Appendix 1), is the first alcohol strategy for Newcastle. It outlines what the key agencies that make up the delivery partnerships will do to tackle the harm caused by alcohol misuse.
4. Alcohol misuse impacts across a broad range of areas including health, crime and disorder, children and young people, environment and housing. It is a critical component of the Newcastle Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy. Expertise and knowledge across all of these areas has been harnessed in developing this strategy. It has also been guided by national, regional and local policy and was informed by a process of consultation with key stakeholders.
5. The strategy sets out the key issues and explains what we will focus on over the next ten years and how progress will be measured. Robust action plans support the delivery of the strategy. They will be refreshed annually to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information to work with and are targeting our energy and resources correctly.
6. The objective of this strategy is to address identified gaps and build a well resourced, coherent and coordinated programme across all of Newcastle partners. The stated aim of this strategy is: to reduce the harm caused by alcohol to individuals, children, families and communities in order that Newcastle is a healthy and safe place to live, work and visit.
7. In order to achieve this aim, we are concentrating on four objectives of prevention, provision, protection and partnership working.

- 1: Developing a preventative approach to alcohol misuse
- 2: Providing services for problem drinkers and their families and carers
- 3: Protecting the public through law and policy enforcement
- 4: Prioritising addressing alcohol misuse through working in partnership

## **Consultation**

8. The draft strategy was disseminated widely for consultation over the summer. The purpose of the consultation was to seek the views of residents and other stakeholders on the key issues that a citywide alcohol strategy should focus on and what actions should be put in place to reduce alcohol related harm. The results of the analysis have informed the development of the final action plans.
9. The consultation exercise was wide ranging, including presentations at stakeholder events, discussions at meetings, use of surveys and questionnaires, on internet sites and via existing health networks. A total of 525 responses were received including comments from Government Office North East. The City Life Questionnaire provided the opportunity for residents to highlight what they felt the Alcohol Strategy needed to focus upon. Three areas were priorities for residents and these have been incorporated into action plans
- Tougher consequences for those committing alcohol related crimes or anti social behaviour e.g. heavier fines, stricter laws for drink drivers,
  - Penalise shops who sell to alcohol to young people e.g. fines, penalties for adults who buy drinks for youngsters
  - Work with schools to educate young people about dangers e.g. getting messages across that drunken behaviour is not “cool”, simplifying public education messages so that people understand units
10. The strategy document was well received and most comments were positive. Many respondents welcomed the strategy and felt that it was informative, clearly written in user friendly language and gave a starting point for discussion. The Project Board convened a half day workshop in order to ensure that all comments were fully considered.

## **Governance**

11. The Health Improvement Board (chaired by the Director of Public Health) will take lead responsibility for ensuring the delivery of this strategy. The Health Improvement Board will report progress to the Delivery Board of the Newcastle Partnership via the Wellbeing and Health Executive. A dedicated Alcohol Strategy Delivery Board, focusing on ensuring the action plan is implemented will be established and the first meeting of this Board will take place by January 2009. This will be made up of representatives of all the contributing delivery partnerships of the Newcastle Partnership in recognition of the significant contribution each has to make in ensuring a safe, sensible and social approach to alcohol in Newcastle. Representatives from delivery partnerships will be responsible for keeping their partnerships informed about implementation of the action plan.

## **Printing and Launch Arrangements**

12. Estimated costs of £10,000 to print and publish the strategy are being met jointly by Safe Newcastle, Health Improvement Board and Children and Young People’s Partnership. The Newcastle Partnership is organising these arrangements in order to ensure alignment with the

suite of documents which already include the Local Area Agreement. It is anticipated that a launch event will be held prior to Christmas 2008. Further details will be circulated when available

## **Recommendation**

### **13. Safe Newcastle is asked to**

- receive the alcohol strategy
- note the proposal to establish an Alcohol Strategy Delivery Board to ensure implementation and monitoring of the strategy
- note the arrangements for the printing, publication and dissemination of the strategy document
- receive update reports in due course

**Contact details:** Gillian Tullock : Tel: 277 7849 Email: Gillian.tullock@newcastle.gov.uk