

Multi-agency inspection

Substance Misuse Services in Grampian 2007

The inspection findings

There are three Drug and Alcohol Action Teams in Grampian, for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray respectively, and one health board, NHS Grampian. Three Community Health Partnerships have the same boundaries as the three local authorities. The voluntary sector plays an important part in providing services. Grampian Police are important partners in supporting initiatives to respond to substance misuse. We found that each Action Team operated differently, and for many issues this was entirely appropriate. Grampian had no overarching substance misuse strategy, as the Action Teams were developing local services appropriate to each area, but we recommended that the Action Teams work more closely with each other, and with NHS Grampian, in particular areas where we thought they needed to improve.

We consulted with 157 people who used services through a peer review led by the Scottish Drugs Forum. The review revealed that people were generally pleased with the services they received when they received them, and they thought the services worked reasonably well together. Carers were less satisfied with the support they received. They often delayed seeking help because of the stigma associated with substance misuse problems.

Aberdeen City had large numbers of people waiting for services, but were in the process of changing their services to cut waiting lists, develop integrated services, and to provide people with substance misuse problems with a route through services after stabilising them. Aberdeenshire had examples of good integrated working, strategic leadership and partnership working, but needed to develop services in the south and central areas of the shire. In Moray the Action Team was providing clear leadership to develop a joint strategic overview, and was beginning to co-ordinate services to help people into treatment. NHS Grampian provided important

services, but needed to improve their capacity to provide the same standard of service across the three Action Team areas.

The Action Teams, NHS Grampian and Grampian Police were working together to develop joined-up care for people with substance misuse problems. While there were examples of good joint working, the Action Teams needed to continue to develop their integrated care to improve outcomes for people who use services. They had developed an integrated assessment tool and this will help provide a better service to people who misuse substances and their families.

The Action Teams and NHS Grampian were changing services to respond to the growing problems of drug and alcohol misuse, by increasing prescribing services, improving treatment and rehabilitation, and introducing services to help people move on, but there was still some way to go.

Improvement is required in some areas, including:

- Further action to reduce waiting times and waiting lists
- Greater involvement of people who use services and carers in developing services
- Better identification and assessment of families where parents misuse substances and there are children in the household
- Better services for people with substance misuse and mental health problems
- Improved assessment and management of risk
- Clear governance arrangements in NHS Grampian to ensure equal standards of service provision across Grampian
- More GP services for people who misuse substances
- Health and social work collecting appropriate information and sharing it

- Further development of joint working between health and social work
- Closer working between Action Teams to ensure the best use of resources and to share learning.

Examples of good services and positive joint working

- Progress 2 Work, a scheme funded by Job Centre Plus, supported well-stabilised drug users to take up training and employment as part of a rehabilitative programme.
- The Integrated Community Drug Rehabilitation (ICDRS), a partnership of voluntary organisations, Aberdeen City social work services and the NHS was a good model of multi-agency working to provide rehabilitation for people who misused substances.
- A youth project in Aberdeenshire offered education on alcohol, drugs and safer sex, with the emphasis on social inclusion activities and the development of personal confidence and social skills. The project had good links with the local GP practice, the pharmacy and the police, and the preventative work was a good example of a project responding to the realities of young people's lives.
- Aberdeenshire employed three Employment Development Officers to encourage recovering substance misusers to access various schemes and projects to promote a more organised lifestyle, and connected them to mainstream services such as further education and leisure. Support workers encouraged, accompanied, and helped people keep appointments.

- An Aberdeenshire ADAT & North Alcohol, Drug and HIV Forum conference, one of a series over a 10-month period, was attended by a number of agencies, and involved the police, specialist substance misuse agencies, and presentations by a theatre company. The conference was fully active, including a series of workshops, and display stands with information on agencies available to delegates.
- Moray had a direct access service, Studio 8, to help people into services, offering literature on drugs and the services available to help people who misuse substances, one-to-one support, and group sessions. The service was providing a quick access to other services.

What is a multi-agency inspection?

The Grampian inspection covered a wide range of services for people who misuse substances. It looked at the way these services, health, social work, voluntary organisations and the police, worked together to help those with substance misuse problems improve their lives.

The multi-agency inspection methodology was developed by the Social Work Inspection Agency, NHS Quality Improvement Scotland and the Care Commission. The inspection team was made up of a number of different people, including doctors, nurses, a health manager, an inspector of constabulary, social work inspectors, a carer inspector and people who had used services.

The team analysed a large selection of information about services for people who misuse substances in Grampian. The team members read files, and carried out surveys of people who use services, their carers and staff. The team also spent two weeks in Grampian meeting staff, managers, visiting some services, and talked to service users and their carers.

The inspection team looked particularly at the way that joint strategies were developed and implemented. It also looked at the way staff worked together to provide services.

This leaflet summarises the key findings of the inspection. The full details are set out in the inspection report published in August 2007. Actions are already being taken to improve services in Grampian, following the recommendations made in the report.

If you would like a full copy of the report please contact:

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