

The City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Thursday 4 May 2023

Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services in Niddrie and Craigmillar

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that Full Council:

- 1.1 Notes the plan for resuming and expanding Drug and Alcohol services in Craigmillar.

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Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services in Niddrie and Craigmillar

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This paper responds to the motion passed by Full Council on 9 February 2023 which:
- 2.1.1 Notes that there are currently no drug and alcohol recovery drop-in services in Niddrie and Craigmillar since provision that was in place was stopped during the pandemic and has not been resumed.
 - 2.1.2 Notes that this means that service users are expected to travel to Leith to access Medically Assisted Treatment and drop-in services, which is a lengthy bus journey away and not suitable for people with anxiety, physical and other issues brought about by addictions.
 - 2.1.3 Instructs officers to work with the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership to reinstate services as a matter of urgency.
 - 2.1.4 Agrees that an update will be reported back to Council within one cycle.
- 2.2 It describes the plan for re-establishing a local base for services and the ongoing work on implementing it.

3. Background

- 3.1 Like many parts of the city, Niddrie and Craigmillar has a significant need for drug and alcohol services. Prior to the re-drawing of locality boundaries in 2016, it was the location of the South East Recovery hub. Much of the treatment in the area is provided by local primary care practices and outreach is available for those at the highest risk, but, as noted in the council motion, the travel to Leith is a significant barrier to treatment and it is recognised that a distinct point of access is needed in that area.
- 3.2 Prior to COVID19, the commissioned voluntary sector drug and alcohol service, Turning Point Scotland (TPS) had an ongoing presence at the East Neighbourhood Centre at 101 Niddrie Mains Road (ENC) in Craigmillar. They offered drop in, 1:1 appointments and group work. They were able to make initial assessments and support access to NHS services based in Leith.

- 3.3 The decision to remove the TPS workers was beyond their control – it was driven by COVID19 when the East Neighbourhood Centre (ENC) closed and staff had to return to the main NE hub base in Leith. Regaining space and facilities in ENC has been challenging and has been the main barrier to returning to at least the former level of service. TPS have had the facility to use the public meeting space from June 2022 alongside other council services scaling up use of space safely with covid health and safety considerations but have been unable to access desk space within the building and therefore have been unable to base workers there. TPS, the ADP and the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership have been working to resolve this and to resume a local service in Craigmillar.

4. Main report

- 4.1 At the time of the motion, the following service was available in the area:

Initial access:

- 4.2 TPS offered a weekly drop in for advice, information and assessment on Thursday 1-4pm at ENC. TPS are reviewing an increase in drop in to twice a week (as pre-COVID) subject to need and demand.
- 4.3 For anyone seeking to access assessment, information and advice in Craigmillar outwith the Thursday drop in, TPS could offer a pre-arranged appt at ENC for the following week, (they have had to book rooms a week in advance). Home visits were also offered for assessment and ongoing support where individual issues mean that ENC is not an appropriate meeting place. From there, direct referrals to the NHS team are with risk assessment to accelerate access to treatment where particularly urgent.
- 4.4 TPS and NHS have a team of Assertive Outreach workers who provide outreach to the homes of people at especially high risk (for instance, people who have had recent non -fatal overdose, hospital discharges or those identified through regular Multi Agency Vulnerable Adults Group meetings).

Ongoing support

- 4.5 TPS's assessment tool specifically asks an individual where they prefer to be seen (at Leith or Craigmillar) for ongoing support. TPS now have an allocated room (Dunsapie) in the ENC two days a week on a Monday and Thursday where they see patients and access to other rooms which they can book in advance.
- 4.6 TPS also have some room access in both Craigmillar and Niddrie Medical Practice where staff see patients of those practices only. These are both large local GP practices in the area which are located just a few minutes' walk from The Bothy on Niddrie Mains Road opposite the ENC and who have significant number of patients who use alcohol or other drugs. TPS have been meeting with local recovery community at Bothy and have started a SMART recovery Group and a weekly peer drop in at the Bothy on Tuesday and Wednesdays.

NHS services

- 4.7 The NHS specialist team have been less able to deliver in Craigmillar. They were seeing people (throughout their treatment) in Leith. For those at the highest risk, assertive outreach is offered and might include transport to the Leith for treatment. Many people on Opiate Replacement Treatment are seen in the local GP practice. However, for those who are neither in the highest level of crisis nor able to get their clinical care from primary care, they have had to go to Leith for treatment, which is acknowledged to have been a significant barrier.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Since this matter was raised through independent community advocacy, new lease agreements have been drawn up for both TPS and NHS partners to have a base at ENC. 2-4 desks are now allocated to TPS workers and 2 allocated for nursing staff; a dedicated room (the Dunsapie room) is available to see people (as well as being able to book other rooms in building for 1:1 and groups when needed). The local service is now comprised of:
- 5.1.1 TPS drop weekly (with referral on to NHS as needed).
 - 5.1.2 Planned appointments 5 days of the week with TPS workers.
 - 5.1.3 More regular planned appointments with nursing staff – two nurses are being allocated to focus on the needs of patients in the Craigmillar area and they will have a base at ENC.
 - 5.1.4 Continued assertive outreach.
 - 5.1.5 Ongoing group work programme at the Bothy and ENC.
- 5.2 All patients will be given the option of continuing to be seen in Leith if they prefer. Levels of need and demand for both TPS and NHS services will be monitored and the level of service reviewed on a continuous basis.
- 5.3 For those seeking rapid access to Opiate Replacement Therapy, the plan in the near future is for the city to have a single, central service open five days a week an offering drop in and same day treatment start (where clinically appropriate) at the Spittal Street Centre. Travel to this from across the city (including Craigmillar) will be facilitated by outreach workers where needed to enable people to access treatment there. Again, when those people no longer need that intensive initial treatment, it is expected that they would be able to return to local care either at ENC or in the GP surgery.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The local community has been helpfully vocal in highlighting the needs in the area through organised groups and via collective advocacy. The substance of this report has been shared with those groups in response to their welcome petition. The Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership (EADP) and operational services have committed to continuing engagement with those groups.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 None.

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.