One minute guide

Forward Leeds - integrated drug and alcohol service

What is Forward Leeds?
Forward Leeds is the new integrated drug and alcohol service for the city, with a single point of contact (telephone: 0113 887 2477) and delivery hubs across Leeds. It is a consortium arrangement, which means that a number of different service providers, some of whom have been working in Leeds for a number of years, have come together to form an integrated service. The service launched on 1 July 2015.

Current figures indicate that there are around 5,900 adults in Leeds who are experiencing significant issues with substance misuse, and around 220 young people.

What is different about the new arrangements?
The consortium approach of Forward Leeds means that people who want to access help with their substance misuse can do this more easily. There is a single point of contact for all, which means that service users who may misuse a number of different substances do not have to go to different providers for help. This makes the service easier to understand and navigate than the previous arrangements.

The service has a presence across the whole of the city. There are three main hubs, one in each wedge, which deliver the full service offer, as well as secondary, smaller hubs in each wedge. Anybody who attends one of the hubs should be offered an assessment of need, with the principle that there is no ‘wrong door’ for people to access help. There are a range of services that are replicated in every hub, but for more complex needs, e.g. a dual diagnosis of substance misuse and mental health problems, service users may need to be seen by a specialist team.

The service has a greater focus on partnership working than previous arrangements, through the housing support team and support for dual diagnosis. The service will also have more of an outreach role, working with communities who may be more difficult to engage, and having a presence at all major festivals and events in the city to offer advice, guidance and support about the misuse of substances.

How will the service support young people who misuse substances?
Each of the hubs across the city has practitioners who are skilled and experienced in working with young people. The area-based model of the new arrangements enables services to be delivered closer to young people’s communities, rather than service users having to travel further. The new arrangements also allow for an easier transition for young people once they turn eighteen, with young people’s substance misuse workers able to work with them up to the age of 25, rather than transferring them to adult services.

The broader age range also allows Forward Leeds to work with the large community of university students in Leeds. This group has been at risk of exclusion previously, missing out on young people’s substance misuse provision they are over eighteen, and missing out on adult provision because they do not live in Leeds full time. Partnership working with universities will also allow Forward Leeds to respond more effectively to emerging drug trends, for example New Psychoactive Substances (sometimes known as ‘legal highs’).
What should practitioners do if substance misuse is present or suspected?

If you have concerns about the potential substance misuse of a young person, parent or carer you are working with, you should call the one-stop support line on 0113 887 2477. Lines are open between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, and staffed by skilled, qualified workers. They can offer information and advice on next steps to support the family, and can help you to make a referral if appropriate. This would involve the knowledge and consent of the person needing support.

For face to face support, practitioners can accompany service users to one of the primary or secondary recovery hubs across the city, where their needs will be assessed. These hubs generally have the same opening hours as the telephone line, but appointments and services may be available outside of these times; call the one-stop support line for further information.

Where can I find further information?

The Forward Leeds website has further details of the support offered by the service, and details of the three main recovery hubs, based in Seacroft (Irford House, Seacroft Crescent LS14 6PA), Armley (Armley Park Court, 9 Stanningley Road LS12 2AE) and Leeds city centre (74 Kirkgate LS2 7DJ).

If you would like to discuss accessing workforce development and training for your agency in relation to working with adults or young people who misuse substances, please call the one-stop support line on 0113 887 2477.

You can follow Forward Leeds on Twitter @forwardleeds.