

 <b>ST HELENS</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL	<b>Appendix 1</b>  <h1 style="text-align: center;">Cabinet</h1>  <h2 style="text-align: center;">25 October 2023</h2>
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<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Cabinet Response to the Spotlight Review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Children and Young People  Wellbeing, Communities and Culture
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Nova Charlton  Councillor Anthony Burns
<b>Exempt Report</b>	No
<b>Reason for Exemption</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Public Notice issued</b>	N/A
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All
<b>Report of</b>	Hilary Brooks Director of Children's Services <a href="mailto:Hilarybrooks@sthelens.gov.uk">Hilarybrooks@sthelens.gov.uk</a>  Ruth du Plessis Director of Public Health <a href="mailto:Ruthduplessis@sthelens.gov.uk">Ruthduplessis@sthelens.gov.uk</a>
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<b>Borough Priorities</b>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	X
	Promote good health, independence, and care across our communities	X
	Create safe and strong communities and neighbourhoods for all	
	Support a strong, thriving, inclusive and well-connected local economy	
	Create green and vibrant places that reflect our heritage and culture	
	Be a responsible Council	

## 1. Summary

1.1 The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee held a spotlight review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children, on April 28, 2023. The purpose of the spotlight review was to enable elected members, relevant services and key partners to:

- Understand the impact of alcohol and drugs use in pregnancy on the child.
- Share the relevant work that is already underway to prevent and reduce harm.
- Work together to identify gaps and opportunities to improve our collective response.
- Commit to the delivery of agreed actions for improvement.

1.2 Drinking alcohol or taking drugs during pregnancy, even in small quantities can be harmful for the baby and have long term effects on the child and into adulthood.

1.3 The report of the spotlight review and its recommendations for action were formally agreed by CYPS Scrutiny on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 and is submitted to Cabinet for responses as per the Council's constitution.

## 2. Recommendation for Decision

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) Approve the Report and Action Plan attached at Appendix 1 that sets out the recommendations from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Spotlight Review.
- ii) Provide a response to the recommendations for the next meeting of the CYPS Scrutiny Committee.

## 3. Purpose of this report

3.1 This report provides Cabinet with the report, recommendations and action plan of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee spotlight review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children.

## 4. Background / Reason for the recommendations

- 4.1 The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Workshop carried out a spotlight review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 2023.
- 4.2 Drinking alcohol or taking drugs during pregnancy, even in small quantities can be harmful for the baby and have long term effects on the child. Impacts can include miscarriage, premature birth and low birthweight. Longer term impacts of drinking in pregnancy can result in the life-long condition of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), which can cause problems with learning, behaviour, communication and physical development of bones, joints and muscles. These can create difficulties in childhood that persist throughout life, with increased likelihood of problems at school resulting in poorer life chances into adulthood. Current NHS guidance recommends complete abstinence from alcohol and drugs during pregnancy where possible.
- 4.3 The focus of the spotlight review was shaped by concerns regarding high levels of teenage pregnancy and alcohol related harm in the borough, including significantly high rates of alcohol hospital admissions due to alcohol. The spotlight study sought to bring elected members and relevant agencies together to:
- Understand the impact of alcohol and drugs use in pregnancy on the child.
  - Share the relevant work that is already underway to prevent and reduce harm relating to alcohol and drugs use in pregnancy.
  - Work together to identify gaps and opportunities to improve our collective response.
  - Commit to the delivery of agreed actions for improvement.

## **5. Consideration of Alternatives**

- 5.1 N/A

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Report in Appendix 1 sets out the recommendations and proposed actions resulting from the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Spotlight Review of Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children. It is proposed that this work is incorporated into the programme of the local Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership. Key themes for improvement focus on supporting a healthy pregnancy, improved data sharing to support better diagnosis of Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and improved support for young people leaving care.
- 6.2 If agreed, the response of Cabinet to the recommendations will be presented to the next meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

## **8. Equality Impact Assessment**

- 8.1 No Equality Impact Assessment is required for the purposes of this report.

## **9. Social Value**

9.1 As this report is not able commissioning a new service or significantly changing provision, there are limited social value impacts. However, the recommendations of this report support social value by skilling up and enabling staff across the partnership to better support local residents as appropriate to prevent and reduce the impacts of substance misuse during pregnancy.

## **10. Net Zero and Environment**

10.1 There are no net zero and environment implications in this report.

## **11. Health and Wellbeing**

11.1 Actions to reduce alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy are intended to have a positive impact on the physical, emotional, and mental health of children and young people in St Helens.

## **12. Equality and Human Rights**

12.1 There are no direct human rights implications contained within this report, though a key focus of the recommendation is on providing support to pregnant women and their families to reduce the impact of substance misuse on the unborn child.

## **13. Customer and Resident**

13.1 Actions to reduce alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy are intended to have a positive impact on the physical, emotional, and mental health of children and young people in St Helens. This will make a significant contribution to safeguarding, aspirations, attainment, social and mental wellbeing and therefore life chances of the children and young people.

## **14. Asset and Property**

14.1 There are no asset or property implications in this report.

## **15. Staffing and Human Resources**

15.1 The agreed actions in this report will be carried out by existing staff from the council and its provider and partner organisations.

## **16. Risks**

16.1 There are no risks identified in this report.

## **17. Finance**

17.1 There are no direct financial implications in this report as any changes are being delivered within current capacity.

## **18. Policy Framework Implications**

18.1 There are no policy framework implications in this report.

## **19. Impact and Opportunities on Localities**

19.1 Although this is a borough wide issue, we will monitor at a locality level and ensure service provision is targeted where the need is greatest.

## **20. Background Documents**

20.1 Report of CYPS on 6 September 2023.

## **21. Appendices**

21.1 None

## Alcohol and Drug Use in Pregnancy - Collective Action to Reduce Risk and Harm to Children

### Spotlight Review Recommendations and Agreed Actions

Rec No	Recommendations	Responsible Officer	Agreed Action and Date of Implementation
1	The Chair of the St Helens Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership Delivery Group to be requested to include this work as one of the priorities within the Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership's delivery plan.	<b>Public Health</b> Michelle Loughlin	Actions to be incorporated into the CDP programme by  <b>November 2023</b>
2	Deliver an awareness raising campaign within existing resources, to include age-appropriate messages on a healthy pregnancy and the risks and harm to children of alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy. To be delivered in schools, colleges, through other partner agencies, and in public spaces. Best practice would be to ensure messaging is informed by the views and opinions of children and young people, including children looked after to improve engagement.	<b>YPDAAT</b> Helen Jones & Lisa Jenkinson	Campaign to commence by  <b>March 2023</b>
3	Ensure that the Council's audit of schools' and colleges' safeguarding information highlights gaps and shares good practice in relation to education about the risks and harms to children arising from drugs and alcohol use in pregnancy; and ensure this topic is flagged with Head Teachers' and Governors' Meetings.	<b>Education</b> Joanne Davies	Information to be incorporated into school's audit by  <b>September 2024</b>  Topic to be flagged with Head Teachers and Governors by  <b>January 2024</b>
4	Explore the use of shared information systems which include flags for the recording of information relating to alcohol and substance misuse in pregnancy. This will help further interventions to identify, diagnose and put in place timely support and treatment for children experiencing FASD. Data sharing between drugs and alcohol services, midwifery, 0-19 Service, and Social Care systems also would be also beneficial.	<b>IT</b> – Mark Roberts  <b>Maternity-0-19-</b> Toni Shepard  <b>Social Care</b> Paula Swindlehurst  <b>Drugs and Alcohol Services</b> Rachel Fance/ James Mawhinney	Exploratory discussions to commence by  <b>March 2024</b>

5	Work with Care Leavers to improve their understanding of the potential harms of drugs and alcohol especially in pregnancy. This should be via appropriate advice, guidance and support, provided in a manner which ensures high levels of engagement, and promotes self-esteem, aspiration and connectedness.	<b>Children's Social Care</b> Paula Swindlehurst	Progress report of action taken to improve work with care leavers around this topic by  <b>January 2024</b>
6	Explore the opportunities to carry out research with young people on attitudes to and use of vaping.	<b>Public Health</b> Michelle Loughlin	Progress report on what we know about young people's attitudes to and use of vaping  <b>March 2024</b>
7	Ensure delivery of consistent advice, messages, and support for pregnant women regarding a healthy pregnancy, including use of alcohol, drugs, vaping, smoking, diet, breastfeeding intentions etc.	<b>Midwifery</b> Sue Orchard  <b>Family Hubs</b> Ruth Du Plessis	Progress report of work undertaken  <b>January 2024</b>