

Addressing Alcohol, Drugs and Domestic Violence through Local Area Agreements

Local Area Agreements

Local Area Agreements present a unique opportunity for action on alcohol, drugs and domestic violence to be effectively integrated into local processes and outcomes. GLADA and the Stella Project are keen to support all local authorities in London to achieve this. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) are the driving force behind LAAs and are responsible for the development and delivery of these borough-based agreements.

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are three-year agreements that set out the priorities for a local area agreed by central government and boroughs. They bring together or 'pool' funding streams and reduce the number of indicators that local areas report to central government on. LAAs aim to deliver sustainable communities and better outcomes for local people through enhanced

partnership working. They provide an opportunity for working innovatively with a range of partners to improve service delivery.

LAAs are structured around four themes, Children and Young People, Safer and Stronger Communities, Healthier Communities and Older People and Economic Development and Enterprise. There are also cross-cutting themes that do not fall neatly into one of the four standard blocks but cut across them such as housing, transport, culture and sport.

There is no blue print for the ideal LAA – this will depend on the specific needs and priorities for each London borough. It is vital to ensure that the domestic violence and alcohol and drug agendas receive sustained priority and funding in the future, and therefore, it is essential that specific indicators and targets be incorporated within boroughs' LAAs.

The Stella Project is a partnership between GLADA and the Greater London Domestic Violence Project. It works to promote effective working across the substance misuse and domestic violence sectors through training, consultancy and information sharing. It has also produced Domestic Violence, Drugs & Alcohol Good Practice Guidelines. More information is available at www.gldvp.org.uk

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What's happening?

In some boroughs LAAs have been agreed, in other negotiations may be considerably advanced. However, whatever the local situation there will be opportunities to look at how issues of drugs, alcohol and domestic violence can be better addressed.

The first round of pilot LAAs were agreed in March 2005 and included the London boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham and Greenwich. Round two included an additional 15 London boroughs.

Round Three negotiations are now well under way and include the remainder of the London boroughs. All boroughs within this round will be required to meet a number of mandatory outcomes for each 'block'. The ones relevant to addressing alcohol, drugs and domestic violence include

- To reduce crime
- To reassure the public and reduce the fear of crime
- To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs
- Empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over decision making and a greater role in public service delivery
- Improved health and reduced health inequalities

Specific indicators which address the link between domestic violence and substance use cross cut several of the mandatory outcomes and are therefore an efficient way of ensuring success in meeting these outcomes.

In addition to the mandatory outcomes there are a number of possible indicators that can be incorporated into the various blocks within LAAs. These include

- Percentage of young people drinking alcohol
- Percentage of young people taking illegal drugs in the last month
- Reduction in violent crime, including alcohol related violence and domestic violence
- Reduction in drug related crime
- Increase the proportion of drug misusing offenders

accommodated within suitable accommodation

- Increase in the proportion of illegal drug users remaining in treatment for 12+ weeks

Additional guidance issued by the Home Office regarding LAA domestic violence targets suggest the following indicators:

- Increase in the number of domestic violence incidents reported to a third party and health agencies (including drug/alcohol agencies)
- Increase in the proportion of health referrals (which would include a referral from a drug and alcohol agency) made to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference system (MARAC).

Research recommends that addressing domestic violence issues

Suffolk County Council (Round 1 Pilot)

Under the Safer and Stronger Communities block, this LAA includes the target to reduce the harm that drugs and alcohol cause to communities. The following indicators have been determined:

- Increase drug and alcohol education and awareness events delivered to local communities by 15 per cent by 2008
- Reduce the number of domestic violence incidents related to alcohol misuse by 10 per cent by 2008
- Reduce the number of violent crimes in a public place related to alcohol misuse by 10 per cent by 2008

can contribute to increasing women's access and retention in substance misuse services. We therefore suggest that identifying domestic violence amongst drug and alcohol service users and providing relevant pathways to support can contribute to meet indicators within the "reducing the harm caused by illegal drugs" mandatory outcome.

Boroughs can make a case for their own additional outcomes if they can show how they contribute to meeting local priorities and how they would be measured through specific indicators.

London Borough of Islington (Round 2)

- Under the mandatory outcome to reduce anti-social behaviour, Islington's LAA will monitor the number of young people drinking excessive alcohol and/or using illegal drugs. This will be measured through the number of young people accessing Tier 2 and Tier 3 treatment for drug and alcohol misuse
- Under the mandatory outcome to reduce crime and the fear of crime, the LAA will also monitor the number of alcohol related crimes.

This will be measured through:

The number of fixed penalty notices issued

Number of licensing visits

Number of test purchase operations

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (Round 1 Pilot)

Under the Safer and Stronger Communities block, this LAA includes specific indicators focused on reducing disorder associated with alcohol

- Percentage reduction on level of alcohol related violence and disorder in Shepherds Bush and Hammersmith
- Percentage reduction of alcohol related hospital admissions (with a baseline to be developed)

What about Round 1 & 2 Refresh?

LAAs from previous rounds will undergo a review and refresh towards the end of 2006. This process allows for a review of outcomes, targets and funding streams to be included for the remaining timeframe of the LAA. Areas may also use this opportunity to look further ahead to the next three year period to be covered by the LAA. This refresh provides a good opportunity to consider alternative and innovative approaches for meeting mandatory outcomes as highlighted in this paper.

The role of the voluntary sector

The voluntary sector has a key role to play in influencing borough LAAs.

Each borough is required to provide a statement detailing how the voluntary sector has been involved in the design and delivery of the agreement.

Through involvement with the LSP and the LAA process, the voluntary sector has the capacity to influence the development of alcohol, drug and domestic violence responses and services.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Round 2)

Reducing domestic violence and preventing substance misuse are highlighted as areas for specific focus and prioritisation in meeting the following mandatory outcome.

- Reduced overall crime and increased public reassurance, with a particular focus on violent crime, anti-social behaviour, and the harm caused by illegal drugs

Relevant indicators set in order to meet the outcome are as follows:

Primary

Reduction in overall crime rate (British Crime Survey)

Number of violent crimes

Numbers of Young People under 18 accessing treatment

Secondary

Reduce the length of time domestic violence is experienced before it is initially reported to a specialist agency.

N.B. Specialist agencies could include a drug/alcohol agency and therefore ensuring screening for domestic violence at these agencies would increase the opportunity for initial contact with victims

The following activities are set out in the LAA delivery strategy as a means to meet these indicators:

Domestic Violence

- Early intervention by health, education and youth services to ensure effective awareness campaigns and encourage early reporting
- Comprehensive responses to address the multiple needs of victims of domestic violence on the first presentation
- Focus on children and families including working constructively with perpetrators

Substance Misuse

- As part of a drugs prevention strategy, targeted measures to reach young people at risk of substance misuse will be a priority. This will include specialist advice and support for parents, carers or family members.
- Treatment will focus on the development of a culturally specific detox unit and a specialist Women's Drug Service

Coventry City Council (Round 1 Pilot)

In response to a local needs assessment that highlighted a year on year increase in alcohol related problems Coventry City Council has the following indicator in the Stronger Safer Communities block:

- Reduce the number of incidents of alcohol related crime and disorder by x per cent by 2008

N.B. The LAA refers to the wide range of community problems associated with alcohol use. Therefore, in identifying strategies to meet this target, the council differentiates alcohol related crime in respect of public nuisance and safety and that associated with violence in the home and ill health arising from alcohol use.

How to include alcohol, drugs and domestic violence

In the first two rounds of LAAs, there are several examples of innovative approaches to addressing alcohol drugs and domestic violence issues. These are described in the boxes shown throughout this briefing.

London Borough of Camden (Round 2)

- Under the Safer and Stronger Communities Block, Camden's LAA includes an indicator which commits the borough to achieve 10 requirements from Level Three of the Mayor's London Domestic Violence Strategy. This includes improving joint working between the domestic violence and substance misuse sectors.

Based on this Camden has used funding through the LAA for a specialist DV and Substance Misuse Development Worker.

Developmental indicators

LAAs allow for developmental indicators that commit to collecting data where no baseline data exists at present. Possible developmental indicators could be

- Target a core number of drug/alcohol agencies to assess screening of DV and subsequent successful referrals onwards to partnership agencies.
- Develop the collection of data from DV agencies with regards to drug and alcohol use by service users and successful referrals onto appropriate substance misuse agencies

This data could then be used to measure progress in future years.

Next Steps?

The responsibility for negotiating the content of LAAs lies with the LAA leads within your LSP and Government Office London (GoL). The Regional Drugs and Crime Mangers at GoL and the DAAT and Community Safety Managers in your borough are able to provide more information. At this stage a first draft will have been agreed but there is still time to provide input to ensure integrated responses to the issues of domestic violence, drugs and alcohol are given priority in your borough.

Additional support and advice on addressing alcohol drugs and domestic violence in your local LAA is available from

The Stella Project – karen.bailey@gldvp.org.uk

London Drug Policy Forum –

David.MackIntosh@cityoflondon.gov.uk

There is a wealth of guidance available to assist in the development of Local Area Agreements – some of these are referenced below.

Department for Communities and Local Government

Information and publications relating to the implementation of Local Area Agreements www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1161632

Local Area Agreements Toolkit – DCLG

www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk/idk/aio/4619987

Voluntary sector involvement in the development of Round 2 Local Area Agreements in London

Key findings and examples good practice, includes six recommendations for optimal engagement of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the process.

www.lvsc.org.uk/shared_asp_files/uploadedfiles/49b872f8-035d-4c7f-898e-c3760c4de88c_laaround2reportmarch2006-final.pdf

Further resources and case studies, relating to LAAs are available at:

www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=1174348

Stronger Safer Communities Fund – Taking the Agreements forward

www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/publications.asp?did=1545

Local Government Association (LGA) report giving details of councils' experience of using domestic violence stretch targets during the first round of local public service agreements (LPSAs).

www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Publication/targetingabuse.pdf

The Greater London Alcohol and Drug Alliance, GLADA, is a strategic partnership of organisations and agencies established by the Mayor, Ken Livingstone in 2002. The partnership works to address London wide alcohol and drug issues that would benefit from a regional response. More information can be found at www.london.gov.uk

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