

Decision Pathway – Report



PURPOSE: Key decision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 10 May 2022

TITLE	Introducing Drug Safety Testing in Bristol		
Ward(s)	All Wards		
Author: Leonie Roberts, Paul Moores & Paul Hammond	Job title: Consultant in Public Health Public health substance use programme lead		
Cabinet lead: Cllr Ellie King, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health and Communities	Executive Director lead: Christina Gray		
Proposal origin: BCC Staff			
Decision maker: Cabinet Member Decision forum: Cabinet			
Purpose of Report: To seek approval of a drug safety testing service for Bristol with a target start date of 28 May 2022. This will provide Bristol with a total of 15 drug safety checking sessions over a 12 month's period.			
Evidence Base: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Drug misuse deaths in England and Wales having continued to rise over the last decade and are now at their highest levels since records began in 1993. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) there were 4,561 deaths related to drug poisoning in 2020, of which 2,996 were people that died specifically from drug misuse (ONS, 2021). Bristol has a higher-than-average number of drug-related deaths with a rate of 8.9 per 100,000 which is substantially elevated when compared to a regional rate of 5.5 and national rate of 5.0 per 100,000.2. According to the British Crime Survey (2020) the prevalence of drug use is highest among 16-19 (21%) and 20-24 year olds (20.3%). These data also show that full-time students are 19.7% more likely than any other occupation to have used drugs in the last year.3. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) has announced an ambition to reduce drug-related deaths by 20 per cent over 3 years. The sustained increase in deaths, has led to growing calls for policies and practices which focus on harm reduction methods to try to reduce the harm that people do to themselves or others from their drug use and reduce the impact on local services.4. Drug safety testing is a public health service whereby service users can submit a sample of a substance and receive the results from a forensic analysis, detailing the content and purity of a given substance. This information is delivered as part of a wider harm reduction consultation and typically lasting around 30 mins.5. Drug safety testing can help to determine whether drug samples contain the substance an individual wants to use, determine the purity level of a substance, identify toxic contaminants and unexpected substances, and track drug use patterns. They can also support informed decision making, reduce the quantity of drugs that people take and increase the likelihood that people will discard unsafe drugs.			

6. A licence has been issued, by the Home Office, for a service to be based in Bristol.
7. The intended outcomes of the service include:
 - a. A reduction in drug-related deaths and associated high risk behaviour,
 - b. Fewer emergency hospital admissions, and
 - c. A reduction in demand for emergency services among those whose drug taking is occasional and associated with the night time economy (primary audience)
8. Drug safety testing was piloted at several outdoor music festivals in the UK between 2016-2018 and two sessions were delivered in Bristol. Evidence from the pilots show that:
 - 20% of those that had substances tested, decided not to take them,
 - 50% said they would reconsider their drug taking based on the information provided,
 - 25% reduction of drug-related medical incidents was observed following festival attendance.
9. The service is planned to provide 15 sessions over a 12-month period. The service will be reviewed at 3 and 12 months to ensure it is attracting the right demographic and overcome any potential barriers to access. Decisions regarding continuation after 12 months will be made following the review.
10. Drug Safety Checking services are also being planned for implementation in Glasgow, London and Liverpool.

Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

1. Authorises the Executive Director, People in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities to procure and award a contract to deliver a Drug Safety Checking facility in Bristol for 12 months at a cost of £40000 funded from the Public Health grant.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. Interventions to reduce drug related harms are closely aligned with both local and national drug strategies. There have been growing calls to reinvigorate such policies and practices to reduce the sustained rise in drug related deaths.

City Benefits:

The expected benefits include:

1. Reduce drug related deaths
2. Reduce emergency hospital admissions
3. Reduce demand for emergency services
4. Raise the profile of substance misuse service in Bristol as it will be the first city in the UK to offer such a progressive and potentially lifesaving service.
5. Has the support of the Home Office, A&S Police, local NHS Trusts, Universities, further education providers, the City BID/night time economy stakeholders

Consultation Details:

Stakeholder engagement/consultation took place during the piloting of this service in 2018.

Background Documents:

- <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/drugs-and-alcohol-strategy-for-bristol>
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/104348/4/From_harm_to_hope_PDF.pdf
- [City checking: Piloting the UK's first community-based drug safety testing \(drug checking\) service in 2 city](#)

EDM Sign-off	Hugh Evans	30 th March 2022	
Cabinet Member sign-off	Councillor Ellie King	31 st March 2022	
For Key Decisions - Mayor's Office sign-off	Mayor's Office	11 th April 2022	
Revenue Cost	£40,000	Source of Revenue Funding	Public Health Grant
Capital Cost	£0	Source of Capital Funding	N/A
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>

Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:
1. Finance Advice: The funding for the service c£40,000 can be contained within the existing Public Health Grant.
Finance Business Partner: Denise Hunt 24 th March 2022
2. Legal Advice: The Public Sector Equality duty requires the decision maker to consider the need to promote equality for persons with “protected characteristics” and to have due regard to the need to i) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; ii) advance equality of opportunity; and iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. The Equalities Impact Check/Assessment is designed to assess whether there are any barriers in place that may prevent people with a protected characteristic using a service or benefiting from a policy. The decision maker must take into consideration the information in the check/assessment before taking the decision.
Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Leader 26 th April 2022
3. Implications on IT: There are no IT implications arising from this proposal.
IT Team Leader: N/A
4. HR Advice: There are no significant HR implications arising from the proposals within this report.
HR Partner: Lorna Laing 25 th March 2022

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny	NO
Appendix D – Risk assessment	YES
Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal	YES
Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal	NO
Appendix G – Financial Advice	NO
Appendix H – Legal Advice	NO
Appendix I – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix J – HR advice	NO

Appendix K – ICT	NO
Appendix L – Procurement	NO