

Briefing: OHID and HEE's Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce Transformation Programme

6 September 2022

Information

This briefing is designed to provide an overview of the new national Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce Transformation Programme for 2022/25. This is the first phase of the workforce programme that will run for the duration of the drug strategy '[From Harm to Hope: A 10-year drug plan to cut crime and save lives](#)'. The briefing is intended to inform stakeholders of the programme and it will be updated regularly to highlight the latest developments and progress.

The overall aim of this new programme is to transform the lives of those affected by drug and alcohol misuse by improving the quality and capacity of the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery workforce, including to increase the professional mix, across England.

The programme is being delivered and led by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' (OHID) Addiction and Inclusion Directorate within the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Health Education England's (HEE) National Mental Health Programme.

Office for Health Inequalities and Disparities (OHID)

OHID officially launched in October 2021 with the aim of tackling health inequalities across the country. As part of DHSC, OHID focuses on improving the nation's health so that everyone can expect to live more of life in good health, and on levelling up health disparities to break the link between background and health.

It brings together expert advice, analysis and evidence with policy development and implementation working with the whole of government, the NHS, local government, industry and wider partners to shape and drive health improvement.

Health Education England (HEE)

HEE works with partners to plan, recruit, educate and train the health workforce – to help improve the quality of life and health and care services for the people of England. HEE works to ensure that the workforce of today and tomorrow has the right skills, values and behaviours, in the right numbers, at the right time and in the right place.

This requires HEE to ensure the future supply into the workforce, to transform and upskill the current workforce, and continually seek improvements in the quality of training in the interests of

patients and learners alike. Workforce transformation is a key function of HEE, supporting the development of a workforce responsive to changes in healthcare now and in the future.

OHID and HEE will be working closely together to develop the workforce transformation required to realise the drug strategy ambitions. OHID has commissioned HEE to deliver specific strategic workforce development and training elements of the wider transformation programme.

Background

In 2019, Dame Carol Black (DCB) was commissioned by the Home Office and DHSC to undertake a [2-part independent review of drugs](#) to inform the government's thinking on what more could be done to tackle the harm that drugs cause.

The second part of the review focused on the drug treatment and recovery system. Its aim was to make sure that vulnerable people with substance misuse problems get the support and treatment they need to recover and turn their lives around. It considered the level of funding required and had a major focus on workforce. The review contains 32 recommendations for change across various government departments and other organisations, to improve the effectiveness of drug prevention and treatment and to help more people recover from dependence.

The Government invested an additional [£80m in drug treatment services in 2021/22](#). This funding saw the field successfully recruit around 800 additional staff in 9 months. Although the recruitment focused predominantly on drug and alcohol workers and peer workers, this demonstrates that the substance misuse sector can use additional investment to rapidly expand the workforce.

In July 2021, the Government responded to recommendations in part 2 of Dame Carol Black's review with a [10-year drug strategy: from Harm to Hope](#) and significant new investment, including an additional £532m for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The new 10-year drug strategy specified that the additional funding should deliver:

- 800 more medical, mental health and other professionals
- 950 additional drug and alcohol and criminal justice workers
- sufficient commissioning and co-ordinator capacity in every local authority (LA)

To achieve this, the Government committed to a range of actions to support workforce transformation including:

- work to implement a comprehensive strategy to expand the workforce through effective recruitment and retention
- work to define and improve the training and skills of all sections of the drug treatment workforce, including registered health professionals, drug and alcohol workers and peer supporters

The new funding is being allocated to LAs as the [Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant \(SSMTR\)](#). This includes continuation of the additional funding made available in 2021/22 which was distributed to all LAs. In addition to this, OHID is taking a phased approach to enhancing funding for treatment and recovery systems, starting with the 50 local authority areas with the highest levels of need. All LAs will receive an uplift in funding by year three.

This funding is additional to the [annual ringfenced public health grant \(PHG\)](#) that LAs use to fund their public health functions, including drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services. This new additional funding will allow LAs and providers to maintain the additional workforce recruited in 2021/22 and to go further to begin to meet the ambitions set out in the drug strategy. Funding must be used to increase the number of health professionals within the workforce because numbers have declined steeply in recent years.

To date, LAs have received their three-year indicative grant allocations for the SSMTR grant for 2022/23 to 2024/25. LAs, working with providers, have developed three-year outline plans and detailed plans for 2022/23. The next ten years are a crucial opportunity for the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery sector to work together to ensure roles have clear career pathways, are well supported and attractive, and to promote a positive image of the sector and the work it does.

Service Scope

OHID's and HEE's teams are working closely to engage with a wide range of services and stakeholders to develop the overall transformation programme. The programme will focus on the following organisation types:

- LA drug and alcohol commissioning teams
- LA-commissioned adult and young people's community drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services, residential rehabilitation, and inpatient detoxification services, including NHS and third sector providers
- Lived experience recovery organisations (LEROs)
- Services jointly delivered between NHS and LA to improve care for people with co-occurring mental health needs and drug and alcohol treatment needs

Some LEROs are commissioned by LAs, some are sub-contracted to treatment providers, and some are entirely independent. The services they deliver – typically early intervention, outreach, harm reduction and recovery support services – are fundamental to effective recovery-oriented systems of care.

The programme will also ensure that its outputs, such as the new workforce strategy, reference and align with NHS workforce strategic planning for other key service types such as NHS-commissioned substance misuse teams in secure settings, mental health services and alcohol care teams (ACTs), and locally services are encouraged to plan in partnership with NHS services. This will ensure better integration of services/roles within Integrated Care Systems (ICSs).

Collaboration is encouraged between NHS and LAs to deliver improved care for people with co-occurring mental health needs and drug and alcohol treatment needs.

LAs and NHS partners should collaborate as part of new ICS structures to jointly plan this expansion of workforce and transformation of services. Services will need to work closely together to plan transformation of services for people with co-occurring needs. This investment should ensure that provision is made to support people with their drug and alcohol treatment needs, alongside their mental health needs, rather than expecting people to attend different services with no alignment or integration.

Workforce Scope

The focus of this programme is on people working within substance misuse services. However, it will also be necessary to address the training needs of people working in a broad range of health and social care services.

The scope of the workforce may be viewed in a tiered way; that is, that whilst nearly all workers within the health and care system will require a basic level of awareness of substance misuse, there are further subgroups of health and social care professions who will need an enhanced level of expertise, particularly those working in substance misuse services.

The tiers may be described as follows:

- People with a strategic view of their local geography and the services within it
- People who provide universal health and social care in a non-specialist role, but for whom an awareness of the impact of substance misuse on health and wellbeing is a core component of their role
- People who do not deliver a specialist substance misuse role, but for whom contact with substance misuse and the implications on people's health is a routine part of their work.
- People who provide not only specialist substance misuse expertise in their own work, but who provide advice and support to the wider system as described above

The core role types in scope include, but are not limited to:

- Peer support workers and volunteers
- Drug and alcohol treatment workers, including criminal justice drug and alcohol workers, harm reduction, outreach, specialist homelessness and rough sleeping substance misuse workers and young people's substance misuse workers
- Drug and alcohol commissioners, including strategic, project management, administrative and analytical posts in LAs
- Addiction Psychiatrists
- GPs
- Other speciality doctors
- Psychological professionals (psychologists, psychological therapists, and psychological practitioners) at a range of levels of seniority who are trained in substance use/addictions
- Registered nurses including those who are trained non-medical prescribers (NMPs) and Advanced Practice nurses with specialism around substance misuse work. These will likely be Adult and Mental Health branch nurses but can also include Child and Learning Disability branch nurses with additional training in substance misuse.
- Pharmacists including those who are trained NMPs
- Social workers with experience in substance misuse work

Delivery

The Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce Transformation Programme for 2022/23-2024/25 is a joint endeavour, bringing the skills and experience of OHID and HEE together with expert input from the treatment sector and people with lived experience.

OHID is leading the national workforce programme, working in partnership with HEE, NHS England (NHSE) their delivery partners. OHID is leading on grant management, governance, risk management, policy, reporting, and monitoring and evaluating all drug strategy

programmes, including the workforce programme. OHID is also responsible for the SSMTR grant.

OHID has been leading work with sector leads to develop targeted action plans on recruitment and retention of specific roles such as psychologists, psychiatrists, and apprentices. This is in addition to scoping the possibility of developing a substance misuse careers and training website and an associated campaign to better promote careers in the sector domestically and internationally. These developing plans will feed into the HEE components of the programme.

The transformation programme deliverables being led by HEE are:

1. Annual Workforce Census

HEE has commissioned the [NHS Benchmarking Network \(NHSBN\)](#) to deliver three national annual workforce censuses of the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery workforce employed by services in the scope of this programme. The first census report will be published in early 2023. NHSBN has brought together representatives from those service types in scope to help shape this unique primary data collection. This year's collection opened on the 25 July 2022 and will close on the 12 September 2022.

These annual censuses will provide an analysis of the workforce, which will assist HEE and OHID in building a comprehensive national workforce profile. This will enable collaborative working with key strategic partners to inform education and workforce planning and investments. The census will also allow for LA, regional and provider-level data analysis and reporting to support the alignment of future workforce capacity with local needs.

2. Ten-Year Workforce Strategy

HEE has commissioned the [National Workforce Skills Development Unit](#) to develop a Ten-Year National Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce Transformation Strategy by December 2022.

This crucial piece of work will map out a shared workforce strategy which sets out solutions to prevent workforce gaps and considers the needs of the Ten-Year Drug Strategy alongside the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) and [Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan](#) that are currently in development.

This Workforce Strategy will support and underpin the national drug and alcohol treatment and recovery workforce transformation programme. It will be instrumental in supporting the delivery of the 10-year ambition for the wider programme: a stable, sustainable, skilled and experienced multidisciplinary workforce that helps more people to reduce risk and initiate and sustain recovery.

3. The Workforce Plan (2022-2025)

HEE will lead the development of a three-year workforce plan. This will include:

- plans to develop a training pipeline of people to work in drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services – including, but not limited to registered professionals

- identifying opportunities to upskill and develop the existing workforce to ensure that the workforce continues to thrive and grow
- exploring opportunities for the introduction of innovative roles recently developed for mental health services into drug and alcohol services where appropriate.
- annual targets with milestones

OHID will also work with services to identify sustainable and innovative recruitment and retention strategies that can be integrated into annual planning cycles.

These plans will be published annually to update the sector on progress and support local and provider-level planning.

4. Workforce Competency Framework

HEE and OHID will work with an expert reference group to develop a refreshed drug and alcohol treatment and recovery workforce competency framework by June 2023. This framework will support the sector to plan, develop, and deploy their workforce.

This competency framework will be developed based on national clinical guidelines on drug misuse and dependence, including the forthcoming alcohol clinical guidelines, and [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\) guidance on treatment and recovery interventions](#); the best evidence for prevention; an examination of the core skills of the workforce; and an examination of the skills gaps when viewed alongside the evidence.

It must build on and refresh the existing Drugs and Alcohol National Occupational Standards (DANOS). The work will be delivered in consultation with sector leads, Royal Colleges, other professional organisations and regulatory and professional bodies.

The refreshed competency framework will:

- provide guidance on training, education, and competencies for roles within the sector
- demonstrate clear pathways for recruitment and progression, with common and transferrable skills
- standardise the levels of competency for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery core roles, especially those without regulatory bodies or recognised professional/accredited qualifications such as drug and alcohol treatment workers, with a view to supporting consistency and quality of care provision.

5. Workforce Calculator

The Workforce Calculator Tool will be developed by HEE to support LA drug and alcohol commissioners, as well treatment and recovery service providers, to better understand the current and future workforce needs, numbers, and the skills mix required to meet local population needs.

The Workforce Calculator Tool will be based on clinical consensus (to be reached via an expert reference group) and existing clinical guidelines. The calculator will be available by June 2023. It will be a standard tool that can be modified according to local service requirements and will help provide a range of options for potential investment in multidisciplinary teams.

Resources, Support and Good Practice

LAs were provided with a 'menu of interventions' eligible for funding using the 2022/23 SSMTR grant funding. This set out the range of evidence-based interventions that LAs could invest in. This menu included interventions to expand the size, skill level, training, strengthen the skills mix including professions and competency of the workforce.

This included:

- increasing the number and hours of core roles so that caseloads can reduce
- incentives for staff and employers to aid recruitment and retention initiatives
- improved recruitment and retention, including international recruitment
- competitive pay and benefits packages
- training, education and continuing professional development, including training and support for line managers
- health and wellbeing support, including initiatives to reduce work-related stress
- capacity in services to support training places for registered professionals including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses and social workers
- training and development programmes for peer workers and volunteers

HEE and OHID will work with providers to identify opportunities to support widescale adoption of these areas of best practice where appropriate.

Good Practice Examples

Many drug and alcohol treatment and recovery providers, LAs, and partner agencies have found new and innovative ways of recruiting and retaining staff. These include:

- making links with:
 - local further education courses and colleges, including providing information and advice about careers in the drug and alcohol sector;
 - LA skills, employment and education services; and
 - volunteering programmes.
- LA leads should also ensure drug and alcohol providers are represented on the local enterprise partnership (LEP) or equivalent.
- some drug and alcohol treatment providers have been attending university careers fairs and offering any graduates expressing an interest in a career in drugs and alcohol an interview.
- job fairs held in the community have also been helpful, engaging people with no direct experience of health and social care and offering them an opportunity to develop new skills.
- traineeships for people with lived experience looking to move into drug and alcohol worker, peer support worker and other roles. Many providers and LEROs have developed in-house training courses to support pathways into employment in the sector for people in recovery. This can include 'buddying' trainees with another worker, shadowing opportunities, and access to formal training, some of which has been accredited.
- developing apprenticeship schemes. For example, one LA has targeted supporting young adults from vulnerable groups such as those leaving social care into qualifications and pathways into employment in the drug and alcohol sector.

OHID Regional Drug and Alcohol Leads

OHID regional drug and alcohol leads have regular stakeholder network meetings for commissioners and providers.

These network meetings typically involve updates on national programmes, sharing regional and national best practice examples, and exploring opportunities to collaborate regionally including on workforce transformation. Contact your local OHID regional drug and alcohol lead for more information.

Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention and Treatment Guidance

[Information and other resources](#) to support commissioners, service providers and others providing alcohol and drug interventions.

Workforce Transformation Resources

Workforce transformation is a process, driven by improving the way we recruit, retain, deploy, develop and continue to support the healthcare workforce, to meet the growing and changing needs of local populations – ensuring high quality care for the patients of today and the future.

As the workforce and education Arm's length body, HEE is the first point of contact for care providers seeking expert support, to build and develop a workforce which drives innovation and improvements for the benefit of patients, service users and populations.

Nationally, HEE has developed the [HEE Star](#), a simple but effective model to support workforce transformation, enabling those responsible for delivering health and care services, to explore workforce challenges in more detail and develop bespoke action plans for improvement.

HEE has also developed a [national approach to accelerate the spread and adoption](#) of innovation and good practice, to facilitate the further and faster pace of sustainable change. To find out more visit [HEE Workforce Transformation webpage](#).

You may find this [HEE 'grow your own' workforce strategy toolkit](#) developed for allied health professionals useful in thinking about developing your own local workforce strategy.

New Ways of Working and New Roles

HEE developed [resources to showcase good practice in developing new workforce roles](#). The resources aim to advise workforce designers to model supply and demand as well as support employers to create sustainable new roles that offer good career opportunities for the staff filling them.

HEE's new ways of working workstream aims to develop an integrated workforce culture and maximise the potential of new roles in addition to the current and future workforce, including supporting professionals to take every opportunity to develop within their role and scope of practice. Roles that have been increasingly integrated across mental health services include:

- [Peer support workers](#)
- [Social workers](#)
- [Pharmacist and pharmacy technicians](#)
- [Psychological professions](#)
- [Allied Health Professionals](#)
- [Nursing and nursing associates](#)

- [Advanced Practitioners](#)
- [Physician Associates](#)

Websites

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-health-improvement-and-disparities>
- <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/>
- <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/mental-health/drugs-alcohol>

Contact

If you have any queries or would like to get involved, contact mentalhealth@hee.nhs.uk