

**DRUG DEATHS TASKFORCE: MINUTE OF MEETING NINETEEN**

Wednesday 19 January 2022

Virtual via Zoom

10:00 – 13:00

**Taskforce Members:**

David Strang (Chair)	
Fiona McQueen (Vice Chair)	
Carole Hunter	Royal Pharmaceutical Society (Scotland)
Colin Hutcheon	Families Lived Experience Representative
Fiona Doig	Borders ADP and Health Improvement
Gary Rutherford	Scottish Ambulance Service
Jason Wallace	Lived/Living Experience Representative
Rebecca Wood	Lived Experience Representative
Anthony McGeehan	Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service
Tara Shivaji	Public Health Scotland
Diane McCulloch	Social Work Representative
Gary Ritchie	Police Scotland
Rebecca Lawrence	Royal College of Psychiatrists

**Attendees:**

Henry Acres	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Lauren Ross	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Kim Paterson	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Nicola Hood	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Orlando Heijmer-Mason	Scottish Government: Deputy Director for Drugs Policy Division
Pat McAuley	Scottish Government: Unit Head for Drug Deaths Unit
Roz Currie	Scottish Government: Drug Deaths Taskforce Support Team
Niven Rennie	Director: Violence Reduction Unit
Ann Wardlaw	Inverclyde Alcohol and Drug Partnership
Clare Collins	Scottish Government: Violence Reduction Policy
Alix Shepherd	Drug Deaths Taskforce Communications Lead
Alistair Muir	Police Scotland
Angela Constance MSP	Minister for Drugs Policy
Liz Speakman	Edinburgh Napier University
Anton Stephenson	Police Scotland
Peter Hillen	Edinburgh Napier University

**Apologies:**

Alison Munro	Academic Representative
Ewen Stewart	Royal College of General Practitioners

## Introduction

1. David Strang introduced himself to the group as the new Chair of the Taskforce and welcomed Fiona McQueen as the Vice-Chair. Members gave brief introductions.
2. Alix Shepherd was introduced to the group as the new Taskforce communications lead who also shared some of her background experience with the group.
3. It was raised that Anthony McGheehan from COPFS will be moving roles and today will be his last Taskforce meeting. The new COPFS representative will be Kenny Donnelly.
4. The Chair passed over to the Minister of Drugs Policy to give an introduction. The Minister expressed her thanks to the former Chair and Vice-Chair for the work done to date and welcomed David and Fiona to the roles. She stated she is looking forward to working together to finalise recommendations. The Minister clarified the plan for the next few months of the Taskforce and outlined Government's expectations. The Minister confirmed any funding already committed by the Taskforce is guaranteed.
5. Minutes from the previous Taskforce meeting in December were approved.

## Public Health Surveillance Update

6. The Chair passed over to Tara Shivaji for a verbal update on behalf of Public Health Scotland on Surveillance Data.
  - Ambulance data showed a rise in call outs in the early pandemic period in 2020, which then fell and increased again, but when compared to pre pandemic data, it shows seasonal patterns.
  - Drug related deaths (DRDs) hospital stays shows Opioid related admissions is decreasing in 2020/2021.
  - Although hospital admissions higher in over ages 35, numbers seem to be stabilising in older age groups.
  - PHS have launched a wider impacts dashboard where data is now shared and encouraged members to look at this. The dashboard can be accessed here - [COVID-19 wider impacts \(shinyapps.io\)](https://shinyapps.io/COVID-19-wider-impacts/)
  - The group discussed accidental/intentional overdoses and the criteria for inclusion.
  - Concerns around rising younger age group (15-24) were discussed. The substances young people are using aren't always the type that services are set up to support. TF have looked at younger people but members think services to younger people need to be looked at again. Stigma was highlighted as a barrier.
  - PHS are working on capturing data to confirm if there has been a rise in people being prescribed substitute medication and what the rise has been. Once available it will be shared with the Taskforce.

## Update on Police Naloxone Pilot

7. The Chair handed over to colleagues from Police Scotland, Gary Ritchie, Anton Stephenson and Peter Hillin, to provide an update to members on the progress of the Police Naloxone Pilot.
  - Shift to intranasal naloxone was outlined as a key driver of success.

- Objections from the Scottish Police Federation (SPF) were discussed. have been opposed to officers carrying naloxone which has been a challenge.
- The pilot was undertaken in Glasgow, Dundee and Forth Valley and included 808 officers. Carriage was voluntary, 656 opted to carry naloxone after the training, around 80%.
- The evaluation report on the naloxone pilot should be completed by the end of January, and will be taken to leadership board of Police Scotland in February where it will be recommended to roll out naloxone to all officers. This report will be shared with Taskforce members.
- By end of official TOC period there had been 53 uses of naloxone by police officer. All 53 individuals given naloxone survived. Those individuals were also given further support.
- Police Scotland are meeting with MET police and Western Australian police around Scotland's approach with naloxone, many areas are interested in learning from us.
- SFAD have noticed an increase in requests for Take Home Naloxone through their Click and Deliver service, some feedback has shown police officers carrying or using which has encouraged people to get involved themselves.
- Confirmed that Police Scotland are building good referral pathways, and investing in officer awareness is necessary.

#### **Evaluation process:**

- Evaluation focused on implementation and processes of the TOC to allow elements of learning and best practice to be identified and to inform any future national implementation of naloxone carriage/administration within Police Scotland.
- Evaluation assessed: Police attitudes towards drug use and people who use drugs, experiences of witnessing and responding to overdoses, perceptions from local communities, police understanding and awareness of drug overdoses and naloxone, effectiveness of naloxone training,
- Research design included: police officer surveys (questionnaires) at baseline, post training and follow up, interviews with focus groups of police officers, community and senior strategic stakeholders and collection of quantities data on administration incidents.
- Shared figures on each division/area for the training, uptake and administrations which showed it was a positive response from officers.
- Majority of officers were supportive on the carriage and administration of naloxone within Police Scotland.
- Officers believed intranasal naloxone was perceived as safe, as police are often first on scene when it comes to drug overdose so believed important to carry naloxone, tied in with duty to save lives and gave the ability to save a life. This also gave police the opportunity to link individuals in with drug services.
- Interviewed 19 community stakeholders, LE, support staff and family member. Main views were that they believed intervention was suitable for officers as first responders and were positive about them carrying naloxone. Barriers were some stories around some officers being stigmatising, some officers risk facing aggression after administration of naloxone and highlighted naloxone is only part of the solution (poly drug use)
- SG confirmed wait to see evaluation come through. Taskforce will factor into final report and recommendations.

### **Update on Inverclyde ADPs Custody Navigators**

8. The chair passed over to Ann Wardlaw to give a progress update on Inverclyde ADPs Custody Navigators.

- There were 33 people who sadly lost their life to a drug related death in Inverclyde in 2019. This was an increase of 9 (37.5%) people from 2018.
- From the latest analysis available (2017), 26.1% of those who had died of a drug related death had been in police custody within the last 6 months prior to death.
- Greenock Police Custody Suite is one of the largest in Scotland with the annual throughput for 2020 being 4,170 people.
- Early help needs to be made available whilst in custody. Focus of this project is support to those people in custody.
- Stepping stones of support are in place for team, and team will work closely with Prison staff.
- Accessing help not dependent on next step of justice journey. Early help team includes coordinator, peer navigators and peer support.
- Early help team work closely with police colleagues while independent of justice. Their priority is the individual and linking them into services. They can also distribute naloxone.
- Synergy with other developments was highlighted e.g. NFO, women's project, the promise (whole family approach) and development of resi rehab pathway
- Members discussed the significance of partnership working. High level of commitment with all partners was noted.
- Next step to reach out to close local authorities- Argyll & Bute and Ayrshire, which will also allow the model to be tested in rural areas.
- Report will be available in April 2022.

### **Presentation from Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) on Custody Navigators**

9. The Chair handed over to Niven Rennie and Alastair Muir from the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit to give a presentation on Custody Navigators.

- VRU established in 2003 – Scotland was labelled most violent country in the world. Tried to suppress issue by putting people in to prison. You can't arrest your way out the problem.
- Mutual learning approach is taken - looking to tie together with relevant stakeholders
- Public Health Model was created in relation to the VRU.
- The aim is to stabilise the patient, since then everything has been about prevention. Work with education, youth violence and crime began to drop.
- Data has showed lives can be turned around if you invest in them.
- Male suicides and alcohol are an issue in Scotland along with Drug Deaths.
- Individuals turn to alcohol and drugs for an escape. We can't tackle the causes in isolation but need to make meaningful connections.
- You Decide Team - Navigator model being taken out in to communities – same model as being used in custody.
- Early intervention saves lives but early prevention saves a community. Need to show more love, compassion and understanding and need to give people hope, opportunity and aspiration.

- Custody navigator project – police in Kirkcaldy in Fife. Relationships and communication is a focus. 103 referrals, 18 were drugs and alcohol dependant, the rest were around housing and mental health issues.
- 294 appointments where navigators went along with individuals. Less appointments were missed, therefore savings made to the public purse.
- Looking to extend to Dunfermline police officers.
- Plea to look at this and extend this approach.

**ACTION** - Presentation to be shared. Secretariat to link navigator projects to facilitate shared learning.

### **Discussion on the Drug Deaths Taskforce 2022 Work plan**

10. The chair passed over to the Minister for Drugs Policy, Angela Constance to give an overview of the proposed work plan for the Taskforce for 2022 (which was shared with members prior to the meeting).

- Members shared concerns about projects that will not complete until after July 22 (including some that have yet to start). Minister confirmed that Government are looking into succession planning.
- Members clear there needs to be a system of accountability. There also needs to be a way to inform the public about work being done.
- Lived and Living experience voices must continue to be heard and included.
- A discussion took place about expectations of final reporting. Minister confirmed she is looking for a substantial body of recommendations and reiterated that evidence is never complete fully. Minister made a plea to Members to be bold in recommendations.
- Barriers to projects (including factors that have caused delays) need to be included and recommendations made.
- Members discussed the proposed work plan and raised some additional items such as primary care, information sharing and workforce planning.

**ACTION** – Taskforce support team will reconsider the work plan and consult with members to ensure all crucial areas are covered.

### **Summary and Any Other Business**

11. The Chair drew the meeting to a close and thanked all members for attending.

- The Chair said farewell and thank you to Anthony McGeehan and wished him well in his new role.
- Confirmed the next meeting of the Taskforce will take place on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March and looks forward to seeing everyone then.