



Yorkshire & Humber  
Improvement Partnership



Offender Health and Social Care  
Improving Health, supporting Justice

***Executive Summary***

***Alcohol and Offenders  
Project (phase 2)***

**Yorkshire and Humber  
Region**

## Introduction

This second YHIP Alcohol and Offenders report builds on an earlier scoping report which highlighted: a high level of treatment need amongst adult alcohol misusing offenders within the region; that a range of treatment interventions were available to them; that there were inconsistencies in the provision and commissioning of treatment services; and outlined recommendations for change towards an integrated model of treatment, focused on addressing identified gaps and missed opportunities.

This report takes forward the earlier recommendations by supporting localities and criminal justice partners to increase the level of alcohol interventions being provided to offenders. In particular, the project emphasises the implementation of alcohol identification and brief advice (IBA) across a range of settings, including Probation Approved Premises (hostels), community women offender projects, prison CARAT and healthcare services, police station Alcohol Arrest Referral schemes, and other local projects. The roll-out of an identification, brief advice and referral model is supported by access to training opportunities to equip practitioners with the appropriate skills to deliver these interventions effectively.

The project examines local commissioning models in the provision of alcohol treatment for offenders. The project assesses the region's progress in meeting recommendations from key policies and reports in relation to addressing alcohol-related harm. Finally, the project scopes the needs of young offenders with alcohol problems.

### **Benefits of providing alcohol interventions to offenders**

In the current economic climate, the focus needs to be on improving provision based upon evidence of what is effective and cost-effective, within financial constraints. Evidence shows that the interventions promoted by the project, those delivered by criminal justice staff or those which offenders are referred into, are likely to be effective in reducing alcohol-related health harms.

- The 'Review of the effectiveness of treatment for alcohol problems' (National Treatment Agency, 2006) provides the main review of evidence to show that alcohol treatment is effective.
- The effectiveness of delivering alcohol interventions specifically to offenders is currently being researched in the UK:
  - SIPS trials are underway to test the most effective and cost effective way of implementing IBA in criminal justice (and other) settings.
  - Home Office Alcohol Arrest Referral pilots are being evaluated to examine the effectiveness of brief interventions in reducing alcohol related re-offending.
  - A range of NOMS Alcohol Best Practice projects are available which demonstrate innovative approaches to meeting the needs of offenders with alcohol problems.

- A significant body of evidence already exists which supports the use of alcohol brief interventions in health settings. The evidence shows that interventions are most effective in reducing alcohol use levels and alcohol related harm amongst increasing and higher risk drinkers (or hazardous and harmful drinkers).
- Evidence (including findings from the first YHIP alcohol and offenders project) shows that a large number of offenders have alcohol misuse problems, that a high proportion of these are increasing and higher risk drinkers, and that offending is often linked to alcohol use. It follows, therefore, that delivering evidence-based IBA to offenders should have an impact on reducing alcohol use and re-offending levels, leading to improved health and social outcomes for offenders.
- The national Drug Interventions Programme (DIP), aimed at tackling drug-related offending, has proved to be effective in reducing drug-related re-offending and drug use levels. It is envisaged that many of the processes and successes of DIP will also be applicable to Alcohol Arrest Referral schemes and alcohol-related crime.
- The provision of alcohol interventions (Tier 1 and 2) by generic staff working within offender settings, allows specialist alcohol treatment providers (of Tier 3 and 4 interventions) to focus limited resources and capacity more effectively.
- Widespread implementation of alcohol IBA is being promoted within the health sector to meet the new PSA 25 national indicator to reduce the harm caused by alcohol (and drugs) and to reduce alcohol-related hospital admissions.
- The Department of Health has identified a number of High Impact Changes, effective actions to reduce alcohol-related harm, which include the provision of IBA to help more people drink less. The Department supports the use of IBA in offender settings as criminal justice staff will engage with individuals who may not be picked up via health services.
- Earlier identification of alcohol problems, and referring people into appropriate treatment as quickly as possible, will be effective in reducing health and social care costs (in relation to hospital stays, repeat hospital admissions, deteriorating health, numbers seen by GPs, assaults presenting in A&E, alcohol related crime and disorder etc).

### **Summary of project achievements**

- The IBA model, utilising the AUDIT screening tool, has been promoted to approximately 60 adult criminal justice services across the region, utilising existing resources.
- Support and sharing of practices within Alcohol Arrest Referral schemes: 10 of 14 localities are providing AAR services, 6 with additional funding from partners.
- All 13 prison establishments have received support and guidance to implement the Prison Healthcare Indicator for alcohol screening and interventions.
- Support to various innovative projects aimed at addressing the needs of offenders with alcohol problems, including prison alcohol workers, a project to improve continuity between community and prisons, and a Probation hostels project. The projects have relied on different funding opportunities to proceed.
- Development of the region's workforce: 80 criminal justice staff completed alcohol e-learning on IBA and 50 staff undertook an accredited RCGP alcohol

training event. The RCGP training was funded by YHIP as a one-off cost with a view to the training being disseminated amongst services.

- Examples of joint health and justice partnership working and commissioning in the provision of treatment for offenders with alcohol problems have been mapped, which can be used as best practice guidance by localities and other areas.
- Progress against key alcohol policy recommendations has been assessed, highlighting both significant progress and outstanding areas for future focus. This also provides a clearer baseline of progress in light of future alcohol policy and guidance expected.
- A regional directory of alcohol treatment services by locality has been produced.
- An assessment of the needs of young offenders with alcohol problems, and the provision available to them has been undertaken, with recommendations for improvement moving forwards provided.

### **Next steps**

This is the latest YHIP-led project focused specifically on improving services for offenders with alcohol problems. The report shows how alcohol interventions can be increased and improved within offender settings to develop a regional model, largely based on existing resources and joined up approaches. The key success to the project moving forwards will be for the achievements and momentum gained to date to be maintained, and for the recommended models and interventions to be continued, along with the piloting of new ideas and approaches. Attention will need to be provided to those areas of provision that remain inadequate to meet the needs of offenders with alcohol problems, and available resources to be targeted or diverted to those areas.

**The report provides a list of 35 recommendations for future action planning, aimed at local leads, commissioners and service providers, and regional health and justice leads (see pages 118-121 of the main report).** The main themes of the recommendations are to: focus on the needs of specific offender groups; increase partnership models and commissioning; encourage local innovation and piloting; share ideas and approaches; improve information flow pathways between services; routinely use AUDIT to measure baseline levels of alcohol use and needs; improve collaborative working; continue to develop the workforce; and in relation to young people, to utilise opportunities for engagement, and provide approaches which are creative and responsive to need.

**The full YHIP Alcohol and Offenders Project reports (2009 and 2010) can be accessed at via the YHIP website at [www.yhip.org.uk](http://www.yhip.org.uk) under the Offender Health section.**