

LEISURE SERVICES: SUPPORTED ACCESS TO LEISURE FACILITIES FOR PERSONS IN TREATMENT OR RECOVERY FROM DRUG AND ALCOHOL RELATED ISSUES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** The purpose of this paper is to outline a proposal for persons who are in formal treatment or recovery programmes for drug and alcohol related problems to have access to free, supported use of council leisure facilities during their period of recovery. The Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) which includes the Council as a partner was contacted for background information.
- 1.2** Scotland as a whole has a significant problem with drug and alcohol misuse. There is an estimated fifty two thousand individual drug users across the country and there were 545 drug related deaths in 2009¹. Alcohol misuse is also a huge issue throughout Scottish society with a recorded 1,282 deaths attributed to alcohol in 2009².
- 1.3** Drug use alone has a significant impact on individuals, families and Society, with an estimated economic and social cost of £2.7bn per annum³. Recent work by experts in the field suggests that a fresh approach is required to address fully the needs of people with drug problems, to help them recover and rebuild their lives⁴.
- 1.4** Reducing problem drug and alcohol consumption will help get more people back to work, help regenerate some of our most deprived areas and allow significant public investment to be redirected⁴. In order to achieve this, a multi-agency approach needs to be incorporated at a local level to help create avenues of support.
- 1.5** This proposal is one of a package of support measures that will be compiled as an "Argyll and Bute Offer" to persons in formal treatment or recovery from their alcohol related problems. The Offer reflects supports that may be combined across the public and 3rd sectors that

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2. <http://www.alcoholinformation.isdscotland.org>

3. http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/health/2009/nr_090326_drugs_alcohol.pdf

4. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/224480/0060586.pdf>

5. Edited collection, *Exercise, Health & Mental Health: Emerging Relationships*, Faulkner & Taylor, 2006

can be offered to a person to help their recovery, increased its sustainability and their general health and wellbeing.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Taking into account the feedback and evidence presented it is recommended that a standard formal partnership arrangement be drawn up with all support services wishing to use council leisure facilities. The arrangement would allow free access to members of the community who are participating in a formal treatment or recovery programme for drug and alcohol misuse.
- 2.2 It is recommended that this arrangement follows the referral process currently set up for individuals attending the **argyllactive** programme. The individual, with their consent, would be referred to the Fitness Coordinator who will process their referral and book them in for induction.
- 2.3 Individuals who require supervised support would access the facility under the same arrangements with their support worker present at all times. This process would be under the agreed terms of the partnership arrangement and associated local leisure facility
- 2.4 The partnership arrangement would be evaluated and monitored through production of attendance figures by Leisure Services and quarterly meetings of a small multi agency project team. An annual report of overall usage with feedback from the support sector services as well as associated comments from individual attendees would be submitted. The report would highlight successes of the service provided and identify any potential development or improvement opportunities.

3. DETAIL

3.1 National Drug and Alcohol Exercise Arrangements.

Scottish Leisure Network Feedback

In order to ascertain what the current situation is across Scotland regarding leisure facility use/exercise programmes set up by addiction services in partnership with local authorities/trusts, the Scottish Leisure Network forum was contacted.

The network forum is conducted by e-mail and is made up of representatives from the 32 local authorities/leisure trusts who are responsible for delivering leisure programmes to the communities they serve.

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The question posed asked for a reply to the following:

'Do any of your facilities offer discounted access for service users who are going through a period of formal treatment/recovery for drug and alcohol addiction?'

'If you do offer a discount please can you indicate what the mechanics of the access entails and if you don't offer a discount would it be possible to confirm this by email'.

The overall feedback from the network forum stated that not many partnerships of this nature are currently in place across Scotland. Those Partnerships that have been set up have been put in place with either the support service provider or local authority paying the overhead costs.

The network forum also reported some negative behaviour feedback regarding the impact that such schemes have had on their membership figures.

3.2 Argyll and Bute Drug and Alcohol Misuse.

In 2009 there were 220 registered drug users across Argyll and Bute and 7 recorded deaths. The registered user number only takes into account those individuals who have asked for help or are in a registered drug rehabilitation programme.

Alcohol misuse across Argyll and Bute is also a significant problem with 23 deaths attributable solely to alcohol in 2009².

Alcohol and drug misuse cannot be treated as separate entities as both often go hand in hand and are now treated in the same context of addiction. Combined consumption of both can lead to an increased incidence of overdose.

3.3 Argyll and Bute Exercise Referral Pathways

argyllactive

Within Leisure Services there is a successful referral pathway through the **argyllactive** scheme which is a partnership between Argyll and Bute Council and NHS Highland. The exercise referral scheme allows health care professionals (including ABAT) in Argyll and Bute to refer individuals for a course of exercise.

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The referral scheme is led and delivered by Council employed Fitness Coordinators in the following facilities:

- **Riverside Swim and Health Centre – Dunoon**
- **Mid Argyll Sports Centre – Lochgilphead**
- **Aqualibrium – Campbeltown**
- **Helensburgh Pool – Helensburgh**

The scheme runs for an 8 week block at a cost of £2.60 per session, the cost of which is taken up by the participant. Each session is delivered by a fully qualified Registered Exercise Professional (REPs) level 3 instructor and is aimed at sedentary individuals who have a wide range of medical issues from depression to coronary heart disease.

3.4 Existing Drug and Alcohol Specific Partnership Working

There are currently 26 drug and alcohol services across Argyll and Bute. At present only two of these Services have any formal links to their local Council leisure providers. The King's Court, Maxie Richards Foundation and the Cowal Council on Alcohol and Drugs both have links to the Riverside Swim and Health Centre in Dunoon. Both Services have different programmes in operation.

The King's Court, Maxie Richards's foundation has a pre-paid group membership for five 'All Facilities' concession memberships which allows their programme members access to the gym, swimming pool and health suite. The Maxi Richards Foundation has had this type of membership at the Riverside since January 2006 and in that period there have been no reported issues with the Foundation member's facility usage. The feedback from both the organisation and the management team at the Riverside has been positive.

The Cowal Council on Alcohol and Drugs (CCAD) negotiated a 'pay as you go' arrangement with the Riverside management in 2009, whereby programme members are given a facility pass which entitles them to free access.

The Riverside collects the cards at reception and the CCAD are invoiced on a monthly basis for their usage at a charge of £1.70 per person per visit. If the individual wishes to use the gym they need to go through a formal gym induction process at a cost £5 per induction. Last year the CCAD were invoiced for 477 attendances and 8 gym inductions.

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3.5 Feedback from current Drug and Alcohol Exercise Schemes

Although on the whole the arrangement with CCAD has been positive, there have been a couple of reported problems. The issues have related to minor incidents, such as the use of bad language where some members of the programme were asked to leave the facility.

The evidence suggests that although there has been some negative feedback regarding partnership work of this kind, only minor incidents have been reported from the services in operation in the Cowal area.

Overall, the feedback from both the services and the individuals involved has been extremely positive. Both current arrangements have proved a success as many individuals have benefited through using the facilities to help aid their rehabilitation. Feedback from both organisations found the arrangements to be a valuable opportunity to aiding recovery for those individuals who took part.

Therefore, in order to develop the programme throughout Argyll and Bute some form of structured partnership arrangement with alcohol and drug misuse services and the local leisure facilities would be a positive development.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The relationship between physical exercise and drug and alcohol cessation is well documented, as it helps support addicts working their way through the withdrawal and recovery process. In general, exercise is known to be a practical form of distraction that can reduce depression and anxiety often associated with drug and alcohol use⁵.
- 4.2 Setting up partnerships between support services and the council leisure facilities fits well in to a multi-agency rehabilitation approach. Partnerships such as these offer a health and fitness avenue for those seeking to change their lives by aiding recovery while gaining the associated benefits of a fitness programme.
- 4.3 These partnership would not only help meet the Scottish Governments five strategic objectives; to make *Scotland wealthier & fairer, smarter, healthier, safer & stronger and greener*, but also help achieve Outcome 2 of the Councils Corporate Plan 2010 -12 which aims to reduce the impact that alcohol and drugs has on its communities and the mental health of individuals. It is therefore

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important that the Council utilises its wide ranging resources in innovative approaches in order to help deliver these objectives.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy

The proposal would be an alteration to the current concession and referral pricing structure/policy

5.2 Financial

The potential loss of income would be relatively minor and notional given the very low level of paid used by this client group at present.

5.3 Personnel

The Council's HR team will assist to ensure that any arrangements meet the policies of the council.

5.4 Equal opportunities

These proposals are consistent with the Council's policy on Equalities

5.6 Legal

None

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