



Cardiff & Vale APB

Covid-19 Update for Substance Misuse Services

From the APB Support Team

These updates aim to keep you updated on changes to local substance misuse service delivery, provide you with information on practices being adopted in other APB areas and in local services, and to share key messages from Welsh Government. Please keep us updated on the challenges that you are facing, so we can ask for help from other services and organisations, on your behalf, and escalate any issues as required.

Our Information Sharing Conference Calls are now held fortnightly, and are an opportunity to share information, and to ask for assistance or offer help to other services who may need it.

PPE We are able to support commissioned service providers in accessing PPE stock that is being co-ordinated by NHS Wales. However there is no guarantee that requirements will be fulfilled and no current information as to what the turnaround time is. Please get in touch if you would like to access this. Alternatively, should your organisation have surplus PPE stock that is not currently required, we ask that you also notify us, so that we can explore sharing this within the APB Footprint if required.

TESTING We are able to refer staff employed by our commissioned providers for testing. For testing to have the most benefit, it is important to consider how long the person has been self-isolating before making the referral. If you would like to access this, please email Charlotte Thomas for a referral form. We will then forward this on to the team, and they will be in touch to arrange an appointment.

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Feedback from other APB Areas in Wales over the last fortnight

Many areas continue to struggle to access PPE and testing for third sector providers.

All areas are prioritising prescribing and NSP services, and most providers are offering support using digital technology.

Many areas are working to introduce the prescribing of Buvival. Providers working in the more remote areas of Wales have had challenges regarding storage and delivery.

North Wales have noted a cluster of Spice overdoses (as has Cardiff). Awaiting analysis results from WEDINOS



Intelligence and Local Information

Drug Trends

Young People services report that cannabis is widely available and is being delivered to young people in their homes. Prices seem to have dropped.

Services in the Vale report that drug supply in Barry has virtually disappeared due to Police Roadblocks being operated in Barry and Barry Island to support social distancing measures. Services were seeing an increase in the use of Crack in Barry prior to Covid-19, and this trend is continuing.

Services are reporting a reduction in the quality, and a rise in the price of heroin available, and a potentially associated rise in the use of Spice amongst the homeless population.

Service referral rates

Referrals rates to substance misuse services have fallen dramatically across Wales. In Cardiff and the Vale, referrals to adult services have reduced by 47%, and to Children and young Peoples services, by 44%. Efforts are being made to publicise the fact that services are open and ready to support people, but there is a risk that referral rates will significantly increase once social distancing measures are lifted and services are being asked to plan for this.

Recovery Planning

Recovery planning has commenced and the APB Support Team will be in contact with all providers in the near future to understand which elements of the innovative practice implemented in services need to be supported to continue post Covid-19, and to understand what risks are perceived by services which will need to be planned for.

Substance Misuse Operational Updates

Adult Services

TAITH/EDAS/NSP

NSP continues to be a priority, with both the Cardiff and Barry buildings remaining open. Two members of staff returned to work this week so the team are at full capacity. EDAS assessments continue to be conducted over the phone –decrease in the number of referrals.

CAU

CAU is operating a reduced level of service using a different model for delivery of care, but it appears to be effective. There are no issues with staff absences. The UHB is working on a recovery plan for Pine Ward to return to its normal function as the demand for Covid-19 beds has been much lower than anticipated. From Monday 3rd May, up to 4 beds will be used for urgent detoxes and from 17th May the ward will accept admissions for week long detoxes, although this may have to be cut short if there is a sudden increase in COVID-19 cases. Community alcohol detoxes will continue, and there is potential to use a Zenayser, which essentially functions as a breathalyser to detect traces of alcohol and certain medications to support this. Plans to move more clients onto Buvidal are underway, and staff have identified individuals who are clinically appropriate.

Integrated Family Support Service

Early Intervention Team are accepting referrals from allocated Children's Social Worker to complete brief interventions with families, with the primary focus on safety planning. Interventions will be completed via telephone and video calls.

The Bridge Project

The Bridge Project continues to be operational. The clients initially found the lack of structure difficult but small group sessions are now being held which has provided more routine.

Substance Misuse Operational Updates

Adult Services

CRAFT

CRAFT continues to accept referrals and offer 1–2–1 interventions and family group interventions via telephone/ video calls.

Dyfodol

The Barry and Cardiff buildings are open as normal but from next week the Cardiff building will be closed on Tuesday afternoons to allow a break for the staff. Referral source has changed –currently the majority of referrals are from the prison and probation, with fewer from court and the police. Referral rates remain the same as last year. There are no symptomatic individuals or positive COVID–19 cases to report.

Rapid Access Prescribing Service

The RAPS caseload is nearly at full capacity and the RAPS case worker is due to be off for the next fortnight.

Homelessness and MDT Outreach

Additional accommodation has been put in place to support those who are homeless, including 2 hotels which are now at maximum capacity – 170 individuals are currently residing in hotels. In terms of accommodation for those who are self–isolating, containers are available in Ely and on Bute Street. To date only one person has tested positive for COVID–19. The Mental Health Nurse is due to return the MDT shortly and will initially prioritise assessing individuals with a psychosis. The need for therapeutic work has increased as people are started on Buvidal, with trauma symptoms manifesting.

Substance Misuse Operational Updates

Adult Services

Footsteps to Recovery

Online resources are available to service users, with a number of groups being run online by practitioners and peers. Out of hours continues to run and referrals are being received, although this has decreased for the re-engagement service. There is a higher demand for counselling.

Recovery Cymru

There's good uptake of peer support using phone and video calls, and online groups continue to run. SV noted that there are occasionally issues with a lack of IT skills amongst clients which can make it difficult to connect with them. Staff are finding remote working can often be more draining than working with clients in person, so some consideration might need to be given over how to support staff with this in the longer term.

The Huggard

Needle Syringe Provision in The Huggard is still fully functioning and is open 24hrs/7 averaging 33 / 34 transactions daily. Outreach NSP is continuing to work well, operating Mon – Friday between 10am – 11:30am and 3pm – 4:30pm. Reporting no issues at present.

Community Alcohol and Drugs Team

There are no updates to report, currently CADT are only doing safeguarding or critical visits. Brynawel has reopened to a small number of admissions; one person has been admitted in and another is due to commence there next week.

Inroads/Living Room

Phone support and online groups are going well. Some individuals are struggling emotionally and present a high risk of relapse, some are using this time to make positive changes and others are asking for support with concerns such as recent unemployment or family members who are key workers.

Substance Misuse Operational Updates

Children and Young People Services

Emotional Wellbeing Service

EWS have had a few new referrals for cannabis. No alcohol referrals received as originally thought might happen. Young people reported being more frustrated and angry as lockdown continues and family arguments increase. It's likely these young people are also experiencing higher levels of stress and anxiety.

Video calls are being offered as well as phone calls, however it can become difficult to have confidential conversations with the young people being in the house. Awareness of safeguarding risks with providing telephone support because of the inability to see the young person physically. To deal with these concerns, EWS have been keeping in touch more frequently and are encouraging young people to set up email addresses so EWS can send them resources direct.

Youth Offending Service (substance misuse workers)

No major changes to report. The main difficulty is that young people are not answering calls even when sessions are booked in. Texting is an option, however was seen as not a suitable substitute for carrying out a whole session.

Service Pressures and Offers of Support

The Homelessness Multidisciplinary team require assistance with support for those with psychological needs stemming from trauma. Offers of support were made by the Bridge Project, Taith and Recovery Cymru.



Welsh Government Update

Buvidal

WG are supporting the use of Buvidal at this time. APB's are required to demonstrate that costs have been covered by SMAF and ring-fence funding as far as possible, but assurance is being provided that where there is a year-end deficit because of Buvidal prescribing, they will cover any shortfall. An analysis of current caseloads and unmet needs was undertaken to provide a rough estimate for the number of individuals who would benefit from Buvidal from across all prescribing services and homelessness provision in Cardiff and the Vale. This has been submitted to WG and identified roughly 600 people. WG are now looking to negotiate a deal with the provider for provision across Wales.

Safeguarding

WG have been provided with assurance that services are prioritising safeguarding, particularly for adults with children, and children and young people.

Data Collection

NWIS data collection was suspended at the start of the Covid-19 response to enable services to focus on service continuity. A request is being made internally within WG to re-instate the system with the caveat that data collection should not hinder service provision.

Useful Links

Breaking Free Online – has extended it's free access to all organisations until **May 31st**.

Any service user who creates a Breaking Free Online account before midnight on May 31st will then be able to access the programme for up to a year afterwards. <http://cardiffandvaleapb.org/wp-content/uploads/no1.-Information-for-services-using-BFO-during-Covid-19.pdf>

Guidance on People unwilling or unable to follow self-isolation and lockdown instructions in hostels and temp accommodation and rough sleepers, which was developed with a range of stakeholders and Welsh Government Housing Division.

The guidance, flowchart and leaflet have now been published here: <https://gov.wales/guidance-dealing-people-who-are-unwilling-or-unable-self-isolate-or-follow-coronavirus-lockdown>

Weekly Bulletin for Care providers. <http://cardiffandvaleapb.org/wp-content/uploads/no2.-Weekly-Bulletin-for-Care-Providers-22-Apr.pdf>

Guidance on PPE issued by PHW and Testing for non-clinical “Critical Workers” issued by Welsh Government

Housing, health, social care and support settings: Examples to inform implementation of the updated Infection Prevention and Control guidance – COVID 19:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/information-for-healthcare-workers-in-wales/housing-health-social-care-and-support-settings-examples-to-inform-implementation-of-the-updated-infection-prevention-and-control-guidance-covid-19/>

Key (critical) workers testing policy: coronavirus (COVID-19):

<https://gov.wales/critical-workers-testing-policy-coronavirus-covid-19-html>

Tempo Communities – Over 200 “Stay connected” activities that may be of interest to service users: <https://tempocommunities.com/stay-connected>

COVID-19 & Injecting Drugs Advice Leaflet. http://cardiffandvaleapb.org/wp-content/uploads/no3.-COVID-19-Injecting-Drugs-Advice_Leaflet.pdf

Alcohol Concern UK have published a further update on change resistant, dependent drinkers during Coronavirus based on conversations with providers around the country. This is in the form of a blog that can be accessed at:

<https://alcoholchange.org.uk/blog/2020/covid-19-supporting-the-most-vulnerable-drinkers>

Please also take a moment to visit [Alcohol Change UK's information and advice hub](#) for up to date information and advice on alcohol generally during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

If you haven't seen it, there is also PHE guidance for commissioners and providers of services for people who use drugs or alcohol: www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-commissioners-and-providers-of-services-for-people-who-use-drugs-or-alcohol This is to support the continuity of drug and alcohol treatment services throughout the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic while protecting staff and service users.

Safeguarding – how to report a concern

English Version: http://cardiffandvaleapb.org/wp-content/uploads/no4.-Reporting-a-concern-2_eng2_reduced-size.pdf

Welsh Version: http://cardiffandvaleapb.org/wp-content/uploads/no4.-Reporting-a-concern-2_welsh_reduced-size.pdf

Public Health Wales Harm Reduction Update : <http://cardiffandvaleapb.org/wp-content/uploads/SUMMARY-FOR-APBs-27.04.2020.docx>