



LINCOLNSHIRE DRUGS STRATEGY

2021-2025



OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE

Lincolnshire Drugs Strategy 2021-2025

Foreword

The impact on society from illicit drugs is well recognised. They destroy lives and organised criminals gain significant profit from the exploitation of some of our most vulnerable members of our communities.

*This strategy and associated plan demonstrates our partnership ambition and commitment to address the illicit use of drugs in Lincolnshire, with a key focus on **reducing** drug related deaths, **reducing** the prevalence of illicit drugs in our communities, and **reducing** drug related offending.*

I'm grateful for the support and leadership shown across the partnership in developing this strategy. We have considered evidence base practice and are taking a whole system approach to maximise our effectiveness.

The delivery of this strategy will not only save lives but will change lives for the better. This is a core responsibility of us all individually and collectively as a partnership.

Jason Harwin
Deputy Chief Constable
Lincolnshire Police
National Police Chiefs Council lead for Drugs

Introduction

Welcome to our four-year drugs misuse strategy for the county of Lincolnshire. Lincolnshire Police and Lincolnshire County Council recognise the harm that illicit drugs can have on individuals, families and communities and the dangers of an unregulated market. Drugs are a significant driver of serious crime, anti-social behaviour, health inequalities and exploitation in our county. The cost to society and the public purse is enormous, considering the long-term health harms to individuals and drug related deaths, the damage it causes to families, the cost of drug related crime, the damage to communities and the serious harm it causes to those most at risk in society including children and vulnerable adults.

We know that no one organisation can manage this independently and therefore a whole system, partnership-based approach is essential to educate, prevent, treat, and reduce the health, social and economic harms of drug misuse. Drug dependency must be recognised as a medical condition which requires both professional treatment and peer led recovery support this is recognised in the 2021 Review of Drugs Part 2 authored by Dame Carol Black. A robust stance needs to be taken in relation to those criminals who profit from the supply of drugs, abuse and exploitation of vulnerable adults and children ensuring that their supply chains and financial gains are cut and that they are pursued through the criminal justice system.

The latest figures produced by the Office for National Statistics 2020 serve to highlight the huge scale of drug misuse in the UK:

- An estimated 3.2 million adults aged between 16 and 59 years used drugs in the last year. 1.1 million of those were Class A users.
- One in five adults aged 16 to 24 years used drugs in the last year. This equates to 1.3 million users.
- Nationally we are seeing the highest level of drugs related deaths since records began.
- It is estimated the illicit drugs market costs £20 billion annually. Aside from the financial costs, the societal costs include homelessness, unemployment, and rough sleeping.
- 46 percent of acquisitive crime and 50 percent of homicides are linked to drugs.
- Over a third of people who are serving custodial sentences are in prison for drug related matters. They predominantly serve short sentences and are highly likely to reoffend.

A Lincolnshire Drug Market Profile completed in 2021 has helped us to better understand what the issues and problems are within our own County. The results were gathered from various partner databases, a public survey and a survey conducted with treatment service users.

The results revealed the following:

- There is a significant demand for illicit drugs with an estimated figure of 40,809 users aged between 16-59 years old. This amount of users will place significant cost on all partners if not addressed. Invest now or pay later. (Drug Market Profile, 2021)
- The most common users are white, British males aged between 20-29 years old. (Drug Market Profile, 2021)
- All drugs are used but Cannabis is the most widely used drug. (Drug Market Profile, 2021)
- Drug use is seen in all areas of our county, but the hotspots are mainly in Lincoln, Boston, Skegness, and Grantham. (Drug Market Profile, 2021)
- It is estimated that up to 4888kg of heroin and 1027kg of crack cocaine would be required to meet current dependency demand with a total estimated street value of £428,592,321 per year. (Drug Market Profile, 2021)
- Two thirds of all deaths recorded as drug poisoning are due to drug misuse, national statistics show a year-on-year increase with deaths rising by 3.8% in 2020 compared to 2019 with regional data showing a 10.8% rise in the East Midlands for the same period. (ONS, August 2021)
- Local coroner's data shows a 35% reduction in deaths for 2020 compared to 2019 which appears to contradict other data sources however verified local data is not yet available for 2020 with the latest being 2017-19 which shows an increase of 13% in Lincolnshire compared to 2016-18. (Lincolnshire Coroner's office 2020 and Public Health Profiles, 2021)
- There were 210 cases of individuals entering NHS hospitals due to poisoning by drug misuse within 2019/20 which is an increase of 23.5% on the previous year. (Public Health Profiles, 2021)
- There are 2151 service users of We are With You seeking support for drug dependency. (NDTMS, 2021).
- We are in the process of reviewing the public consultation survey results.
- A review of homelessness within Lincolnshire found the number of people found sleeping homeless on a single night in Autumn 2020 was 34. This highlighted a decrease of -54.67% when compared to 2019 data which detailed 75 people found sleeping homeless on a single night in Autumn. The decrease is largely attributed to the 'everyone in' scheme where individuals were offered temporary accommodation due to the covid pandemic, it is therefore advised that 2019 data may be a more accurate reflection of homelessness in Lincolnshire. (Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2019 & 2020 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk))
- Information gathered from South Kesteven and City of Lincoln highlights more than 75% of those rough sleeping have recognised dependency issues. (SKDC and COL, 2021)

- In 2020 1750 drug offences were recorded by Lincolnshire Police; 1266 relate to drug possession and 484 relate to the supply, production, and importation of drugs (Drugs Market Profile, 2020)
- There is a hidden demographic of recreational drug users where people fund their drug use through employment and live independently these are thought to generally be cannabis and/or cocaine users. (Responding to illicit drug use partnership questionnaire, 2020)
- A public survey held by the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership in August 2021 showed that out of the 463 participants who agreed to take part 67.56% stated “I have never used drugs”, 20.86% stated “I have used drugs in the past, but I no longer do” and 1.60% stated “I use drugs all of the time.” Cannabis was the most commonly taken drug followed by MDMA (also known as ecstasy) and cocaine. The age at which respondents detailed first taking drugs was commonly aged between 18-24 years (18.59%) and under 18 years old was 16.07%. A large proportion of the respondents believed they live in an area where drugs are used (61.38%) and 52.14% believed they lived in an area where drugs were being supplied. A large proportion of the sample group was over 45 years old (57/05%), only 8.03% were aged 18-24 years old and only 1.74% were under 18 years old.
- Between 2016 -2021, 354 individuals have been assessed by the Assisting Rehabilitation through Collaboration Team (ARC). In their assessments 209 used heroin, 133 used cocaine, 122 used cannabis, 84 used mamba, 89 used other drugs and 97 used alcohol. 183 were multiple users of drugs and alcohol, 102 were single users and 69 had no drug or alcohol use. 103 engaged in treatment and 251 did not engage in treatment services. (ARC Team, 2021)

This is a four-year Strategy and is based on the data generated from the Drugs Market Profile 2021 this outlines how we as a local county partnership aim to tackle the issues, problems, and harms that illicit drugs cause to our people and communities. Tackling drugs is everybody’s business. To do nothing is not an option. Without a strategy and positive action being taken, more individuals will become dependent on drugs, more communities and families will be harmed, more children and vulnerable people will suffer, and the cost of crime and health services will continue to increase.

Our vision

We will work in partnership to make Lincolnshire the safest and healthiest County to live, work and visit by reducing the harms and supply of illicit drugs in our communities.

Our overall strategic aim

We will deliver a whole-system approach to tackling drug misuse through partnership working, coordinated law enforcement activity, expanded diversionary activity and treatment provision across Lincolnshire. To reduce the demand for drugs and associated services, with particular focus on reducing the harm caused by drugs including reducing drug-related addiction and deaths, tackling drug-related offending, and reducing drug prevalence in our communities.

Our strategic objectives

Our focus will be on the following three strategic objectives:

- Deliver a successful and sustainable treatment and recovery system, that addresses individual needs.
- Cut off the illicit drug supply chain.
- Drive down recreational drug use and make such use socially unacceptable.

Deliver a successful and sustainable treatment and recovery system, that addresses individual needs

- We will seek to ensure individuals can access necessary services in a timely and convenient manner.
- We will develop pathways to ensure all those with co-occurring substance misuse and mental health issues have their needs identified early and met by working together to reach shared solutions.
- We will develop diversion pathways from the Criminal Justice process to divert users into appropriate services at the earliest opportunity.
- We will seek opportunities where there is a clear need to increase the availability of Naloxone.
- Embed lived experience, user voice and volunteering in how we work.
- We will seek to develop a recovery community to support those who have previously had substance misuse issues and help those leaving treatment stay drug free in the long term.
- Define and support more evidence-based, innovative products and services in our treatment services.
- Improve successful outcomes for those who access treatment.
- We will implement a system to investigate drug related deaths to learn and develop services to reduce further incidents.

Cut off the illicit drug supply chain

- We will target those involved in the supply and production of illicit drugs.
- We will target those exploiting the vulnerable through criminality such as County lines and cuckooing.
- We will seek to strip assets from those involved in involved in supply and production.
- We will safeguard those exploited to commit criminal offences.
- We will increase our intelligence capability to better understand the profile of drugs in our communities.
- We will deal effectively with those arrested for possession with intent to supply offences and all supply offences to reduce harm ensuring that we seek a remand in custody for those serious offenders. We will look at opportunities of how we can reduce the number of people released under investigation and bring them to swifter justice.
- We will utilise opportunities for out of court disposals for offences such as minor possession charges.

Drive down recreational drug use and make such use socially unacceptable

- We introduce drug testing on arrest and a new out of court Disposal pathway for drug users into appropriate treatment services.
- We increase our activities to understand the demand from recreational use and thereby respond accordingly.
- We work with schools, colleges, and further education to change behaviours and increasing social acceptance.
- We will undertake work to help prevent the onset of drug use both in young people and adults.
- We will work with all partners to help drive down anti-social behaviour.

What does success look like?

We will see:

1. A reduction in drug addiction and drug related deaths.
2. A reduction in the prevalence of drugs in our communities.
3. A reduction in drug related offending.

How we will achieve success

Governance and accountability

Taking account of the recommendations from the 2021 market profile, we have a clear and accountable delivery plan.

Implementation of the recommendations and progress against actions will be monitored through a strategic Board and Tactical delivery group who will meet regularly to review and assess how it is progressing.

The Terms of reference and membership of these will be finalised as part of the county Community safety Governance review.

In the interim the current Drugs Strategy Board will be accountable for delivery of the Strategy and Plan.

Although alcohol misuse is not included in this strategy there will be a strategy written in the future for alcohol misuse which will dovetail with this drugs strategy.

The Drugs market Profile will be reviewed every 2 years and the strategy and delivery plan refreshed accordingly.