

Director of Public Health
Annual Report 2023
Combating Drug and
Alcohol Misuse



City of Westminster



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON
AND CHELSEA

Lead Member Foreword

We are delighted to introduce this year's annual public health report focussing on drug and alcohol misuse in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and City of Westminster.

In this report, our bi-borough Director of Public Health, Anna Raleigh, explains how substance misuse has consequences beyond that of the individual and their life, but also on friends, families, and our wider communities. It can affect a person's personal circumstances such as their health and housing situation as well as impact on crime, health and social care systems and the workplace.

The health and wellbeing of all our residents is of utmost importance to both councils.

The COVID-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis have posed significant challenges, resulting in many people changing the way they use alcohol and drugs^{[1][2]}. Considering these challenging times, it is vital that we make every effort to prioritise substance misuse services, whilst supporting residents with recovery, including personal finances, housing, and employment. By creating and sustaining links with the NHS, substance misuse treatment providers, the police and the National Probation Service, we are pleased to say that the bi-borough's 'Combatting Drugs Partnership' (CDP) has made significant steps forward in tackling the challenging issue of drug and alcohol misuse across both boroughs.

This report also includes videos which provide a fascinating insight into some of the CDP's innovative projects. These initiatives are person centred and asset-based, aiming to improve access to effective support for those with drug and alcohol issues, and promote resilience.

We hope that you find this annual report engaging, and that it encourages colleagues to work closely with our communities and partners, build on existing partnerships and create new ones, to combat substance misuse across both boroughs.



Councillor Josh Rendall
Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea



Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis
Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, City of Westminster

1. How the cost of living crisis affects alcohol harm - Institute of Alcohol Studies (ias.org.uk)

2. Alcohol and other substance use during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review - PMC ([nih.gov](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/))

Director of Public Health Introduction

This year, I have chosen to focus my annual report on drug and alcohol misuse, a key issue for both the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council.

This report follows on from my 2022 Annual Report in that it seeks to demonstrate how we work to galvanise a whole systems approach to addressing complex public health problems, challenging inequality, and promoting good health.

Rates of substance misuse are particularly high in our boroughs. Drugs and alcohol cause a variety of physical and mental health problems, as well as having wider implications for society. Substance misuse, for example, is associated with increased rates of violence, potentially jeopardising the wellbeing of all our residents. Drug supply chains regularly exploit children and vulnerable adults, including through use of county lines, resulting in safeguarding concerns, increased rates of youth violence and limited access to education and training opportunities.

Our Combatting Drugs Partnership, which I have the privilege to chair, brings together partners and communities with the aim of reducing the harms and crime rates associated with substance misuse, promoting engagement with treatment, and improving recovery.

We have chosen to focus on three groups who are particularly vulnerable to the adverse health and societal effects of drugs and alcohol.

These are: children and young adults, residents involved with the criminal justice system, and older opiate and crack users.

Our Combatting Drugs Partnership... brings together partners and communities ...

The final section of the report exemplifies the range and quality of interventions we have set up to combat substance misuse across the bi-borough. Many of these, such as 'Starting Over' and 'DAWS Plus', work closely with housing and employment services, a key aspect of working together and ensuring our interventions are holistic and sustainable. Others, such as 'Build on Belief' and 'DAWS Women's Service', rely heavily on coproduction to build services, which are both relevant and user-friendly.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team and our services for their expertise dedication and passion for improving, promoting, and protecting the health of our residents.



Anna Raleigh
Director of Public Health for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster

Executive Summary

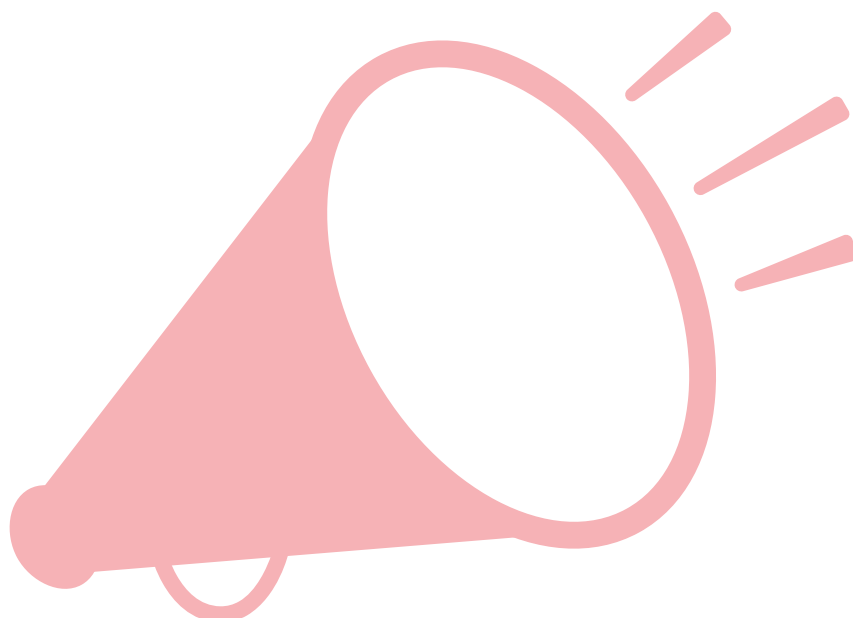
Key Messages

- Drug and alcohol misuse is a particular concern for both the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council (RBKC and WCC), partly due to the boroughs' Central London locations, thriving night-time economies and large rough sleeper population.
- Substance misuse causes a wide range of physical and mental health problems for individual users, as well as having a significant impact on their family, friends and communities.
- Adopting a 'Whole Systems Approach' is key to the way both RBKC and WCC commission services. This involves partnering with a number of key organisations including (but not limited to) the NHS, Housing, the Metropolitan Police, specialist treatment providers, schools, the voluntary sector, Children's and Family Services, Employment Services, Community Safety Teams and the Probation Service.
- The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP), led by the Director for Public Health, is a prime example of a 'Whole Systems Approach', aiming to combat substance misuse in the local area and provide a holistic and effective service for our residents.
- The CDP has chosen to focus on three priority areas which reflect the needs of our residents as well as local contextual factors:
 - **Children and young adults**
 - **The criminal justice system**
 - **Older opiate and crack cocaine users**
- Both boroughs have a wide range of specialist substance misuse services available, many of which focus on these priority areas. We are continuously aiming to ensure these services are of high quality, are meeting residents' needs, and are embedded appropriately within the councils' wider health and social support systems.

We aim to be informed by the experiences of service users in the design of many of our services, to ensure services are relevant and effective.

Calls to Action

- 1.** We encourage all stakeholders within the wider health and social care system to raise the profile of substance misuse services available within Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster and think about how they are best placed to improve engagement with these services (as outlined in the CDP Delivery Plan) amongst residents in need of support.
- 2.** We encourage stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the work of the CDP, and actively participate and commit to its delivery.
- 3.** We encourage the wider health and social care system to adopt a personalised and holistic approach when supporting people with substance misuse issues, providing access to education, training, employment and housing advice as well as specialist treatment services.
- 4.** We encourage clarification of leadership and governance responsibilities in relation to substance misuse services within the local integrated care board.
- 5.** Substance misuse services themselves must ensure they are accessible to all residents, provide flexible appointment systems, maintain good communication channels with GPs and mental health services, and ensure continuity of care between hospital-based and community teams.



Introduction

Misuse of drugs and alcohol is a major issue for society, having significant financial consequences as well as affecting access to housing, employment and educational opportunities^[1].

Economically, drug misuse costs society £19.3 billion per year, 86% of which can be attributed to the health problems and crime associated with heroin and crack cocaine use^[2].

Increased use of crack and expansion of county lines^[3] has also contributed to a significant increase in serious violence in the UK, with drug supply chains often exploiting children^[4] and vulnerable adults, giving rise to significant safeguarding concerns; for example, when someone is at risk of abuse or neglect^[5].

These issues are of particular concern to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Westminster City Council (WCC), which have vibrant night-time economies, a large homeless population and high rates of drug and alcohol misuse.

On an individual level, substance misuse can cause a wide range of physical and mental health problems (figures 1 and 2), leading to significant numbers of excess deaths.

Many drugs, for example, increase the risk of heart disease, strokes and depression. Use of intravenous drugs can result in blood-borne virus transmission, including hepatitis C, which, if left untreated can lead to liver cancer.

Similarly, alcohol is a risk factor for multiple cancers, life threatening infections and even dementia^[5].

1. Substance Misuse – Business Case (Westminster City Council, 2023)

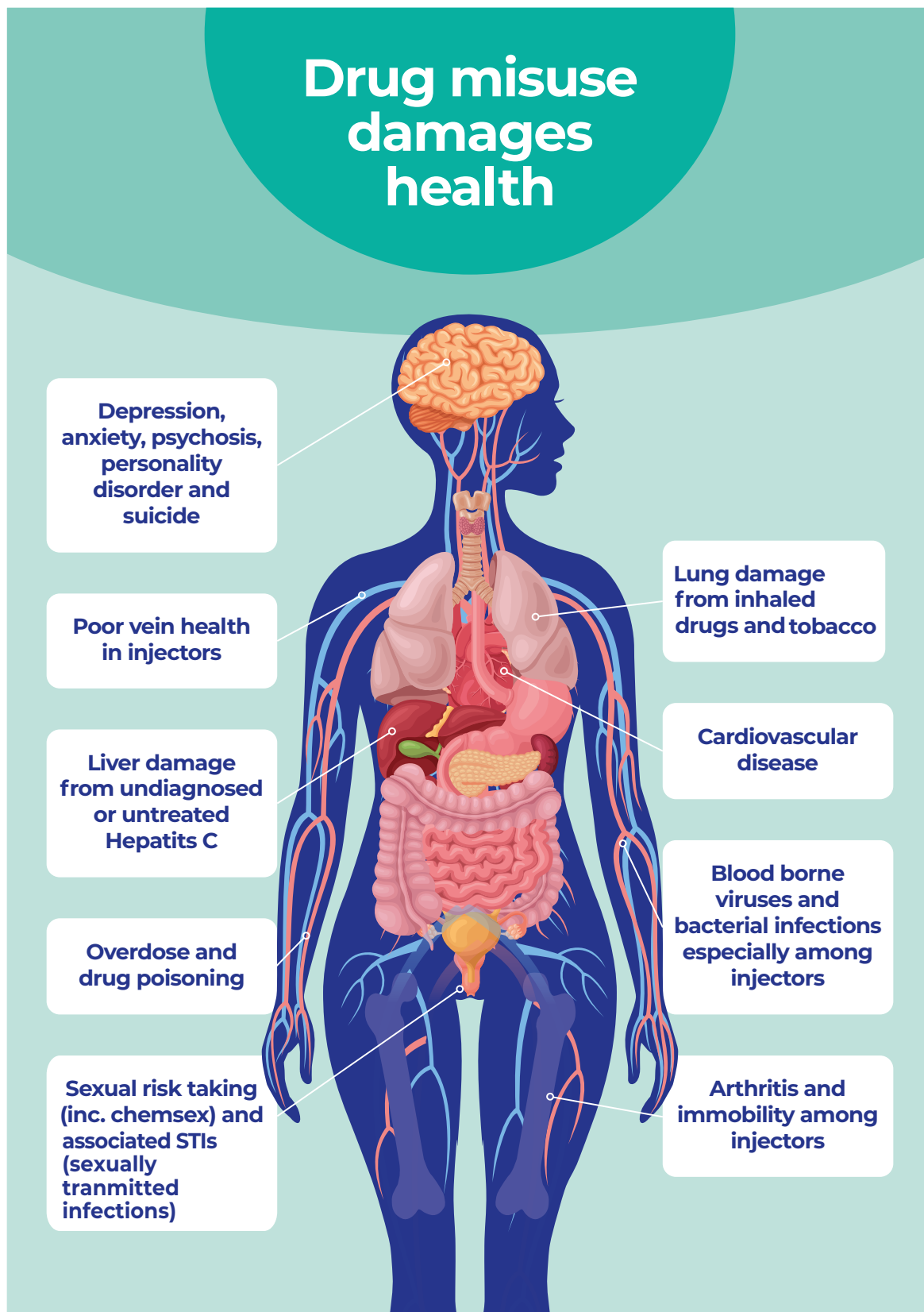
2. Government response to the independent review of drugs by Dame Carol Black - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

3. 'County Lines is a police term used to describe the exploitation of children or vulnerable adults to move and sell drugs. It is named after the phone lines often used in the distribution. Exploited individuals may have been groomed to believe they are autonomously selling drugs or that those exploiting them are their friends' (taken from: Youth Violence and Exploitation Strategy 2022-2025, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea).

4. For the purposes of this report, the term 'children' refers to anyone under the age of 18.

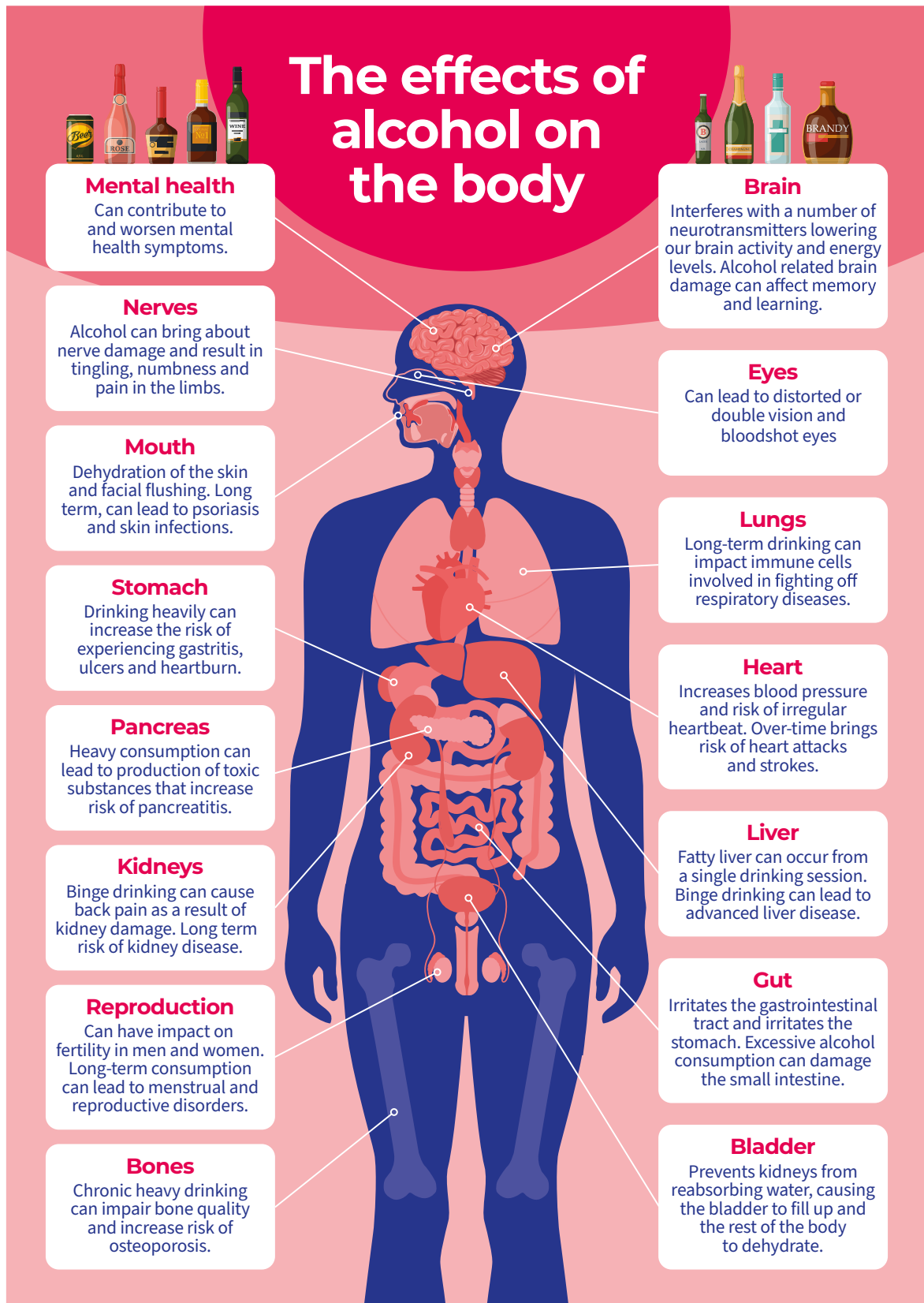
5. Bi-borough Combatting Drugs Partnership – Draft Drugs and Alcohol Needs Assessment (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council, 2022)

Figure 1: The harmful effects of drugs on the body



From: Misuse of illicit drugs and medicines: applying All Our Health (www.gov.uk)

Figure 2: The harmful effects of alcohol on the body



From: Effects of alcohol on the body - Priory (priorygroup.com)

Kensington and Chelsea



3,600 residents aged over 18 have a high risk of drug dependence.



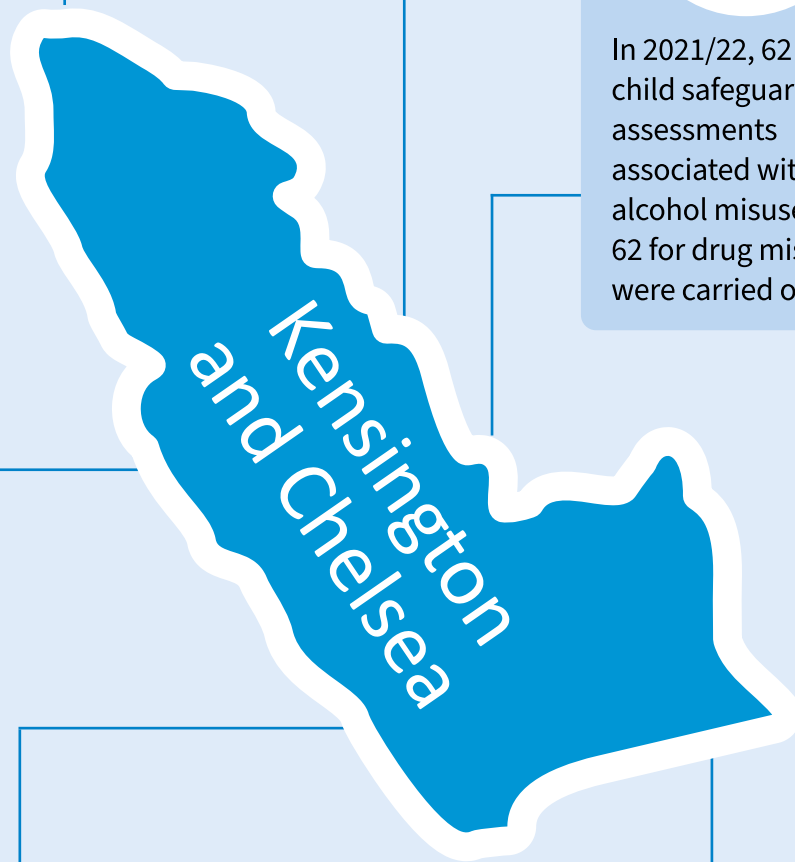
Drug and alcohol use accounts for 3% of permanent school exclusions.



In 2021/22, 62 child safeguarding assessments associated with alcohol misuse and 62 for drug misuse were carried out.



There were 9 deaths due to drug misuse in 2021. Drug related deaths are among the top five causes of death in the under 50s in the borough.

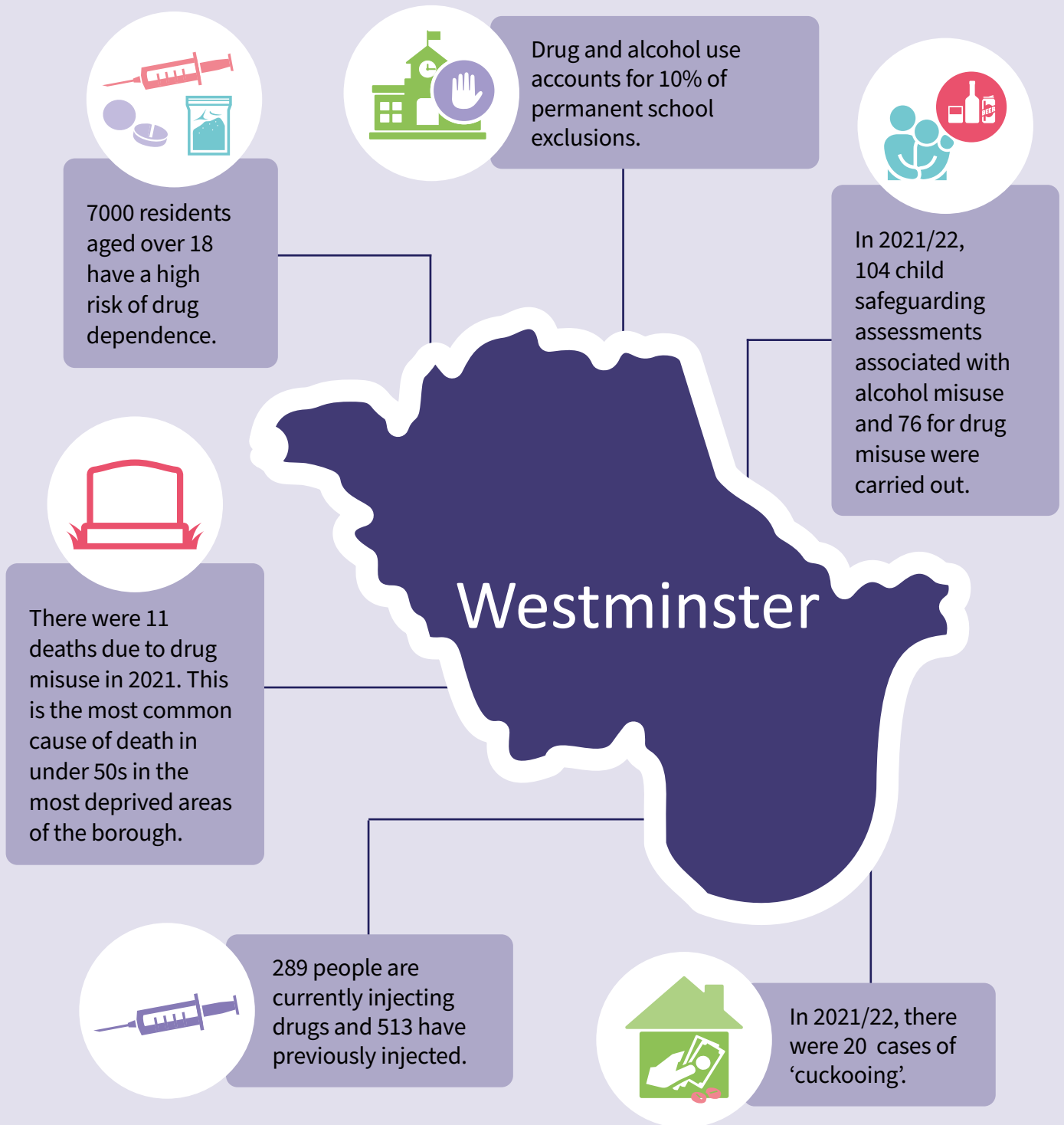


114 people are currently injecting drugs and 248 have previously injected.



In 2021/22, there were 14 cases of 'cuckooing' (where a vulnerable person's house is taken over as a base for illegal drug dealing).

Westminster



The data above for both Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea were sourced from:

Projecting Adult Needs and Service Information (PANSI), Figures are taken from the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014 and applied to ONS population projections <https://www.pansi.org.uk/>

Office for National Statistics (ONS) Deaths related to drug poisoning by local authority, England and Wales, 2021, Deaths related to drug poisoning by local authority, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Primary Care Mortality Database, 2014-2018 (as included in JSNA Borough Story – Summer 2023)

Prevalence and Unmet Need Report, NDTMS - National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, Office for Health Improvement & Disparities
 NDTMS - Prevalence and unmet need toolkit, 2019/20 NDTMS - Prevalence and unmet need toolkit

Bi-Borough School Inclusion Strategy 2022 (rbkc.gov.uk) .

Bi-borough Combatting Drugs Partnership – Draft Drugs and Alcohol Needs Assessment (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council, 2022).

Local Context

The Night-time Economy

Levels of dangerous drinking and drug misuse are higher in both Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster compared to the rest of England.

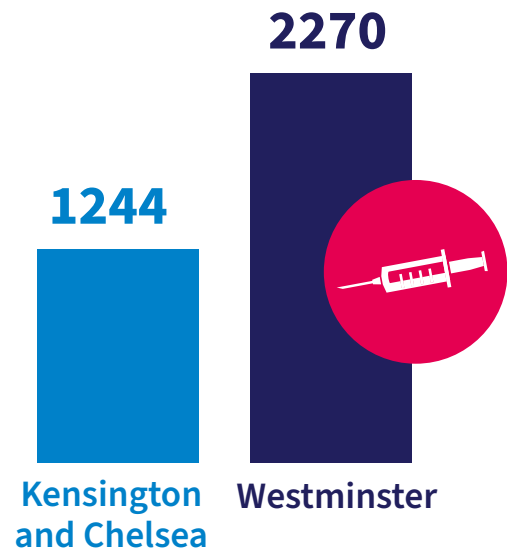
This is in part due to both boroughs' thriving hospitality and entertainment sectors, which form a key part of our highly successful night-time economies^[1].

Westminster has the highest concentration of night-time economies in the UK (primarily centred around the West End, including Soho, Leicester Square, Piccadilly and Covent Garden). In Kensington and Chelsea, there is a similar picture close to the King's Road, Sloane Square and the borders of Knightsbridge.

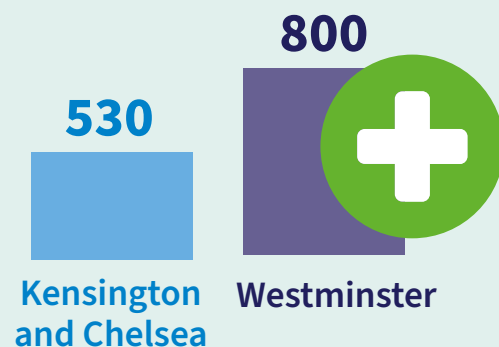
Related to this, we have seen a shift in drug-using patterns of younger people towards 'club drugs' (such as ecstasy and gamma-hydroxybutyrate – GHB) and 'new psychoactive substances' (such as synthetic cannabinoids and novel benzodiazepines).

There has also been an increase in use of similar substances during sexual activity, known as 'chemsex', particularly amongst men who have sex with men (MSM).

Number of people using opiates (such as heroin) and/or crack cocaine in 2019/2020 ^[2]



Number of hospital admissions for alcohol-specific conditions in 2021/2022 ^[3]



1. Nighttime Economy Framework Summary (nhs.wales)

2. Prevalence and Unmet Need Report, NDTMS - National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, Office for Health Improvement & Disparities NDTMS - Prevalence and unmet need toolkit

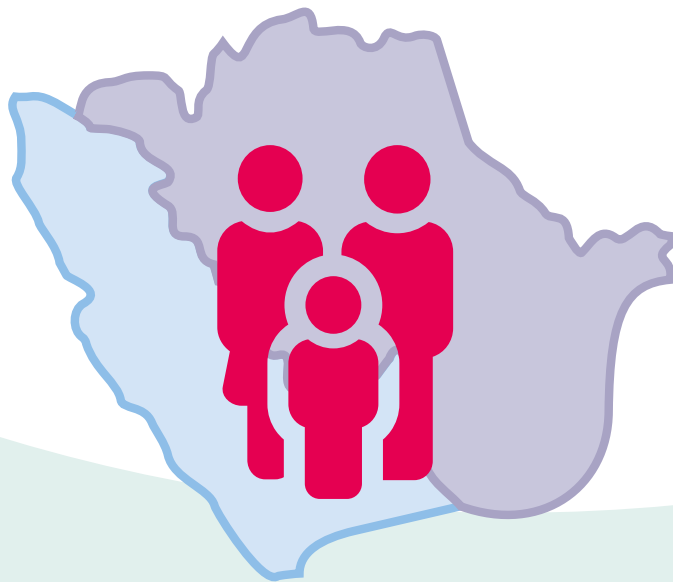
3. Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (OHID) Public Health Outcomes Framework indicator C21 - Admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions (Narrow) Public Health Outcomes Framework - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)

Temporary Populations

Both RBKC and Westminster have large temporary and visiting populations. A significant proportion of drug-related crime happening in our boroughs occurs amongst residents from other boroughs, including children and young adults^[1] who travel into RBKC and Westminster to sell drugs ('reverse county lines').

As in other parts of the country though, drugs are also transported *out* of RBKC and Westminster along county lines. Organised criminal gangs from RBKC, for example, have been linked to drug use in nine different regions throughout the UK, primarily Thames Valley, Hampshire and Sussex.

Similarly, in Westminster, individuals associated with five different gangs have been linked to drug use in 11 different regions (including Hampshire, Thames Valley and Suffolk)^[2].



Children, Young Adults and Crime

Children and young adults can be affected by substance misuse in a variety of ways, including falling victim to exploitation by illegal drug supply chains.

Drug-related offences are the most common type of offence committed by children known to Youth Offending Services (YOS) within RBKC, and the second most common offence in Westminster. There is a disproportionately high number of boys from black and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds known to YOS in both boroughs^[3].

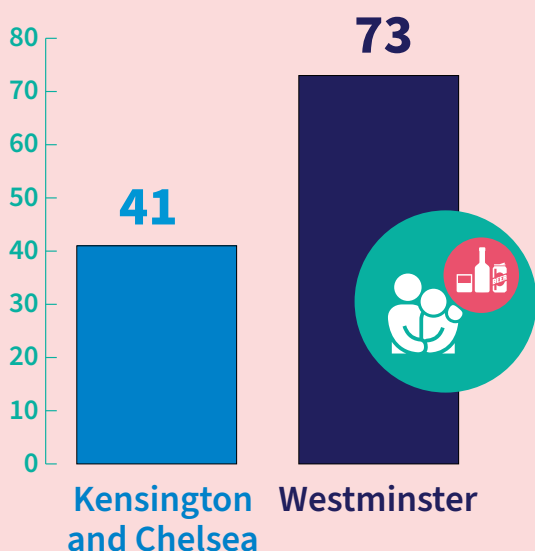
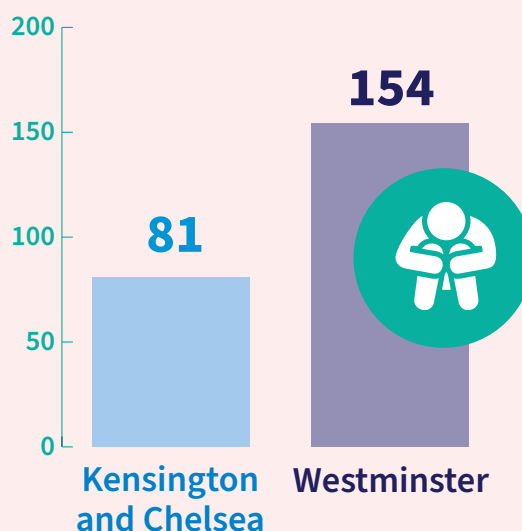
Exposure to the harms associated with substance misuse, such as serious violence and neglect, can have a significant impact on children's lives.

This can affect their mental health^[4] as well as education and employment opportunities later down the line^[5].

Our Children and Young People Drugs Strategy (2023-2026) provides more information on factors associated with substance misuse and criminal gang involvement in this age group, as well as providing ways to make it easier for people to access support^[6].

1. For the purposes of this report, the term 'young adults' refers to people aged 18 to 24.
2. Bi-borough Combatting Drugs Partnership – Draft Drugs and Alcohol Needs Assessment (Westminster and RBKC, 2022)
3. What can we do as a partnership to prevent and reduce youth offending and serious youth violence? A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2020 (Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea).
4. <https://mft.nhs.uk/rmch/services/camhs/young-people/adverse-childhood-experiences-aces-and-attachment/>
5. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740916303449>
6. Bi-Borough Children and Young People's Plan 2023-2026 (Westminster City Council and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea)

Children and young adults currently using opiates (such as heroin) and/or crack cocaine



Young people currently in treatment for substance misuse

1 in 3 of those engaging with youth offending services across the bi-borough use drugs



The data above for both Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea were sourced from:

Prevalence and Unmet Need Report, NDTMS - National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, Office for Health Improvement & Disparities
NDTMS - Prevalence and unmet need toolkit

What can we do as a partnership to prevent and reduce youth offending and serious youth violence? A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2020 (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council).

Homelessness

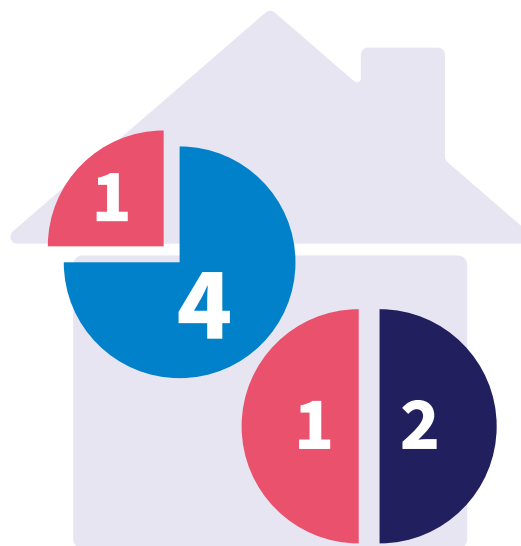
Homelessness is also a significant concern for us, with the rough sleeper population demonstrating higher rates of substance misuse than most. In the UK almost two thirds (62.5 per cent) of people sleeping rough have a problem with substance misuse^[1]. This is much higher than in the general population, where only 2.6 per cent of adults in England and Wales are reported to be frequent drug users^[2].

Homeless people who use drugs also face significant barriers when accessing healthcare, preventing them from receiving appropriate treatment for other medical issues and stopping them from quitting^[3].

Indeed, a high proportion of people sleeping rough who are known to outreach services in both our boroughs have significant drug or alcohol needs, as well as serious health conditions associated with long-term misuse^[4].

RBKC has approximately **199 people** sleeping rough. Westminster has **2300 people** sleeping rough - the highest in London⁵.

In RBKC, approximately **1 in 4** users of opiates (such as heroin) enter treatment with a housing need. In Westminster, it is **1 in 2**^[5].



1. Homelessness: statistics | Mental Health Foundation

2. Drug misuse in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

3. What treatment and services are effective for people who are homeless and use drugs? A systematic 'review of reviews' | PLOS ONE

4. Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports), 2022/23 Rough sleeping in London (CHAIN reports) - London Datastore

5. NDTMS - ViewIt - Adult

How we are tackling substance misuse across the boroughs

A 'Whole Systems Approach' is key to the way in which RBKC and WCC commission services across the two boroughs, forming links with multiple partners in order to deliver a holistic and effective service for residents.

A prime example of this approach is the 'Combatting Drugs Partnership' (CDP), chaired by the Director for Public Health, and formed in response to the UK Government's 'From Harm to Hope Strategy' in 2021, which made a commitment to reduce drug-associated crime and mortality by minimising the need for and availability of drugs, and delivering high quality treatment and rehabilitation services^[1].

The CDP has been made possible by extra funding from the Department of Health and Social Care to help improve drug and alcohol treatment and recovery systems.

This funding is additional to the annual ringfenced public health grant which we use to fund our public health functions, including drug and alcohol services.

RBKC and WCC receive additional funding in the form of three grants from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID):

- 1.** The Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (bi-borough): to develop targeted interventions and enhance current service provision to reduce the impact of drug and alcohol-related crime and drug-related deaths.
- 2.** The Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant – Housing Support (WCC only): to help fund a programme of housing support interventions for people in drug and alcohol treatment.
- 3.** The Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (bi-borough): to implement evidence-based drug and alcohol treatment and provide holistic support for people sleeping rough (or at risk of sleeping rough).



1. From harm to hope: a 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives (publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP)

The aim of our CDP is to create links between individuals and organisations affected by drugs and drug-related harms to understand how drugs cause harm on a local level, identify any challenges our systems face and how we can overcome these, and provide person-centred support for users with complex needs^[1]. These links include (but are not limited to) partnerships between the Department of Public Health, the NHS, Housing, the Metropolitan Police, specialist substance misuse treatment providers, schools, the voluntary sector, Children’s and Family Services, Employment Services, Community Safety Teams and the Probation Service.

The CDP aims to deliver on six nationally prioritised themes:

1. Reducing drug and alcohol use
2. Reducing drug and alcohol-related crime
3. Reducing drug and alcohol-related harm
4. Reducing supply of drugs
5. Increasing engagement in drug and alcohol treatment
6. Improving drug and alcohol recovery outcomes

The CDP has also identified **three local priority areas** based on contextual factors specific to our boroughs and the wider socio-economic effects of drug and alcohol use within these cohorts.

These include:

● Children and Young Adults

We hope to achieve a generational shift in substance misuse by targeting this important age group.

Priority areas for action include:

1. Raising awareness amongst children and young adults of how drugs and alcohol can impact their lives (and the lives of those around them)
2. Reducing the impact and harms of substance misuse on children and their families
3. Strengthening family support using a ‘Whole Family Approach’ and providing a local support structure to reduce exposure to drug-related criminality and exploitation.

1. Guidance for local delivery partners (accessible version) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

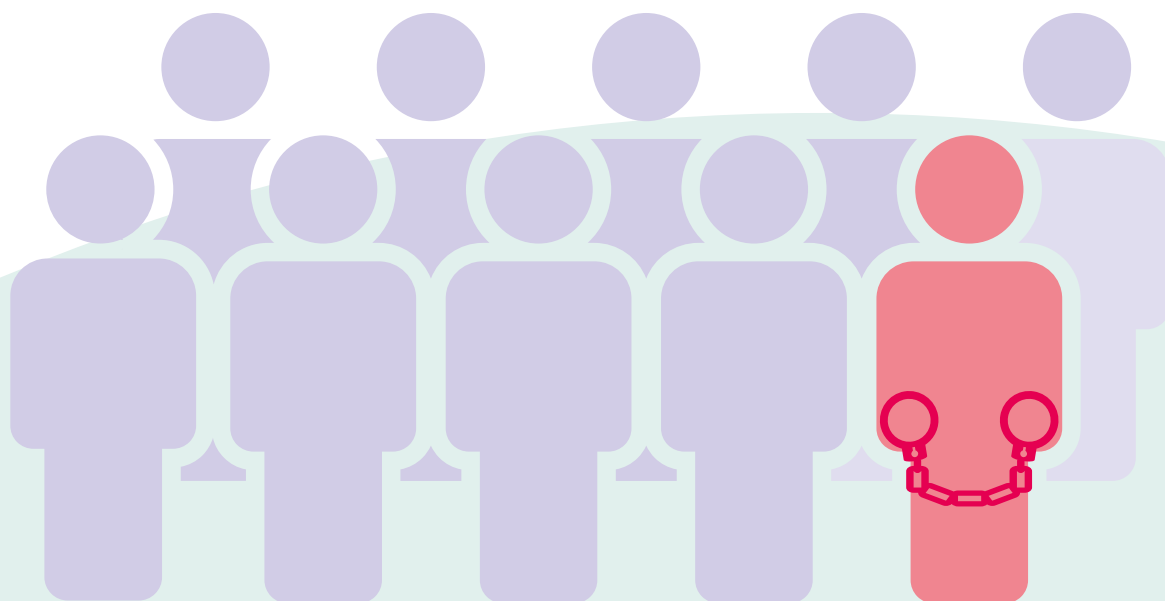
● The Criminal Justice System (CJS)

Drug and alcohol misuse are closely related to crime^[1]. We therefore feel it is particularly important to ensure those with substance misuse issues who are involved with the CJS have access to appropriate community treatment services in order to prevent relapse and re-offending (i.e., ‘the revolving door’).

One in 10 opiate (such as heroin) users in treatment have contact with the CJS across RBKC and Westminster^[2].

Priority areas for action include:

- 1. Improving the recovery of CJS substance users and access to increased education, training and employment opportunities**
- 2. Improving prison leavers’ continuity of care and support away from the drivers of substance misuse and crime (including suitable accommodation)**
- 3. Providing additional support to the most prolific offenders to change their behaviour and prevent re-offending.**



1. Prisons and drugs: health and social responses | www.emcdda.europa.eu
2. Diagnostic Outcomes Monitoring Executive Summary Q4 2022/23

• Older Opiate and Crack Users (OCUs)

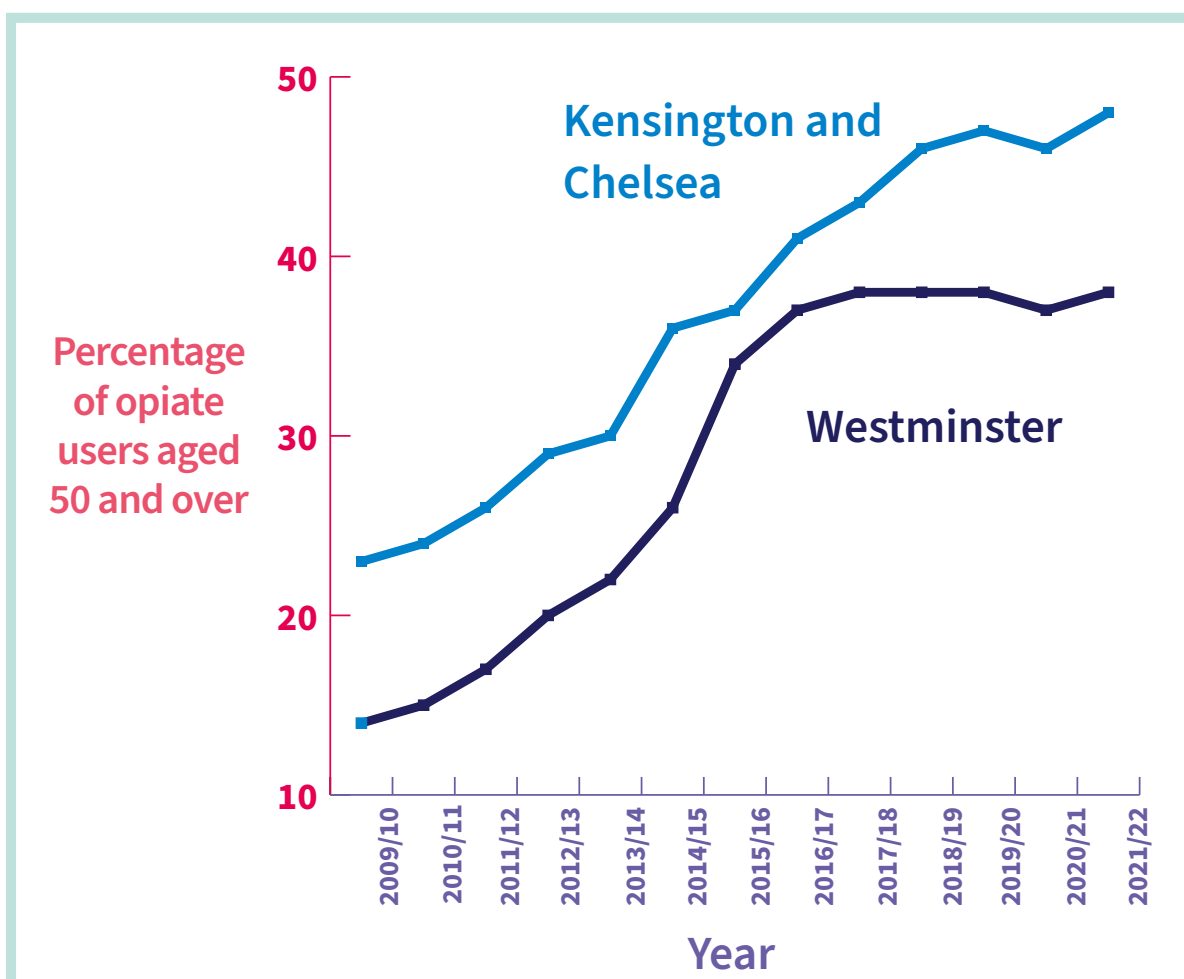
This is a growing cohort with complex health needs who require highly personalised care.

Many older OCUs experience high rates of stigma and are at higher risk of significant illness and death due to prolonged substance misuse, worsening physical and mental health and difficulty accessing health services^[1].

Priority areas for action include:

1. Increasing the proportion of older homeless OCUs entering (and remaining on) treatment using OHID grant funding
2. Addressing the declining physical health of older homeless OCUs and improving access to mental health services
3. Tackling street drug gangs supplying older homeless OCUs.

Opiate users aged 50 and over rose from 23% per cent in 2009/10 to 48% per cent in 2021/22 in RBKC and from 14% to 38% in Westminster.



From: NDTMS - ViewIt - Adult

1. ACMD Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (2019)

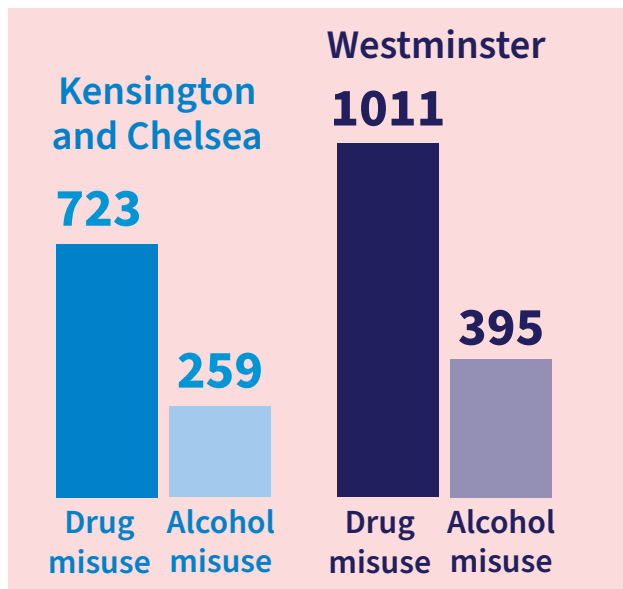
Our Services

Both our boroughs have a well-established treatment system for people with substance misuse issues, with specialist services available to support those who abuse drugs and alcohol. The Substance Use Team (SUT), for example, which is managed by Public Health, is responsible for providing detoxification and rehabilitation services for those with alcohol or drug addiction problems, whilst also approving requests and referrals from other organisations, and collecting admission-related data.

Another team, the 'Dual Diagnosis Team' is a specialist service available to anyone over 18 living in RBKC or Westminster who has coexisting substance misuse and mental health problems, providing advice, information and one-to-one support^[1]. For these clients, tackling both issues simultaneously is of upmost importance as mental health issues can exacerbate problems with substance misuse (and vice versa)^[2].

As part of its commitment to a whole systems approach, Westminster is the only London Borough which has formed a partnership with **Changing Futures**, a national programme aiming to improve outcomes for adults experiencing multiple disadvantages, including substance misuse, homelessness, mental health issues, domestic abuse and contact with the CJS^[3]. Part of the programme's work includes introduction of new frontline services for those who regularly seek help but do not find appropriate support within the system, training of the cross-sector workforce, and production of services which rely heavily on the input of people who have experienced multiple disadvantage themselves^[4].

Number of people in treatment for drug and alcohol misuse (2021)



From: Public Health Outcomes Framework C19a - Successful completion of drug treatment: opiate users; C19b - Successful completion of drug treatment: non opiate users; C19c - Successful completion of alcohol treatment, 2021, Public Health Outcomes Framework - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)

1. <https://www.peoplefirstinfo.org.uk/health-and-wellbeing/alcohol-and-substance-misuse/mental-health-and-drug-or-alcohol-problems/>
2. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng58/documents/severe-mental-illness-and-substance-misuse-dual-diagnosis-community-health-and-social-care-services-final-scope2>
3. Changing Futures - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
4. Changing Futures | Westminster City Council

Specific services designed to tackle substance misuse amongst children and young adults include the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit (IGXU), a Westminster-based initiative (partly funded by Public Health) working with 10 to 25-year-olds involved in group violence and gang related activity, helping children and young adults make better life choices and reduce youth offending. One aspect of the Unit's work focusses particularly on girls and young women involved in serious youth violence and exploitation^[1].

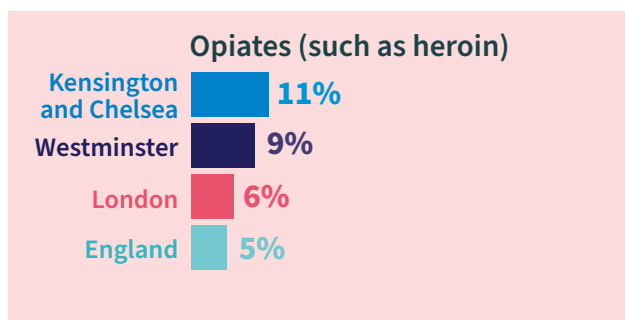
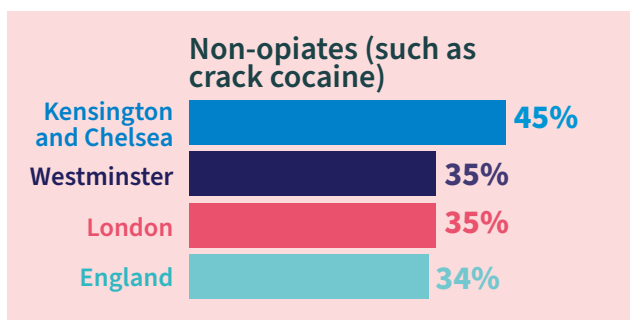
Similarly, Insight, which is active across both boroughs, provides a free confidential support service for children and young adults aged up to 25 years living with, or affected by, substance misuse issues^{[2][3]}. It provides a range of support, outreach and training on substance misuse and related topics such as drugs awareness, nitrous oxide and vaping, working with children and young people, families, professionals and schools.

We are constantly striving to improve the services we provide to our residents as well. This year, for example, we delivered training sessions for current heroin users, ex-users and frontline workers on administering naloxone, a medication which can act as a rapid antidote for patients who have overdosed on drugs such as heroin.

The system does face challenges, however. During COVID-19, for example, the way in which substance misuse services were delivered changed dramatically, with a shift away from face-to-face contact and changes to how drug and alcohol treatment was provided^[4]. Stigma around substance misuse can also act as a barrier against people seeking help, as can inflexibility in accessing appointments and frequent alterations to referral systems. Substance misuse services also need to ensure that they communicate well with GPs and mental health services, as well as allowing for continuity of care between hospital and community-based teams.

Despite these challenges, however, success rates for drug treatment in RBKC and Westminster are generally higher than those for London and England (see graph below).

The number of people that left drug treatment successfully who do not then re-present to treatment again within six months as a percentage of the total number of users in treatment (2021)



From: Public Health Outcomes Framework C19a - Successful completion of drug treatment: opiate users; C19b - Successful completion of drug treatment: non opiate users; C19c - Successful completion of alcohol treatment, 2021, Public Health Outcomes Framework - Data - OHID (phe.org.uk)

1. Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit (IGXU) | Westminster City Council

2. Insight KC - Insight (insightyoungpeople.org.uk)

3. Insight Westminster - Insight (insightyoungpeople.org.uk)

4. Written evidence submitted by Collective Voice: Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee - Call for Evidence: Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS Sectors (June 2020)

Case Studies

We have a wide variety of drug and alcohol support and prevention services available, which draw on multiple different agencies from within RBKC and Westminster (including schools, housing and employment services).

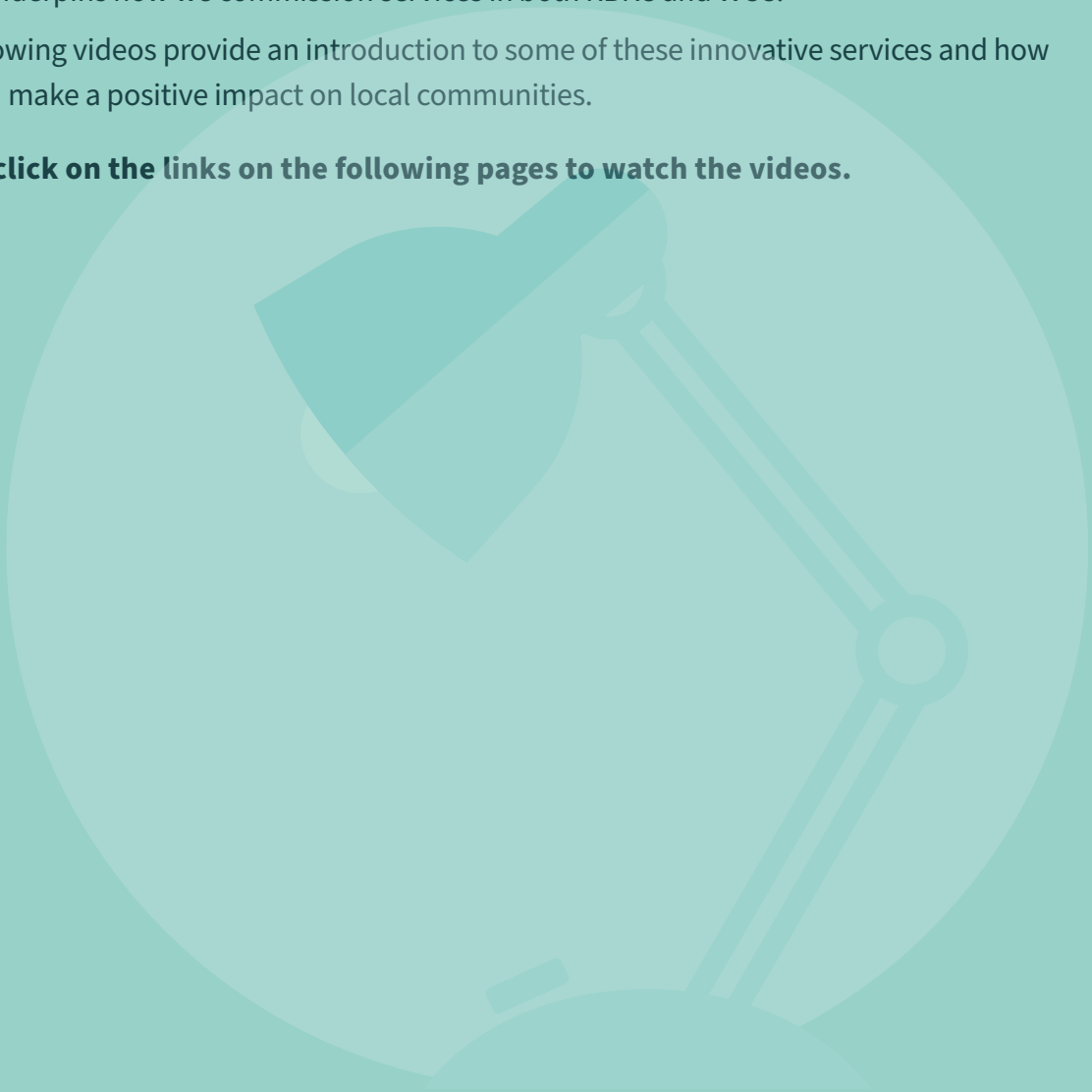
Many of these initiatives focus on the three priority cohorts mentioned above, whilst also taking the night-time economy and rough sleeper population into account.

They draw on the skills and knowledge of a wide variety of public services, whilst also working closely with service users themselves to ensure services are meeting the needs of residents within both boroughs.

They consider the experiences of residents which is a key part of coproduction and a principle which underpins how we commission services in both RBKC and WCC.

The following videos provide an introduction to some of these innovative services and how they can make a positive impact on local communities.

Please click on the links on the following pages to watch the videos.



Black and Blue



Watch the Black and Blue' video on YouTube.

The Black and Blue programme is a new prevention initiative funded by Public Health that offers drug education and awareness sessions for Year 6 school pupils across RBKC and Westminster.

It also touches on other topics such as mental health and racism through the experience of Paul Canoville, the first black footballer to play for Chelsea Football Club, who turned to drugs when struggling with physical injury and racial abuse.

Having successfully overcome his addiction problems, Paul now leads the Black and Blue sessions in partnership with WCC archives team. He acts as a role model for young children, advocating for the fact that adversity can be overcome when faced with gangs, drugs, racism and mental health challenges.



Starting Over



Watch the 'Starting Over' video on YouTube.

The Community Safety teams in both RBKC and WCC commission the Starting Over service, delivered by Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Wellbeing Service (DAWS).

The service provides additional support to the adult male Integrated Offender Management cohort, as well as to prolific theft offenders, to address their substance misuse needs and reduce their reoffending.

They work alongside the police, as well as receiving referrals from council teams and the Probation Service, supporting clients both in the community and in custody.

Starting Over have also worked closely with the council in developing our approach to prison leavers with a combination of issues (such as homelessness, substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health problems) through **Changing Futures** (www.westminster.gov.uk/changing-futures), a national program aiming to improve outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage^[1].



Scan here

1. Changing Futures - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Build on Belief



Watch the 'Build on Belief' video on YouTube.

Build on Belief (BoB) is based in RBKC, and also active in Westminster, specialising in providing weekend and online services for people with substance misuse issues .

It is a prime example of a service which provides holistic support to residents with complex physical and mental health needs, including older opiate and crack users – OCUs.

BoB is primarily a peer-led service; the majority of volunteers working with service users are in recovery themselves or have worked hard to overcome addiction.

These lived experiences that volunteers are able to share with service users is pivotal in helping people turn their lives around and start afresh¹.



1. What do we do? | Build on Belief Ltd

Turning Point DAWS – Women’s Service



Watch the ‘Turning Point DAWS -Women’s Service’ video on YouTube.

Another branch of Turning Point’s DAWS is focussing on developing a drug and alcohol service specifically for women with substance misuse issues across the boroughs.

Aside from exercise classes, DAWS Women’s Service offers a variety of ‘Safe Spaces’, including art workshops, acupuncture sessions and support groups, as well as wellbeing events involving sexual health teams and homeless health clinical nurse specialists.

An important aspect of the initiative is that it is co-designed with women who use the services, by means of quarterly ‘Co-design Cafés’ ensuring that services are meeting women’s needs.

Looking towards the future, the team hopes to embed women’s safe spaces within hostels and is currently recruiting for volunteers to act as peer mentors for service users.



Turning Point DAWS Plus



Watch the 'Turning Point DAWS Plus' video on YouTube.

DAWS Plus is active in both RBKC and Westminster, offering joined up support and treatment for homeless people within housing and wider healthcare services.

The main purpose of the service is to break the link between homelessness and substance misuse, both of which feed into and exacerbate one another.

The programme targets vulnerable individuals who are sleeping rough or living in temporary accommodation (including OCU's). It aims to support them as they start treatment for substance misuse and find more permanent accommodation through provision of support packages, practical advice and relevant information.

Both boroughs have also received extra funding via The Rough Sleepers Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Grant (RSDATG) over the past few years. This funding has been used by Turning Point in collaboration with other stakeholders to enhance the existing DAWS service.



Club Drug Clinic



Watch the ‘Club Drug Clinic’ video on YouTube.

The Club Drug Clinic (CDC) is a shining example of a leading service in the local area. It provides free confidential advice for people living in RBKC and Westminster.

The CDC has been nationally and internationally recognised as a highly specialised, unique service to reduce the harms of Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and Club Drugs used by residents within RBKC and Westminster. NPS covered include methamphetamine, GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyrate), cocaine and ketamine, among others.

The clinic monitors new drug trends and responds to emerging needs with innovative service delivery. The clinic provides support and a safe place for service users to talk openly in a relaxed, non-judgemental environment, either face to face, by video or telephone. Workers have particularly extensive experience working with the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning +) community, and have a sound understanding of specific issues that affect this cohort with respect to substance misuse and sexual health in those using drugs in a sexual context^[1].



1. <https://www.clubdrugclinic.cnwl.nhs.uk/>

Night Stars



Watch the 'Night Stars' video on YouTube.

Night Stars is a volunteer night-safety initiative targeting Westminster's unique night-time economy, operating on Fridays between the hours of 7pm and 5am.

The service was formed in partnership with the Metropolitan Police, Capital Arches Group, Northbank and Heart of London Business Alliance, with volunteers aiming to ensure that Westminster's nightlife remains a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable experience for residents and visitors alike.

Night Stars is actively working on growing volunteer numbers to ensure shifts can go ahead and is even planning to offer one additional Saturday shift per month^[1].



1. Night Stars | Westminster City Council

Appendix

‘Making Health Everyone’s Business’– Progress Review

This year’s Annual Report of the Director of Public Health emphasises the importance of partnerships and adopting a whole systems approach with respect to tackling substance misuse in RBKC and Westminster. Similarly, last year’s report recognised that health is far more than the provision of services and that to improve health and wellbeing and address health inequalities, health needs to be everyone’s business.

It outlined a commitment to a collaborative approach in understanding and responding to our communities, drawing on data and community insight to understand local need and priorities for action and ensuring initiatives and services are proportionate and delivered in a way that is accessible and acceptable to residents.

Huge progress has been achieved in the past year with significant investment in a number of areas.

- As part of our cross-council work plan for 2023/24, we are investing over £15 million in public health initiatives.
- This money is being used to fund over 30 initiatives in RBKC and over 50 in Westminster.
- These initiatives include support for mental health, physical health, children’s services, substance misuse services, homelessness prevention and employment services.

Some specific examples are shown below:

Friendly Neighbourhoods, Social Activities and Mental Health



Sandie, one of Bikeworks’ visually impaired users and her carer Kieron.

We have been funding Bikeworks’ ‘Ride Side-by-Side’ initiative (a cycle taxi scheme active in both boroughs where passengers also peddle) which provides an active and inclusive way for residents with restricted mobility (and their carers) to socialise.

To help with the cost-of-living crisis, we are using S106 grant funding to set up a food pantry at the Kensal Resource Centre, which will be expanded into a holistic ‘community support hub’ for residents.

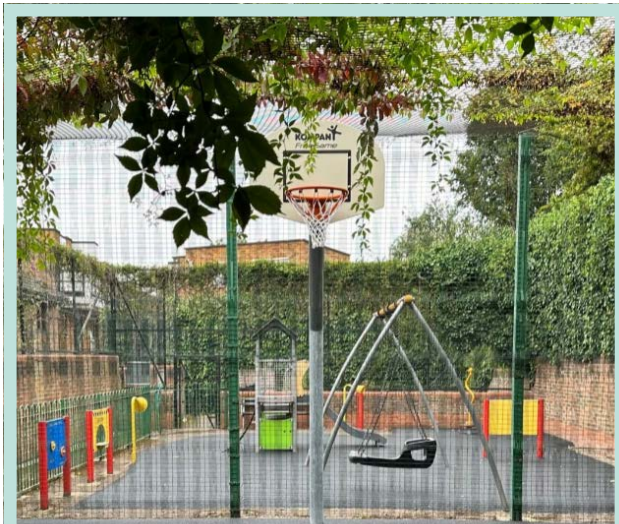
Since June 2022, we have had Mental Health Youth Workers providing specialist support to the young people attending youth clubs in Westminster. So far, over 100 young people have attended mental health workshops at the Avenues Youth Project, Amberley Youth Club and Churchill Gardens Youth Club.

S106 funding has also been used to provide ‘Lunch and Dance’ sessions for vulnerable residents in sheltered housing across RBKC who are at risk of social isolation.

In October 2022 we launched a Westminster-based service providing 1:1 emotional wellbeing and mental health support for teachers and education staff to support individuals working in early years settings, schools and colleges post-pandemic.

We have also collaborated with Portobello Business Centre to support local businesses and employers in developing employment opportunities for residents with learning disabilities and mental health problems.

Healthy Lifestyles



The newly refurbished multiuse game area on Convent Estate.

A new Santander bike docking station has been installed on Harrow Road, aiming to promote active travel and help mitigate poor air quality. 90 bikes were hired from here within the first week of installation.

We have invested in two sports development officers within RBKC to promote physical activity amongst residents across both boroughs.

We have expanded our cycle training scheme with Bikeability to focus on the north of Westminster. So far, Bikeability has provided training for over 552 children and 131 adults, increasing their cycling confidence and promoting active travel.

Once again, we secured S106 grant funding for volunteers to deliver boxing sessions for young people on World's End Estate.

Following consultation with local residents, planning permission for two sports pitches in Churchill Gardens Estate and Church Street has been requested.

We are continuing to speak with residents from Notting Dale and North Kensington in order to find out how best we can support the overall health and wellbeing of communities affected by the Grenfell Tragedy.

We have made significant progress with some of our outdoor gym projects in Westminster, with two new facilities at Grosvenor and Fisherton Estates aiming to open Spring 2024.

Outdoor Spaces and Healthy Environments

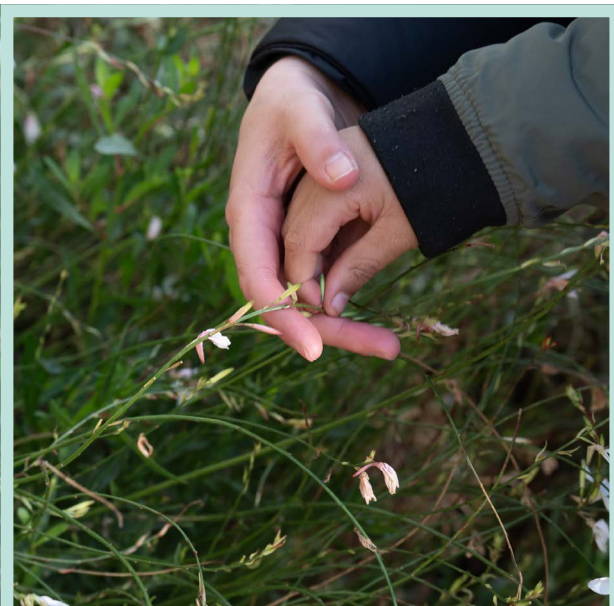
We have invested in the refurbishment of playgrounds and multiuse game areas (co-designed with residents) on the Wiltshire Close and Convent Estates.

This year, the e-cargo bike scheme 'Beryl Bikes' was launched in Westminster, with hiring sites available in Harrow Road, Church Street and Tachbrook Market. So far, more than 30 trips have been made using Beryl Bikes, allowing transportation of small to medium-sized loads such as work tools, shopping and sports equipment in a green and cost-effective manner.



The opening of the playground at Wiltshire Close.

Following the success of the Sensory Garden in Holland Park for people with sensory impairments, we are now funding a further Sensory Garden in St Luke's Gardens.



Sensory Garden in Holland Park.

An allotment area has been developed for children's use on the Lillington Estate and in January 2023, a new large food growing area was built on Churchill Gardens Estate.

We are establishing a conservation volunteering programme for young adults who are not in education training or employment to contribute to the ongoing maintenance of Little Wormwood Scrubs.

We have been funding the 'Green Doctors' scheme in Westminster, a service which provides energy advice and support to older and disabled people in receipt of benefits, aiming to ease the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and promote environmental sustainability.

We are investing in interventions such as green walls across RBKC to reduce the negative impact of poor air quality.

Immunisations

We secured a grant from NHS England which was used to explore whether novel approaches, such as delivering childhood immunisations in alternative locations, could improve vaccination uptake rates in Westminster.

Last Autumn all RBKC and WCC employees, as well as school and nursery staff working within the boroughs, were offered the flu vaccine free of charge.

It is clear that the **whole council approach to Public Health** and our focus on working closely with partners and communities is delivering benefits for our residents. We will continue to build on these successes and incorporate our work addressing the challenges of substance misuse in the year ahead.

