

Contents:

- **Executive Summary**
- **National Picture**
 - Coalition Government – setting national policy
- **Local Context for Oxfordshire**
 - Annual Public Health Report 2010
 - Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2008-2011
- **Aim and Priorities**
 - Central Concepts
 - Community Safety
 - Health
 - Young People
 - Crossovers
- **Ownership and Delivery**
 - Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership
 - Oxfordshire Alcohol Steering Group
 - Annual objectives and action plans

Executive Summary

Alcohol is an embedded part of British culture. It is important to recognise that it can play a positive role but that excessive consumption can have serious consequences for individuals, families and communities as well as impacting on public services.

The negative impact alcohol can cause cannot be tackled in isolation or by a single organisation. The issues connected with alcohol are often interlinked to other themes such as domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, risky sexual activity, increased health concerns and lifestyle choices. As alcohol cuts across a wide range of agendas, it is vital that organisations work in partnership to raise awareness and tackle the issues together to ensure a coherent and effective approach is taken. Involvement of local communities will also be key to challenging social acceptability of alcohol misuse and its associated behaviour.

The Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2011-2014 aims to **reduce the harmful impact of alcohol in Oxfordshire through**

- **effective partnership working across the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sectors**
- **encouraging people to get the facts, weigh up the risks and live with the consequences**
- **ensuring the right services and support are in place for anyone who wants and needs help**

National Picture

In May 2010, a new **Coalition Government** was formed between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrat parties. The first joint document to be published, 'The Coalition: Our Programme for Government', set out the immediate vision and priorities to be tackled. Alcohol was specifically identified under the Crime and Policing section:

- Ban the sale of alcohol below cost price.
- Review alcohol taxation and pricing to ensure it tackles binge drinking without unfairly penalising responsible drinkers, pubs and important local industries.
- Overhaul the Licensing Act 2003 to give local authorities and the police much stronger powers to remove licences from, or refuse to grant licences to, any premises that are causing problems.
- Allow councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar found to be persistently selling alcohol to children.
- Double the maximum fine for underage alcohol sales to £20,000.
- Permit local councils to charge more for late-night licences to pay for additional policing.

This indicated a shift in policy from the previous Labour Government. In the months that followed the Coalition Government demonstrated its commitment to tackling alcohol as a major issue by:

- Moving responsibility for the Licensing Act 2003 to the Home Office from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport
- Opening two public consultations – one focusing on pricing of alcohol and the other on overhauling the Licensing Act 2003

**** This section will need to be added to once the Home Office consultations have closed and any actions published ****

The Coalition Government also launched the concept of '**Big Society**' and encouraging people to get involved and participate in their local communities. It also saw an emphasis on increased local control and devolved decision making.

In relation to **Public Health and alcohol** under the new Government; in a speech to the Faculty of Public Health Annual Conference in July 2010, the Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley, outlined the principles of self responsibility which will be encouraged in further developing the public health agenda. The Minister said that a new approach is needed: "We have to impact on demand. That means we have to change behaviour, and change people's relationships with each other and with drugs, alcohol, tobacco and food." He went on to say that causative social factors have to be addressed, including perceptions of drinking in our society and, ultimately, the issue is one of building self esteem to enable people to make healthy choices.

Alongside changes in Government, the **National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)** has developed a set of three guidance documents focused on addressing alcohol related problems:

- Alcohol use disorders: preventing the development of hazardous and harmful drinking.
- Alcohol use disorders: diagnosis, assessment and management of harmful drinking and alcohol dependence.
- Alcohol use disorders: diagnosis and clinical management of alcohol-related physical complications.

Local Context for Oxfordshire

For the first time, the **Director for Public Health Annual Report for Oxfordshire in 2010** included a chapter on alcohol as one of the six long-term threats to the health of Oxfordshire residents. It emphasised the need to:

- be realistic in changing attitudes and behaviours in connection with alcohol,
- shift towards prevention and helping people take responsibility for their health by providing factual information
- make use of 'Brief Advice' by professionals at appropriate opportunities

The report identifies the impact alcohol has locally on crime and anti social behaviour, hospital admissions (acute care and Emergency Departments are affected), an individual's health, families and wider communities.

It highlights that a good start has been made on tackling alcohol issues in Oxfordshire, but given the threat that alcohol poses it should take a higher priority. This Strategy for 2011-2014 hopes to do just that and to build on the previous good work of the Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2008-2011.

Under the previous **Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy for 2008-2011**, there was an increased focus on alcohol issues across the county. The Alcohol Steering Group brought people together to deliver effective work and the issue was given much needed leadership.

There will be continued coordination of issues around alcohol and its negative impact on Oxfordshire. Under the previous strategy for 2008-2011, there were five objectives:

- **Reduce alcohol related disorder**
- **Increase the consistency and quality of alcohol awareness for all ages**
- **Develop key health initiatives and commission alcohol treatment services**
- **Develop a balanced sustainable leisure economy for the benefit of all ages**
- **Reduce young people's demand for and supply of alcohol and its associated harms**

The strategy for 2008-2011 saw a number of successes such as the public awareness campaign in 2009 which included a practitioner's conference on alcohol and its impact, developing 'Nightsafe' standards across all of the separate schemes, making better strategic links with leads on domestic abuse and young people, developing local brief advice training for professionals outside of health and a pilot project with trained alcohol workers in the Emergency Department at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

The strategy for 2011-2014 has refined and refocused the alcohol priorities for Oxfordshire which are clearly outlined in the following section. As alcohol is a fundamental cross cutting theme, the strategy is not designed to stand alone but to link into and complement other strategies and action plans as appropriate.

Aim and Priorities for 2011-2014

The overall aim of the Strategy is to **reduce the harmful impact of alcohol in Oxfordshire through**

- **effective partnership working across the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sectors**
- **encouraging people to get the facts, weigh up the risks and live with the consequences**
- **ensuring the right services and support are in place for anyone who wants and needs help**

At the heart of the Strategy are a number of key **central concepts** that underpin the strategic approach for Oxfordshire and are essential to achieving the aim. They need to be taken into consideration when developing the annual objective and action plans under the priority themes.

Central Concepts:

1) Raising Awareness

Through consistent messages that are relevant to the intended audience and are delivered in the most appropriate way. This could be via a communication campaign for the general public, best practice sharing for professionals or targeting a particular 'at risk' group.

2) Multi Agency Responses

All agencies and organisations which deal with alcohol and its effects need to work together to realise a more coherent and effective response to the issues and accomplish more effective outcomes.

3) Challenge Social Acceptability by Promoting Self Responsibility

There needs to be a shift towards changing unacceptable behaviour linked to alcohol and encouraging people to take responsibility for the impact of their drinking on their own health and the wellbeing of others.

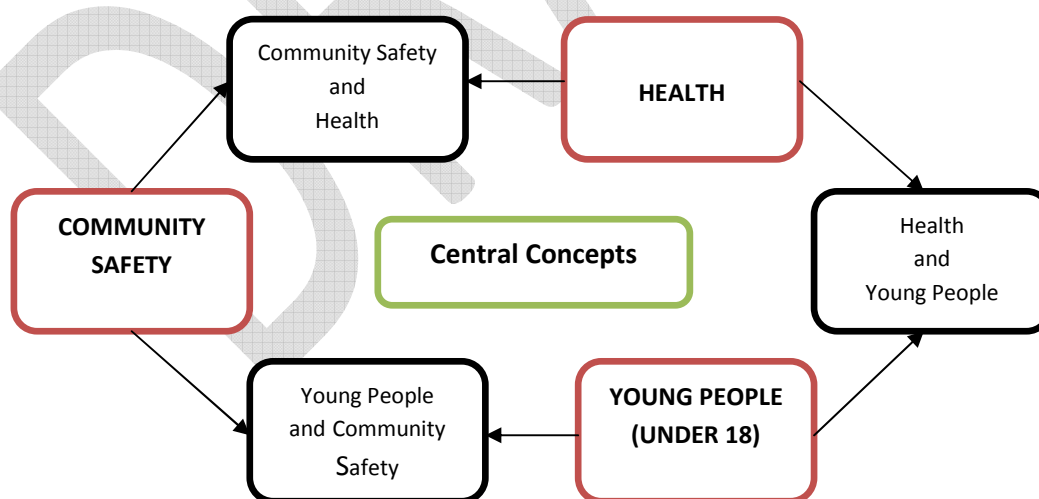
4) Prevention, Early Intervention and Specialist/Targeted Approaches

It is important to identify which approach needs to be taken when action planning with more emphasis being put on prevention. Evidence based practice is also key to choosing the most appropriate way to achieve the aim.

5) Family and/or Community Centred

A holistic approach must be taken which incorporates the impact on wider family and social networks rather than focusing solely on the individual.

The **Priorities** have been set out under three strategic themes which are connected by crosscutting priorities, all of which have the key central concepts running through them. As part of the annual delivery plans, the Alcohol Steering Group will set annual objectives and actions under the themes. These action plans will be published separately and progress in implementing the actions will be reported regularly.

**Priority Themes:**

It is vital to use evidence of best practice but to also be at the forefront of innovative solutions and getting local communities to be engaged, where appropriate, to tackle the issues.

1) Community Safety

Community Safety covers a wide range of issues that can affect local people and communities. This includes levels of crime, anti-social behaviour, hate crime, fear of crime and how satisfied people are with their local area. Alcohol is often linked, in varying degrees, to specific problems being addressed such as anti social behaviour, environmental issues, domestic abuse and the impact on emergency services. The action plans drawn up on these and other specific issues need to include work to address use and abuse of alcohol where this is a root cause.

2) Health

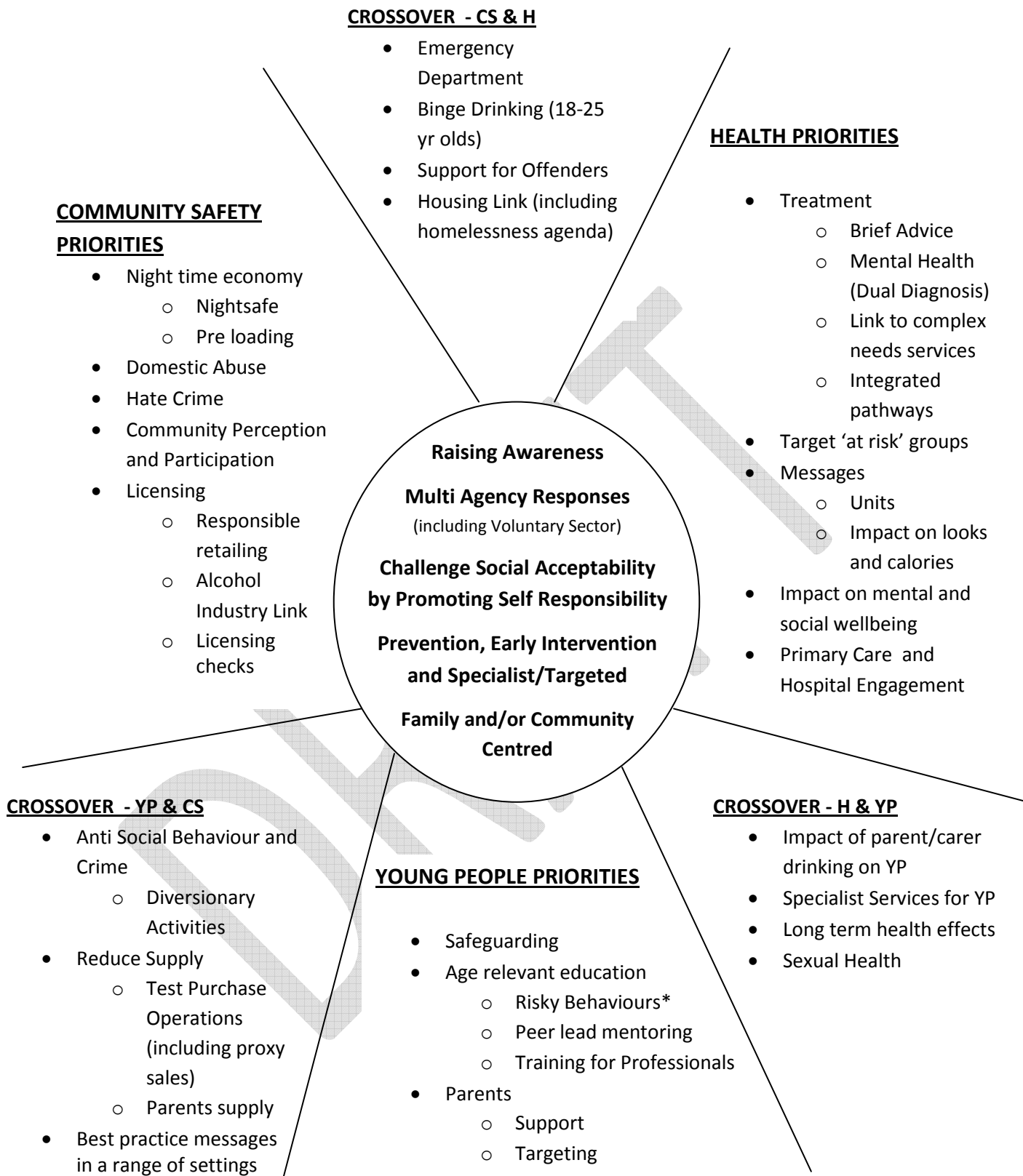
The impact of alcohol on health and wellbeing is wide reaching across all ages and backgrounds. It can be a major cause of disease, injury, disability, violence, social problems and premature death.

There are certain groups of people who may be at increased risk of alcohol related harm to their health but they will not be regarded as “alcohol dependent”. There is growing concern about the impact of drinking at higher than recommended levels over long periods of time. This is known to increase the likelihood of a range of cancers and heart problems as well as the more well-known liver diseases often associated with alcohol consumption. Many people who may regard themselves as social drinkers may come into this risk group.

3) Young People (under 18)

Young People and their relationship with alcohol should not be tackled in isolation. It is important to make the links to other risky behaviours such as sexual activity, unplanned pregnancy, anti social behaviour and being a victim of crime.

As there are a wide range of agencies engaging with young people, it is essential to have a coordinated approach to minimise duplication and maximise effectiveness in delivery. The strategic approach for alcohol needs to be part of the Every Child Matters agenda and link to the Children and Young Peoples Trust and its Children and Young People’s Plan and objectives.



*Risky Behaviours can include Sexual Activity and Pregnancy, Drugs, Bullying, Peer Pressure, ASB and Crime, becoming a victim, etc. **Is this defined by Children's trust?**

Ownership and Delivery

The Strategy comes under the remit of the **Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP)**, the strategic body for community safety in Oxfordshire which reports to the Public Service Board. Within the OSCP structure, the delivery of the Strategy is owned by the multi agency Alcohol Steering Group. However, the scope of the strategy goes beyond the remit of the Community Safety Partnership and can only be delivered by a wider range of partnerships and organisations including the Children and Young People's Trust and the Health and Well-Being Partnership.

The **Alcohol Steering Group** will set annual objectives and action plans to work towards which will support the delivery and achievement of the aim and priorities set out in this document. One of the key roles of the Alcohol Steering Group is to identify areas where alcohol is a cross cutting theme and ensure that it is given the appropriate level of priority in all agencies and that a coordinated and consistent approach is taken. This means that some of the objectives and actions on the annual plans will be led by other organisation or partnerships. This will include local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to deliver actions at a local level depending on their individual needs assessment. Members of all the CSPs are represented on Alcohol Steering Group.