**Soft Market Testing Exercise**  
**Substance Misuse Service Models**

**North Northamptonshire Council**

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**Section 1:** **Introduction**

**Purpose of Soft Market Testing**

The purpose of this soft market testing exercise is to seek views from the market on proposed service models for the future commissioning of substance misuse services in North Northamptonshire. This process will help inform decision-making by gathering feedback from existing and potential providers on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and limitations of each proposed model.

Please note: This market testing exercise is not an invitation to tender or a request for formal expressions of interest. It does not form any part of a procurement process at this stage. North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) is issuing this document as a request for information only. No supplier selection or preference is implied by participation in this exercise.

**Confidentiality and Freedom of Information (FOI)**

All responses will be treated confidentially. However, as a public body, North Northamptonshire Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which means that any information received may be subject to disclosure unless deemed commercially sensitive. If you consider any information to be confidential, please clearly mark it as such.

**Market Engagement Event**

Following the soft market testing, an in-person market engagement event will take place to discuss the proposed models and gather further insights.

**Date & Time:**   
**Friday 21st March 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM**   
**(doors open at 9:45 AM)**  
  
**Venue:**   
**North Northamptonshire Council**

**Council Chamber,  
East Northamptonshire House,**

**Cedar Drive,**

**Thrapston,**

**Kettering.**

**NN14 4LZ**

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/NMkhAve94jUJYuaZ8>

**Section 2: Background & Context**

**Current Service Arrangements**

North Northamptonshire Council currently commissions substance misuse services through contracts managed by West Northamptonshire Council. These contracts are due to expire on 31st March 2026. From 1st April 2026, North Northamptonshire Council will commission its own services independently.

**Summary of Needs Assessment and Recommendations**

A recent Substance Misuse Needs Assessment highlighted several key issues and recommendations.

**Children & Young People:** Hospital admissions due to substance misuse in 15–24-year-olds are significantly higher than the England average. Young people with vulnerabilities (e.g., mental health issues, adverse childhood experiences) are at higher risk of substance misuse.

**Adults:** An estimated 7,000 adults in Northamptonshire are dependent on alcohol and require specialist treatment. Drug misuse-related deaths have increased, with the highest impact in Northampton, Kettering, and Corby.

**Treatment Services:** Engagement with treatment services is lower than required, with gaps in accessibility, particularly for those with complex needs or co-occurring mental health conditions.

**Harm Reduction & Prevention:** There is a need for improved visibility and accessibility of services, especially for under-served communities, and better integration between substance misuse and mental health services.

**Key Recommendations:**

1. Improve treatment pathways, particularly for individuals with complex needs and those transitioning from youth to adult services.
2. Expand harm reduction services and improve public awareness.
3. Strengthen the referral process and collaboration between services, including health, social care, and criminal justice.
4. Develop more flexible and accessible service models, considering digital solutions and community-based interventions.
5. This soft market testing exercise will explore potential service models that align with these priorities and best meet local needs.

**Section 3:** **Service Model Options**

The following models are being considered for the future service provision. Providers are invited to assess each model based on feasibility, delivery effectiveness, and potential impact.

**Option 1: Integrated Substance Misuse Service Model**

A single lead provider to deliver an integrated service covering both adult and children’s substance misuse services under one contract.

**Key Features:**

* One contract with a lead provider overseeing all service elements.
* Full integration of treatment, recovery, family support, and training.
* Coordination of care across all age groups to provide seamless transitions.
* Reduces fragmentation and promotes a holistic approach to service delivery.

**Option 2: Lead Substance Misuse Service Provider Model**

A lead provider to oversee adult treatment services while subcontracting smaller service elements, including family support, recovery, and children’s services.

**Key Features:**

* One contract with a lead provider responsible for service coordination.
* Smaller, specialist providers would be subcontracted to deliver specific elements.
* Ensures a balance between integrated oversight and specialist expertise.
* Flexibility in service delivery while maintaining a central point of accountability.

**Option 3: Integrated Substance Misuse Service Model for Adult’s Service, Separately Commissioned Children’s Services**

A fully integrated adult substance misuse service under one contract, while children’s services are separately commissioned.

**Key Features:**

* Two distinct contracts: one for adult services, one for children’s services.
* Fully integrated approach for adult services covering treatment, recovery, family support, and training.
* Ensures adult service integration without requiring a joint contract for children’s services.
* Allows greater alignment with adult-specific needs while keeping children’s services distinct.
* Alignment of children’s substance misuse services with wider children’s and young people’s services.

**Option 4: Lead Provider Service Model for Adult’s Service, Separately Commissioned Children’s Services**

A lead provider would be commissioned for adult substance misuse services, subcontracting other service elements, while children’s services would be commissioned separately.

**Key Features:**

* Two separate contracts: one for adult services, another for children’s services.
* The lead provider for adult services would oversee treatment, recovery, and training but subcontract delivery of specific components.
* Allows for a clear distinction between adult and children’s services while maintaining coordination.
* Encourages partnerships and collaborations within the provider market.
* Alignment of children’s substance misuse services with wider children’s and young people’s services.

**Option 5: Commissioning Under Separate Agreements**

Each service element (treatment, recovery, family support, training, children’s) would be commissioned separately, either through multiple contracts or a framework agreement with distinct service lots.

**Key Features:**

* Maximises provider specialisation and flexibility.
* Potential for increased market diversity and competition.
* Risk of service fragmentation without strong coordination mechanisms.

**Section 4: Responding to This Soft Market Test**

Providers are invited to submit feedback on the proposed models by completing the response form at the end of this document and returning it to [**nncphcommissioning@northnorthants.gov.uk**](mailto:nncphcommissioning@northnorthants.gov.uk) by **Thursday 13th March 2025**.

**Next Steps:**

Responses will be reviewed to refine the options appraisal.

Key findings will be shared at the market engagement event on **Friday** **21st March 2025**.

Formal commissioning plans will be developed following engagement feedback.

We appreciate your time and input in shaping the future of substance misuse services in North Northamptonshire.

**Section 5: Provider Response**

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| --- | --- |
| **Organisation Name** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Office Address** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Contact Person** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Email:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Phone Number:** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Preferred Option** | Choose an item. |
| **Please explain why the selected option is the preferred option, or if selected ‘Other’, please describe the model and it's advantages.** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

We would welcome support in completing a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) for each of the models. Please contribute your thoughts on each of the models below, considering both the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for your organisation specifically, but also considerations for all commissioned substance misuse services, the wider system impacted by substance misuse, service users and their families.

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| --- | --- |
| **Option 1: Integrated Substance Misuse Service Model** | |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| **Option 2: Lead Substance Misuse Service Provider Model** | |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| **Option 3: Integrated Substance Misuse Service Model for Adult’s Service, Separately Commissioned Children’s Services** | |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| **Option 4: Lead Provider Service Model for Adult’s Service, Separately Commissioned Children’s Services** | |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| --- | --- |
| **Option 5: Commissioning Under Separate Agreements** | |
| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Opportunities** | **Threats** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| **Any other comments or suggestions?** |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |