

Naloxone Case Study – North Yorkshire

A summary of the initiative?

In North Yorkshire, our specialist adult community drug and alcohol service is responsible for provision, expansion and associated governance arrangements for Naloxone – with support from the Public Health Team including medicines optimisation service. Pre-March 2020, the service had started to establish arrangements locally with homeless and housing organisations, to provide the necessary training and Naloxone kits to professionals working with individuals at risk of an opioid overdose, so that they could administer naloxone in the event of an emergency on site as applicable.

As the severity of the threat that COVID-19 posed became clearer, the ‘Everyone In’ campaign was launched nationally. This campaign provided accommodation for rough sleepers, as well as an opportunity to potentially address a range of needs for this cohort of individuals.

In Harrogate, this campaign was managed by the Housing Options team within the Borough Council. There is also a local independent homeless charity that works directly with rough sleepers. Individuals who were identified as part of this campaign were housed across all of the hostels or housing stock that these two providers managed.

North Yorkshire Horizons were aware of local arrangements for this campaign as a member of the local steering group. The service identified and capitalised on the opportunity and offered training to staff working in the two local housing providers to be able to administer naloxone in the event of an opioid overdose, alongside kits. The two organisations accepted this offer.

Who you worked with and how?

North Yorkshire Horizons worked with Harrogate Borough Council Housing Options team and Harrogate Homeless Project to establish training courses where staff of the organisations could attend. This training gave background and context to this medication, how to administer safely for all parties and how to store/manage this medication safely too.

North Yorkshire Horizons provided Naloxone kits to each of the hostels that were staffed across the two providers, and the necessary governance arrangements were implemented - including management of expiration dates and replenishing of kits. North Yorkshire Horizons also arranged follow-ups with each of the providers in the event of further queries or guidance required.

How you set it up – including any challenges and how you overcame them?

The biggest barrier to this project was the COVID restrictions in place at the time. This took place in Spring 2020 and the current lockdown measures meant that training couldn’t take place face-to-face. North Yorkshire Horizons re-designed their training package so that it could be delivered in an online setting remotely. This enabled staff across the housing providers to receive the training remotely and didn’t delay it being completed. North Yorkshire Horizons arranged for the stock of kits to be sent to each of the staffed hostels following completion of the training.

Any outcomes achieved?

Staff completed the training successfully in Summer 2020 and kits were provided for use on site as applicable. Critically, a naloxone kit was successfully used to save a life in Summer 2021 by staff at Harrogate Homeless Project.