

druglink

changing futures

Annual Report 2022/23

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Our objective is to change the future for people who are, or could be, affected by substance misuse.

**We achieve this through
Addiction Treatment,
Housing Solutions,
Education and Training.**

We Change Futures

In reviewing our aims and objectives and planning our future activities Druglink has referred to the guidance in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

In particular, the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set in our Strategy. Through our pathway, Druglink offers benefit to the community through the prevention of, and recovery from, substance misuse. Our objective is to change the future for people who are, or could be, affected by substance misuse. We achieve this through Addiction Treatment, Housing Solutions, Education and Training.

PREVENTION

Our Diversion Schemes and educational activities, such as school presentations and community engagements, present risk factors associated with substance misuse. Druglink takes an active role in education to help prevent substance misuse; we believe that by making the realities of substance misuse and addiction more visible we enable people to make better decisions about their substance use. Better education results in greater awareness and understanding of addiction, which enables us to help more people in their recovery journey as well as working towards reducing drug and alcohol related issues in local communities.



DETOX & RECOVERY

Druglink's Oxygen Recovery Service offers a person-based treatment programme to people with drug and alcohol addictions and dependencies. Our service offers individuals the opportunity to address their addictions in a supportive and therapeutic environment with programmes based on the needs of individuals. Our service works closely with the other agencies and counselling services which are offered to the clients and their partners and families. Our Oxygen Recovery service provides flexible levels of housing support depending on an individual's needs and where they are within their treatment journey.

RE-INTEGRATION AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

Our housing service provides secure supported community living to those in recovery from substance misuse issues. We provide structured programmes including volunteering on projects that provide education and training opportunities, build skills, self-confidence and self-esteem and help individuals reintegrate into local communities.



2 Overview of the year

In 2022/2023 we had always planned to look at the growth and the future of the charity – there were areas of development that we had been hoping to focus on as a business, and this was the year to bring our vision for the charity to life.

We identified that Detox provision across the country was very limited, with large waiting lists of people wanting to start their journey of recovery. It was always one of our aims to provide a clear supported pathway from chaos to independent living. Working with trusted landlords, we identified a building that we could develop into a medically assisted Detox, a service that we had been asked by numerous providers to offer. Towards the end of Q3 22-23, we opened our 'Oxygen Detox' service where we offer seven beds of medically assisted detox with nurses on site 24/7.

This new service impacted on Druglink due to set up costs and a one-month delay in accepting clients (due to staffing and CQC registration) and we accepted our first clients in January 2023. To mitigate the cost of having empty beds, we negotiated several ring-fenced beds with local authorities. Within one month of opening - as forecasted - the Detox service was very well utilised and operating with high occupancy levels, and it has continued to do so since.

Due to increased services, the number of staff employed rose from 37 to 57 from April 2022 - March 2023. We knew we provided a high standard of care and support to our clients and we also knew that our staff had to reflect this.

We believe that our work really does 'Change Futures' for those we connect with and the activity presented in this report shows that during 2022/2023 we have done our best, we have supported each other and we have 'done the right thing'.

OXYGEN DETOX

- Launched Jan 2023
- 37 clients within the first three months of opening (Jan – March 31st 23)
- 95% detox completion rate in first three months
- Working with 12 local authorities to support people needing access to detox
- 9 new members of staff

OXYGEN RECOVERY

- Flourishing referral relationships with CGL Cambridge/CGL Huntingdon/CGL St Ives, ARCH in Hillingdon and Uxbridge, ARC, Haringey, the CJS and probation
- Our quality data showed a consistently high level of service
- We replaced the kitchen thanks to a generous donation from our local Howdens

HOUSING SERVICES

- Safer Places (domestic violence) project went live in July
- Increased number of beds in Gateway service
- Dissolved Gateway Eve
- Launched new Step Down pilot project

“*At first, when I came, the first two days were hard. But everyone helped me get by. The best bit about my stay at Oxygen Detox was that I felt comfortable. At the end of my stay I felt much better..I felt like I had been there for weeks.*”

Anonymous Oxygen
Detox client

3 Detox, Recovery & Housing

3.1 OXYGEN DETOX

Oxygen Detox is Druglink's medically monitored detoxification service. It is our seven bed Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service in Hertfordshire, for both men and women. We provide 24 hour care, seven days a week. Oxygen Detox is a stand-alone service, in a separate location to our residential rehabilitation or supported housing services.

This addition to our services enables us to offer a complete pathway from homelessness housing, detoxification, rehabilitation to supported accommodation. Oxygen Detox provides a safe, recovery focused, therapeutic environment where clients can be assisted to become abstinent, or to regain control of their problematic substance misuse.

37 clients in the first three months of opening (Jan-Mar 23) with a 95% detox completion rate

3.2 OXYGEN RECOVERY

Oxygen Recovery is a nine-bed rehabilitation service offering support for those suffering from alcohol and drug addiction. Clients receive one-to-one support as well as group therapy and relapse prevention advice. Groups this year included anger management, assertiveness, yoga, art and group therapy. The average stay is twelve weeks though some clients stay up to six months. The shortest rehab stay offered is 28 days with the client being able to access aftercare with telephone support and weekly visits. We work with clients who have complex needs and offer client-centred holistic support.

83

people received treatment at Oxygen Recovery from April 22 - March 23

83 people received treatment at Oxygen between April 2022 and the end of March 2023 - 45 detox

treatments and 38 rehab

treatments. The majority of clients were in treatment following use of alcohol or Class A drugs. 52 clients were male and 31 were female.

Our quality data showed a consistently high level of service, with **97% of clients responding "Yes Generally" or "Yes, Definitely" when asked "Do you feel you received a high level of overall service at Oxygen Recovery?"** Information from client's exit questionnaires showed that when asked **"How welcome & comfortable we're you made to feel on the day you entered Oxygen Recovery?" 100% responded with either "Good" or "Excellent" (the same result as 21/22).**

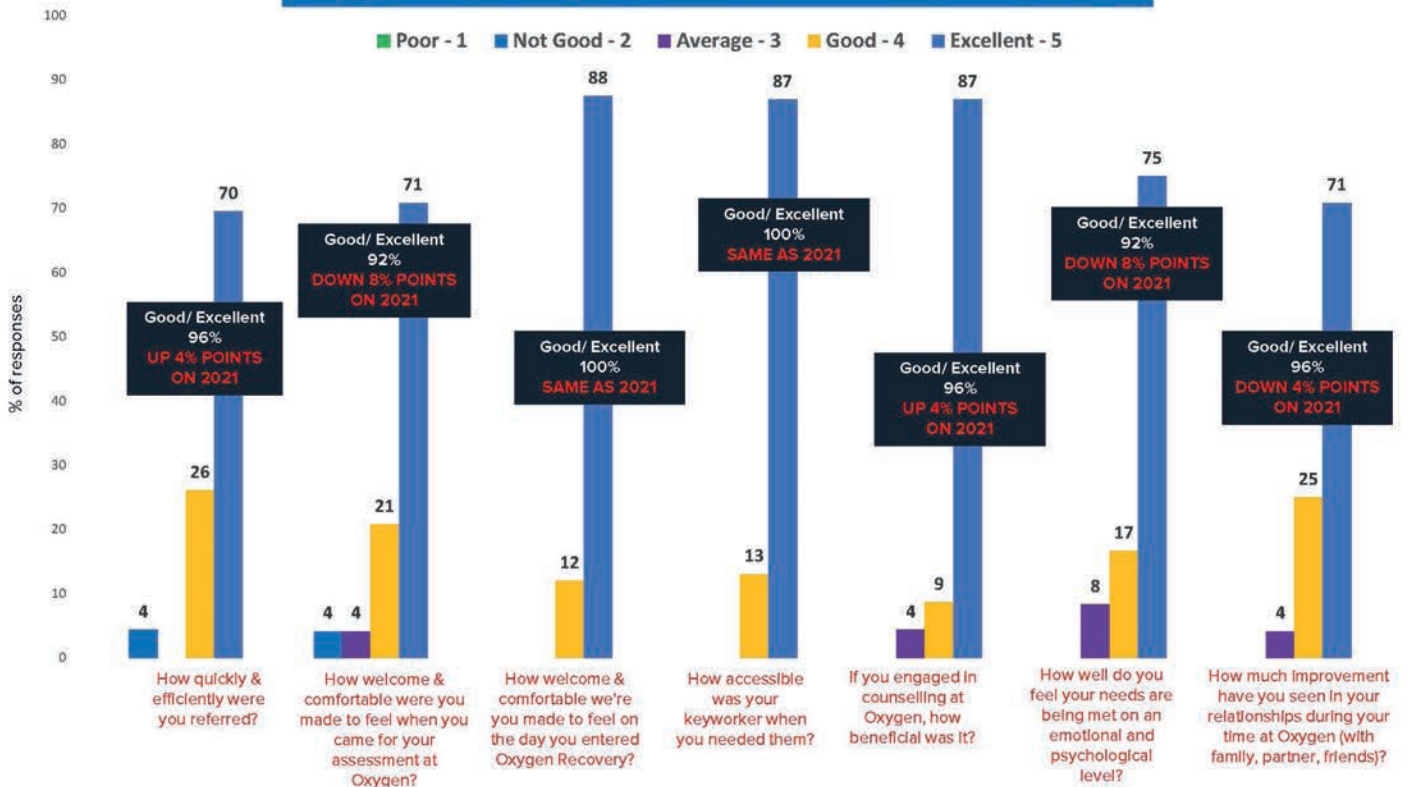


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Oxygen Recovery Client Satisfaction 2022



Oxygen Recovery Resident Exit Questionnaire 2022



Oxygen Recovery offers aftercare for up to six months with clients having access to phone or one-to-one support. If they move onto our supported living facilities, we also offer them the chance to attend the service and all of the available support groups. This ensures that people are leaving their rehabilitation with the knowledge that in their early days of recovery, when they are most likely to relapse, they can continue to access immediate support.

Oxygen's excellent outcomes and associated reputation has allowed us to see flourishing relationships with a number of local authorities and an ever increasing number of referrals from the CJS and probation.

The client structure and weekly program was revamped and treatment agreements were updated ensuring a person-centred approach aligned to changing best practice (whilst still offering a challenging and therapeutic environment).

Therapeutic art took off through the charity Child-Of, using art as an expressive and creative way to help communicate emotion. With their links to the Saatchi Gallery in London, clients have had work exhibited, they have done workshops at the gallery with others and been involved with other charities that support addiction.

Internally in the building new flooring was laid in all the bathrooms, toilets, COSSH cupboard and pantry. Using donations we laid a new floor and carpet in the group therapy room.

3.3 OXYGEN CHOICE, SAFER PLACES & STEP DOWN

In 2022/2023 our Oxygen Choices programme offered 30 beds of supported housing for those in recovery. **We had 28 clients in the service who were given floating support and attended our day service** at Trefoil House. We partnered with other agencies offering specialist advice for those looking to move on into education, training and employment.

We help service users by offering them the 'Choices' group program that consists of relapse prevention, tenancy skills support, process groups and complimentary services. We educate people on substances and their effects in order to drive prevention and stop problems arising in the future. We offer housing related support, conduct weekly key work sessions that focus on support plans and risk management plans. Choices clients also benefit from the inclusion of external stakeholders in the service and we have improved and included family members, wherever that is possible, as this has been shown to be beneficial in a client's recovery.

oxygen choices

We launched our **Safer Places** programme in **June 2022**, a supported housing service joint with local domestic violence service **Safer Places**. The service offers specialist housing and recovery support for women fleeing domestic violence and suffering with substance misuse. **We worked with 13 women during the 22/23 financial year.**

safer places



“The support I received at Step Down was unparalleled. The staff members I met were incredible, I felt like I could approach all of them with any problem I had. Everyone treated me with honesty, respect and courtesy. I was treated like a human being and not an addict, everyone saw me for who I really was. I was able to get clean and have amazing people around me that I could trust.”

Anonymous Step Down client

Step Down was a 12 month Supported Housing service pilot from June 2022.

The service provided four beds for clients who had completed the regional inpatient detox provision. Clients could stay for up to 28 days subject to assessment. We provided rapid access to Step Down beds via a joint assessment protocol agreed with Essex Partnership Trust to assess and refer to Oxygen Step Down.

Ten clients accessed the service, with nine successful completions.

Two were housed into ongoing supported accommodation and one was supported into a volunteer role.

3.4 OXYGEN GATEWAY, HOUSING FIRST, GATEWAY EVE

Oxygen Gateway has 20 beds of supported accommodation for anyone with a history of offending, substance misuse or homelessness. We increased the number of Gateway beds in 22/23 - from 11 to 20 - due to a high demand in the need for safe and secure accommodation for people leaving the criminal justice system who are using substances. At Gateway, clients are encouraged to move on as soon as they are ready and they can continue to receive informal support after leaving Druglink.

We have further developed our partnership with other drug and alcohol services to provide a holistic approach to recovery and to help improve the chances of residents gaining employment.

Housing First has continued to grow and provide support to tenants on their journey away from homelessness. We offer nine places of supported housing to our client group that has included entrenched street drinkers, clients who are actively injecting and clients with problematic sex working histories. We use the Homelessness Star to prove the value and the success of the service.

Gateway Eve

During the 22/23 financial year we dissolved the Gateway Eve project. This complex client group was difficult to manage, therefore the decision was made to close the project.

“Initially arriving in Hemel without the help from probation I would've been homeless which would've increased my risk of using drugs and alcohol more and quite possibly returned to crime. Daisy and Mark from Gateway swiftly got me into accommodation. The transition from each move and into Detox was a smooth one and all credit has to go to the wonderful staff at Gateway.”

The staff at Gateway and in the Detox facility have been incredibly supportive and enabled me to address and deal with my addiction. I will be going onto stage 2 housing and group with Druglink following Detox.”

Anonymous Gateway client

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“ Before I made it to Druglink I had just left rehab and was homeless, I wasn't in a good place. I was also being stalked by my ex which left me feeling unsafe and scared. I didn't know what he was going to do or say next.

I needed extra support and I wanted to be safe. I needed help and was lucky to find a place at Druglink. I have felt a lot safer since being with Druglink.

I've met some really nice people. I wasn't used to spending so much time with other girls and it has been a good experience. It has been great having the extra support there if I needed it. I have also been able to attend addiction recovery groups which have helped me stay clean and sober. If I didn't have my Druglink key worker to keep me on the straight and narrow I would be a lot worse off.

I am now clean from drugs and drink. My confidence has grown now that I am in a safe environment. I'm still not clear what the future holds for me, but the strategies I have been taught whilst here will definitely help me get my life back to where I want it to be. **”**

Anonymous Safer Places client

3.5 GENERAL ACTIVITY

Druglink continue to provide floating support to residents who move on to other tenancies. We have continued to improve our offer to clients introducing 'tenancy maintenance' skills and moving them on to appropriate secure accommodation. We give intensive support to clients to; get GP registered, reinstate benefits, reduce self-harm, reduce drug use, re-establish family contact, gain 'Settled Status'.

A Diversion

During the year to 31 March 2023, Druglink have continued to provide our national Diversion education and awareness sessions in partnership with 18 Police forces across the UK. Diversion courses provide an early intervention for people who have committed an alcohol-related or drugs-related offence. These 'Out of Court Disposals' (OoCDs) - usually a Community Resolution or a Conditional Caution - provide a Diversionary intervention which encourages offenders to examine their actions and promotes more responsible behaviour to reduce the chances of future offending.

We give offenders important information that can help them; stay saf, make better decisions, be aware of the law, understand the consequences of their actions.

Although our courses are aimed at first time offenders they are designed to be hard-hitting. They challenge and confront whilst also informing and educating. Our trainers tailor their approach to each group to ensure that participants are engaged and get the most from their session.



During the year, we had 12,062 people referred to courses from our Police partners. 62% of referrals were for our Cannabis courses and 20% for alcohol courses with 78% being Community Resolutions.

During 22/23 we had interest from Greater Manchester Police and City of London police. Both are still in discussion and we hope they become confirmed Police partner soon.

Our Drug diversion course with Thames Valley Police (that launched in November 21) was one of three schemes being evaluated by the NIHR National drug diversion evaluation throughout 22/23. We are yet to see the analysis and results of the evaluation.

We maintained our Hardship Fund to provide financial assistance to those who needed to undertake the course but could not afford it. We supported an increasing number of clients to complete the course using the fund. Police forces across the country are now recognising the importance of this fund and several forces are now operating a similar fund.

“It was a real eye opener and, in my opinion, that course should be more widely recognised. It's made me realise I need to take what was said seriously and further steps need to be addressed.”

Diversion course attendee

druglink
diversion

5 Communications & Marketing

Through the many challenges of 2022/2023 – still recovering from the impact of the COVID pandemic, the increasing cost of living – we were unwavering in our commitment to driving awareness and engagement. We are deeply grateful for the unyielding help of our donors, volunteers, and the individuals and families whose lives we've touched. During 22/23 we took the opportunity to shout about the amazing work Druglink does, and we received huge amounts of support from the industry and community.

We were delighted that our **Oxygen Recovery Team won the Hertfordshire Care Awards 'Outstanding Achievement Award'**. The award was given for their hard work and dedication over the pandemic and how they managed client care at our residential detox and rehabilitation service.

Infinity Home Solutions, a local decorating company, ran a **Christmas competition in 2022 to raise money for Druglink**. All funds raised from selling tickets was donated to Druglink and the prize was to decorate one room in the winners' home for free. **They raised over £600 for us.**

We carried out numerous fundraising campaigns throughout the year; **we raised almost £3500 from The Big Give Christmas Challenge and over £9000 in the Aviva Community Fund**. Our Communications Director ran the London Marathon – her first ever marathon – and **raised an incredible £2000 for Druglink.**



One of Druglink's key aims continues to be acting as good neighbours to our local community.

We are extremely proud of our work with Kings Langley Football Club who have continued to be active supporters during the past year. They have raised a considerable sum of money to support us this year and we are partnering with them again in 2023.

At the beginning of 2023 we ran a free parent workshop with Kings Langley Football Club, where people could ask for advice or information on any questions, issues of concern they had relating to alcohol and other drugs.

6 Coffee Ethic

Coffee Ethic saw struggles during the 22/23 period. The Civic Centre location proved to be limiting as many members of staff are still working from home, therefore reducing footfall to the cart. Despite this we continued to train a small number of clients on the cart and are continuing to support the development of this activity.



“Coffee Ethic has been really good for me. Nadia is so friendly and I like being involved and learning new skills - it makes me feel useful. Some customers ask me how I’m doing in my recovery and that makes me feel like they care. It makes me want to work hard and not let them down.”
Coffee Ethic Volunteer

we change futures

we do the right thing

we do our best

we support each other

Our Charity

In order to meet our charitable objectives most effectively we need to be an efficient and effective organisation.

During 2022/23 we have continued to invest in making Druglink a good and efficient place to work.

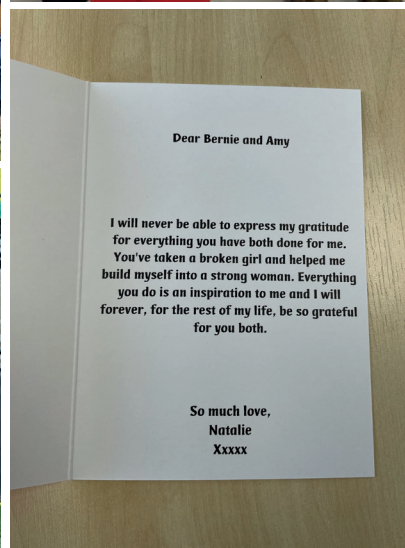
We introduced a brand new Wifi and phone system across the charity. Fibre was installed at all properties. As part of this process we installed a call centre software package as part of our Diversion service to enable us to monitor call rates.

All Druglink staff carried out and completed an online health and safety training programme. The senior management team carried out management training as part of the HCPA Inspire Framework.

We updated and added to our company benefits – we are committed to the health and wellbeing of our staff and ensuring Druglink is a desirable place to work.

Our staff team have, as always, been amazing over the past year. They have coped with the fallout and side effects of the COVID pandemic, and were faced with the challenges of the ever increasing cost of living. Staff had to adapt to tighter budgets in the provision of services and care and they have consistently gone 'above and beyond' what is expected of them because of the personal commitment to our clients that they bring with them into work every day.

Druglink believe that we Change Futures for people. Our activity across all of our services and throughout our organisation during 2022/23 has underlined our determination to Change Futures through our charitable work.



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Notes Page



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