

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26



Neath Port Talbot &
Swansea

Drug and Alcohol
Leadership Board

Connecting Services, Empowering People, **Transforming Lives**

Reflecting on progress and
partnerships that are making
a difference across
Swansea and
Neath Port Talbot.



OUR VISION

To help people, families and communities thrive
by reducing the harms from drugs and alcohol.



CONNECTING SERVICES

Working together across
organisations and communities
to deliver joined-up support.



EMPOWERING PEOPLE

Putting people at the heart
of decisions and creating
opportunities for change.



TRANSFORMING LIVES

Supporting recovery, improving
wellbeing and building brighter
futures together.



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Prawf Cymru
Wales Probation



Cyngor **Abertawe**
Swansea Council



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Bae Abertawe
Swansea Bay University
Health Board



Comisiynydd
yr Heddlu a
Throseddau
De Cymru
South Wales
Police and Crime
Commissioner



CONNECTING SERVICES



EMPOWERING PEOPLE



TRANSFORMING LIVES

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LIVES

CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Neath Port Talbot & Swansea Drug and Alcohol Leadership Board Annual Report for 2025/26.

This year has been one of significant change and progress for drug and alcohol services across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. Through strong partnership working, we have strengthened collaboration, improved services and laid the foundations for a more integrated approach to reducing harm and supporting recovery.

Key achievements include the transition from the Area Planning Board to the Drug and Alcohol Leadership Board, the development of a new regional Strategy and Delivery Plan in response to Turning the Tide, and the mobilisation of the new Alliance model for service delivery.

Throughout the year, we have continued to invest in prevention, treatment, recovery and harm reduction, while ensuring the voices of people with lived and living experience help shape our work and future priorities.

These achievements would not have been possible without the commitment of our partners, providers, staff, volunteers, Board members and communities. While challenges remain, we can be proud of the progress made and remain committed to improving outcomes and creating healthier, safer and more resilient communities across our region.



Marie Davies

Director of Planning and Partnerships,
Swansea Bay University Health Board

Chair,
Drug and Alcohol Leadership Board



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**EMPOWERING
PEOPLE**



**TRANSFORMING
LIVES**

ABOUT THE BOARD

Working Together to Reduce Harm and Improve Lives

OUR VISION

To help people, families and communities **thrive** by reducing the harms from drugs and alcohol.



The Drug and Alcohol Leadership Board (DALB) brings together organisations across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot to work towards a shared goal: **reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol and improving outcomes for individuals, families and communities.**



Working with local authorities, health services, criminal justice partners, service providers and people with lived and living experience, the DALB helps ensure that **support services are planned, coordinated and delivered effectively across the region.**



The Board oversees the development of local strategies and priorities, supports collaboration between partner organisations, and promotes approaches that focus on **prevention, treatment, recovery and harm reduction.**



Dedicated partnership groups support the delivery of this work, helping to turn shared ambitions into **practical improvements that make a difference to people's lives.**

OUR PRIORITIES



LISTEN AND RESPOND

To listen and respond to what matters most to people, ensuring services are accessible, tailored and inclusive for all.



COLLABORATE AND DELIVER

To collaborate with people and partner agencies to deliver effective interventions with a skilled and confident workforce.



PREVENT HARM EARLY

To prioritise prevention, early intervention and education to reduce escalation of substance use harms.



LEAD AND IMPROVE

To embed oversight through leadership, governance and accountability, driving improvement and innovation.



CHALLENGE STIGMA

To challenge stigma, promote understanding and foster positive cultural shifts.

OUR VALUES



Open and Inclusive Culture



Shared Purpose and Priorities



Mutual Respect and Active Listening



Solution Focused Collaboration



Effective Planning and Delivery

TOGETHER, WE ARE



CONNECTING SERVICES

Bringing organisations together to provide coordinated and effective support.



EMPOWERING PEOPLE

Ensuring people with lived and living experience help shape decisions and services.



TRANSFORMING LIVES

Supporting prevention, recovery and wellbeing to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

2025/26
A YEAR OF
PROGRESS

Building a Stronger Drug and Alcohol System



Together, partners across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot have continued to strengthen the regional response to drug and alcohol-related harm, laying the foundations for a more connected, person-centred and sustainable system.



1

Transitioned from APB to DALB

Providing stronger leadership and partnership across the region.



2

Developed a New Strategy

Co-produced with partners and people with lived and living experience.



3

Progressed the Alliance Model

Supporting a more integrated and coordinated approach to services.



4

Strengthened Partnership Working

Bringing together organisations to improve outcomes for communities.



5

Expanded Lived Experience Involvement

Ensuring people with lived and living experience help shape decisions and services.



6

Continued Investment in Harm Reduction

Supporting safer communities through prevention, early intervention and lifesaving initiatives.



7

Improved Data and Performance Monitoring

Strengthening insight, accountability and evidence-based decision making.



SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Across Our Communities 



CONNECTING
SERVICES



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PEOPLE



TRANSFORMING
LIVES



Throughout 2025/26, partners across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot continued to work together to ensure that people affected by drug and alcohol use could access timely, effective and person-centred support. Despite increasing demand and significant service transformation, services remained focused on improving access, reducing barriers and creating clearer pathways into treatment and recovery.

1



MORE PEOPLE ACCESSING SUPPORT

More people than ever before accessed support during 2025/26. Demand increased across both clinical and non-clinical services, with more individuals reaching out for help and being successfully connected to treatment and recovery services. Stronger partnerships with criminal justice services, improved referral pathways and increased awareness of available support all contributed to more people accessing help when they needed it. The Board also continued to prioritise early intervention and community-based support, helping people engage with services at an earlier stage.



2



INCREASED ENGAGEMENT ACROSS SERVICES

Partners worked hard to strengthen engagement with people who may previously have found it difficult to access support. Services developed improved routes into treatment, increased outreach activity and adopted more joined-up approaches across organisations. Multi-agency initiatives such as the Intensive Multi-Agency Panel (IMAP) and targeted outreach programmes helped improve engagement with people experiencing multiple and complex needs, including those affected by homelessness, poor mental health and social exclusion. These collaborative approaches have helped ensure that support is available to people wherever they enter the system.



3



IMPROVED TREATMENT PATHWAYS

A major focus during the year was improving how people move through the treatment system. Work undertaken through the development of the Alliance model has strengthened coordination between providers and reduced fragmentation across services. Referral pathways have been streamlined, access routes clarified and governance arrangements strengthened to support a more seamless experience for individuals seeking help. The Board also continued to use learning from audits, reviews and performance monitoring to identify opportunities for improvement and improve the quality and consistency of support available across the region.



4



EXPANDED PRESCRIBING OPTIONS

Access to prescribing support continued to develop throughout 2025/26. The integration of Rapid Access to Prescribing pathways has improved access to clinical interventions and supported earlier engagement with treatment. Partners have continued to explore innovative approaches to prescribing, helping ensure services remain responsive to need and offer a range of evidence-based options to support recovery and reduce harm. Alongside this, work has continued to strengthen prescribing pathways and improve coordination between clinical and community-based services.



5



CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION

The DALB remains committed to ensuring that residential rehabilitation is available for individuals with the most complex needs. During the year, dedicated funding supported access to specialist residential rehabilitation placements through a multi-agency assessment process that ensures people receive the most appropriate level of support. Rehabilitation continues to play an important role within the wider treatment and recovery system, offering people the opportunity to develop the skills, confidence and foundations needed to support long-term recovery. The Board remains committed to maintaining access to this important element of the care pathway.



6



BUILDING A STRONGER SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

Together, these developments have helped create a more connected, accessible and person-centred system across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. By improving access, strengthening partnerships and investing in a broader range of treatment and recovery options, the DALB and its partners continue to support people to reduce harm, improve wellbeing and achieve lasting recovery.



“

Together, these improvements have helped create a more accessible, coordinated and person-centred system, enabling more people across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot to access the support they need to reduce harm, improve wellbeing and build lasting recovery.

”

AT A
GLANCE



More people
accessing support
than ever before



Stronger engagement
across services
and communities



Improved treatment
pathways and
coordination



Expanded
prescribing
options



Continued investment
in residential
rehabilitation



A stronger,
more connected
system of support

HARM REDUCTION

Working together to keep people safer and healthier

Reducing harm remains a key priority for the DALB and its partners. Throughout 2025/26, organisations worked together to deliver life-saving interventions, improve access to support and respond to emerging substance use risks.



The region saw a reduction in deaths notified for review and a reduction in non-fatal overdoses compared with the previous year.

Partners continue to use this information to identify trends, improve services and strengthen prevention activity.



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“Every intervention matters. From delivering naloxone and blood-borne virus testing to identifying emerging drug trends and reaching people through community outreach, harm reduction helps save lives, reduce inequalities and create opportunities for recovery.”

Protecting Lives

1



Naloxone remains a priority

- 24% increase in naloxone supply in Neath Port Talbot and expanded access across community settings.
- HMP Swansea achieved the highest rate of naloxone distribution across the prison estate in Wales.
- Plans to expand access into housing, homelessness, mental health and wider community settings.



2



More people accessing Needle and Syringe Programme Services (NSP)

- 5% increase in individuals accessing NSP across the region.
- Neath Port Talbot showed an increase of 10% in transactions and 15% increase in individuals using NSP.
- NSP continues to provide an important point of contact for people who inject drugs and support safer injecting practices and reduce harms.



Keeping People Safe

Supporting People

3



More Blood Borne Virus (BBV) screening completed

- BBV prevention and testing remained a major focus throughout the year.
- Routine testing was further embedded within specialist substance use services.
- 6% increase in blood-borne virus tests completed during the year.
- Regional BBV Action Plan adopted to strengthen our approach to testing, treatment and accountability.



4



Improved intelligence and monitoring

- Updated our Local Drug Information System.
- Enhanced dashboards supporting earlier intervention and better decision-making.



Reducing Risk

Working Together

5



Responding to emerging risks

Changing drug trends, including ketamine, synthetic opioids, benzodiazepine analogues and increasing cocaine-related harms

- Established a Ketamine working group
- Established a Harm Reduction Innovation Fund
- Enhanced intelligence to develop a coordinated multi-agency response



LEARNING & IMPROVEMENT

Learning, Listening and Improving Together

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Continuous learning is essential to improving outcomes for people and communities. Throughout 2025/26, the DALB strengthened its approach to quality assurance, performance improvement and organisational learning.

By reviewing, reflecting and acting on learning, partners have continued to improve services, strengthen pathways and support better outcomes.

1



INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL

The Independent Review Panel helps identify learning from cases where substance use may have been a contributing factor. By bringing together a range of partners and lived experience representatives, the Panel identifies opportunities to improve services, strengthen partnership working and share good practice. Learning is monitored and used to drive improvements across the system.

KEY IMPACT

- ✓ Learning shared across the system
- ✓ Good practice identified
- ✓ Service improvements monitored and implemented

2



LEARNING FROM PRACTICE REVIEWS

Learning from Practice reviews help identify opportunities to improve services, strengthen pathways and enhance the support people receive. During 2025/26, this work led to improvements in recording standards, risk and safeguarding processes, and service design, with learning directly influencing the development of new pathways within the Alliance model.

KEY IMPACT

- ✓ Improved recording standards
- ✓ Stronger safeguarding processes
- ✓ Learning embedded into the Alliance model

3



PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Performance monitoring helps the DALB and its partners understand what is working well and where improvements are needed. During 2025/26, enhanced dashboards and reporting tools strengthened oversight across the system, supporting better decision-making and service development. This has helped increase service capacity, improve workforce training, strengthen data quality and reporting, and support ongoing improvements to access, treatment pathways and the overall quality of services.

KEY IMPACT

- ✓ Increased service capacity
- ✓ Enhanced workforce training
- ✓ Improved access and treatment pathways
- ✓ Better data quality and reporting

AT A GLANCE



84

learning points identified through Independent Review Panel case reviews.



95%

of recommendations completed or in progress, demonstrating a strong commitment to improvement.



Learning from Practice reviews helped strengthen risk management, safeguarding and service pathway.



Enhanced dashboards and performance reporting improved oversight, accountability and decision-making.



Learning directly influenced service redesign, including improvements incorporated into the Alliance model and future service delivery arrangements.

OUR CYCLE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



REVIEW

We look at what is happening



LEARN

We understand what we can do better



IMPROVE

We make changes and strengthen practices



DELIVER BETTER SERVICES

Better support, better outcomes



REVIEW AGAIN

We keep learning and improving



“ Learning and improvement are at the heart of everything we do. By listening, reviewing, reflecting and acting on what we learn, we continue to strengthen services, improve safety and ensure that support for individuals and families is informed by evidence, experience and continuous improvement. ”



LIVED & LIVING EXPERIENCE

From Voice to Impact



LIVED EXPERIENCE ALLIANCE FORUM

People with lived and living experience continue to play a central role in shaping substance use services across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. Throughout 2025/26, the LEAF (Lived Experience Alliance Forum) worked alongside partners to influence decision-making, contribute to service redesign and help ensure that services are responsive, inclusive and person-centred.

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Members reported feeling valued, listened to and able to influence service design and decision-making.

1 MINISTER ENGAGEMENT

During the year, LEAF members met with the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing to share their experiences of recovery and highlight the challenges people can face when rebuilding their health and wellbeing following substance use. This provided an important opportunity to ensure lived experience informed discussions at a national level and helped raise awareness of the barriers that individuals and families can encounter.



2 INCLUSION HEALTH SUMMIT

LEAF members played a leading role at the Public Health Wales Inclusion Health Summit, delivering an "Experts by Experience" session focused on the barriers faced by people affected by substance use. Their contribution helped promote more compassionate, inclusive and person-centred approaches across health and public services.



3 SHAPING SERVICE REDESIGN

People with lived and living experience were actively involved in shaping key developments throughout the year, including the DALB rebrand and the development of the new Drug and Alcohol Strategy. Their feedback and insights helped ensure these changes reflected the needs, priorities and experiences of the people who use services.



4 INFLUENCING THE ALLIANCE MODEL

Lived experience was fully embedded within the development of the Alliance model. LEAF members participated in consultations, review processes and decision-making activities, helping shape the future design and delivery of regional substance use services. Their involvement demonstrated the value of co-production and strengthened partnerships across the system.



5 LEAF ACHIEVEMENTS

2025/26 was one of LEAF's most active and productive years to date. Members contributed to consultations, workforce training, strategy development and service improvement activities across the region. Alongside influencing system transformation, LEAF continued to strengthen its own co-production approach, increase member involvement and support opportunities for people to build confidence, develop new skills and contribute to positive change.



6 BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE TOGETHER

The voice of lived and living experience continues to be a driving force in shaping better, more inclusive and effective services. Looking ahead, LEAF will continue to be at the heart of decision-making, ensuring that services are shaped by the people who use them and creating opportunities for lasting change across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.



Voices from the LEAF Community:



"When I was up there speaking I could see people smiling and really listening to me, this was a first as I always feel little and not really heard."



"It's scary when you realise you're part of something this big, and that the decisions you make can have a real impact."



"At the APB meeting, I was genuinely surprised to hear that what we had shared during consultation would directly shape the decisions being taken. It made me feel truly respected and valued."

AT A GLANCE



Lived experience influencing strategy and service design



Engagement at national level



Active role in consultations, training and improvement



Co-production shaping the future



Stronger, more inclusive services for our communities



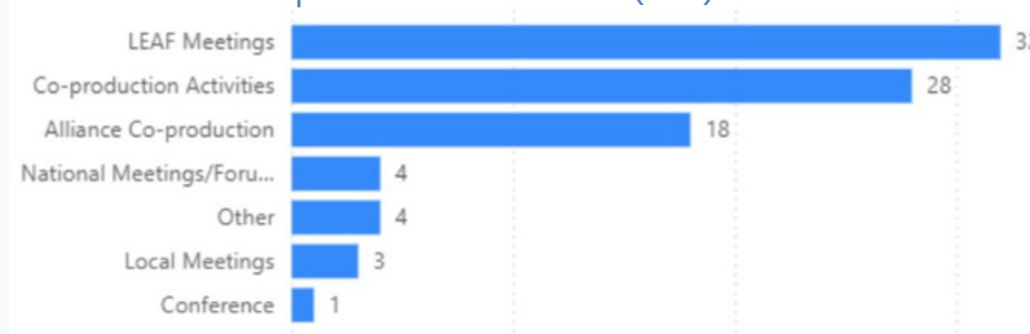
When people with lived and living experience are at the heart of decision-making, services are more inclusive, more responsive and more effective for everyone.



LIVED & LIVING EXPERIENCE

From Voice to Impact

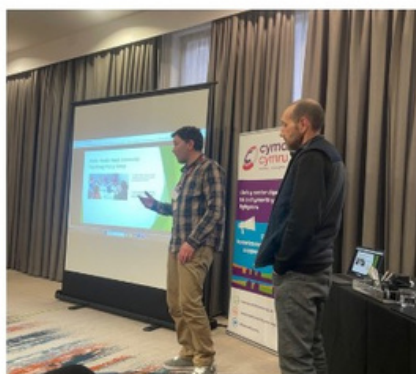
Number of Lived experience alliance forum (LEAF) activities undertaken 25/26



Minister for Mental Health & Wellbeing



Public Health Wales Health Inclusion Summit



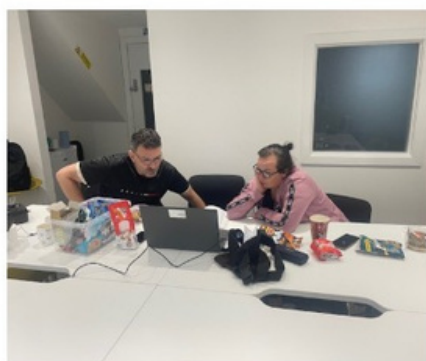
Student Social Work Stigma Session



APB Substance Use Strategy Consultation



Alliance Panel Moderation Scoring



LEAF Celebration and Reflective Lunch



“ Services are strongere when shaped by the people who use them. By placing **lived and living experience** at the centre of decision-making, the DALB continues to develop more inclusive, responsive and effective services that reflect the needs and aspirations of our communities. ”



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LIVES

WORKING TOGETHER to Reduce Harm

Working together is key to reducing harm. Throughout 2025/26, partners across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot collaborated to support people facing complex challenges through coordinated services, outreach and peer-led approaches. By combining expertise, lived experience and community engagement, services helped people access support, reduce risk and improve wellbeing.



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AT A GLANCE



PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER

Health, housing, social care, criminal justice and substance use services worked together to provide more coordinated support for people with complex needs.



SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

IMAP strengthened collaboration and information sharing, helping services develop joined-up responses and improve access to support.



POWER OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

SAFE Peer volunteers worked alongside services to provide outreach, reduce isolation, promote naloxone and help people access support.



REACHING COMMUNITIES

Joint outreach activity helped engage people in community settings, temporary accommodation and housing services who may otherwise not access support.



REDUCING HARM THROUGH COLLABORATION

Partnership working, peer support and community engagement helped reduce barriers, strengthen connections and improve wellbeing.

1



THE INTENSIVE MULTI-AGENCY PANEL (IMAP)

Brings together partners from health, housing, social care, criminal justice and substance use services to support people with the most complex needs.



By working together, services can share information, coordinate support and develop more joined-up responses, helping people access the right support at the right time.

2



SAFE PEER VOLUNTEERS

SAFE Peer volunteers work alongside services to provide outreach, reduce isolation, promote naloxone, deliver training and help people access support.



By sharing their lived experience, they help build trust, strengthen engagement and connect people with services and opportunities for recovery.

3



OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Outreach plays an important role in helping people access support and stay connected. Throughout 2025/26, partners worked together across community, housing and health settings to reach individuals who may be at risk of isolation or disengagement.



Joint outreach by peer volunteers and services helped raise awareness, improve access to support and promote safer choices within local communities.

4



PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

One of the strongest themes emerging throughout the year has been the importance of collaboration. Whether through IMAP, peer-led outreach, housing partnerships, criminal justice services or community-based support, organisations have continued to work together to provide a more coordinated response to drug and alcohol-related harm.



This shared commitment has helped strengthen engagement, improve access to services and support people with some of the most complex needs across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

“

Working together helps us reach people earlier, provide more coordinated support and reduce harm more effectively. By combining professional expertise with lived experience, partners across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot are helping to build stronger, safer and more connected communities.

”



Strong
partnerships



Coordinated
support



Community
outreach



Reducing
harm



Stronger
communities

LOOKING FORWARD

Our Priorities for 2026/27 and Beyond

Building on the progress made during 2025/26, the DALB and our partners will continue to work together to reduce harm, improve wellbeing and create brighter futures for individuals, families and communities across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.



Neath Port Talbot &
Swansea

Drug and Alcohol
Leadership Board

Connecting Services, Empowering People, Transforming Lives



1 EMBEDDING THE ALLIANCE MODEL

A key priority is to embed the Alliance model and strengthen integrated ways of working across the region. By bringing organisations together around shared goals, resources and accountability, the Alliance will deliver more coordinated, person-centred services and better outcomes for people.



2 DELIVERING THE NEW STRATEGY

We will oversee the implementation of the new Drug and Alcohol Strategy and Delivery Plan, shaped by partners and people with lived and living experience. The strategy provides a shared framework for reducing harm, improving wellbeing and strengthening recovery across our communities.



3 EXPANDING PREVENTION ACTIVITY

Prevention and early intervention remain central to our approach. We will continue to develop initiatives that raise awareness, reduce stigma, support children, young people and families, and help prevent substance-related harm before it occurs.



4 STRENGTHENING HARM REDUCTION

We will build on our strong harm reduction foundations by expanding access to evidence-based interventions, responding to emerging drug trends and ensuring services are informed by learning, intelligence and best practice.



5 INCREASING PARTICIPATION AND CO-PRODUCTION

People with lived and living experience will continue to play a central role in shaping services and decisions. We will strengthen opportunities for participation and co-production to ensure services reflect the voices and priorities of the people they support.



6 IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Our ultimate aim is healthier, safer and more resilient communities. By strengthening partnerships and improving access to support, we will continue to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities across Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.



KEY MESSAGE

The year ahead is about building on the foundations laid during 2025/26. By working together, listening to lived experience and continuing to invest in prevention, harm reduction and recovery, we will deliver the next phase of transformation and create lasting positive change for our communities.



CONNECTING SERVICES
Working together across
organisations and communities.



EMPOWERING PEOPLE
Ensuring people are heard,
supported and able to shape change.



TRANSFORMING LIVES
Creating opportunities for healthier,
safer and more fulfilling lives.

Understanding Some of the Terms Used in This Report

Harm Reduction

Practical actions that help keep people safe and healthy, reduce the risk of injury, illness or death, and provide opportunities for people to access support and recovery services.

Naloxone

A life-saving medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and provide time for emergency medical help to arrive.

APB

APB

Area Planning Board

The previous name of the partnership before it became the Drug and Alcohol Leadership Board (DALB) in 2025/26.

NSP

NSP

Needle and Syringe Programme

A service that provides sterile injecting equipment and advice to help reduce health risks associated with drug use.

Alliance

A way of working where organisations share responsibility and work together as one team to improve services and outcomes for people who need support.

BBV

BBV

Blood-Borne Virus

Viruses such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV that can be passed from one person to another through blood. Testing helps identify infections early and improve access to treatment.

LEAF

LEAF

Lived Experience Alliance Forum

A group of people with personal experience of drug or alcohol-related challenges who help shape services, influence decisions and improve support for others.

Residential Rehabilitation

Specialist accommodation-based support that helps people address drug or alcohol-related problems and build skills for long-term recovery.

Lived and Living Experience

People who have experienced drug or alcohol-related challenges themselves, or have supported someone who has. Their experiences help improve services and decision-making.

Prevention

Activities that help stop drug or alcohol-related problems from occurring or becoming more serious. This can include education, raising awareness and early support.

IMAP

IMAP

Intensive Multi-Agency Panel

A group of organisations that work together to support people facing multiple and complex challenges. This helps ensure people receive coordinated support from different services.

Co-production

Working together with people who use services to design, improve and evaluate support. It means decisions are made with people, not just for them.

Recovery

A personal journey of improving health, wellbeing and quality of life, while reducing the impact of drug or alcohol-related difficulties.