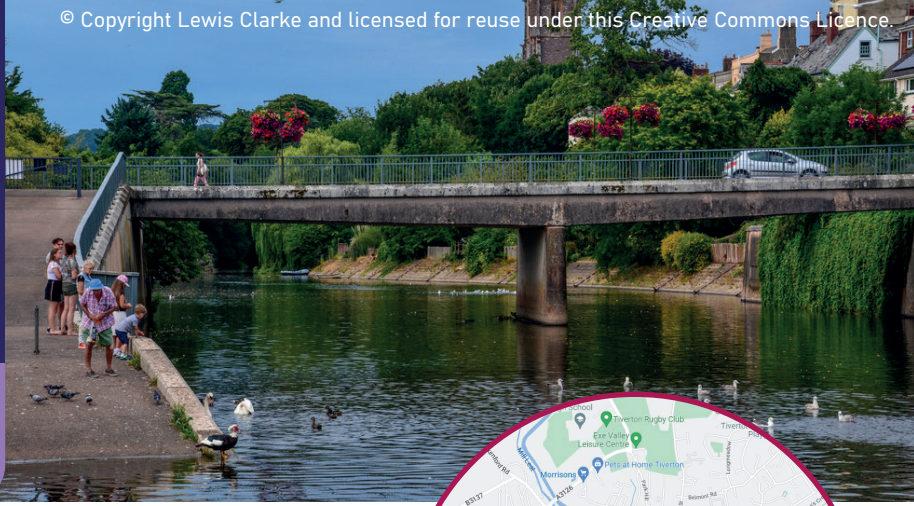
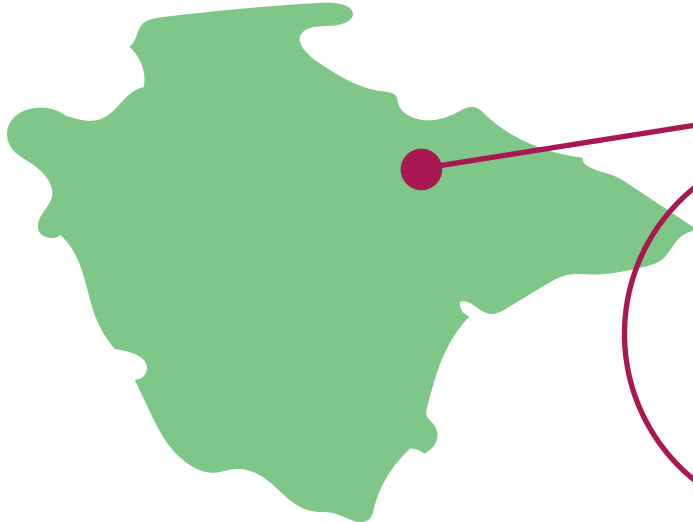


Public Health Outreach Team Insight Snapshots 2023

#4 TIVERTON



PROJECT: COMPLEX LIVES



“There’s a need for funding for mental health support for CHAT attendees.”

IN A NUTSHELL...

The Public Health Outreach Team initially made contact in the community via a monthly Complex Lives Clinic being run with Together from the former Heathcoat School complex in Tiverton. Participants at the clinic included people experiencing homelessness, and those with drug and alcohol disorders. Since November this clinic has moved to Tiverton CHAT (Churches Housing Action Team) in the centre of Tiverton, which has proved more accessible. CHAT provides free, impartial support and advice to those who are homeless or in hardship. The Public Health Outreach Team now co-ordinates the input from specialist health teams at this monthly clinic.

NEEDS, GAPS AND BARRIERS

Discussions with clients, Together staff, and CHAT identified a need for mental health support. There is a widening gap between those attending CHAT who are reporting mental health issues and those who are receiving specialist mental health support. This is particularly acute for those who have a dual diagnosis of drug and alcohol misuse and mental health issues. Other needs are:

- dental and oral health
- counselling and support for those who are bereaved or suffering loneliness and social isolation – especially those living in rural Mid Devon where public transport is lacking and too costly for many to afford

COMMUNITY VISION – WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

CHAT’s base is a community hub – a trusted space with trusted faces in Tiverton – that has traditionally focussed on homelessness and helping people with debt and poverty issues. They also run a food provision service, the use of which has grown hugely in the last year. The communities who visit CHAT are amongst the most vulnerable of Health Inclusion Groups who need services to integrate and to come to them, face-to-face, in this trusted environment – rather than having to make separate appointments via a GP or find themselves talking to an anonymous person on telephone support call.



ROLE OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH OUTREACH TEAM

Most importantly the Outreach Team officer has become a trusted face in CHAT, directly interacting with Together drug and alcohol misuse clients at clinics and meetings to find out which services are needed to bring into the clinic. CHAT is already working at full stretch, so the Outreach Team has added paid officer time on the ground to co-ordinate clinics, ensuring that the relevant services (CHAT, Together, GP surgeries) are liaising with one another.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

- Bringing a mental health team to the monthly clinics.
- 11 direct referrals for this service in the first two clinics.
- The no-shows of this service subsequently have led to clinics having to be cancelled at short notice

Bringing a sexual health advisor to the January 2023 clinic

- Providing oral health services.
- 3 direct referrals from individuals with drug and alcohol abuse histories, who needed urgent care

Successful delivery of Covid-19 vaccine to low-uptake cohorts (particularly individuals experiencing homelessness)

Facilitating a joined-up approach to service delivery amongst the existing providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS

There is a real need for funding for mental health support for CHAT attendees – particularly around loneliness and isolation. Also a need for innovative transport solutions in this area of Mid Devon where public transport is patchy. Service providers need to have policies and funding for outreach services to come to CHAT – face-to-face, not remote via internet or phone. Systems and culture changes within health service providers may need to take place for this to happen.

Community Support by Steve Feasey of Devon Public Health Outreach Team.
Snapshot Designed by Devon Communities Together.