

SUMMARY

Prison leavers shared their experiences of accessing support from drug and alcohol services, and how they could be improved.



Awareness of drug and alcohol services needs to be improved to encourage people using drugs and/or alcohol get the help they need. Most participants found out about drug and alcohol services through the criminal justice system and were supported by the system to access support upon their release from prison.



Lack of motivation and/or willpower was the greatest barrier to accessing support. Only a small number of participants faced physical barriers which prevented them from accessing drug and alcohol services, with most stating that support is easily accessible.



Receiving timely support is crucial for preventing relapse. All participants were able to access drug and alcohol services in a timely manner, with many receiving immediate support upon their release from prison.



Participants had very positive experiences of receiving support from drug and alcohol services. In particular they praised the care they received from staff and key workers. Areas for improvement included reducing the turnover of key workers, encouraging attendance at peer support groups, and providing easier access to methadone prescriptions.



Accessing support to reintegrate into society and the community is a significant challenge. Participants shared the areas they have struggled with since being released from prison – including finding appropriate housing, registering with a GP, accessing financial support, rebuilding relationships, and finding employment.

Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council has welcomed this report and the findings will feed into the Council's Drug and Alcohol Strategy delivery plan, along with other recommendations we have made to support the improvement of service provision. Additional reports on drug and alcohol services can be found on our [website](#).