

Naloxone - West Midlands PCC response

Good morning Diane,

Please find below responses to questions in a letter sent by the Chair of the Health Committee to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, Simon Foster along with some additional information which is attached.

I hope these responses are helpful and if you require any further information in relation to either naloxone or the work being done in the West Midlands in this area – do get in touch with my colleague Dan Gordon cc'd.

1. What has the trial of naloxone achieved so far in the West Midlands area?

West Midlands Police, in partnership with West Midlands OPCC, were the first police force in the UK in which officers were trained and equipped with Nyxoid (nasal spray version of Naloxone). This started as a pilot of officers in Birmingham city centre, but has since been expanded to officers in Walsall and Sandwell. So far, over 150 officers are trained with and carry Naloxone. The ultimate ambition is to train officers from all of the NPUs in West Midlands police.

It is hard to show substantive success, without properly recorded use of the Nyxoid. To start with, we had issues with officers recording their use and we have continued to see this. We have been informed that there have so far been two uses of Nyxoid but due to lack of recording, we are unsure about the context of the use.

Despite this, we would argue the biggest success has been paving the way for police forces around the country to follow in our footsteps. Countless forces have been in touch with us for us to share our learning. We are national leaders on this issue. The reaction of officers has also been hugely positive. Every officer trained has agreed to carry a Nyxoid kit. Generally, there are wider benefits of this in terms of perception shifting within WMP and also changing the perception of WMP to drug users.

We completed an internal evaluation of the pilot in 2020. See attached.

2. How has the local community (both the drug-using community and wider community) reacted to the police carrying naloxone?

Initial work was done by a WMP officer where they engaged with service users of drugs treatment.

Overwhelmingly, service users were very positive about officers carrying Nyxoid. It helped change the perceptions of the police to being a body that supports, rather than punishes drug users.

See attached for work of that officer and also see evaluation.

3. What is the experience so far of the police officers involved in the trial?

So far, every officer that has received the training has agreed to be equipped with a Naloxone kit. Anecdotally, the feedback we have had from officers and treatment providers has been very positive. Fundamentally, most police officers just want to help people and this provides another avenue in which this support can be given.

I have also attached a dissertation from David Neale (Walsall Public Health) who researched officer views towards naloxone. Also see evaluation.

4. From your experience of the trial so far, what do you think would be the key benefits of a wider rollout of naloxone for police forces the country?

Drug related deaths are at record levels in the UK. Police officers are often the first on the scene in overdose situations. Officers being able to carry Naloxone means a greater chance that people's lives can be saved. This alone is the key benefit. The more people carrying Naloxone, the more people that could potentially save a life. This is an addition to the less tangible benefits of improving public perceptions of the police.

5. From your experience so far, what do you think would be the key concerns and barriers associated with a wider rollout of naloxone for police forces across the country?

See attached evaluation.

6. Do you feel it would be beneficial for England to have a national naloxone programme, as is the case with Wales and Scotland?

Anything that increases the supply and use of naloxone, across all organisations, would be positive. It is already working across the country in various forces, so if the Home Office were to issue national guidance that would increase the number of forces who use it, that would be welcomed.