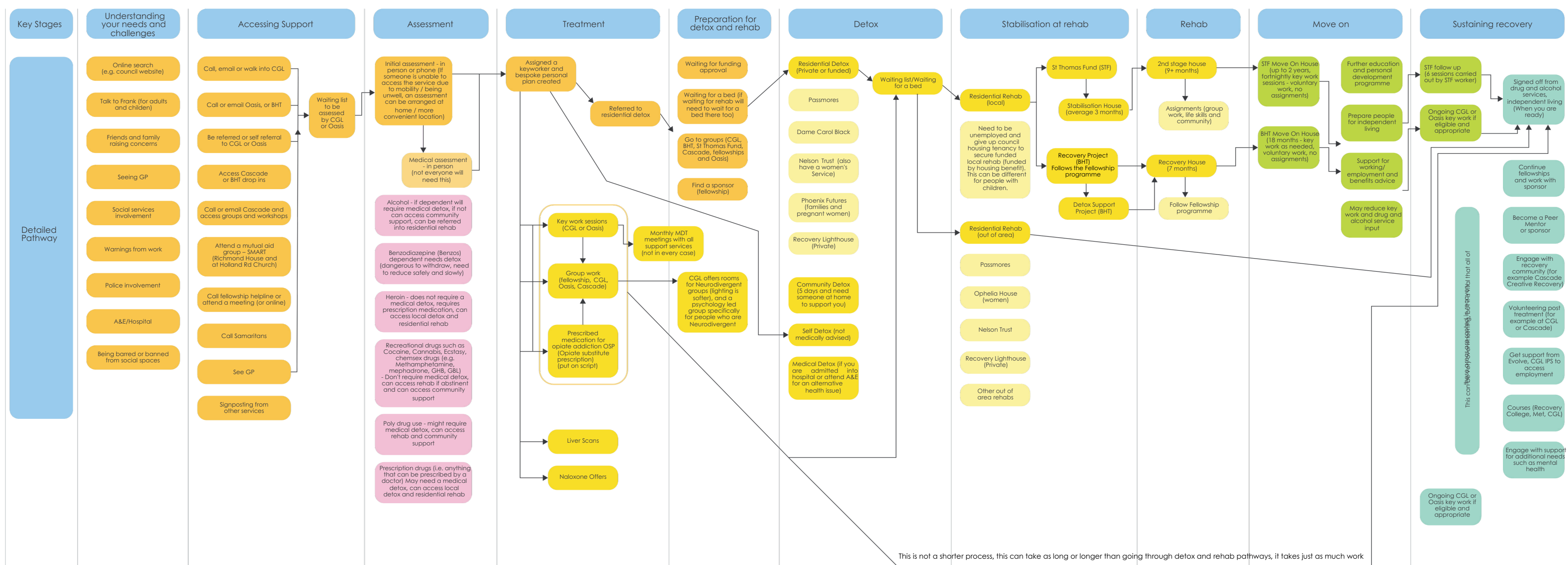
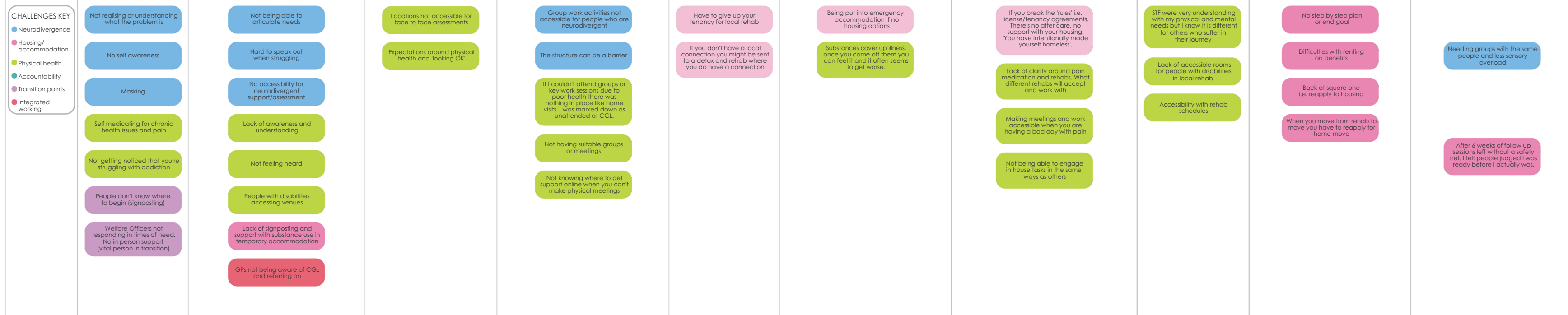


Drug and Alcohol Pathway



Challenges



Challenges encountered across the pathway

A note on this pathway
This pathway was created by people with lived experience of substance use. The group had a range of different experiences which are reflected in this work.
This pathway was created as a tool to help our discussions but we feel it can be helpful to the system.
Every journey is different and the pathway is not the same for everyone (e.g. not everyone will go to detox), it will take differing amounts of time to move through it.
We recognise that relapse can happen at any part of this pathway, people may fall out of the pathway and re-join at different points.

Glossary in relation to the drug and alcohol pathway
Detox - is the process of safely removing a substance from the body.
Rehab - a course of treatment for drug or alcohol dependence, typically at a residential (live in) facility.
Dependent - to be physically dependent on alcohol or drugs. This means it is dangerous to reduce without medical supervision.
Medical detox - is the process of safely removing a substance from the body under medical supervision with the support of prescribed medication.
Stabilisation - refers to the initial phase of treatment where a person works to achieve a stable physical and mental state by managing withdrawal symptoms, addressing immediate mental health concerns, and developing basic coping mechanisms.
Social services - is split into children services and adult social care in Brighton and Hove. They provide support for children and adults, including help with health, safety, and wellbeing.
Fellowship - refers to meetings that aim to help individuals overcome and deal with their addiction in the long term with the support of like-minded individuals around them and by following a 12 step programme. This includes groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Cocaine Anonymous (CA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA), amongst others.
SMART Recovery - a registered charity which promotes choice in recovery through a network of mutual aid meetings and online training programmes.
Neurodivergent - Neurodivergence is the term for when someone's brain processes, learns, and/or behaves differently from what is considered 'typical'. Some neurodivergent conditions include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum condition (ASC), dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia.
Emotional dysregulation is a brain-related symptom that means you have trouble managing your feelings and emotions.
Key worker - is a support worker who helps people with drug and alcohol addiction. Key workers can help people stay on track with their recovery.
Peer mentors use their experiences to help others make positive changes. Many peer mentors are in recovery or have used one of our services in the past. Others have helped or loved one through their journey.

What we mean when we talk about addiction
"Addiction is life or death"
"I didn't know I was an addict until it was almost too late"
"Addiction was somewhere I ended up after years of struggling with my mental health"
"I took it to take my pain away because nothing else worked"
You are spiralling uncontrollably, continuing harmful & dangerous behaviours despite the negative consequences and finding yourself trapped in an unbearable cycle.
You are physically unable to stop even if the will is there. Withdrawals can kill, in many cases you can't cut down on your own without medical supervision.
It's very hard to come back from the shame, regret, consequences, guilt and fear
Addiction is the end result of a much bigger issue. It's when reality becomes too unbearable to face without substances. It's using substances to avoid feelings, self-medicating physical pain or mental health challenges. For some people it's wanting to belong and for others it's wanting to escape.
It's progressive, many people will describe it as an illness. Not just because of a physical dependence, but it is so often a symptom of mental ill health. A replacement to reality that gets worse and worse.

What we mean when we talk about recovery
"It was about managing my pain in a different way"
"You can be sober but not in recovery"
"Recovery has replaced hopelessness with hopefulness"
"Recovery has given me tools for life, it has given me better solutions to my difficulties"
Recovery looks different for each person and is very personal.
Recovery is understanding why you were drinking or taking drugs.
Recovery is a new way of living, learning to live life free of substances.
Recovery is a lifelong journey that is ever changing. It's an ongoing process to rebuild and live life free of addiction. It's long term and for some it is a daily programme of working for life. Something you hope grows stronger with time but can be ever-changing depending on circumstances.
It's not just about stopping using substances and suddenly being physically abstinent. It's looking at your life and reassessing it. It's a commitment.
Don't be hard on yourself and learn to accept help and support. It's about making positive changes and accessing support with a view to life long abstinence.
Looking after yourself and your mindset is extremely important, take time for self care.
Recovery is taking back the control of your life and no longer being controlled by your substance of choice. Taking responsibility mentally & physically, thinking positively, learning new skills and rediscovering old ones and learning to enjoy life on life's terms.
"Recovery has made my life make sense by helping me to see what I'm responsible for and understand my fears and face them. It has been a safe place for me to let go and pick myself back up, bit by bit."