

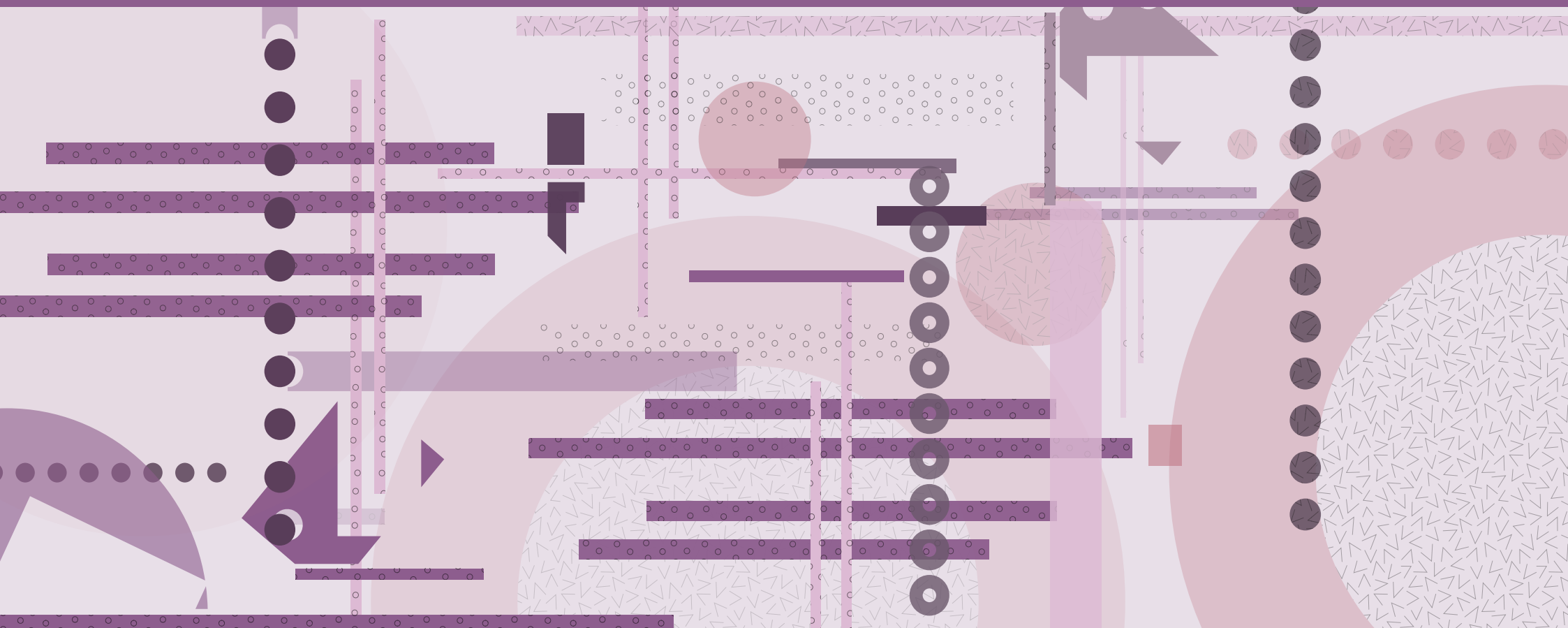
Criminal Justice Project: Drug Interventions Programme



Knowsley Drug Testing Profile (2013/14 to 2015/16)

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Key findings

- Of the 27,138 attempted drug tests across Merseyside between April 2013 and March 2016, 1,718 resided in Knowsley (6%).
- Over one-third (34%) of Knowsley residents were tested in Liverpool, followed by a slightly smaller proportion in Sefton and St Helens (32% each), while 2% were tested in Wirral.
- The number of attempted drug tests conducted on Knowsley residents reduced by 62% over the three-year period, with the greatest reduction between 2014/15 and 2015/16 (56%), while the positive drug test rate has increased.
- The positive drug test rate in 2015/16 was 58%, which is just below the figure for tests for all those arrested and tested across Merseyside overall (60%).
- Two-thirds (67%) of positive tests in 2015/16 were for cocaine only, while the remaining positive tests were for some form of opiate metabolites (22% for both cocaine and opiates; 11% for opiates only).
- Theft and Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences accounted for the largest proportions of offences recorded at the time of the drug test (34% and 33% respectively).
- The majority (86%) of Knowsley residents were male.
- Just under one-quarter (23%) were aged between 25 and 29 years.
- Almost all were White European (99%).
- There were 24 Knowsley residents who tested positive across Merseyside between April 2015 and March 2016 that subsequently re-presented and were tested again at a Merseyside custody suite during the time period. This represents 15.4% of the total individuals testing positive in 2015/16, the lowest proportion of re-presentation seen in any of the seven cohorts documented in this profile.

Introduction

The Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) process begins with the police arresting and drug testing potential drug using offenders. If offenders test positive for Class A drugs (opiates only, cocaine only or both [cocaine and opiates]), they are served with a Required Assessment (RA) by the police. This is a compulsory legal sanction for the individual to attend up to two appointments (initial/follow-up RA) with a drugs worker. During these assessments the drugs worker will assess the individual's drug and offending behaviour and, if necessary, encourage them to engage with drug treatment services (Home Office, 2010). Failure by the individual to attend the assessment(s) would result in additional breach charges being brought against them. For this reason, the police play a very important role in the early stages of this process.

Until mid-2015, Test on Arrest in Merseyside occurred when an adult was arrested for a trigger offence (offences that have a clear link to substance misuse; generally involving stealing, theft, fraud or drug) or an offence where a custody Inspector suspects specified Class A drug use was a causal or contributory factor. After a successful pilot in Wirral early in 2015, Merseyside Police rolled out a targeted drug testing approach in its custody suites, with this system fully implemented by August 2015. The targeted testing approach involves a set list of questions around drug use that should be considered before a decision is made on whether the arrestee is drug tested. The main aim of targeted testing is to reduce the number of negative drug tests carried out in the custody suite setting while ensuring drug using offenders continue to be tested and referred to drug treatment services through the RA process.

This Drug Testing Profile for Knowsley presents drug testing data between April 2013 and March 2016, with an emphasis on the most recent financial year (2015/16). This profile will contextualise Merseyside Police drug testing data by providing numbers and trends of drug using offenders identified through this route into the DIP system and a demographic

overview of the individuals. As the profile will look at three years of data, we will be able to examine the impact, if any, targeted testing has had. This profile also provides recommendations for local government, commissioners and service providers in terms of the efficient use of resources and effective services locally and across Merseyside.

Drug tests for Knowsley residents

There are no custody suites in Knowsley. Knowsley residents arrested as per the above-mentioned guidelines are drug tested at the different custody suites across Merseyside. When individuals test positive for Class A drugs they should be transferred back to Knowsley Integrated Recovery Service as part of the RA and continuity of care process which underpins DIP.

Between April 2013 and March 2016, there were a total of 27,138 attempted drug tests in Merseyside, of which 6% were reported to be Knowsley residents (n=1,718; Table 1); however it should be noted that 17% of records across the three years did not have a Drug (and Alcohol) Action Team (D[A]AT) of residence recorded and therefore figures do not represent a true reflection of Knowsley residents arrested and drug tested across Merseyside. The largest proportion of Knowsley residents were tested in Liverpool (34%), followed by Sefton and St Helens (32% each), while 2% were tested in Wirral.

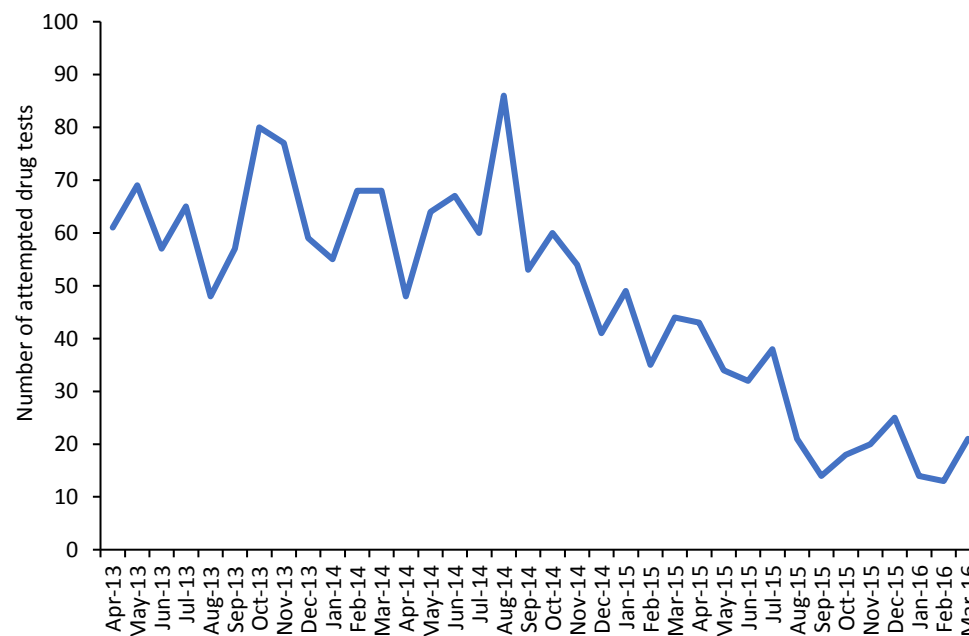
The number of attempted drug tests reduced by over three-fifths (62%) between 2013/14 and 2015/16. Notably, in 2015/16 there were less than half the number of tests when compared to the previous year (56% decrease), which is likely as a result of the implementation of targeted testing in 2015.

Table 1: Number of attempted drug tests for Knowsley residents by area and year (2013/14-2015/16)

Area	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Total
Liverpool	260	253	67	580
Sefton	259	232	65	556
St Helens	235	160	153	548
Wirral	10	16	8	34
Total	764	661	293	1,718

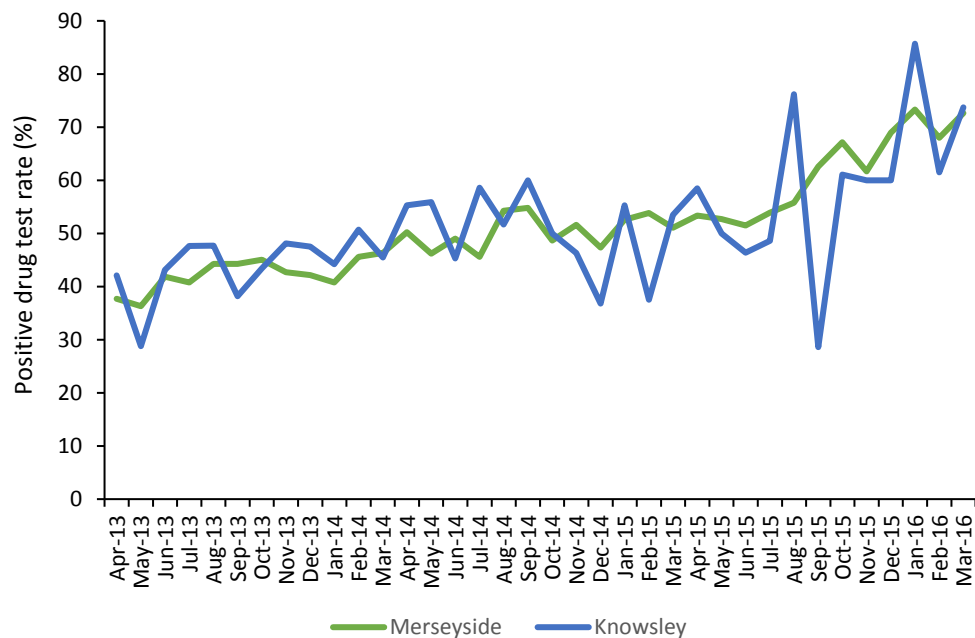
Figure 1 presents the number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside for Knowsley residents by month and year. It's clear to see the number of tests reduced in 2015 when targeted testing was introduced, particularly in August when it was fully implemented across Merseyside's custody suites. The lowest number of attempted tests for Knowsley residents were in January 2016 (n=14) and February 2016 (n=13).

Figure 1: Number of attempted drug tests for Knowsley residents by month/year (2013/14-2015/16)



The positive drug test rate (the number of individuals testing positive ÷ the number of individuals successfully tested) for Knowsley residents tested across Merseyside increased year on year, with the exception of lower rates in December 2014 (n=37), February 2015 (n=38) and September 2015 (n=29; Figure 2). Rates were highest in August 2015 (n=76), January 2016 (n=86) and March 2016 (n=74), following implementation of targeted testing across Merseyside’s custody suites.

Figure 2: Positive drug test rate by month/year (2013/14-2015/16)

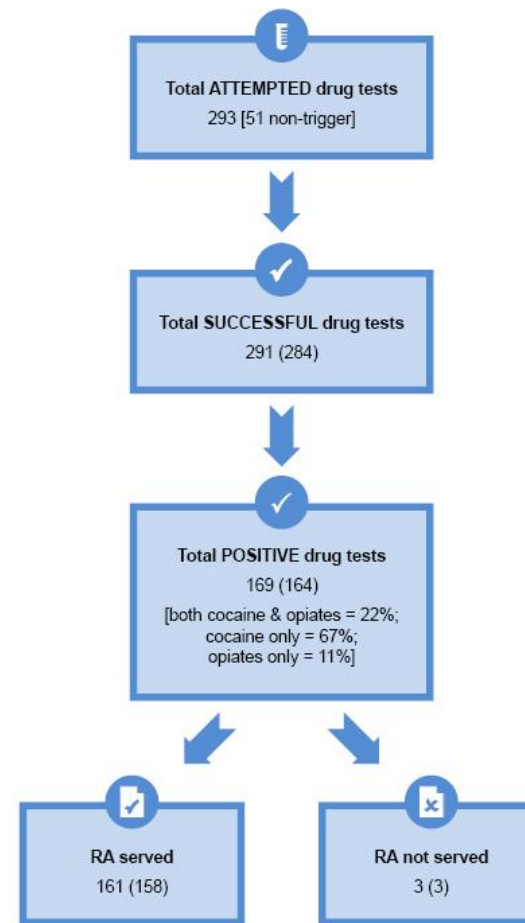


Drug testing activity for Knowsley residents

Figure 3 shows the drug testing activity for Knowsley residents arrested and drug tested across Merseyside between April 2015 and March 2016. Of the 284 individuals successfully tested in 2015/16, 164 individuals tested positive; this equates to a positive drug test rate of 58%, which is just below the figure for all those arrested and tested across Merseyside (60%).

Two-thirds (67%) of positive tests were for cocaine only, while the remaining positive tests were for some form of opiate metabolites (22% for both cocaine and opiates; 11% for opiates only). There were more positive tests for cocaine only and less positive tests for opiate metabolites in comparison to all tests across Merseyside (Merseyside=42% and 58% respectively).

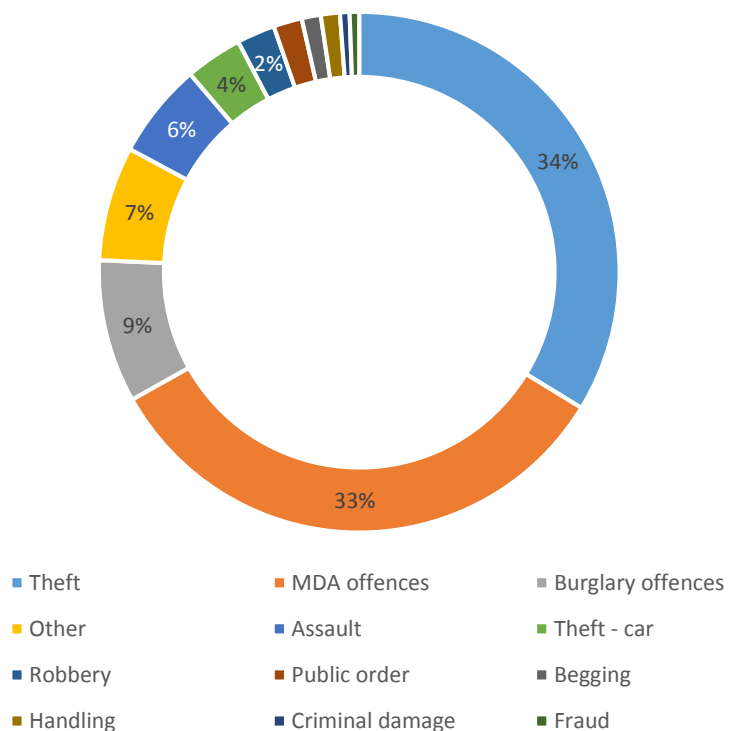
Figure 3: Drug testing activity for Knowsley residents (2015/16)^



[^] Numbers of individuals at each level are presented in brackets.

Police drug testing data capture the offences recorded at the time of the drug test in Merseyside’s custody suites. Theft and Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences accounted for the largest proportions for Knowsley residents arrested and testing positive across Merseyside between April 2015 and March 2016 (34% and 33% respectively; Figure 4). In comparison, data for all positive drug tests across Merseyside in 2015/16 reported 43% theft and 24% MDA offences.

Figure 4: Positive drug tests for Knowsley residents by offence recorded at time of test (2015/16)



Demographics of Knowsley residents

Table 2 presents the age group and gender of those testing positive in 2015/16. The majority (86%) of Knowsley residents were male, similar to the overall Merseyside figure

(83%). Knowsley residents aged between 25 and 29 years accounted for just under one-quarter (23%) arrested and testing positive in 2015/16, while the largest proportion across Merseyside was for those aged between 35 and 39 years (18%), followed by those aged between 25 and 29 years and between 40 and 44 years (17% each).

Table 2: Positive drug tests for Knowsley residents by age group and gender (2015/16)^

Age group	Females		Males		Total	
18-24	***	17%	<25	14%	25	15%
25-29	***	17%	<40	24%	39	23%
30-34	***	13%	<25	16%	26	15%
35-39	***	13%	<20	13%	22	13%
40-44	5	21%	19	13%	24	14%
45-49	***	8%	<20	10%	17	10%
50+	***	13%	<15	9%	16	9%
Total	24	100%	145	100%	169	100%

^ Numbers less than five have been suppressed to maintain patient confidentiality.

Almost all Knowsley residents testing positive between April 2015 and March 2016 were White European (99%).

Re-presentation

Table 3 provides an indication of the rate of re-presentation of clients through the drug testing process and shows the number of times Knowsley residents who tested positive in a Merseyside custody suite within a 12-month period re-presented across Merseyside for a successful drug test.

There were 24 Knowsley residents who tested positive across Merseyside between April 2015 and March 2016 that subsequently re-presented and were tested again at a Merseyside custody suite during the time period. This represents 15.4% of the total individuals testing positive in 2015/16, the lowest proportion of re-presentation seen in any of the seven cohorts documented in Table 3. The rate of re-presentation in the April

2015 to March 2016 cohort is somewhat lower than the overall Merseyside re-presentation rate (20.4%).

Table 3: Re-presentation of clients testing positive (end March 2016)

Number of arrest occasions	Oct 14 - Sep 15 (n=196)	Nov 14 - Oct 15 (n=180)	Dec 14 - Nov 15 (n=169)	Jan 15 - Dec 15 (n=171)	Feb 15 - Jan 16 (n=163)	Mar 15 - Feb 16 (n=163)	Apr 15 - Mar 16 (n=156)
One	145 (74.0%)	137 (76.1%)	137 (77.5%)	135 (78.9%)	133 (81.6%)	135 (82.8%)	132 (84.6%)
Two	37 (18.9%)	27 (15.0%)	27 (13.0%)	21 (12.3%)	21 (12.9%)	21 (12.9%)	16 (10.3%)
Three	9 (4.6%)	11 (6.1%)	11 (7.1%)	11 (6.4%)	5 (3.1%)	3 (1.8%)	5 (3.2%)
Four	3 (1.5%)	3 (1.7%)	3 (1.2%)	2 (1.2%)	2 (1.2%)	3 (1.8%)	3 (1.9%)
Five	1 (0.5%)		1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)		
Six		1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	1 (0.6%)	
Seven	1 (0.5%)	1 (0.6%)					
Clients presenting more than once (%)	26.0%	23.9%	22.5%	21.1%	18.4%	17.2%	15.4%

Summary

- For Knowsley residents and across Merseyside overall, the number of attempted drug tests has decreased, particularly between 2014/15 and 2015/16, which is likely as a result of targeted testing.
- The positive drug test rate has increased year on year for Knowsley residents and across Merseyside overall, particularly following the implementation of targeted testing.
- Across Merseyside, slightly more tested positive for opiate metabolites than cocaine only. Knowsley residents however were more likely to test positive for cocaine only.
- Across Merseyside, theft accounted for the largest proportion of offences, followed by MDA offences. For Knowsley residents, the figures for theft and MDA offences were similar.
- In general, the demographic profile of those arrested and testing positive across Merseyside was male, aged between 25 and 44 years with similar proportions across these age groups, of White European ethnicity and residents of Liverpool. Knowsley residents had a larger proportion of arrestees aged between 25 and 29 years when compared to Merseyside.
- The rate of re-presentation of clients through the drug testing process across Merseyside is variable (Knowsley = 15.4%; Liverpool = 26.2%; Sefton = 23.2%; St Helens = 26.1%; Wirral = 27.5%). For Knowsley clients, individuals testing positive

in 2015/16 was the lowest proportion of re-presentation seen in any of the cohorts.

Recommendations

- The drug testing process is the main criminal justice route whereby drug using offenders are identified and assessed for treatment. Local police drug testing data are not available through other reporting mechanisms; therefore this resource should be utilised by the police, drug treatment agencies and local commissioners regularly. It should be noted that the number of Knowsley residents arrested and drug tested across Merseyside are under-represented as around one-fifth of records in the three-year dataset do not have a D(A)AT recorded.
- All partners in the DIP process should utilise available data which allow to look at trends over time; for example, total attempted drug tests and positive drug test rates. This information will enable stakeholders to observe any changes and/or trends within their local area and across Merseyside, as well as investigating the reasons for these trends. This should then help to evidence any process changes that may be needed, in addition to highlighting potential gaps or barriers which may affect these clients from engaging with treatment services.
- The number of attempted drug tests has decreased and the positive drug test rate has increased, which is likely due to the implementation of targeted testing. Targeted testing aimed to reduce the number of negative tests; therefore as this profile shows, it has been successful with what it set out to achieve. However, we need to ensure drug using offenders continue to be tested and are not being missed through the targeted testing method, as feedback from some drug treatment agencies suggest. Similarly, where re-presentation has reduced in

Merseyside (as it has for Knowsley residents), care should be taken with figures as this is likely due to the reduction in the number of those being tested.

- The police drug testing dataset enables client profiling; including drug use, offending behaviour, gender, age, ethnicity and residency. This information is key to knowing likely presenters through drug testing and DIP and can impact on the resources and services required to cater for the needs of these individuals in an efficient manner in the custody suite, drug treatment service and/or local community. With resources and budgets constantly under scrutiny, it is vital that this information is used to ensure these individuals have a successful drug treatment experience. Furthermore, the dataset needs to be monitored in order to identify any changes in client profiling; for example, a previous drug testing report identified those aged between 18 and 24 years more likely to be arrested and drug tested (Collins et al., 2015), though in 2015/16 there were higher proportions among arrestees aged between 25 and 44 years.
- It is imperative that there are effective and prompt communication channels between the police in the custody suites, the local drug treatment agency and all other relevant drug treatment agencies across Merseyside. Although organisational operations may differ considerably, an overarching aim of assisting drug using offenders towards treatment should be shared by all involved with DIP and facilitated as much as possible. High levels of communication are particularly relevant when dealing with Knowsley residents, who do not have a local custody suite. Regular feedback of any issues arising need to be encouraged and addressed, as well as adequate training where and when required.

These recommendations are unlikely to be achieved without sustained working between all stakeholders; however their implementation would likely ensure drug using offenders

are being referred to treatment services appropriately and have a successful and positive drug treatment experience.

References

Collins, P. et al. (2015). *Merseyside Annual DIP Report: Drug Testing (2014/15)* [online]. Available at: <http://www.cph.org.uk/publication/merseyside-annual-dip-report-drug-testing-april-2014-march-2015/> [Accessed 1st September, 2016].

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