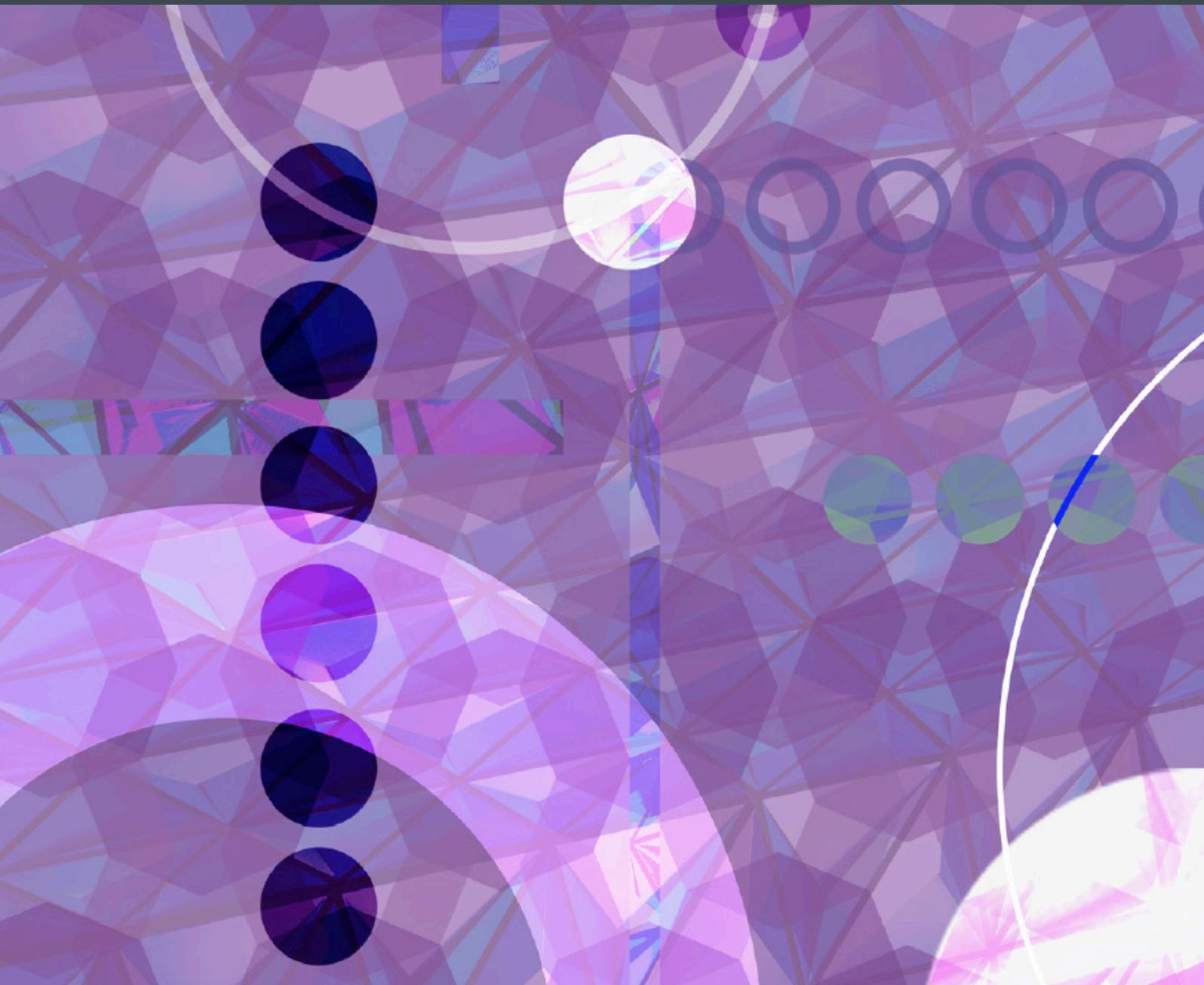


Criminal Justice Project: Drug Interventions Programme

DIP Activity in Wirral (2020/21)

Karen Critchley and Mark Whitfield



January 2022

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KEY FINDINGS: DIP ACTIVITY IN WIRRAL (2020/21)

- In the year ending March 2021, there were 268 contacts (225 individuals) recorded by Wirral Criminal Justice Intervention Team (CJIT); of which, all were residents of Wirral Local Authority area. This is less than half of the number of CJIT contacts in the previous twelve-month period (55% decrease), which can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Of the CJIT contacts in 2020/21, there were similar proportions of other criminal justice routes and Required Assessments (36% and 35% respectively), while around three in ten (29%) were voluntary presentations following release from prison.
- Just over seven in ten (72%) of the CJIT contacts in the year ending March 2021 were taken onto the CJIT caseload, while one in seven (14%) were already case managed, one in ten (10%) did not require further intervention and the remaining clients did not want to engage with the CJIT (3%).
- Around one in five (19%) individuals were aged 30-34 years, while proportions were similar for the remaining age groups (12%-15%). Just over four in five (82%) individuals were men.
- The majority (97%) identified themselves as White British, while over two in five (43%) considered themselves to have a disability.
- While the majority reported no housing problem, around three in ten (31%) had some form of a housing problem, with just over one in ten (12%) stating an urgent housing need due to being of no fixed abode.
- Three in ten (30%) had parental responsibility for a child aged under 18 years.
- Around half (49%) reported heroin as their main substance, while around one-quarter (24%) reported cocaine. Over two in five (46%) of the second substance was recorded as crack, while over one-third (36%) of the third substance was recorded as other.
- Around three in five (59%) smoked their main substance, followed by around one in five (21%) whose route of administration was intranasal and 13% who administered their main drug orally.
- Around seven in ten (69%) stated they had never injected, while just over one-quarter (27%) had previously injected but were not currently and 4% were currently injecting.
- Just over one in five (22%) men consumed alcohol in the 28 days prior to their CJIT assessment. Of these, just under two in five (38%) consumed 16-24 units of alcohol daily, while one-quarter (25%) consumed 1-6 units daily, 23% consumed over 24 units daily and 15% consumed 7-15 units daily.
- Around three in ten (29%) women consumed alcohol in the 28 days prior to their CJIT assessment. Of these, around seven in ten (71%) consumed 7-15 units of alcohol daily.
- Three in ten (30%) reported offences categorised as 'other' as the offence which prompted the current or most recent contact with the criminal justice system, followed by around one in five (21%) Misuse of Drugs Act offences.
- Of the clients taken onto the CJIT caseload, 86 (82 individuals) were referred to structured treatment in the year ending March 2021.
- There were 354 recovery support sub-intervention assessments carried out in 2020/21 on clients on the CJIT caseload (174 individuals), with a total 1,187 sub-interventions delivered.

INTRODUCTION

Although the Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) was decommissioned as a national programme by the Home Office in 2013, Wirral Criminal Justice Intervention Team (CJIT) continue to collect and submit the criminal justice data set via the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS). The aim of CJITs is to identify and engage with offenders in the criminal justice system who use drugs and/or alcohol, and encourage them to engage with appropriate treatment services in order to reduce acquisitive crime. There is a body of evidence supporting this process at reducing offending for this population (Collins et al., 2016; Collins et al., 2017; Cuddy et al., 2015; Public Health England and Ministry of Justice, 2017). Under Merseyside Police's DIP drug testing process in the custody suites, if offenders test positive for specified Class A drugs (opiates and/or powder/crack cocaine) they are required to undergo a Required Assessment (RA) with a CJIT worker. This is a key route into treatment, though there are other routes of contact with a CJIT, including: Conditional Cautioning; requirement by the individual's Offender Manager; court mandated processes, such as Restriction on Bail, pre-sentence reports, Drug Rehabilitation Requirements and Alcohol Treatment Requirements; and voluntary presentations.

The CJIT data set captures client information, episode details (including drug and alcohol use, and offending behaviour), referrals to structured treatment and recovery support sub-interventions. Assessments allow CJIT workers to determine whether further intervention is required to address drug and/or alcohol use and offending, and if necessary, encourage engagement with a range of appropriate treatment options. This is a key element of the work carried out by CJITs, as it provides wraparound support across four key areas: drug and alcohol use (harm reduction and overdose management); offending; physical and psychosocial health; and social functioning (housing, employment and relationships; Home Office [n.d.]).

This CJIT Activity report for Wirral presents data for clients accessing the CJIT between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021^{1,2,3,4}. Where possible, comparisons to the Merseyside figures and the previous four years' Wirral CJIT activity have been made; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, caution should be taken when comparing 2020/21 figures to that of previous years. Notably, Merseyside Police suspended DIP drug testing in the custody suites between April and August 2020; therefore, there were no RAs imposed by the police during this time, which subsequently affected the number of people coming into contact with the CJIT.

¹ Please note that figures for gender, age and ethnicity are for individuals (*Figures 4-7*); however, this is not the case for other figures, as data may change for clients with more than one CJIT episode during the reporting year.

² Throughout this report, numbers less than five have been suppressed to maintain client confidentiality. Where there is only one number less than five in a category then two numbers have been suppressed to prevent back calculations from totals (e.g. <10).

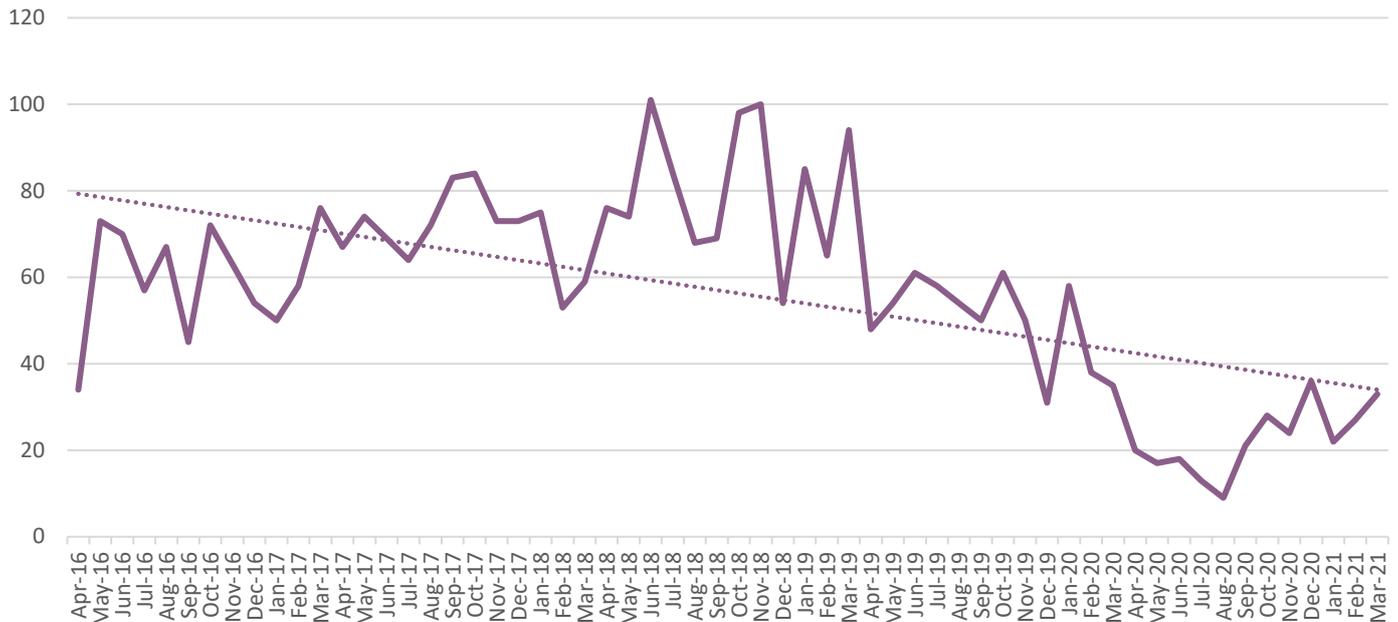
³ Note that in instances where there are blank records, or the client declines to answer, does not know or does not state a response, these have been excluded from the calculations; therefore, totals may not add up to the total number of CJIT contacts or individuals.

⁴ Note that percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

OVERVIEW

In the year ending March 2021, there were 268 contacts (225 individuals) recorded by Wirral Criminal Justice Intervention Team (CJIT). This is less than half of the number of CJIT contacts in the previous twelve-month period (55% decrease) and this reduction can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the number of CJIT contacts started to decline in the previous twelve-month period, prior to the pandemic, which to some extent could have been attributed to the treatment provider ceasing to assess non-Wirral residents in 2019. Notably, all Wirral CJIT contacts assessed in the year ending March 2021 were residents of Wirral Local Authority area. *Figure 1* shows the monthly number of CJIT contacts between April 2016 and March 2021.

Figure 1: Monthly trends of Wirral CJIT contacts, April 2016 - March 2021



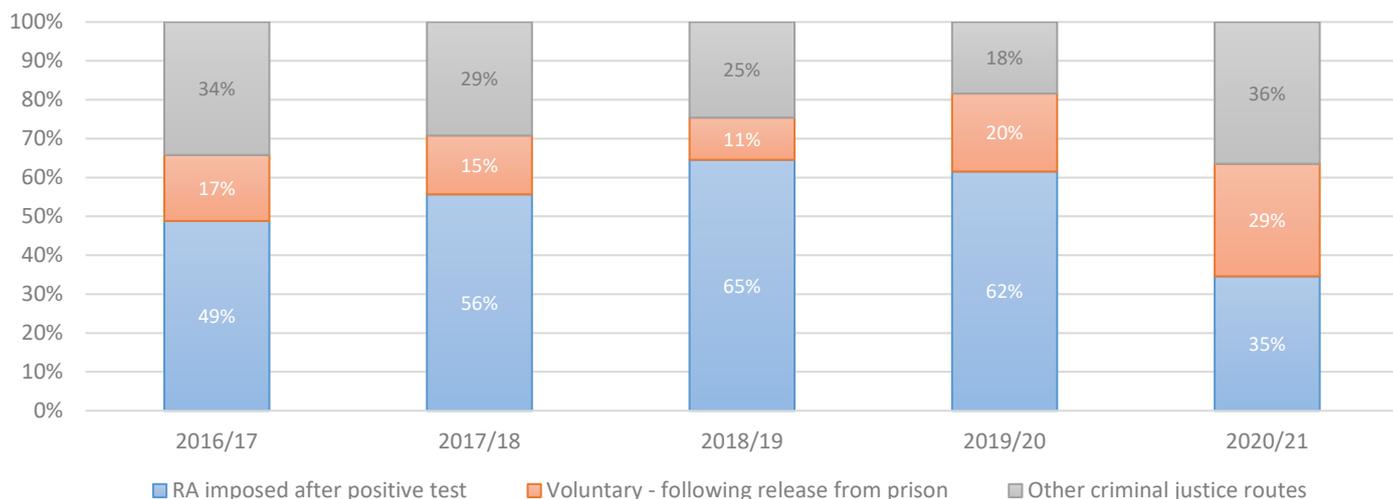
CRIMINAL JUSTICE ROUTES IN WIRRAL

Figure 2 shows the criminal justice routes that led to the contact with Wirral CJIT in the five years up to the year ending March 2021. There were similar proportions of other criminal justice routes (n=97; 36%)⁵ and Required Assessments (RAs) following a positive drug test for opiates and/or cocaine in a police custody suite (n=92; 35%), while around three in ten were voluntary presentations following release from prison (n=77; 29%).

The proportion of clients who presented through other criminal justice routes decreased year-on-year between 2016/17 and 2019/20, though increased in 2020/21 (*Figure 2*), while the proportion of clients who came into contact with Wirral CJIT through the RA process in the year ending March 2021 is lower than the previous four years, though it is higher than the Merseyside figure (28%). This can be attributed to the suspension of DIP drug testing in the custody suites between April and August 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Conversely, the proportion who presented voluntarily following release from prison in 2020/21 is higher than the previous four years, though it is substantially lower than the Merseyside 2020/21 total (40%).

⁵ Other criminal justice routes: Required by offender management scheme/DRR/ATR/IOM = 72; other = 17; requested by Offender Manager (post DRR/ATR) <10; voluntary - other <5.

Figure 2: Referral routes of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2016/17 - 2020/21

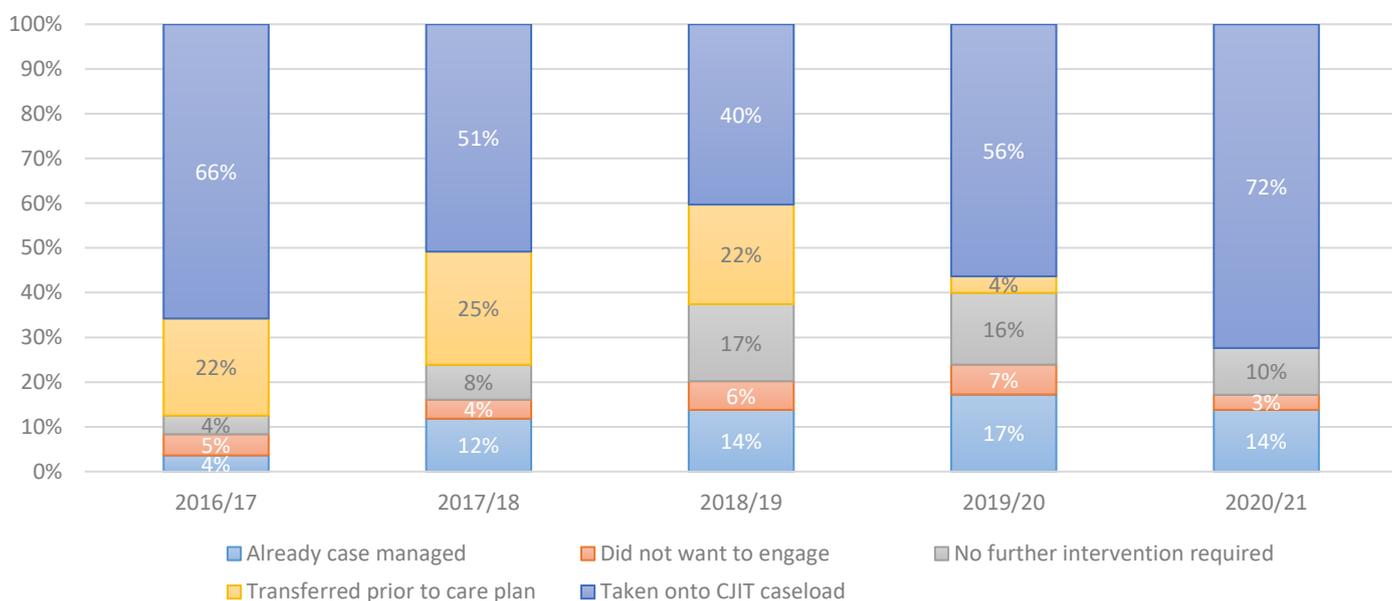


OUTCOMES FOLLOWING CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSESSMENT

Just over seven in ten of the Wirral CJIT contacts in the year ending March 2021 were taken onto the CJIT caseload (n=194; 72%), while one in seven were already case managed by a structured treatment provider, other CJIT or Offender Manager (n=37; 14%), one in ten did not require further intervention (n=28; 10%) and the remaining clients did not want to engage with the CJIT (n=9; 3%) (Figure 3).

The proportion of clients taken onto Wirral CJIT’s caseload in 2020/21 is somewhat higher than the previous four years, though it is below the Merseyside total (79%), while the proportion of clients already case managed following a CJIT assessment in the year ending March 2021 is similar to the previous three years, though the highest of the Merseyside CJIT areas (Merseyside total: 6%). The proportion who did not want to engage with the CJIT in 2020/21 is the lowest of the five-year period and lower than the Merseyside figure (9%), while the proportion of clients who did not require further intervention in 2020/21 is lower than the previous two years (16%-17%), though the highest across Merseyside (Merseyside total: 5%). Notably, the proportion who transferred to prison or another CJIT prior to care plan decreased from around one-quarter in the three years ending March 2019 to one in 25 (4%) in 2019/20 and none in 2020/21.

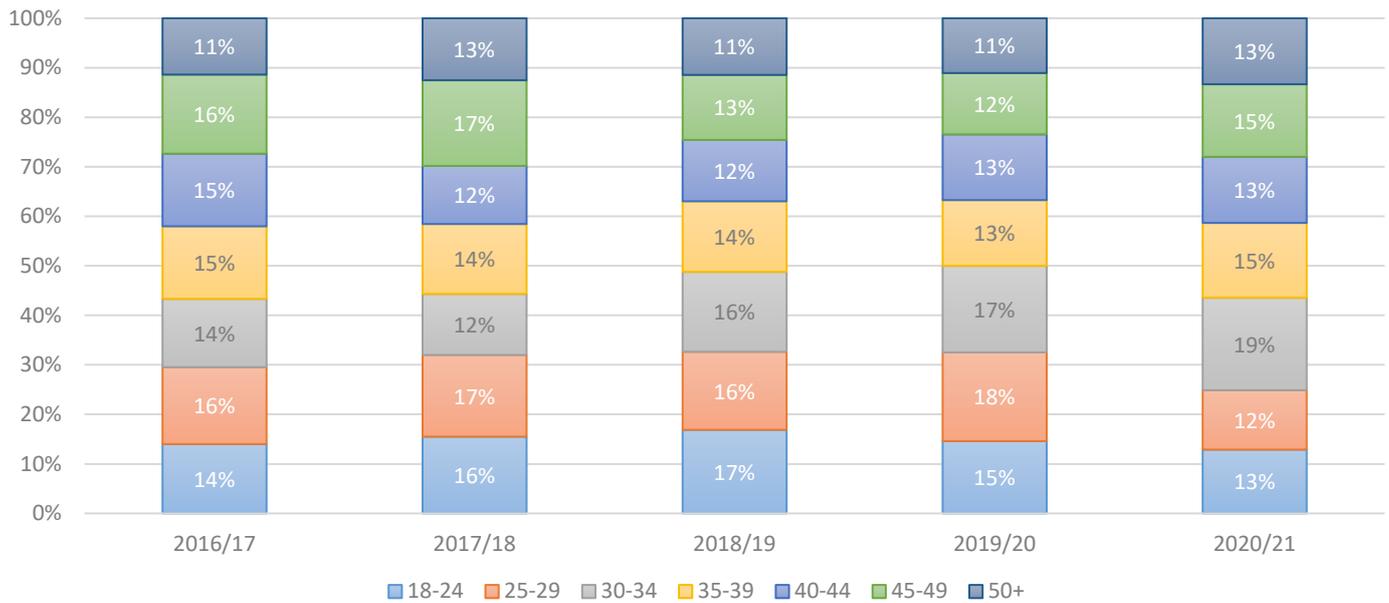
Figure 3: Outcomes following criminal justice assessment of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2016/17 - 2020/21



AGE AND GENDER

Of the 268 Wirral CJIT contacts in the year ending March 2021, there were 255 individuals. The median age was 36 years, which is similar to the previous year (35 years). Looking at age groups, around one in five individuals were aged 30-34 years (n=42; 19%), while proportions were similar for the remaining age groups (ranging from 12% for 25-29 year olds to 15% for both 35-39 year olds and 45-49 year olds) (Figure 4). In general, proportions are somewhat similar to previous years and the 2020/21 Merseyside figures.

Figure 4: Age group of Wirral CJIT contacts (individuals), 2016/17 - 2020/21



Just over four in five individuals in contact with Wirral CJIT in the year ending March 2021 were men (n=185; 82%) (Figure 5). This is the same as the previous twelve months and is similar to the Merseyside total (83%).

Figure 5: Gender of Wirral CJIT contacts (individuals), 2016/17 - 2020/21

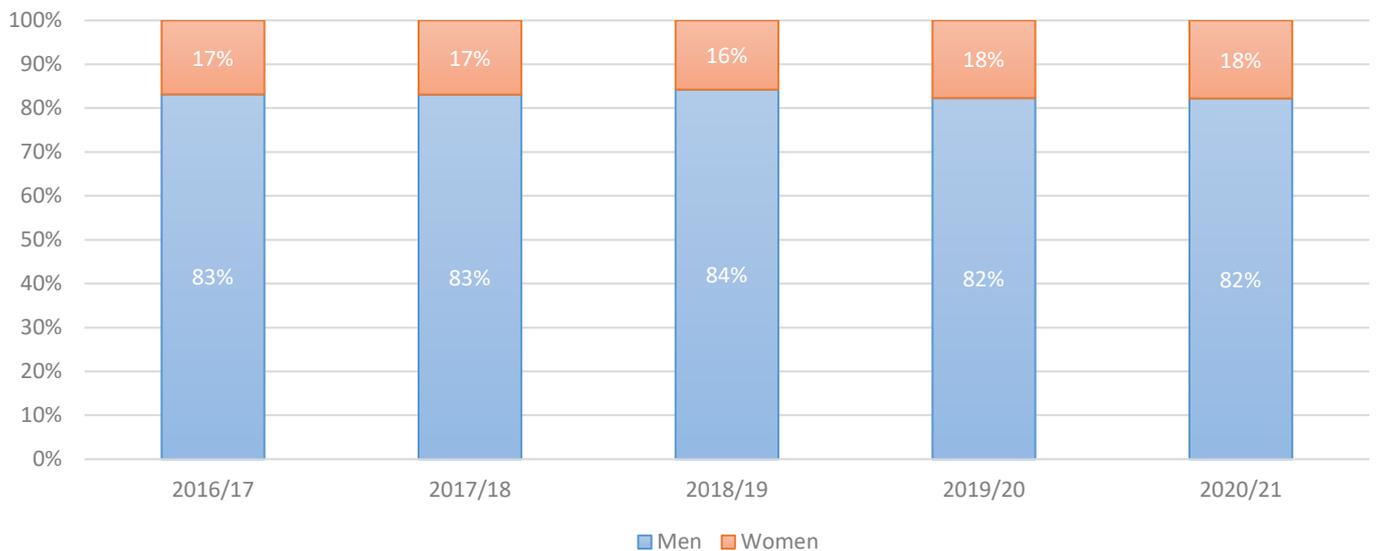
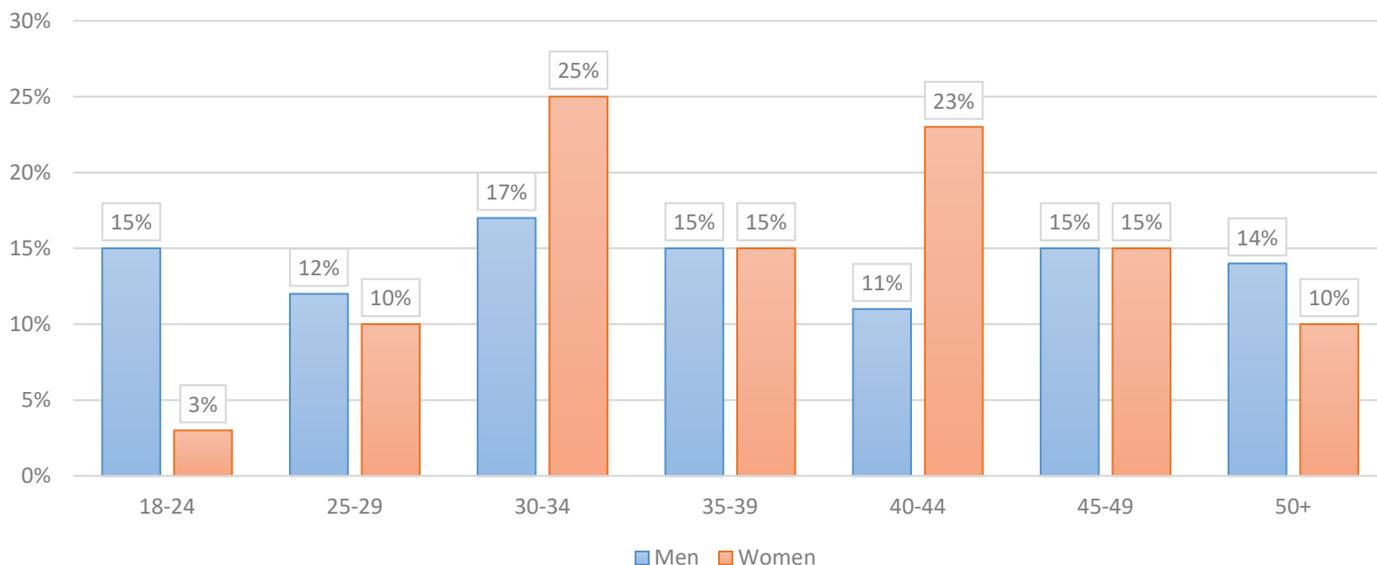


Figure 6 shows some differences in age group proportions across gender groups in Wirral in the year ending March 2021. Whilst there are fewer female CJIT contacts, there were larger proportions aged 30-34 years and 40-44 years (25% and 23% respectively) when compared to men (17% and 11% respectively), while there was a larger proportion of men aged 18-24 years (15%) when compared to women (3%).

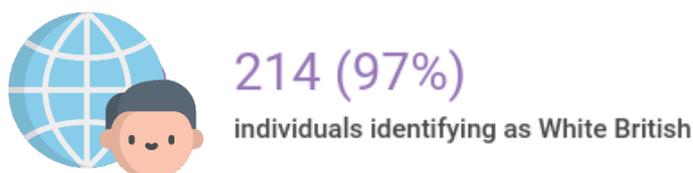
Figure 6: Age group and gender of Wirral CJIT contacts (individuals), 2020/21



ETHNICITY

The majority of Wirral CJIT contacts in the year ending March 2021 identified themselves as White British (n=214; 97%) (Figure 7), which is the same proportion as the previous year, though slightly higher than the Merseyside proportion (95%).

Figure 7: Ethnicity of Wirral CJIT contacts (individuals), 2020/21



DISABILITY

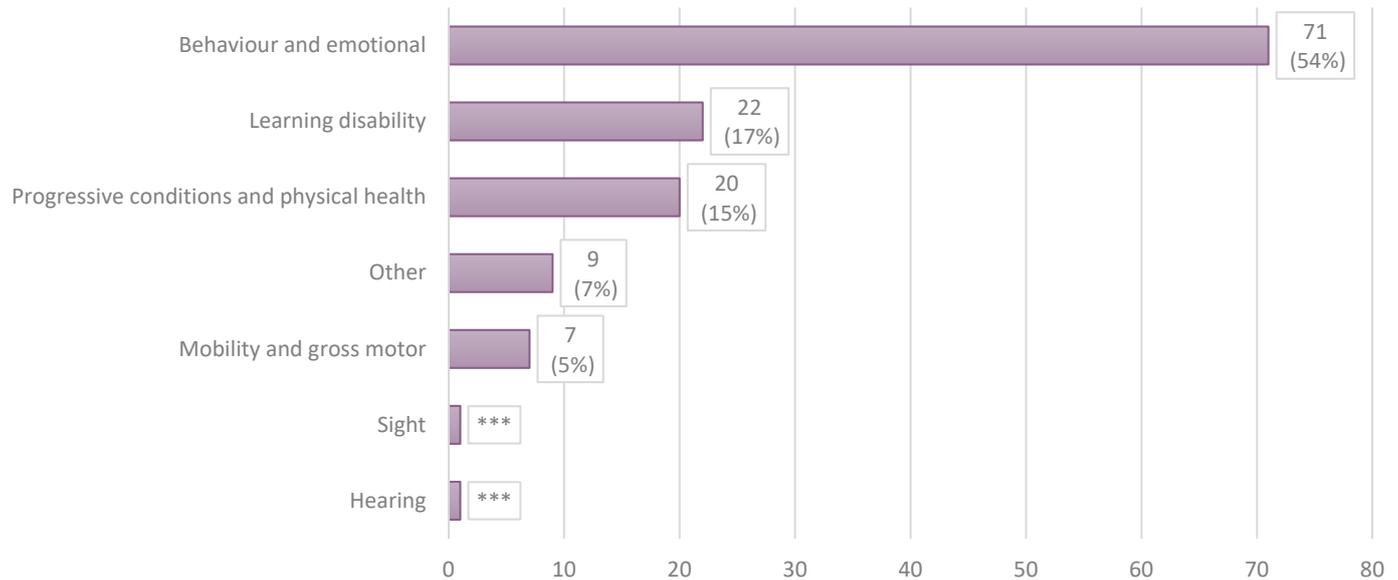
Over two in five Wirral CJIT contacts in 2020/21 considered themselves to have a disability (n=108; 43%) (Figure 8), which is substantially higher than the Merseyside figure (28%).

Figure 8: Disability status of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



The 108 clients who considered themselves to have a disability reported a total 131 disabilities in the year ending March 2021⁶. Over half of the disabilities were behaviour and emotional (n=71; 54%), followed by learning disability (n=22; 17%) and progressive conditions and physical health (n=20; 15%) (Figure 9).

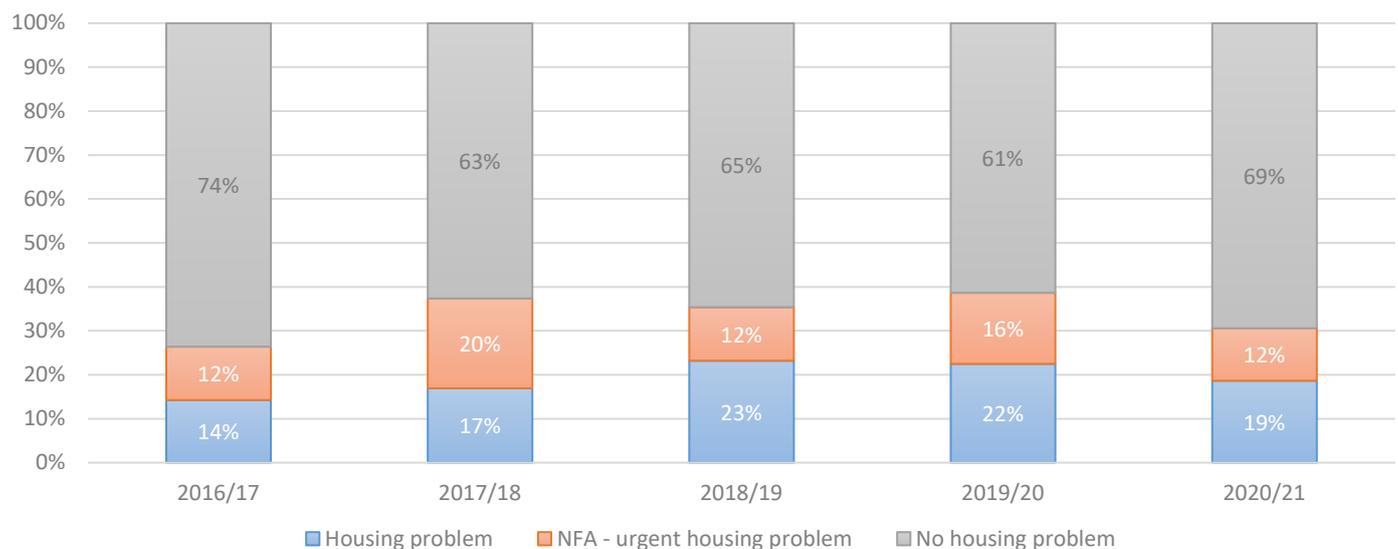
Figure 9: Types of disabilities reported by Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



HOUSING NEED

While the majority of the Wirral CJIT contacts in the year ending March 2021 reported no housing problem, around three in ten had some form of a housing problem (n=82; 31%), with just over one in ten stating an urgent housing need due to being of no fixed abode (NFA; n=32; 12%) (Figure 10)⁷. The proportion of Wirral residents who stated some form of a housing problem in 2020/21 is lower than the previous three years, though it is higher than the Merseyside figure (24%).

Figure 10: Housing need of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2016/17 - 2020/21



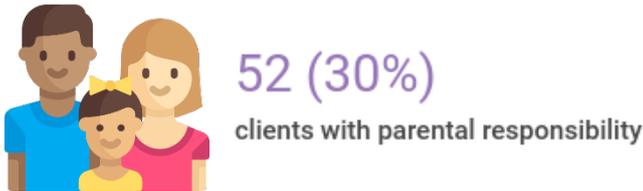
⁶ Please note that clients may have up to three disabilities recorded.

⁷ Non-urgent housing need includes: staying with friends/family short term, short stay hostel, short term B&B/hotel, placed in temporary accommodation by LA Squatting. Urgent housing need (NFA) includes: lives on streets/rough sleeper, uses night shelter (night-by-night basis)/emergency hostels, sofa surfing/sleeps on different friend's floor each night.

PARENTAL STATUS

In the year ending March 2021, three in ten clients had parental responsibility for a child aged under 18 years (n=52; 30%) (Figure 11), which is double the Merseyside proportion (15%). Over four in five Wirral CJIT contacts with parental responsibility had none of the children they are responsible for living with them the majority of the time (n=73; 84%), which is the highest proportion of the five Merseyside CJITs (Merseyside total: 75%).

Figure 11: Parental status of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



SUBSTANCE USE

Between 2016/17 and 2019/20, proportions of alcohol and opiate drugs recorded as the main substance have generally been decreasing, while non-opiate drugs were increasing. However, this was reversed in the year ending March 2021: proportions of alcohol and opiate drugs recorded as the main substance increased, while the proportion of non-opiate drugs decreased.

Around half of the Wirral CJIT contacts in 2020/21 reported heroin as their main substance (n=130; 49%), while around one-quarter reported cocaine (n=65; 24%) (Figure 12). While the proportion of heroin decreased year-on-year between 2017/18 and 2019/20, it increased in 2020/21 to the highest proportion of the five-year period, though it is somewhat similar to the Merseyside figure (46%). Conversely, the proportion of cocaine increased year-on-year between 2016/17 and 2019/20, followed by a decrease in 2020/21, which is a similar proportion to the Merseyside total (22%).

Figure 12: Main substances used by Wirral CJIT contacts, 2016/17 - 2020/21

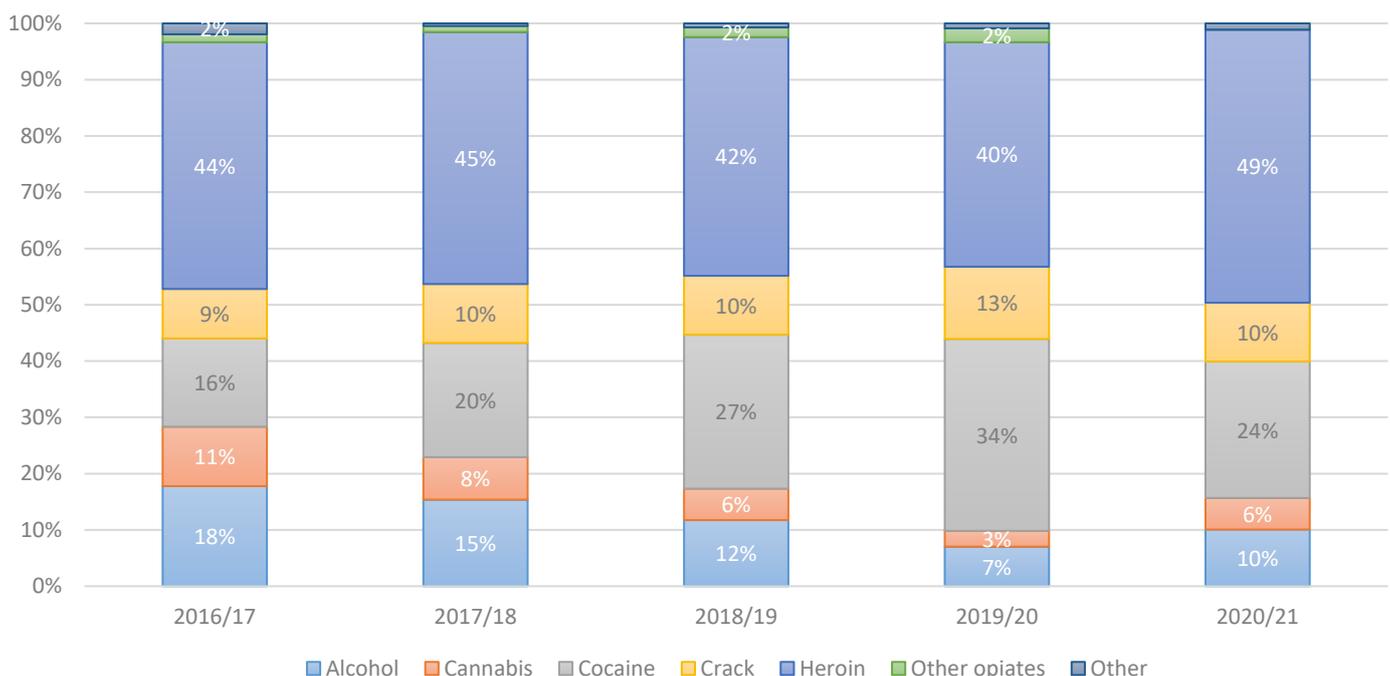


Figure 13 shows 2020/21 figures split by substance one, two and three. Over two in five of the second substance was recorded as crack (n=78; 46%) and around one-quarter was recorded as cannabis (n=45; 26%), while over one-third of the third substance was recorded as other (n=16; 36%), followed by cannabis (n=12; 27%) and alcohol (n=9; 20%).

Figure 13: Substances 1-3 used by Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21

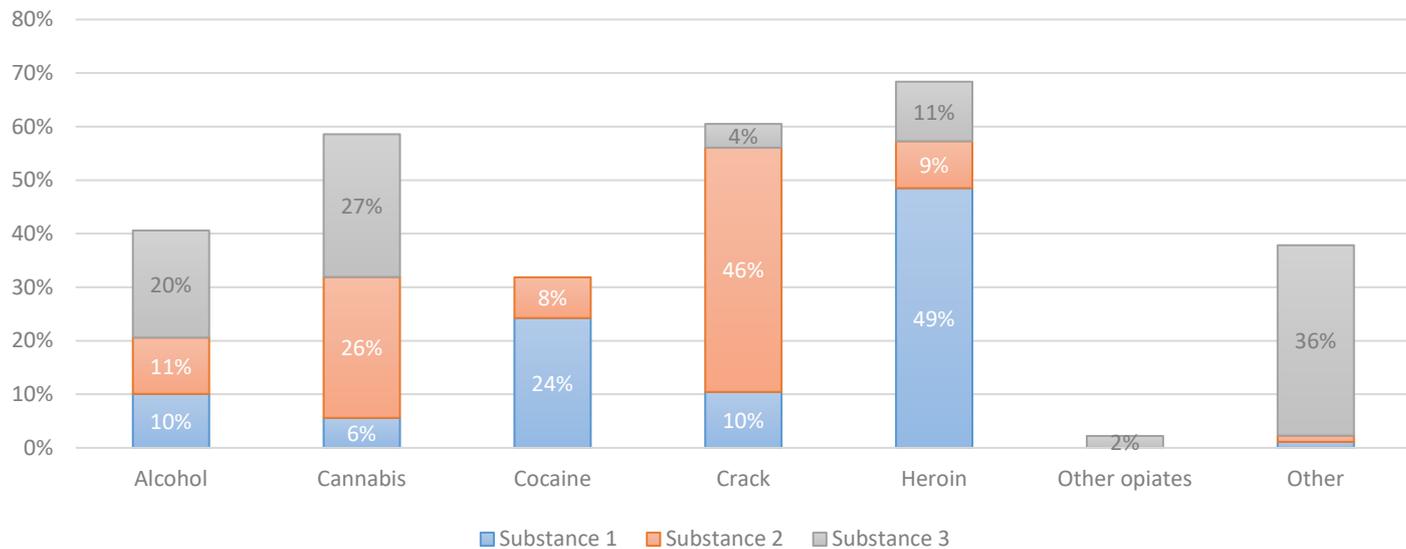


Figure 14 shows the proportions of the main substance by gender in the year ending March 2021. There were larger proportions of crack and heroin recorded as the main substance by women (20% and 53% respectively) when compared to men (8% and 47% respectively), while there was a larger proportion of men who reported cocaine (26%) when compared to women (16%).

Figure 14: Main substance and gender of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21

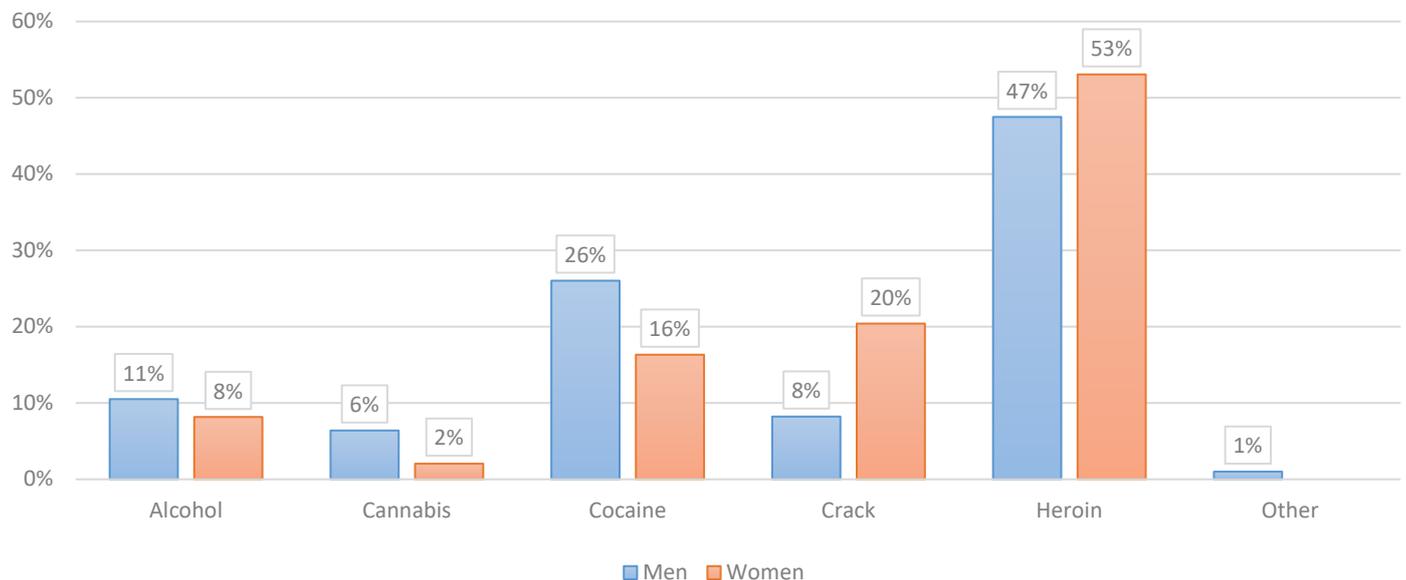
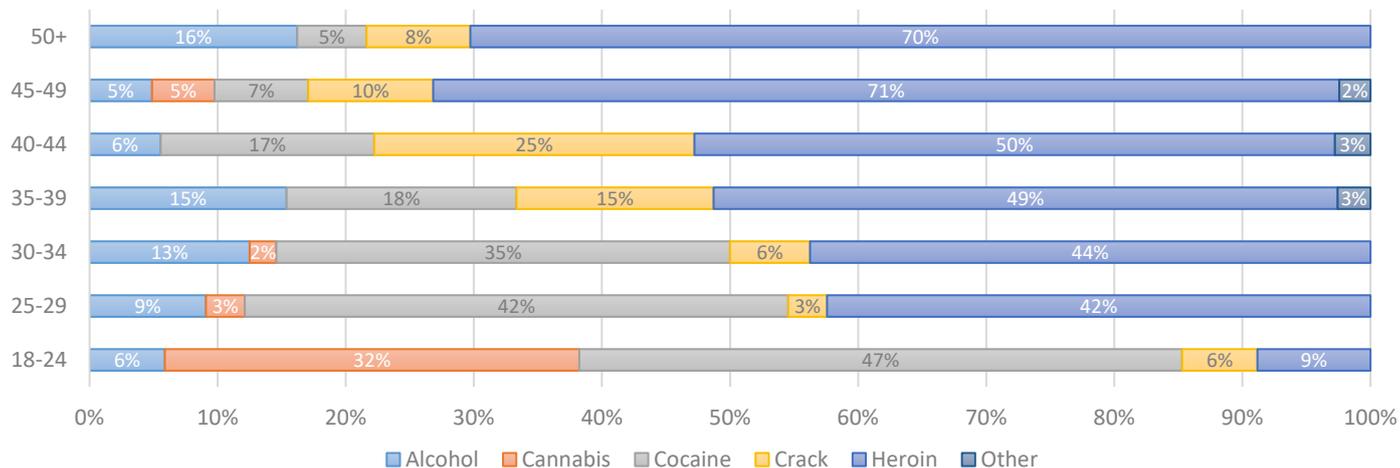


Figure 15 shows the proportions of the main substance for each age group in the year ending March 2021. In general, there were larger proportions of cocaine recorded as the main substance in the younger age groups and larger proportions of heroin across the older age groups. Just under half (47%) of 18-24 year olds reported cocaine as their main substance, while proportions of heroin were highest for clients aged 45-49 years and 50 years or over (71% and 70% respectively). Furthermore, proportions of alcohol were highest for clients aged 35-39 years and 50 years or over (15% and 16% respectively), while cannabis was highest for 18-24 year olds (32%) and crack was highest for 40-44 year olds (25%).

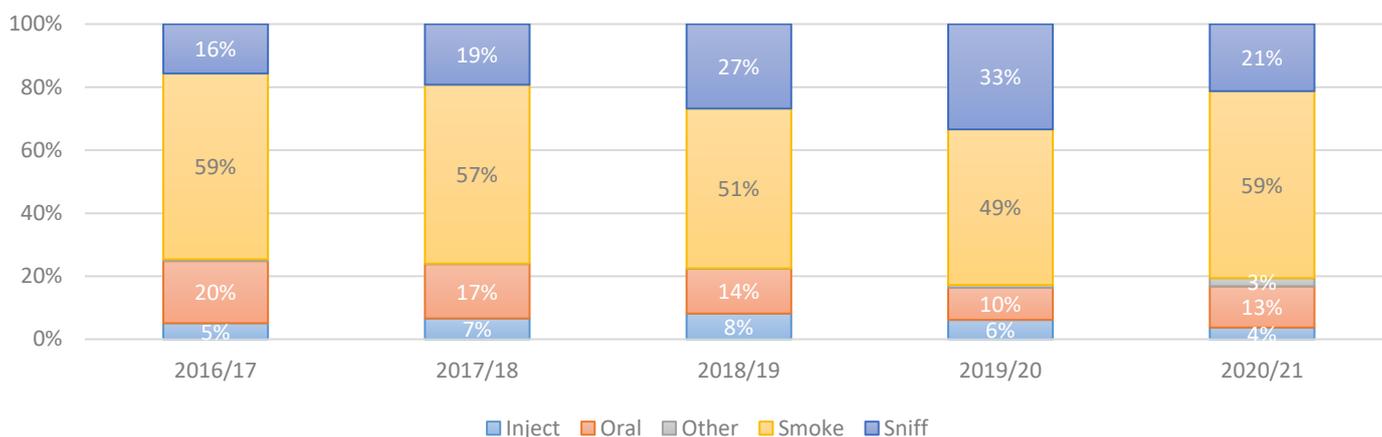
Figure 15: Main substance and age group of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

The route of administration of the main substance is shown in Figure 16. In the year ending March 2021, around three in five of the Wirral CJIT contacts smoked their main substance (n=159; 59%), followed by around one in five whose route of administration was intranasal (n=57; 21%), while 13% administered their main drug orally (n=35), 4% injected (n=10) and 3% used other routes of administration (n=7). The proportion who smoked their main substance in 2020/21 was higher than the previous three years and higher than the other Merseyside areas (Merseyside total: 52%), while the proportion whose route of administration was intranasal in 2020/21 was lower than the previous two years and the same as the Merseyside figure. Furthermore, the proportion who administered their main drug orally in 2020/21 was similar to the previous two years, though the lowest of the five Merseyside areas (Merseyside total: 21%), while the proportion who injected their main substance in 2020/21 was the lowest of the five-year period and similar to the Merseyside figure (5%).

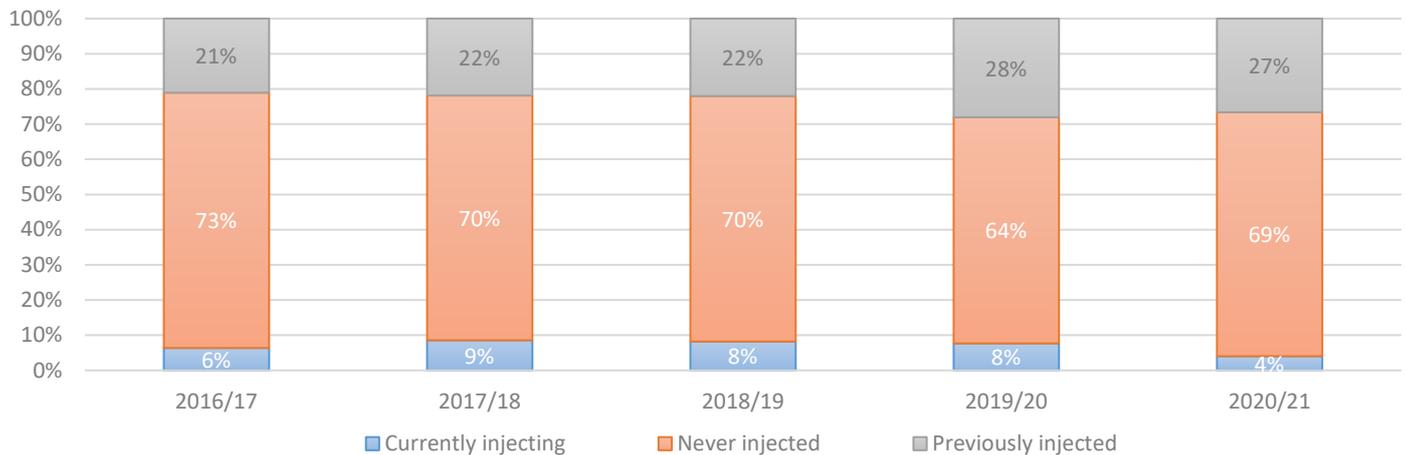
Figure 16: Route of administration of the main substance used by Wirral CJIT contacts, 2016/17 - 2020/21



INJECTING STATUS

Around seven in ten Wirral CJIT contacts in the year ending March 2021 stated they had never injected (n=172; 69%), while just over one-quarter had previously injected but were not currently (n=66; 27%) and 4% were currently injecting (n=10) (Figure 17). The proportion of clients who reported in 2020/21 that they had previously injected is similar to the previous year (28%), while the proportion who were currently injecting in 2020/21 is the lowest of the five-year period. Notably, all proportions in the year ending March 2021 were similar to the Merseyside figures.

Figure 17: Injecting status of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2016/17 - 2020/21

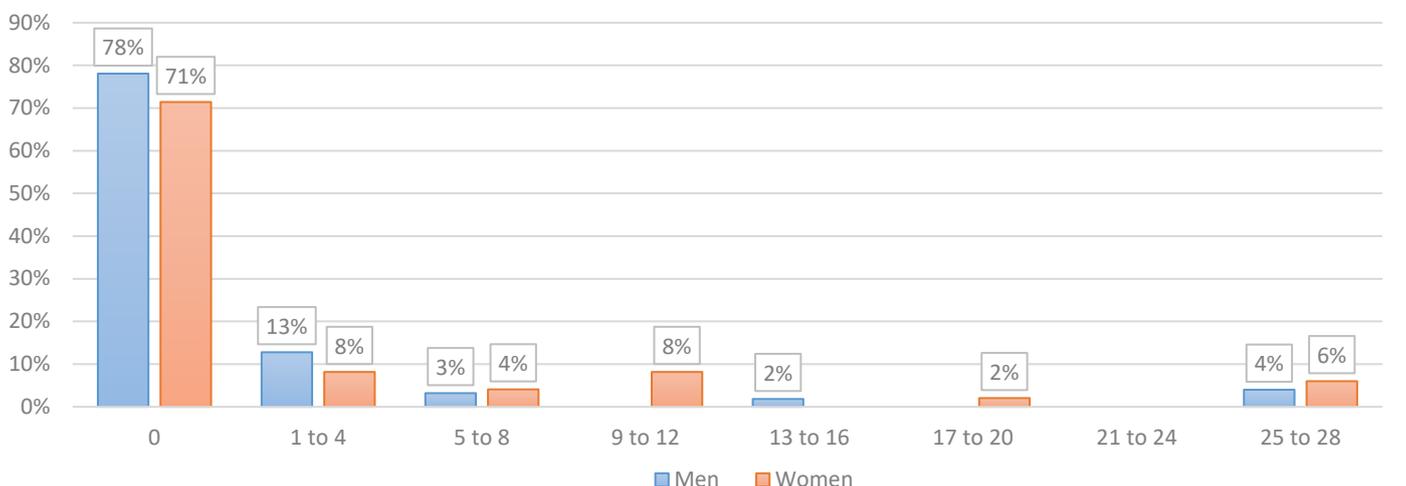


ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

Figure 18 shows the number of days alcohol was consumed by Wirral clients in the 28 days prior to their CJIT contact in the year ending March 2021. Just under four in five men did not consume alcohol (n=171; 78%), compared to just over one in five who did consume alcohol (n=48; 22%). The proportion of men who consumed alcohol in the 28 days prior to their CJIT assessment in 2020/21 is lower than the previous four years and lower than the Merseyside figure (33%).

For women, around seven in ten did not consume alcohol (n=35; 71%), compared to around three in ten who did consume alcohol (n=14; 29%) (Figure 18). The proportion of women who consumed alcohol in the 28 days prior to their CJIT assessment in 2020/21 is lower than the previous four years and lower than the Merseyside figure (34%).

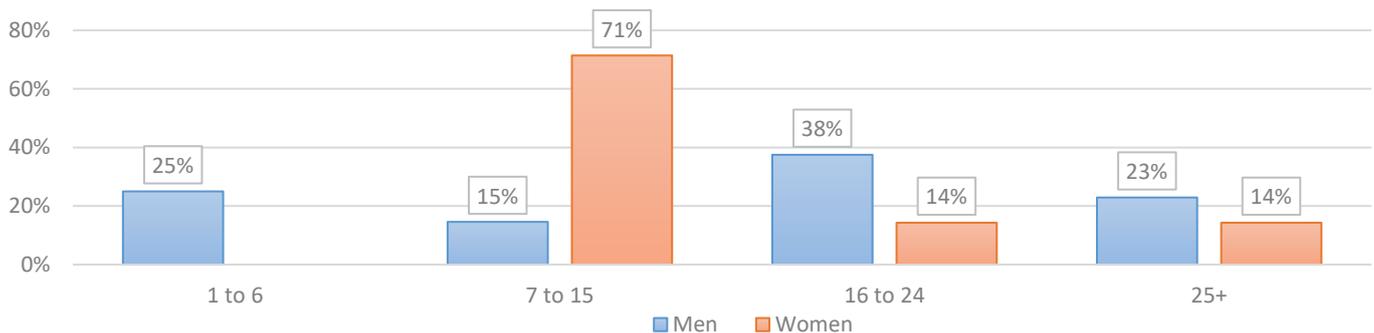
Figure 18: Number of drinking days in the 28 days prior to assessment for Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



The daily average number of units of alcohol consumed by Wirral clients in the 28 days prior to CJIT contact in the year ending March 2021 are shown in *Figure 19*. Of the 48 men who consumed alcohol in the 28 days prior to their assessment, just under two in five consumed 16-24 units of alcohol daily (n=18; 38%), while one-quarter consumed 1-6 units daily (n=12; 25%), 23% consumed over 24 units daily (n=11) and 15% consumed 7-15 units daily (n=7). The proportion who consumed 16-24 units of alcohol daily in the year ending March 2021 is higher than the previous four years and higher than the other Merseyside areas (Merseyside total: 24%).

Of the 14 women who consumed alcohol in the 28 days prior to their assessment, around seven in ten (71%) reported to consume 7-15 units of alcohol daily (*Figure 19*). This is a higher proportion than the previous four years and higher than the Merseyside figure (55%).

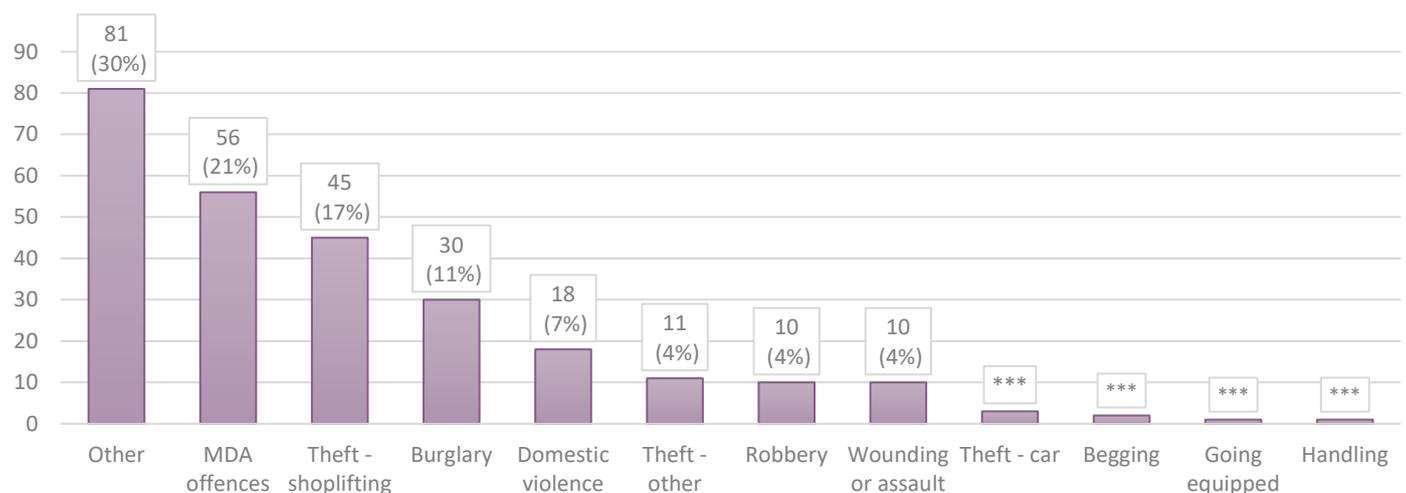
Figure 19: Number of units of alcohol (daily average) consumed by Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



OFFENDING

The offence that prompted Wirral CJIT clients' current or most recent contact with the criminal justice system in the year ending March 2021 is shown in *Figure 20*. Three in ten offences were categorised as 'other' (n=81; 30%), followed by Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences (n=56; 21%)⁸, theft - shoplifting (n=45; 17%) and burglary (n=30; 11%). Although the proportion of other offences is lower than the other Merseyside areas, it is not too dissimilar to the Merseyside figure (33%), while the proportion of MDA offences is the same as the Merseyside total.

Figure 20: Offence that prompted current / most recent contact with the criminal justice system for Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



⁸ Around three in five of the MDA offences were supply (n=34; 61%), while the remainder were possession (n=22; 39%). Notably, this is the highest proportion of supply recorded across Merseyside (Merseyside total: 29%). The other four Merseyside CJITs reported a majority of possession.

Figure 21 shows five-year trends of the main offending categories for Wirral residents. The proportion of other offences in the year ending March 2021 is higher than the previous four years, while the proportions of theft - shoplifting and wounding or assault in 2020/21 are the lowest of the five-year period. It is possible that the shift in trends in the year ending March 2021 could be attributed to lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the proportions of MDA offences are somewhat similar over the five years.

Figure 21: Main offences that prompted current / most recent contact with the criminal justice system for Wirral CJIT contacts, 2016/17 - 2020/21

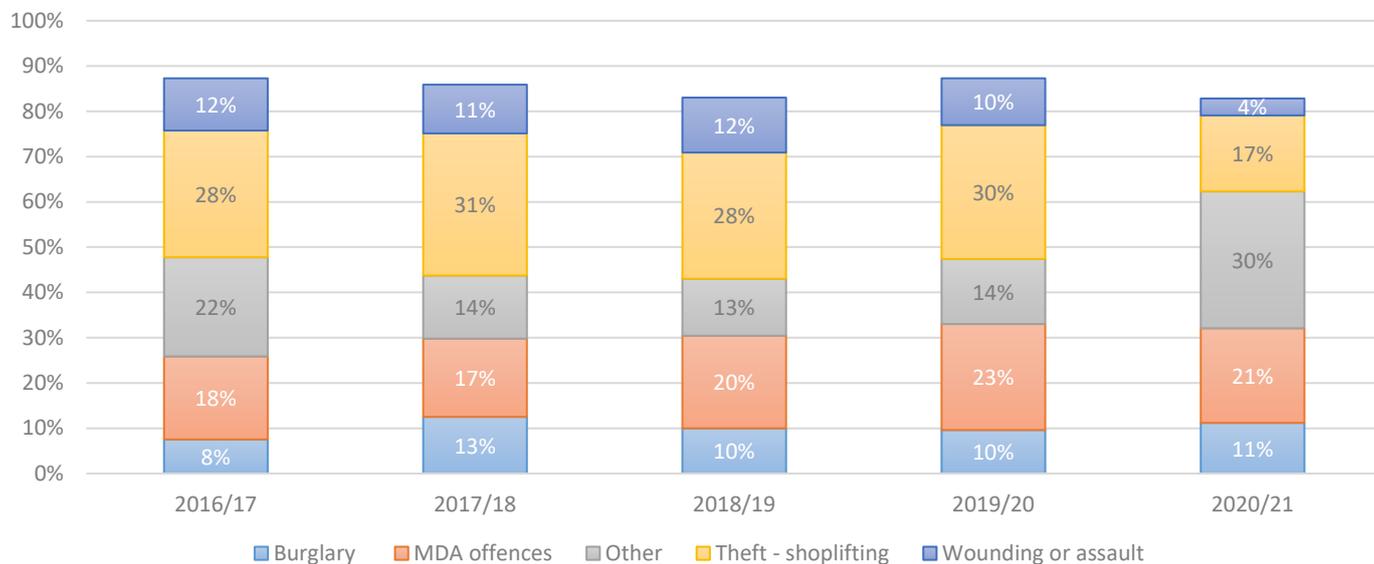
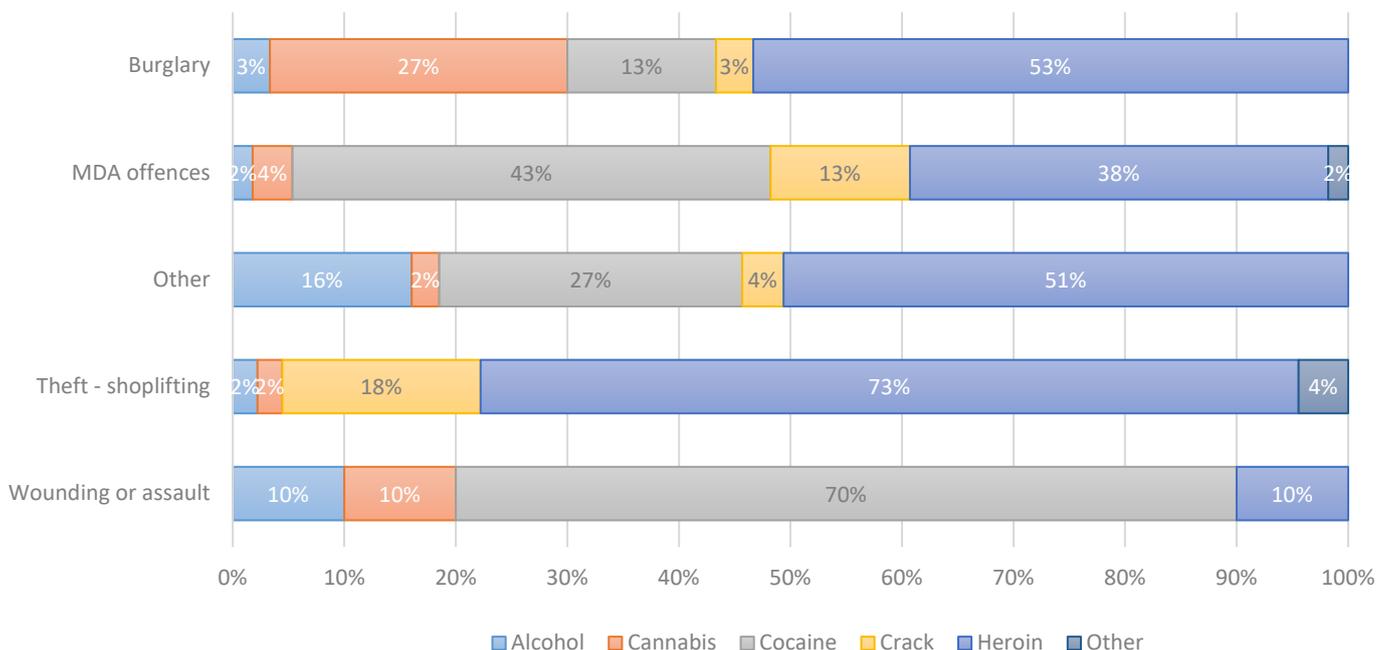


Figure 22 shows the proportions of the main substance for the most common offences recorded for Wirral CJIT contacts assessed in the year ending March 2021. Alcohol recorded as the main substance was most prominent for those whose contact with Wirral CJIT was prompted by other offences (16%), while for cannabis it was burglary (27%) and for cocaine it was wounding or assault (70%), followed by MDA offences (43%). Crack and heroin were most prominent for theft - shoplifting (18% and 73% respectively). Furthermore, heroin accounted for around half of burglary and other offences (53% and 51% respectively).

Figure 22: Main substance and offence of Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21

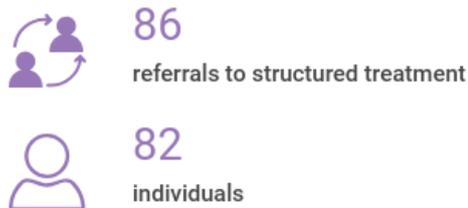


INTERVENTIONS

REFERRALS TO STRUCTURED TREATMENT

Of the clients taken onto the CJIT caseload, 86 (82 individuals) were referred to structured treatment in the year ending March 2021 (*Figure 23*)⁹.

Figure 23: Referrals to structured treatment for Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



RECOVERY SUPPORT SUB-INTERVENTIONS

In the year ending March 2021, 354 recovery support sub-intervention assessments were carried out on clients on the CJIT caseload (174 individuals), with a total 1,187 sub-interventions delivered (*Figure 24*)⁹.

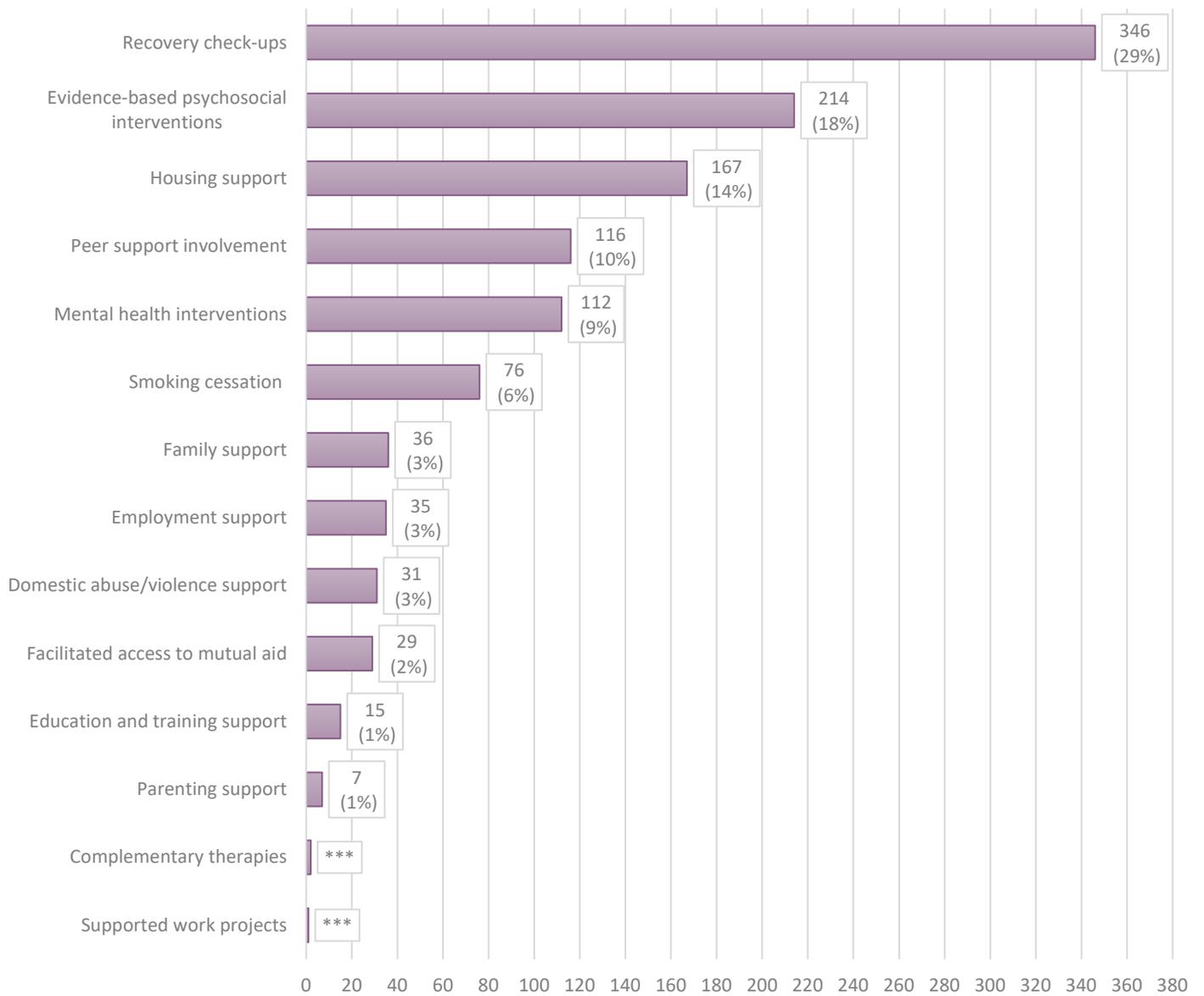
Figure 24: Recovery support sub-intervention assessments for Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



A wide range of recovery support sub-interventions were recorded in the year ending March 2021 (*Figure 25*). Around three in ten were recovery check-ups (n=346; 29%), followed by just under one in five evidence-based psychosocial interventions to support relapse prevention (n=214; 18%), one in seven housing support (n=167; 14%), one in ten peer support involvement (n=116; 10%) and mental health interventions (n=112; 9%).

⁹ Clients not taken onto the CJIT caseload, and clients with the same caseload start date and discharge date as well as a 'prior to caseload' discharge reason (as these are deemed to have not been taken onto the CJIT caseload), have been excluded from these figures. Figures include referrals to structured treatment or recovery support sub-intervention assessments where the date was between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, regardless of when the client was taken onto the CJIT caseload.

Figure 25: Recovery support sub-intervention delivered to Wirral CJIT contacts, 2020/21



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