

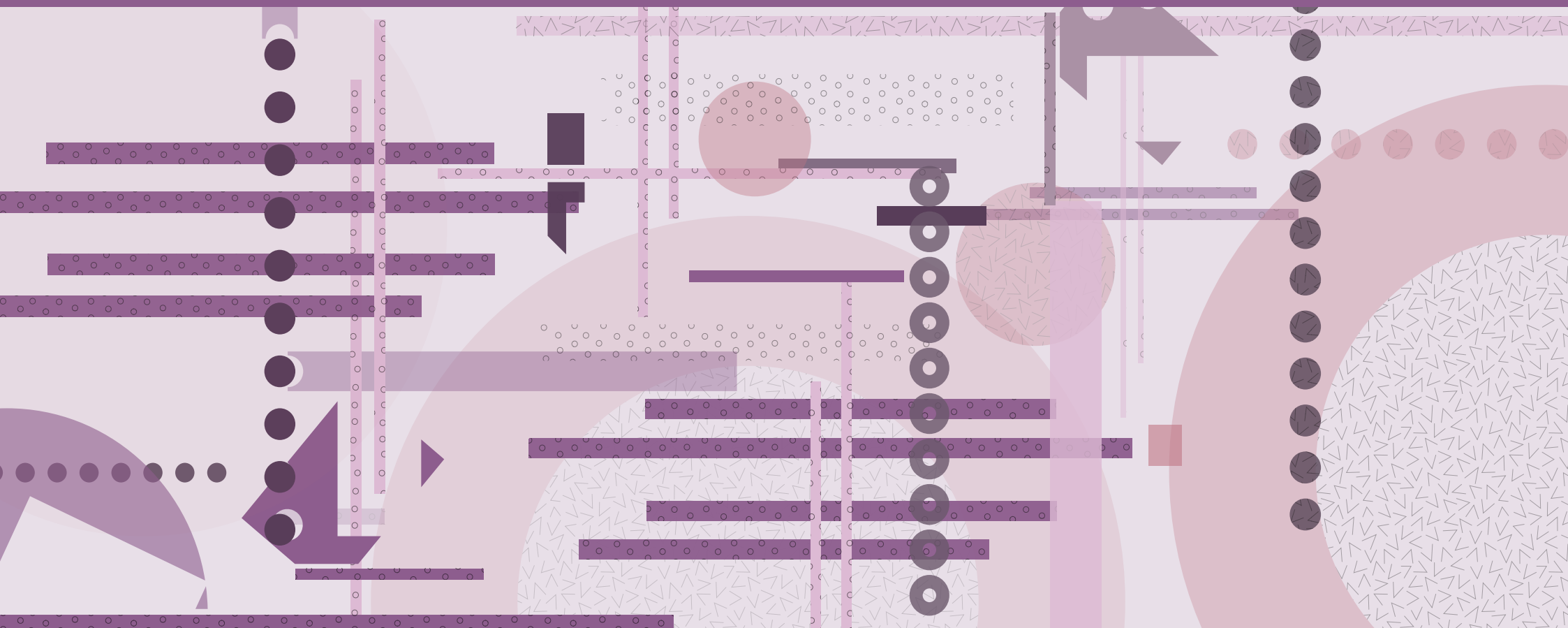
Criminal Justice Project: Drug Interventions Programme



Sefton 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, 19% were conducted at a custody suite in Sefton (n=5,140).
- The number of attempted drug tests in Sefton reduced by 60% over the three-year period, with the greatest reduction between 2014/15 and 2015/16 (58% decrease).
- The positive drug test rate increased year on year. In 2015/16, the rate was 64% which is greater than the figure for tests across Merseyside overall (60%).
- Half (50%) of positive tests were for some form of opiate metabolites (42% for both cocaine and opiates; 9% for opiates only), while the remaining positive tests were for cocaine only (50%).
- Theft accounted for four in ten (40%) offences recorded at the time of the drug test, followed by just over three in ten (31%) Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences.
- The majority (84%) of arrestees in Sefton were male.
- Those aged between 25 and 29 years and between 35 and 39 years accounted for the largest proportions of positive tests (18% each), followed by arrestees aged between 18 and 24 years, between 30 and 34 years and between 40 and 44 years (16% each).
- Almost all were White European (99%).
- Just under half (49%) were resident in Sefton, followed by three in ten (30%) resident in Liverpool and 9% resident in Knowsley.
- There were 112 arrestees who tested positive in a Sefton custody suite 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 23.2% of the total individuals testing positive in 2015/16, the lowest proportion of re-presentation seen in any of the ten cohorts documented in this profile.

Introduction

In Sefton, 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 Sefton 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 and commissioners and service providers in terms of the efficient use of resources and effective services locally and across Merseyside.

Drug tests across Sefton

Currently there is one custody suite in operation in Sefton, Copy Lane. Though now closed, Southport was open and therefore drug testing at some point during the three years included in this profile.

Between April 2013 and March 2016, there were a total of 27,138 attempted drug tests in Merseyside, of which just under two in five (19%) were conducted at a custody suite in Sefton (n=5,140; Table 1). The number of attempted drug tests in Sefton reduced by 60% between 2013/14 and 2015/16. Notably, in 2015/16 there were less than half the number of attempted tests in 2014/15 (58% decrease), which is likely as a result of targeted testing being implemented in Sefton’s custody suites in July 2015.

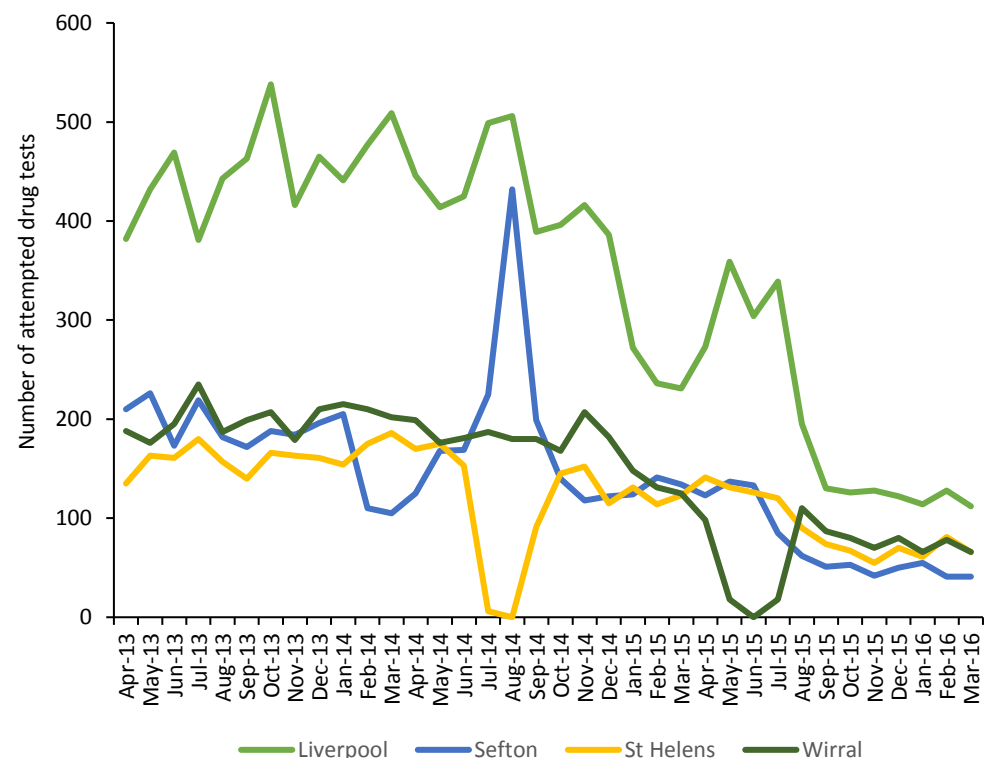
Table 1: Number of attempted drug tests in Merseyside by custody suite and year (2013/14-2015/16)

| Custody suite | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | Total |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Belle Vale | 1,042 | 194 | 25 | 1,261 |
| Copy Lane | 1,853 | 2,080 | 859 | 4,792 |
| St Anne's Street | 3,747 | 2,781 | 1,831 | 8,359 |
| Southport | 317 | 17 | 14 | 348 |
| St Helens | 1,941 | 1,375 | 1,082 | 4,398 |
| Wavertree | 627 | 1,641 | 474 | 2,742 |
| Wirral | 2,403 | 2,064 | 771 | 5,238 |
| Total | 11,930 | 10,152 | 5,056 | 27,138 |

Figure 1 compares the number of attempted drug tests in Sefton with Liverpool, St Helens and Wirral (there are no custody suites in Knowsley). It is clear to see the number of tests

in Sefton dropped in July 2015 when targeted testing was introduced in its suites. The lowest numbers were recorded in February and March 2016 (n=41 each month) and November 2015 (n=42). There was an increase in drug tests in Sefton in July, August and part of September 2014, when they decreased in St Helens. This is probably due to the closure of St Helens custody suite during this time, and therefore arrestees were taken to Sefton.

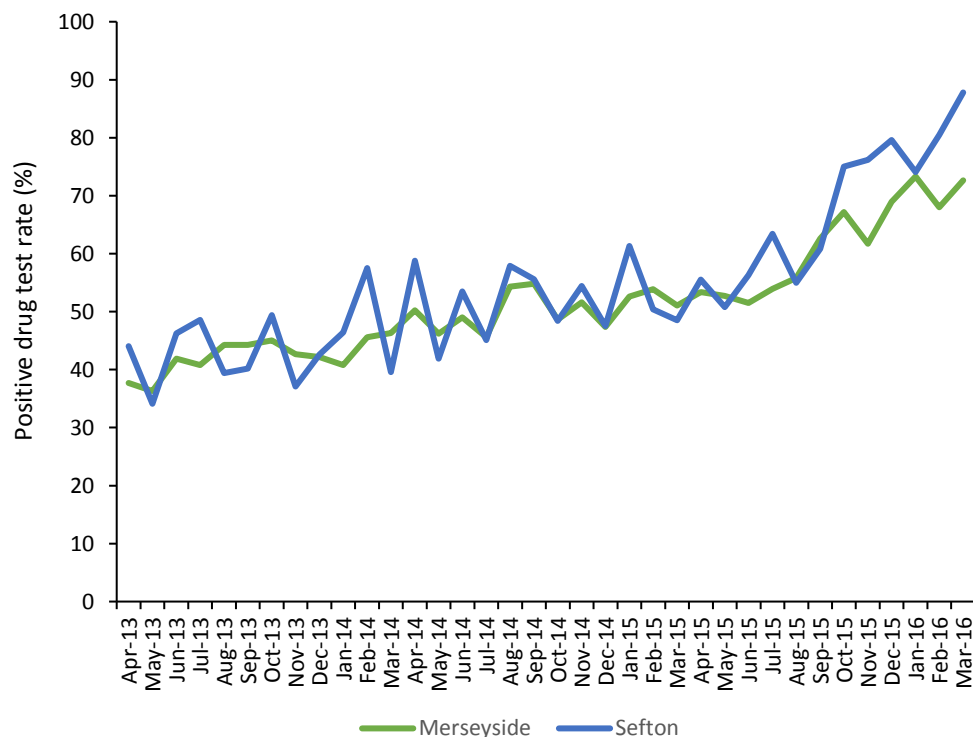
Figure 1: Number of attempted drug tests by area and month/year (2013/14-2015/16)



The positive drug test rate (the number of individuals testing positive ÷ the number of individuals successfully tested) for those tested in Sefton increased year on year,

particularly following the implementation of targeted testing in its custody suites (Figure 2). Sefton’s figures follow similar patterns to the figures for Merseyside overall.

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



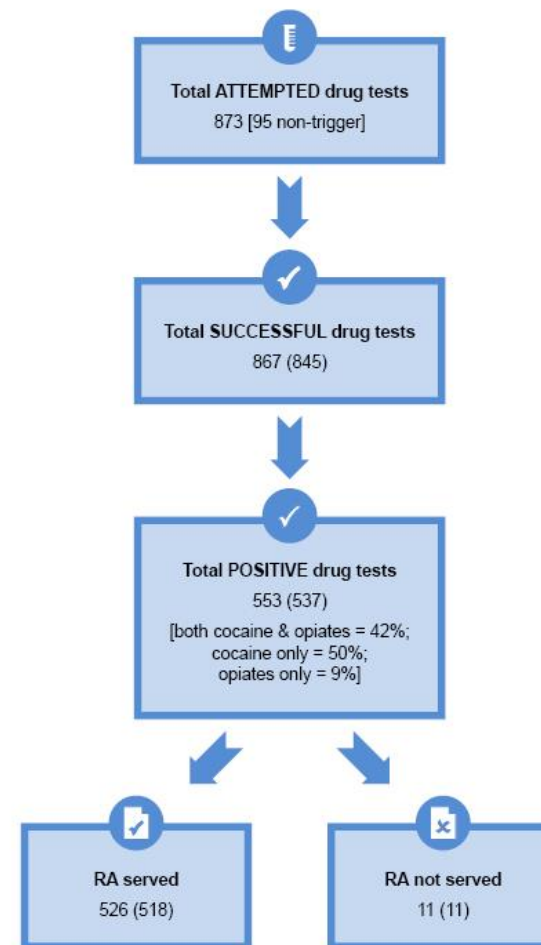
Drug testing activity in Sefton

Figure 3 shows the drug testing activity for those arrested and drug tested in Sefton between April 2015 and March 2016. Of the 845 individuals successfully tested in 2015/16, 537 individuals tested positive; this equates to a positive drug test rate of 64%, which is above the figure for all those arrested and tested across Merseyside (60%).

Half (50%) of positive tests were for some form of opiate metabolites (42% for both cocaine and opiates; 9% for opiates only), while the remaining positive tests were for cocaine only

(50%). There were less positive tests for opiate metabolites and more positive tests for cocaine only in comparison to all tests across Merseyside (Merseyside=58% and 42% respectively).

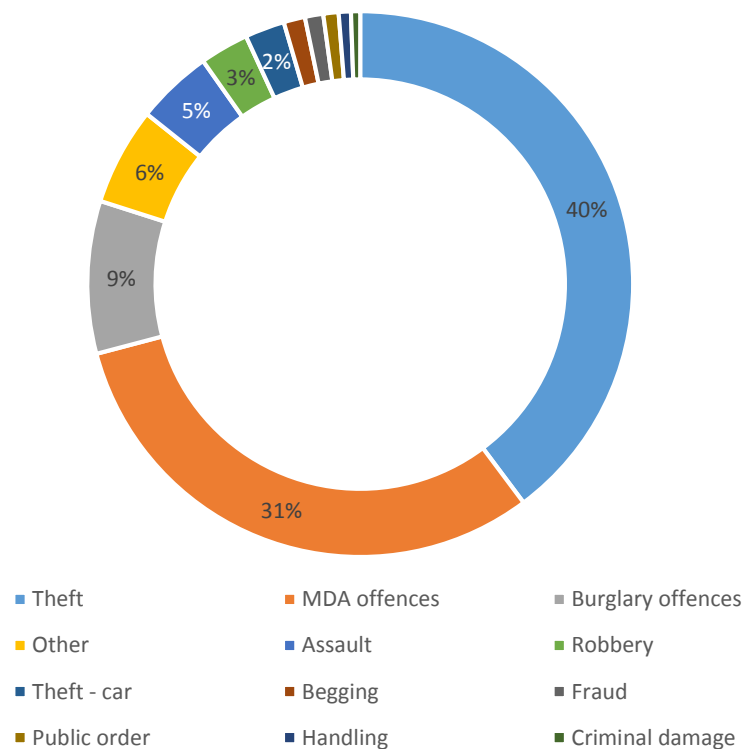
Figure 3: Drug testing activity in Sefton (2015/16)^



[^] 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. Theft accounted for two in five (40%) offences reported by Sefton custody suites for those testing positive between April 2015 and March 2016, followed by just over three in ten (31%) Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences (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 in Sefton by offence recorded at time of test (2015/16)



Demographics

Table 2 presents the age group and gender of those testing positive in Sefton’s custody suites in 2015/16. The majority (84%) were male, similar to the overall Merseyside figure (83%). Arrestees in Sefton aged between 25 and 29 years and between 35 and 39 years

accounted for the largest proportions of positive tests (18% each), followed by arrestees aged between 18 and 24 years, between 30 and 34 years and between 40 and 44 years (16% each), similar to proportions for all positive tests across Merseyside.

Table 2: Positive drug tests in Sefton by age group and gender (2015/16)

| Age group | Females | | Males | | Total | |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 18-24 | 8 | 9% | 83 | 18% | 91 | 16% |
| 25-29 | 12 | 13% | 86 | 19% | 98 | 18% |
| 30-34 | 16 | 18% | 70 | 15% | 86 | 16% |
| 35-39 | 11 | 12% | 86 | 19% | 97 | 18% |
| 40-44 | 17 | 19% | 71 | 15% | 88 | 16% |
| 45-49 | 18 | 20% | 34 | 7% | 52 | 9% |
| 50+ | 7 | 8% | 34 | 7% | 41 | 7% |
| Total | 89 | 100% | 464 | 100% | 553 | 100% |

Almost all of those arrested and testing positive in Sefton between April 2015 and March 2016 were White European (99%).

Where recorded, just under half (49%) of those tested in Sefton were resident in Sefton, followed by three in ten (30%) resident in Liverpool and just under one in ten (9%) resident in Knowsley.

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 clients who tested positive in a Sefton custody suite within a 12-month period re-presented across Merseyside for a successful drug test.

There were 112 arrestees who tested positive in a Sefton custody suite 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 23.2% of the total individuals testing

positive in 2015/16, the lowest proportion of re-representation seen in any of the ten cohorts documented in Table 3. The rate of re-representation in the April 2015 to March 2016 cohort is slightly higher than the overall Merseyside re-representation rate (20.4%).

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

| Number of arrest occasions | Jul 14 - Jun 15 (n=717) | Aug 14 - Jul 15 (n=677) | Sept 14 - Aug 15 (n=613) | Oct 14 - Sep 15 (n=586) | Nov 14 - Oct 15 (n=578) | Dec 14 - Nov 15 (n=562) | Jan 15 - Dec 15 (n=559) | Feb 15 - Jan 16 (n=531) | Mar 15 - Feb 16 (n=503) | Apr 15 - Mar 16 (n=483) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| One | 515 (71.8%) | 492 (72.7%) | 455 (74.2%) | 435 (74.2%) | 430 (74.4%) | 425 (75.6%) | 417 (74.6%) | 395 (74.4%) | 377 (75.0%) | 371 (76.8%) |
| Two | 108 (15.1%) | 91 (13.4%) | 82 (13.4%) | 80 (13.7%) | 80 (13.8%) | 74 (13.2%) | 82 (14.7%) | 78 (14.7%) | 67 (13.3%) | 60 (12.4%) |
| Three | 37 (5.2%) | 33 (4.9%) | 26 (4.2%) | 26 (4.4%) | 26 (4.5%) | 26 (4.6%) | 24 (4.3%) | 25 (4.7%) | 29 (5.8%) | 26 (5.4%) |
| Four | 15 (2.1%) | 27 (4.0%) | 24 (3.9%) | 25 (4.3%) | 23 (4.0%) | 18 (3.2%) | 20 (3.6%) | 16 (3.0%) | 18 (3.6%) | 16 (3.3%) |
| Five | 22 (3.1%) | 16 (2.4%) | 14 (2.3%) | 12 (2.0%) | 10 (1.7%) | 9 (1.6%) | 6 (1.1%) | 8 (1.5%) | 3 (0.6%) | 4 (0.8%) |
| Six | 8 (1.1%) | 7 (1.0%) | 6 (1.0%) | 3 (0.5%) | 4 (0.7%) | 5 (0.9%) | 7 (1.3%) | 6 (1.1%) | 6 (1.2%) | 3 (0.6%) |
| Seven | 4 (0.6%) | 5 (0.7%) | 1 (0.2%) | 2 (0.3%) | 2 (0.3%) | 2 (0.4%) | 1 (0.2%) | 2 (0.4%) | 1 (0.2%) | 2 (0.4%) |
| Eight | 3 (0.4%) | 2 (0.3%) | 2 (0.3%) | 2 (0.3%) | 2 (0.3%) | 2 (0.4%) | 1 (0.2%) | | 1 (0.2%) | 1 (0.2%) |
| Nine | 2 (0.3%) | 1 (0.1%) | 2 (0.3%) | | | 1 (0.2%) | 1 (0.2%) | | | |
| Ten | 1 (0.1%) | 1 (0.1%) | | | | | | 1 (0.2%) | 1 (0.2%) | |
| Twelve | 2 (0.3%) | | | | 1 (0.2%) | | | | | |
| Thirteen | | 1 (0.1%) | | | | | | | | |
| Fifteen | | 1 (0.1%) | 1 (0.2%) | 1 (0.2%) | | | | | | |
| Clients presenting more than once (%) | 28.2% | 27.3% | 25.8% | 25.8% | 25.6% | 24.4% | 25.4% | 25.6% | 25.0% | 23.2% |

Summary

- In Sefton 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 in Sefton and across Merseyside overall, particularly following the implementation of targeted testing.
- Across Merseyside overall, slightly more tested positive for opiate metabolites than cocaine only; however in Sefton, half tested positive for opiate metabolites.
- In Sefton and across Merseyside overall, theft accounted for the largest proportion of offences, followed by MDA offences.
- In general, the demographic profile of those arrested and testing positive across Merseyside overall was male, aged between 25 and 44 years with similar proportions across these age groups, of White European ethnicity and residents of Liverpool. Those drug tested in Sefton were generally aged between 18 and 44 years, half were residents of Sefton and three in ten were residents of Liverpool.
- 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%). In Sefton, the 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.

- 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 in Sefton), 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].

Home Office (2010). *Operational Process Guidance for Implementation of Testing on Arrest, Required Assessment and Restriction on Bail* [online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97792/DTOA-Guidance.pdf [Accessed 5th August, 2016].

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