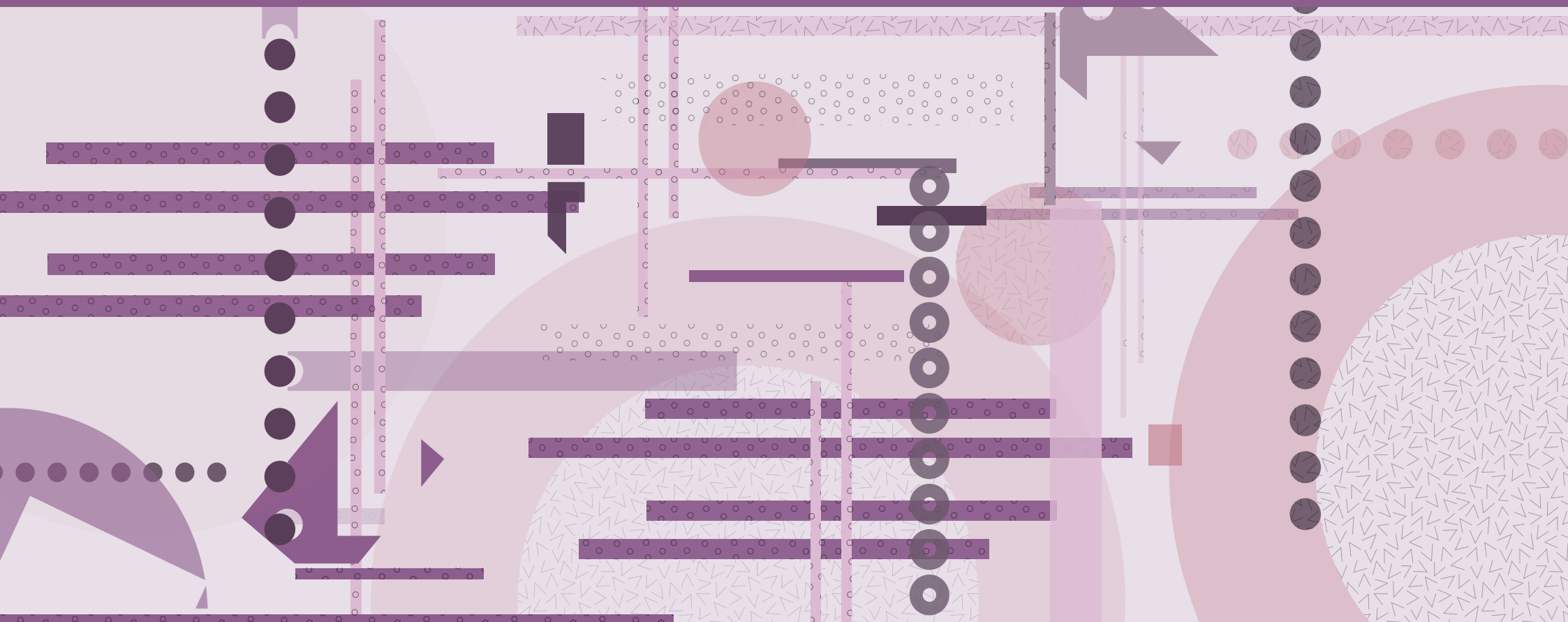


Criminal Justice Project

Liverpool 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, just under half (46%) were conducted at a custody suite in Liverpool (n=12,362).
- The number of attempted drug tests in Liverpool reduced by 57% over the three-year period. Notably, the number of tests in 2015/16 halved when compared to the previous year.
- The positive drug test rate increased year on year. In 2015/16, the rate was 55% which is just below the figure for tests across Merseyside overall (60%).
- Just under three in five (58%) positive tests were for some form of opiate metabolites (44% for both cocaine and opiates; 13% for opiates only), while the remaining positive tests were for cocaine only (42%).
- Theft accounted for over two in five (41%) offences recorded at the time of the drug test, followed by just over one in five (21%) Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences.
- The majority (82%) of arrestees in Liverpool were male.
- Just under one in five (18%) were aged between 30 and 34 years, followed by those aged between 25 and 29 years, between 35 and 39 years and between 40 and 44 years (17% each).
- Almost all were White European (95%).
- Just under three-quarters (73%) were resident in Liverpool, followed by just over one in ten (11%) resident in Wirral.
- There were 263 arrestees who tested positive in a Liverpool 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 26.2% of the total individuals testing positive in 2015/16, the highest proportion of re-presentation seen in any of the ten cohorts documented in this profile.

Introduction

In Liverpool, the criminal justice 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 Liverpool 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 criminal justice 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 Liverpool

Currently there is one custody suite in operation in Liverpool, St Anne’s Street. Though they are now closed (but occasionally opened), Belle Vale and Wavertree were 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 almost half (46%) were conducted at a custody suite in Liverpool (n=12,362; Table 1). The number of attempted drug tests in Liverpool reduced by 57% between 2013/14 and 2015/16. Notably, the number of tests halved in 2015/16 when compared to the previous year (50% decrease), which is likely as a result of targeted testing being implemented in Liverpool’s custody suites in August 2015.

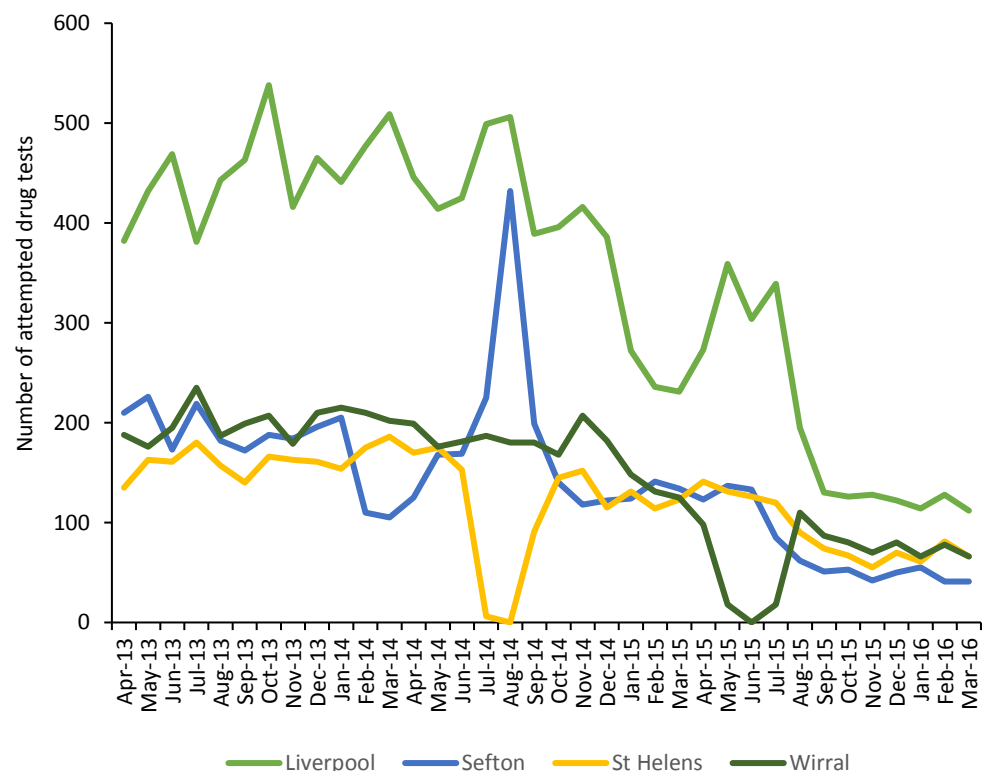
Table 1: Number of attempted drug tests in Merseyside by custody suite and year (2013/14-2015/16)

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

in the number of tests in Liverpool in 2015/16, especially between August 2015 (when targeted testing was introduced in Liverpool) and March 2016, with the lowest numbers recorded in March 2016 (n=112) and January 2016 (n=114). There was an increase in drug tests in Liverpool between May and July 2015, though the number of tests in Wirral reduced during this time. This is probably due to the closure of Wirral custody suite in June and part of May and July 2015, and therefore arrestees were taken to Liverpool.

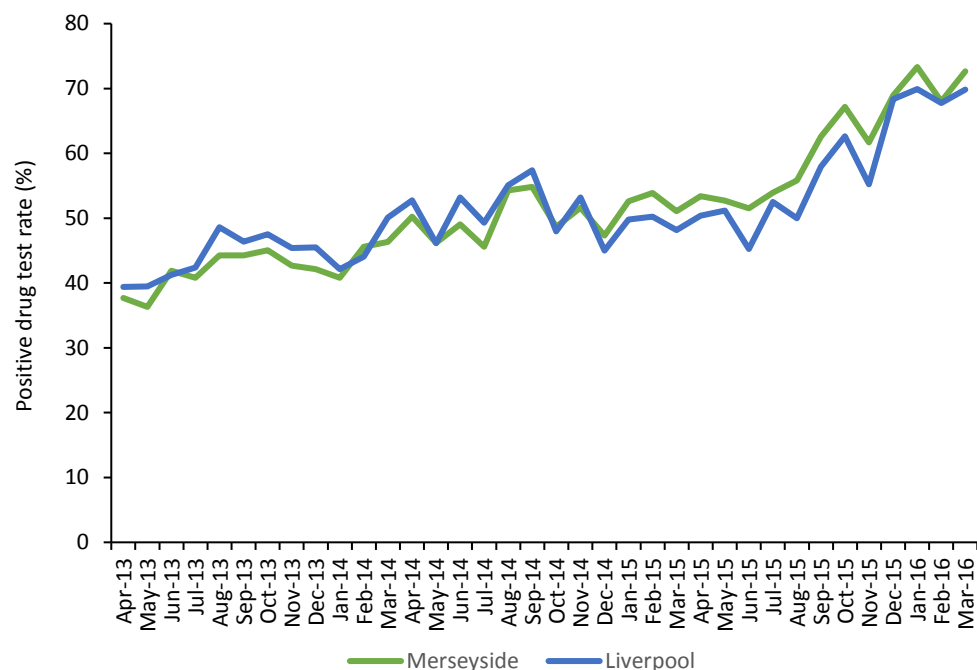
Figure 1: Number of attempted drug tests by area and month/year (2013/14-2015/16)



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

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

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



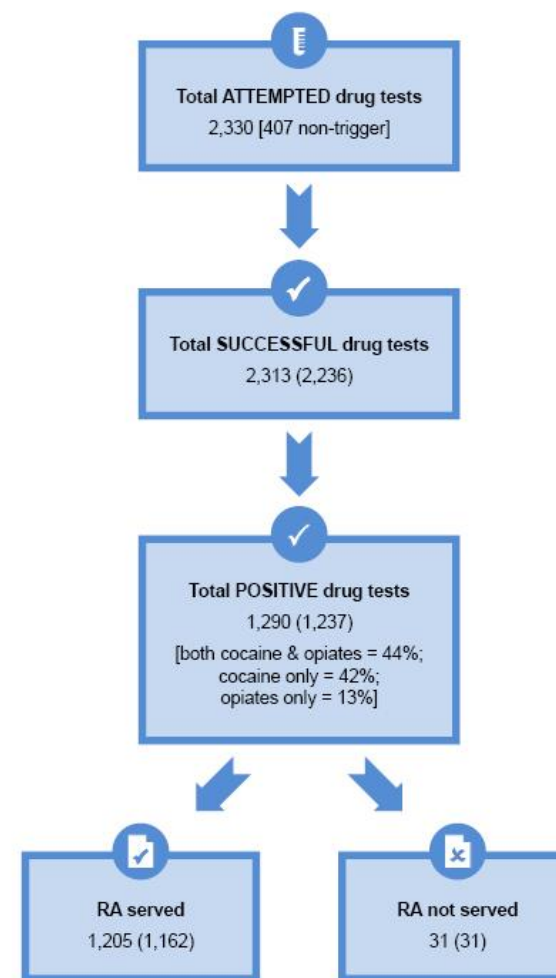
Drug testing activity in Liverpool

Figure 3 shows the drug testing activity for those arrested and drug tested in Liverpool between April 2015 and March 2016. Of the 2,236 individuals successfully tested in 2015/16, 1,237 individuals tested positive; this equates to a positive drug test rate of 55%, which is just below the figure for all those arrested and tested across Merseyside (60%).

Just under three in five (58%) positive tests were for some form of opiate metabolites (44% for both cocaine and opiates; 13% for opiates only), while the remaining positive tests were for cocaine only (42%). These figures were representative of those for positive tests conducted across all custody suites in Merseyside.

Criminal Justice Project: Liverpool Drug Testing Profile

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

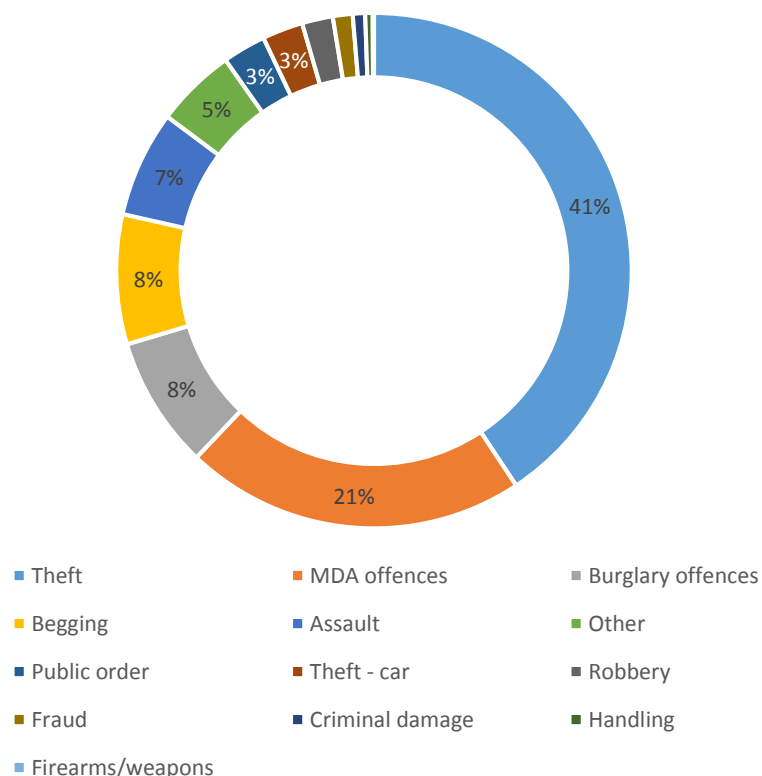


[^] Numbers of individuals at each level are presented in brackets.

Police drug testing data capture the offences recorded at the time of the drug test. Theft accounted for over two in five (41%) offences reported by Liverpool custody suites for those testing positive between April 2015 and March 2016, followed by just over one in five (21%)

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 Liverpool by offence recorded at time of test (2015/16)



Demographics

Table 2 presents the age group and gender of those testing positive in Liverpool’s custody suites in 2015/16. The majority (82%) were male, similar to the overall Merseyside figure (83%). Arrestees in Liverpool aged between 30 and 34 years accounted for 18% of positive tests in 2015/16, followed by those aged between 25 and 29 years, between 35 and 39 years and between 40 and 44 years (17% each), similar to proportions for all positive tests across Merseyside.

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

Age group	Females		Males		Total	
18-24	24	10%	158	15%	182	14%
25-29	41	18%	177	17%	218	17%
30-34	44	19%	191	18%	235	18%
35-39	41	18%	177	17%	218	17%
40-44	33	14%	187	18%	220	17%
45-49	38	17%	100	9%	138	11%
50+	9	4%	70	7%	79	6%
Total	230	100%	1,060	100%	1,290	100%

The majority (95%) of those arrested and testing positive in Liverpool between April 2015 and March 2016 were White European.

Where recorded, just under three-quarters (73%) of those tested in Liverpool were resident in Liverpool, followed by just over one in ten (11%) resident in Wirral.

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 Liverpool custody suite within a 12-month period re-presented across Merseyside for a successful drug test.

There were 263 arrestees who tested positive in a Liverpool 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 26.2% of the total individuals testing positive in 2015/16, the highest proportion of re-presentation seen in any of the ten cohorts documented in Table 3. The rate of re-presentation in the April 2015 to March 2016 cohort is somewhat higher than the overall Merseyside re-presentation rate (20.4%).

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

Number of arrest occasions	Jul 14 - Jun 15 (n=1,637)	Aug 14 - Jul 15 (n=1,594)	Sep 14 - Aug 15 (n=1,457)	Oct 14 - Sep 15 (n=1,356)	Nov 14 - Oct 15 (n=1,275)	Dec 14 - Nov 15 (n=1,164)	Jan 15 - Dec 15 (n=1,105)	Feb 15 - Jan 16 (n=1,063)	Mar 15 - Feb 16 (n=1,040)	Apr 15 - Mar 16 (n=1,004)
One	1,249 (76.3%)	1,206 (75.7%)	1,110 (76.2%)	1,021 (75.3%)	958 (75.1%)	865 (74.3%)	829 (75.0%)	791 (74.4%)	771 (74.1%)	741 (73.8%)
Two	212 (13.0%)	217 (13.6%)	186 (12.8%)	180 (13.3%)	170 (13.3%)	155 (13.3%)	138 (12.5%)	141 (13.3%)	137 (13.2%)	131 (13%)
Three	78 (4.8%)	79 (5.0%)	73 (5.0%)	72 (5.3%)	68 (5.3%)	68 (5.8%)	74 (6.7%)	69 (6.5%)	71 (6.8%)	63 (6.3%)
Four	45 (2.8%)	38 (2.4%)	34 (2.3%)	38 (2.8%)	37 (2.9%)	41 (3.5%)	33 (3.0%)	30 (2.8%)	28 (2.7%)	31 (3.1%)
Five	15 (0.9%)	23 (1.4%)	28 (1.9%)	21 (1.5%)	21 (1.6%)	17 (1.5%)	15 (1.4%)	18 (1.7%)	14 (1.3%)	17 (1.7%)
Six	15 (0.9%)	13 (0.8%)	8 (0.5%)	9 (0.7%)	10 (0.8%)	8 (0.7%)	7 (0.6%)	3 (0.3%)	7 (0.7%)	9 (0.9%)
Seven	6 (0.4%)	4 (0.3%)	8 (0.5%)	6 (0.4%)	3 (0.2%)	3 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)	4 (0.4%)	6 (0.6%)	7 (0.7%)
Eight	8 (0.5%)	5 (0.3%)	2 (0.1%)	2 (0.1%)	2 (0.2%)	3 (0.3%)	4 (0.4%)	2 (0.2%)	3 (0.3%)	2 (0.2%)
Nine	4 (0.2%)	5 (0.3%)	4 (0.3%)	2 (0.1%)	2 (0.2%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	4 (0.4%)	2 (0.2%)	2 (0.2%)
Ten	2 (0.1%)	3 (0.2%)	2 (0.1%)	2 (0.1%)	2 (0.2%)	2 (0.2%)	3 (0.3%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)
Eleven	2 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.1%)	2 (0.2%)	1 (0.1%)				
Thirteen			1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)						
Clients presenting more than once (%)	23.7%	24.3%	23.8%	24.7%	24.9%	25.7%	25.0%	25.6%	25.9%	26.2%

Summary

- In Liverpool 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 Liverpool and across Merseyside, particularly following the implementation of targeted testing.
- In Liverpool and across Merseyside overall, slightly more tested positive for opiate metabolites than cocaine only.
- In Liverpool 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 in Liverpool and 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.
- 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 Liverpool, individuals testing positive in 2015/16 was the highest proportion of re-presentation seen in any of the cohorts.
- All partners in the criminal justice 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 (though it hasn't in Liverpool), 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 drug treatment agencies 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, 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

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.

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 the criminal justice process 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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