

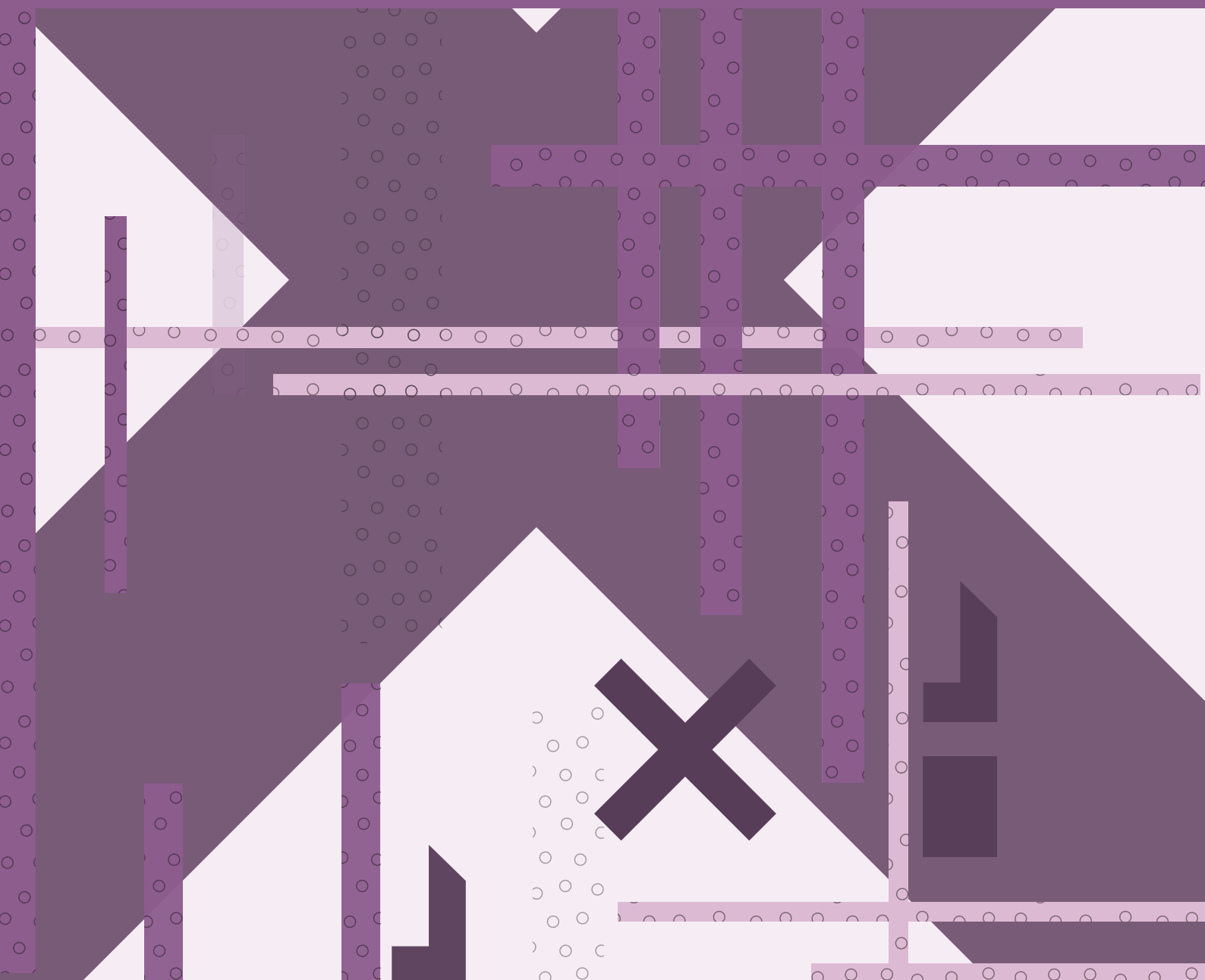
Criminal Justice Project: Drug Interventions Programme



Sefton Drug Testing Profile (2014 to 2017)

April 2018

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KEY FINDINGS

SEFTON CUSTODY SUITES

- Between January 2014 and December 2017, 17% of the attempted drug tests across Merseyside were carried out at Sefton's custody suites (n=3,835).
- Attempted drug tests reduced by 62% between 2015 and 2016, with an overall reduction of 77% over the four-year period.
- The average positive drug test rate in 2016 and 2017 was 79% and 80% respectively, compared to 51% in 2014.
- There were 334 positive drug tests in 2017 (328 individuals).
- Over half (52%) of the positive tests in 2017 were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 144 [43%]; opiates only = 29 [9%]), while the remaining positive tests were for cocaine only (n=161; 48%).
- Around seven in ten (69%) positive drug tests occurred midweek (n=229).
- Around half (49%) occurred during the hours the suite is staffed by a drugs worker (08:00-16:00; n=162).
- Thirty-five per cent of the positive drug test records in 2017 reported theft (n=117), followed by 33% Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences (n=109).
- Around four in five (79%) were male (n=264).
- Those aged 25-29 years and 35-39 years each accounted for 17% of those testing positive in 2017 (n=58 each).
- The majority were White European (n=327; 98%).
- Around one-third (35%) were resident in Sefton (n=108), followed by one-quarter (25%) resident in St Helens (n=76), 21% resident in Liverpool (n=64) and 12% resident in Knowsley (n=36).

SEFTON RESIDENTS

- Between January 2014 and December 2017, 10% of the attempted drug tests carried out across Merseyside were Sefton residents (n=2,298).
- The majority of Sefton residents were drug tested in Sefton (n=1,626; 71%).
- Attempted drug tests reduced by 47% between 2014 and 2015, and by 67% between 2015 and 2016, while the number of tests increased by 23% in 2017 when compared to 2016.
- There were 207 positive drug tests in 2017.
- Over half (51%) of the positive tests were for cocaine only (n=105), while 49% were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 89 [43%]; opiates only = 13 [6%]).
- Around one-third (34%) of the positive drug test records in 2017 reported theft (n=71), followed by three in ten (30%) MDA offences (n=63), while burglary and offences categorised as 'other' each accounted for 11% (n=22 each).
- Around four in five (81%) were male (n=167).
- Sefton residents aged 30-34 years and 35-39 years each accounted for one-fifth (20%) of those testing positive in 2017 (n=41 each).
- The majority were White European (n=202; 98%).

INTRODUCTION

The Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) process generally begins with the police drug testing individuals in the custody suite following an arrest. If offenders test positive for Class A drugs (opiates and/or cocaine), they are served with a Required Assessment (RA) by the police. This is a compulsory legal sanction which requires 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 use and offending behaviour and, if necessary, encourage them to engage with drug treatment services (Home Office, 2010). In 2016/17, 57% of those accessing DIP in Merseyside presented via the RA route, while in Sefton 60% presented through RAs (Collins et al., 2017a). For this reason, the police play an important role in the early stages of the DIP process.

Merseyside Police introduced targeted drug testing in 2015. This involves a set list of questions around drug use that should be considered by the police 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, thus save police time and money, while ensuring offenders who use drugs continue to be drug tested and referred to treatment services through the RA process.

This Drug Testing Profile for Sefton presents information on drug tests carried out at Sefton's custody suites and on Sefton residents across the Merseyside area between January 2014 and December 2017, with a particular focus given to the most recent year (2017). This profile contextualises Merseyside Police drug testing data by providing numbers and trends of offenders who use drugs identified through this route into the DIP system and a demographic overview of the individuals. Comparisons to overall Merseyside figures have been made, where possible, with tables in Appendix A and B showing comparisons across each area (custody suite area and area of residence). This profile also provides recommendations for all stakeholders involved with DIP, in terms of the efficient use of resources and effective services locally and across Merseyside.

SEFTON CUSTODY SUITES

OVERVIEW

Between January 2014 and December 2017, there were a total of 22,808 attempted drug tests in Merseyside's custody suites. The number of drug tests decreased year on year (Table 1), particularly between 2014 and 2015 (44% decrease) and between 2015 and 2016 (50% decrease), which is likely attributed to the implementation of targeted testing across Merseyside in 2015. Notably, the number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside reduced overall by around three-quarters (74%) within the four-year period.

Of the attempted drug tests across Merseyside, 17% were carried out at Sefton's custody suites¹ (n=3,835; Table 1). The number of attempted drug tests at Sefton's custody suites reduced year on year, representing a total decrease of 77% between 2014 and 2017. Notably, the number of tests reduced by 62% in 2016 when compared to 2015.

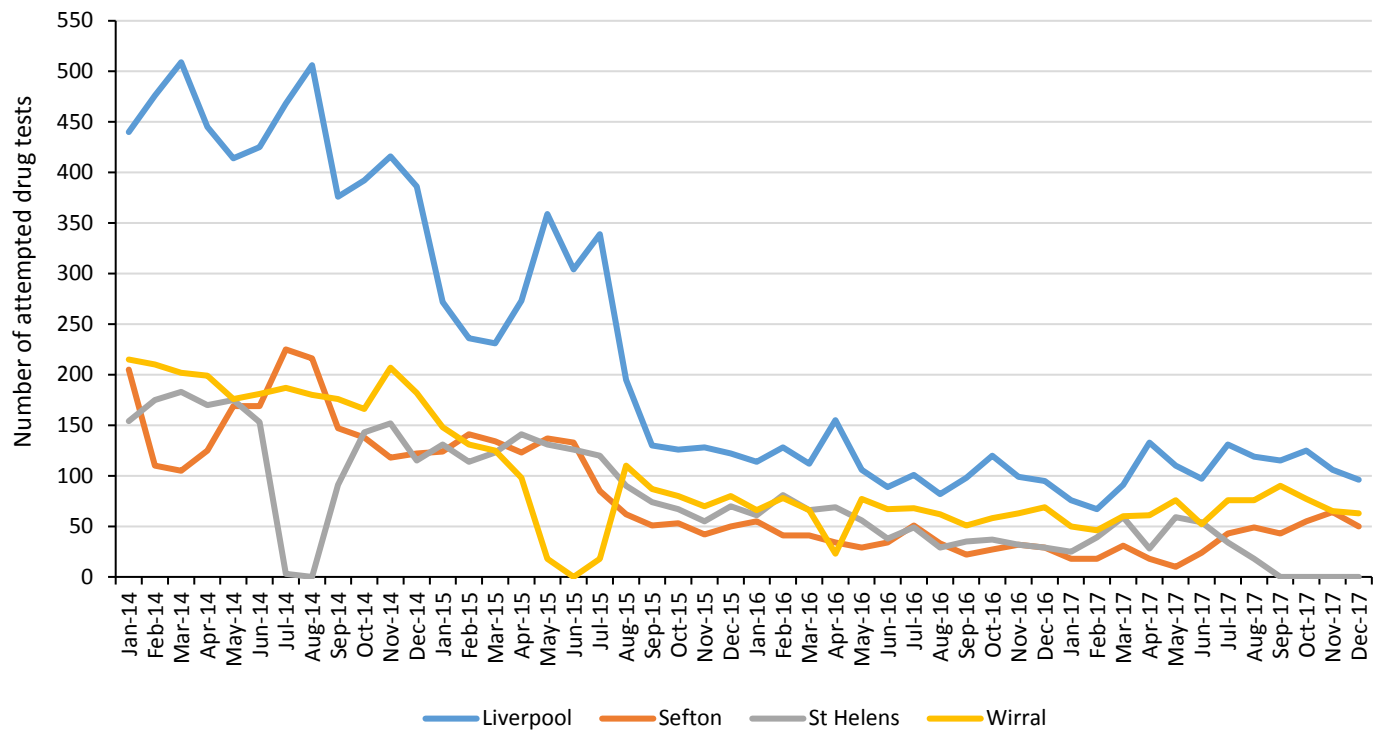
¹ Currently there is one custody suite in operation in Sefton (Copy Lane). Though now closed, Southport was open during the four-year period (no drug tests have been carried out at Southport since December 2015).

Table 1: Number of attempted drug tests by custody suite area and year (2014-17)

Area	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Liverpool	5,253	2,715	1,299	1,266	10,533
Sefton	1,849	1,135	428	423	3,835
St Helens	1,514	1,242	582	316	3,654
Wirral	2,281	965	748	792	4,786
Total	10,897	6,057	3,057	2,797	22,808

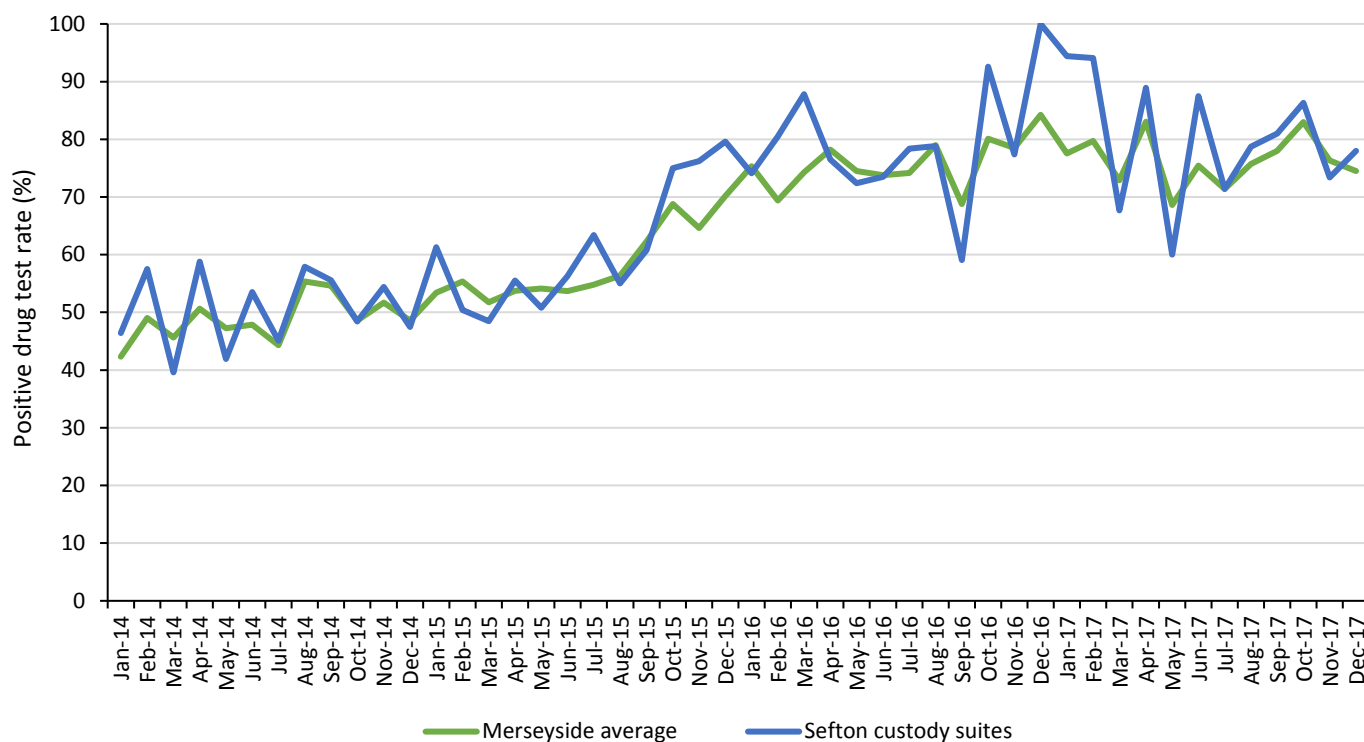
Figure 1 compares the number of attempted drug tests in Sefton with Liverpool, St Helens and Wirral (there are no custody suites in Knowsley). Evident is the reduction in the number of tests in all areas in 2015 when targeted testing was implemented. The lowest number of tests was recorded in May 2017 (n=10), followed by January 2017, February 2017 and April 2017 (n=18 each). Tests were highest in July 2014 (n=225) and August 2014 (n=216).

Figure 1: Number of attempted drug tests by custody suite area and month/year (2014-17)



The positive drug test rate² for those drug tested in Sefton increased year on year over the four-year period (Figure 2). The average positive drug test rate in 2016 and 2017 was 79% and 80% respectively, while it was 51% in 2014.

Figure 2: Positive drug test rate by month/year, Sefton custody suites and Merseyside (2014-17)



DRUG TESTING ACTIVITY

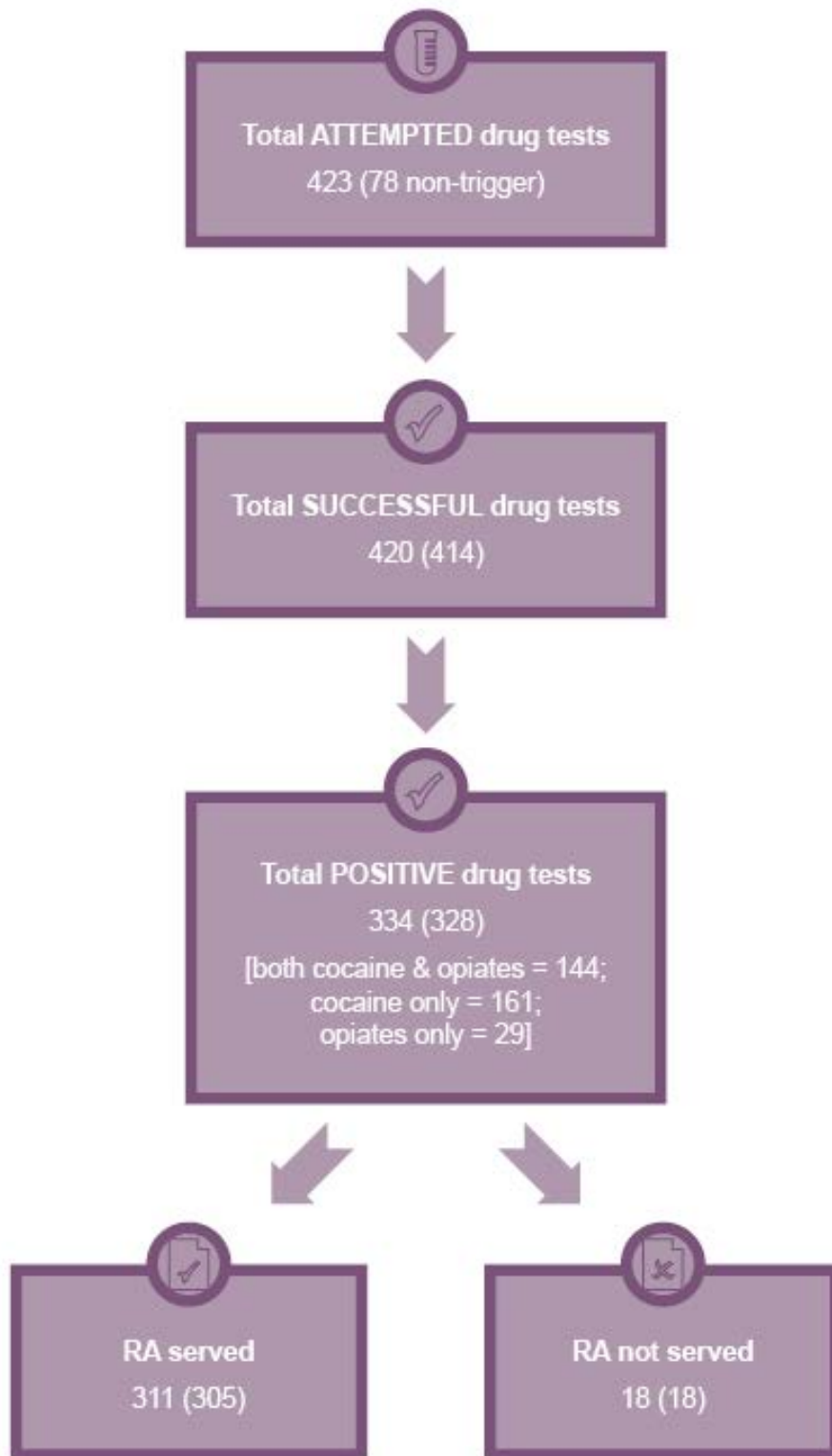
Figure 3 shows the drug testing activity for those arrested and drug tested at Copy Lane custody suite between January and December 2017³. There were a total of 423 attempted drug tests in 2017; of which 420 were successful (414 individuals). Of the individuals successfully tested, 328 individuals tested positive. This represents a positive drug test rate of 79% in 2017, which is higher than the average positive drug test rate for Merseyside (74%).

Over half (52%) of the 328 positive tests in 2017 were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 144 [43%]; opiates only = 29 [9%]), while the remaining positive tests were for cocaine only (n=161; 48%). The proportion that tested positive for opiate metabolites is similar to the Merseyside figure (53%).

² Positive drug test rate = (number of individuals testing positive ÷ number of individuals successfully tested) x 100.

³ All drug tests carried out in Sefton in 2017 were at Copy Lane custody suite.

Figure 3: Drug testing activity in Copy Lane custody suite (2017)⁴

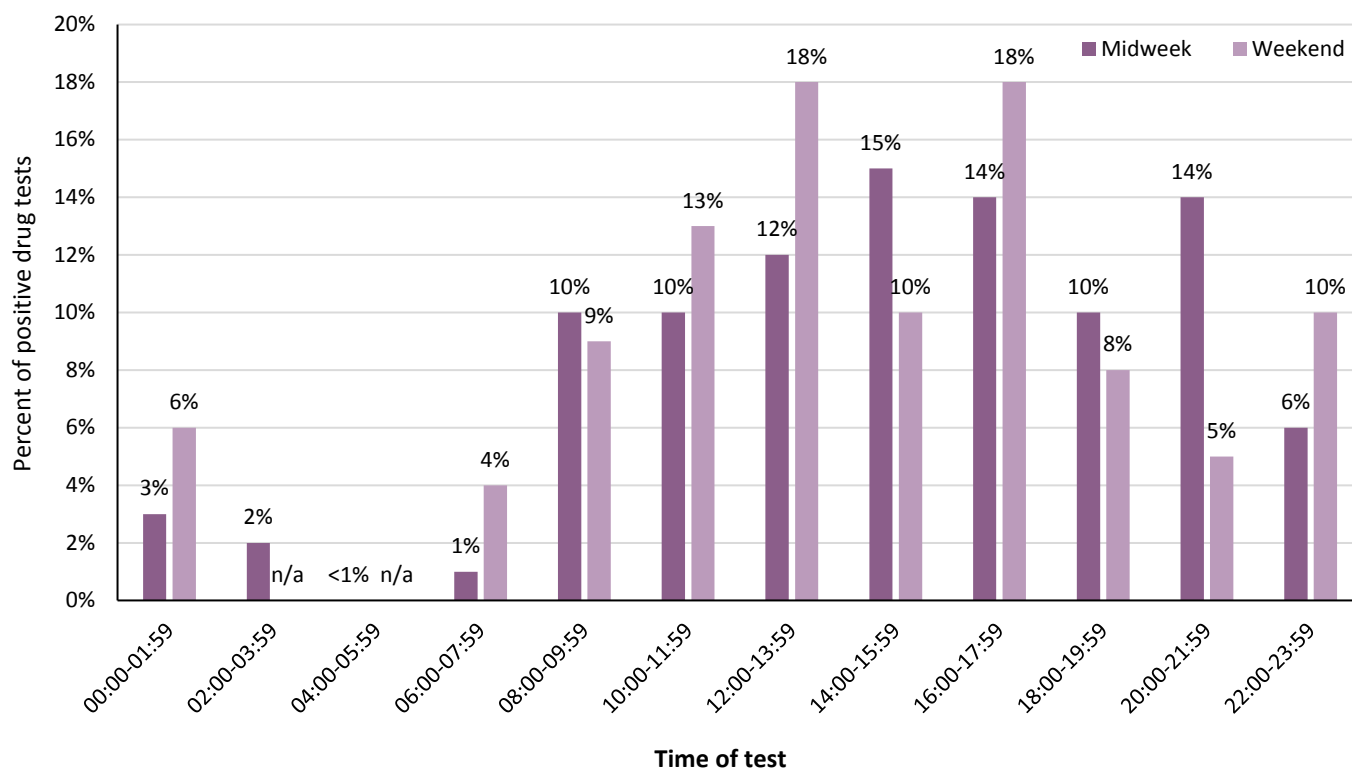


⁴ Numbers of individuals at each level are presented in brackets. 'Total attempted drug tests' is a summation of successful tests and those that were refused or aborted. 'RA served' and 'RA not served' indicate the number of occasions when those testing positive were either served or not served with the requirement to attend an initial RA. Records where tests were disputed and overturned have been removed; therefore the figure may be different to the subtraction of 'RA not served' from 'Total positive tests'.

Of the 334 positive drug tests carried out at Copy Lane custody suite in 2017, around seven in ten (69%) occurred midweek (n=229). This is the same proportion as all positive drug tests across Merseyside.

Figure 4 shows the proportions of positive drug tests by time of test, making comparisons between those which occurred during the week and at the weekend. Around half (49%) of all positive drug tests occurred during the hours the custody suite is staffed by a drugs worker (08:00-16:00; n=162). Positive drug tests during the week were generally between 08:00 and 21:59, peaking between 14:00 and 15:59 (n=35; 15%) and between 16:00 and 17:59 (n=33; 14%), while proportions at the weekend peaked between 12:00 and 13:59 and between 16:00 and 17:59 (n=19 each; 18% each).

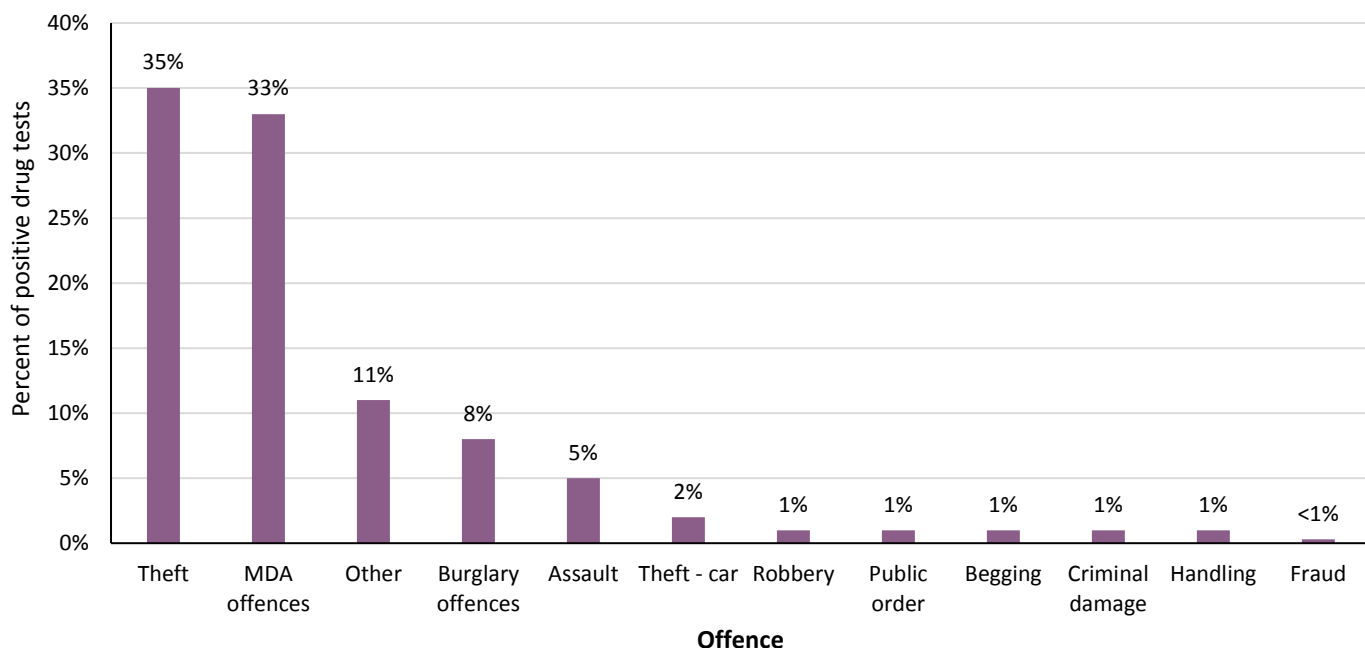
Figure 4: Positive drug tests at Copy Lane custody suite by time of test, midweek vs. weekend (2017)⁵



Police drug testing data capture the offence that led to the arrest and subsequent drug test. Theft accounted for the largest proportion (n=117; 35%) of positive drug test records in 2017, followed by Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences (n=109; 33%; Figure 5). In comparison, data for all positive drug tests across Merseyside in 2017 reported a higher proportion of theft (38%) and a lower proportion of MDA offences (31%).

⁵ n/a = no positive drug tests during those hours.

Figure 5: Positive drug tests at Copy Lane custody suite by offence (2017)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Males accounted for around four in five (79%) positive drug tests in Sefton in 2017 (n=264), which is lower than the proportion for Merseyside overall (83%).

Figure 6 shows that those aged 25-29 years and 35-39 years each accounted for 17% of those testing positive in 2017 (n=58 each). The age profile is similar to the overall Merseyside figures.

Figure 6: Positive drug tests at Copy Lane custody suite by age group (2017)

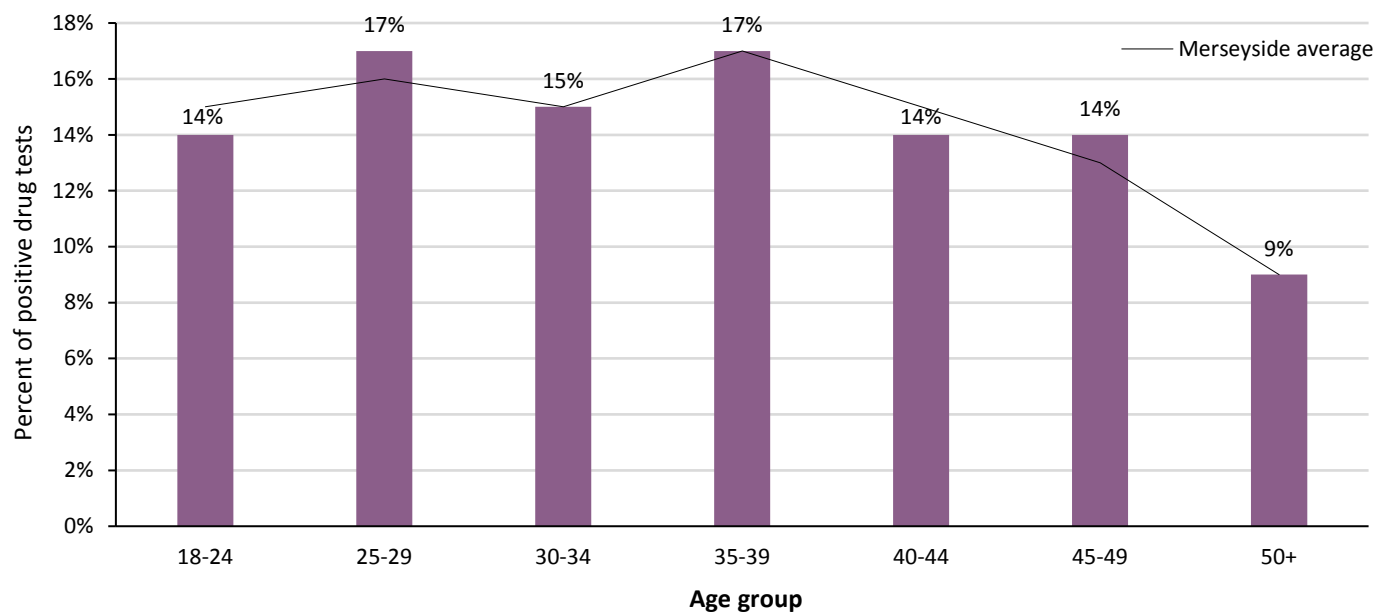


Table 2 shows some differences in age group proportions across gender in Sefton. Although there were smaller numbers of females, there were larger proportions of older females (aged 30 years and over) when compared to males.

Table 2: Positive drug tests at Copy Lane custody suite by age group and gender (2017)⁶

Age group	Females		Males		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
18-24	***	4%	<45	16%	46	14%
25-29	8	11%	50	19%	58	17%
30-34	13	19%	37	14%	50	15%
35-39	13	19%	45	17%	58	17%
40-44	13	19%	33	13%	46	14%
45-49	11	16%	36	14%	47	14%
50+	<10	13%	<25	8%	29	9%
Total	70	100%	264	100%	334	100%

The majority of those arrested who tested positive at Copy Lane custody suite in 2017 were White European (n=327; 98%), compared to 96% across Merseyside. Around one-third (35%) were resident in Sefton (n=108), followed by one-quarter (25%) resident in St Helens (n=76), 21% resident in Liverpool (n=64) and 12% resident in Knowsley (n=36)⁷.

SEFTON RESIDENTS

OVERVIEW

Of the 22,808 attempted drug tests across Merseyside between January 2014 and December 2017, 10% were carried out on Sefton residents (n=2,298). It should be noted that 18% of records across the four-year period 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 Sefton residents arrested and drug tested across Merseyside.

The majority of Sefton residents were tested at Sefton's custody suites (n=1,626; 71%; Table 3). Overall, the number of Sefton residents drug tested across Merseyside reduced by 82% between 2014 and 2016. However, they increased by 23% between 2016 and 2017, which is likely attributed to an increase in the recording of D(A)AT of residence in 2017⁸. The largest reduction in attempted drug tests was between 2015 and 2016 (67% decrease), followed by a 47% reduction between 2014 and 2015.

⁶ Throughout this report numbers less than five have been suppressed (with ***) to maintain confidentiality.

⁷ Drug (and Alcohol) Action Team (D[A]AT) of residence was missing for 24 records of the positive drug tests carried out at Copy Lane custody suite. When St Helens custody suite closed mid-August 2017, the majority of residents were taken to Copy Lane in Sefton; 78% of St Helens residents between August and December 2017.

⁸ Records missing D(A)AT of residence: 2014=17%; 2015=21%; 2016=25%; 2017=11%.

Table 3: Number of attempted drug tests for Sefton residents by custody suite area and year (2014-17)

Area	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Liverpool	279	100	51	56	486
Sefton	889	473	127	137	1,626
St Helens	16	44	24	11	95
Wirral	10	21	7	53	91
Total	1,194	638	209	257	2,298

Figure 7 shows the number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside for Sefton residents by month and year, clearly demonstrating the reduction in the number of tests between 2014 and 2016. There was a substantial drop in numbers in July 2015, when targeted testing was implemented at Copy Lane custody suite. The lowest number of attempted tests for Sefton residents was November 2016 (n<5)⁹, followed by May 2017 (n=6) and January 2017 (n=8). The number of tests was highest in January 2014 (n=130).

Figure 7: Number of attempted drug tests for Sefton residents by month/year (2014-17)



DRUG TESTING ACTIVITY

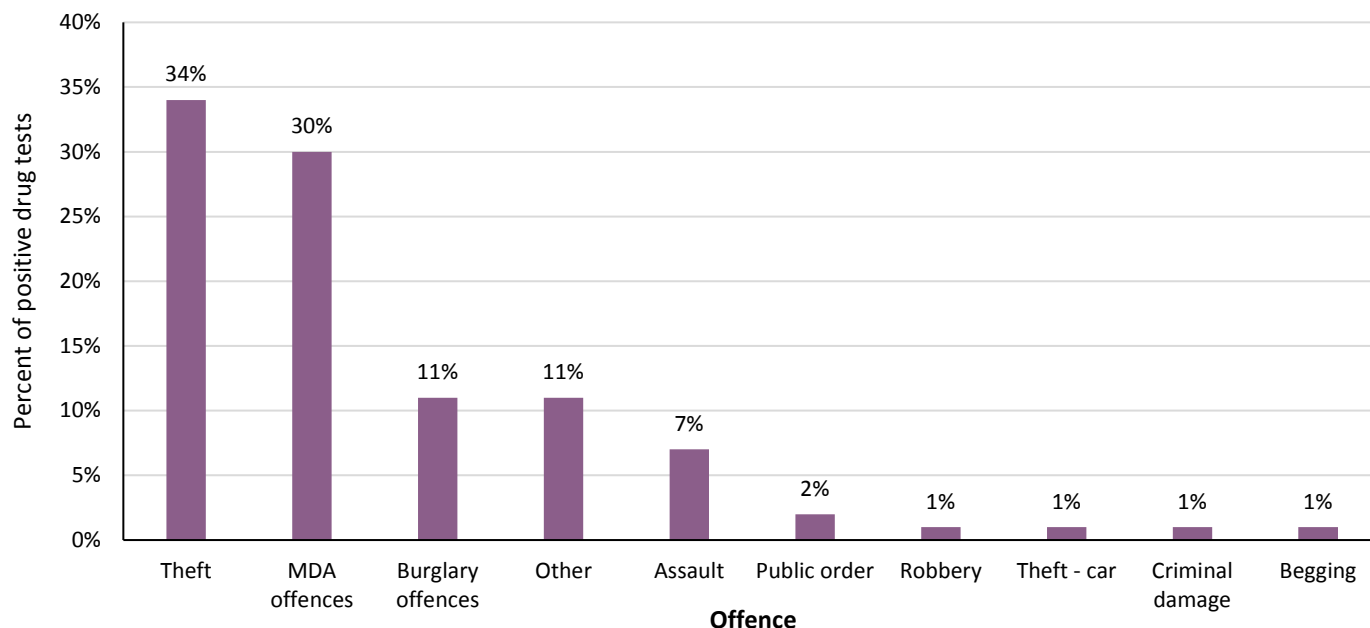
Of the 257 attempted drug tests on Sefton residents in 2017, 255 were successful tests and 207 were positive tests (81% of the successful tests were positive)¹⁰. Over half (51%) of the positive tests were for cocaine only (n=105), while 49% were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 89 [43%]; opiates only = 13 [6%]). The proportion of Sefton residents who tested positive for cocaine only was somewhat higher than Merseyside overall (47%).

⁹ This low number suggests issues with recording DAT of residence; numbers were also low in November 2016 for St Helens residents.

¹⁰ In 2017, 11% of all positive drug tests did not have a D(A)AT of residence recorded.

Around one-third (34%) of Sefton residents testing positive in 2017 were arrested for theft offences (n=71), followed by three in ten (30%) MDA offences (n=63), while burglary and offences categorised as 'other' each accounted for 11% (n=22 each; Figure 8). In comparison, data for all positive drug tests across Merseyside in 2017 reported a higher proportion of theft (38%) and a similar proportion of MDA offences (31%).

Figure 8: Positive drug tests for Sefton residents by offence (2017)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Just over four in five (81%) Sefton residents testing positive in 2017 were male (n=167). This is a slightly lower proportion than the overall Merseyside figure (83%).

Sefton residents aged 30-34 years and 35-39 years each accounted for one-fifth (20%) of those testing positive in 2017 (n=41 each; Figure 9). Proportions for these age groups are higher than those recorded across Merseyside.

Figure 9: Positive drug tests for Sefton residents by age group (2017)

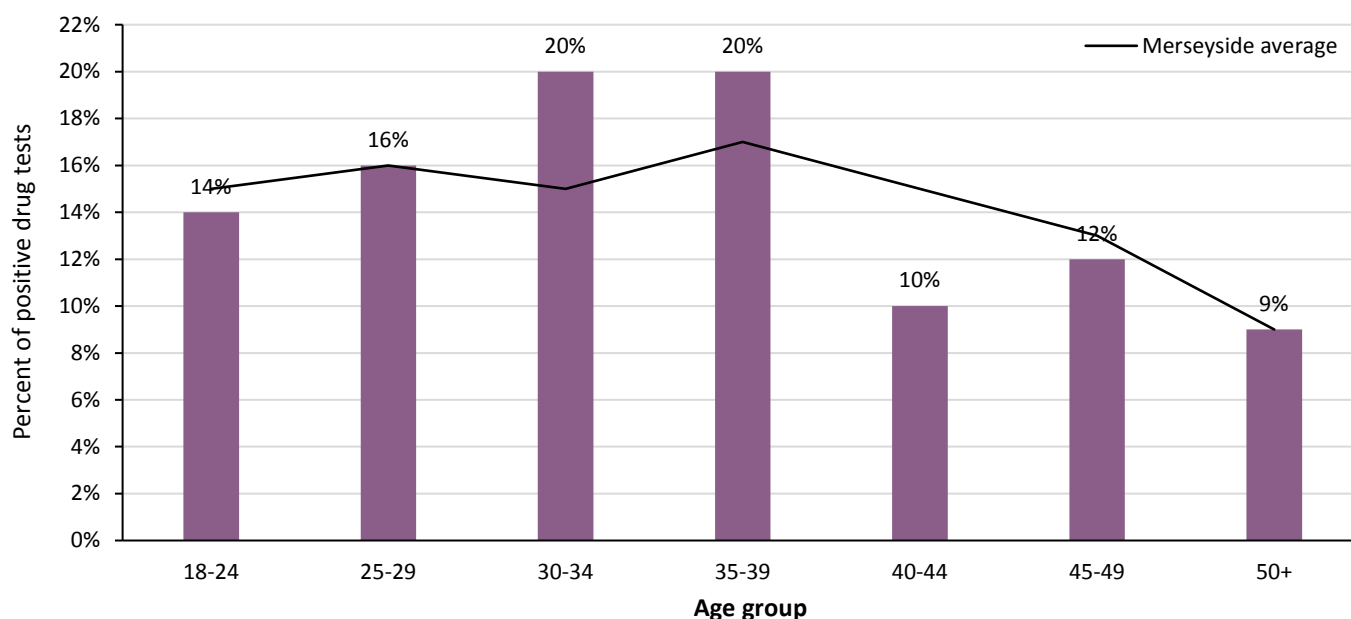


Table 4 shows some differences in age group proportions across gender for Sefton residents. Although there were smaller numbers of females, there were larger proportions aged 30-34 years, 35-39 years, 40-44 years and 50 years and over (23%, 23%, 20% and 18% respectively) when compared to males (19%, 19%, 7% and 7% respectively).

Table 4: Positive drug tests for Sefton residents by age group and gender (2017)

Age group	Females		Males		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
18-24	***	10%	<25	14%	28	14%
25-29	***	5%	<35	19%	33	16%
30-34	9	23%	32	19%	41	20%
35-39	9	23%	32	19%	41	20%
40-44	8	20%	12	7%	20	10%
45-49	***	3%	<25	14%	25	12%
50+	7	18%	12	7%	19	9%
Total	40	100%	167	100%	207	100%

The majority of Sefton residents arrested who tested positive in 2017 were White European (n=202; 98%), compared to 96% across Merseyside.

SUMMARY

- Between 2014 and 2017, attempted drug tests across Merseyside reduced by 74%. They reduced by 77% at Sefton’s custody suites and by 78% for Sefton residents across Merseyside (for Sefton residents, the number decreased by 82% between 2014 and 2016, but increased by 23% between 2016 and 2017).
- In 2017, there were 334 positive drug tests carried out at Copy Lane custody suite, compared to 207 Sefton residents testing positive across Merseyside.
- Over half (53%) of positive tests across Merseyside in 2017 were for opiate metabolites, and a similar proportion was recorded at Copy Lane (52%), though a lower proportion for Sefton residents (49%).
- Around seven in ten (69%) positive drug test results across Merseyside in 2017 occurred midweek, with the same proportion reported at Copy Lane.
- Just under two in five (38%) positive tests across Merseyside in 2017 reported theft offences, while it was lower for tests carried out at Copy Lane and for tests carried out on Sefton residents (35% and 34% respectively).
- Across Merseyside, the majority (83%) were male, though smaller proportions were reported by Copy Lane custody suite and for Sefton residents (79% and 81% respectively).
- The age profile across Merseyside overall was varied. For positive tests at Copy Lane, those aged 25-29 years and 35-39 years accounted for the largest proportion (17% each), while for Sefton residents it was those aged 30-34 years and 35-39 years (20% each); Merseyside: 25-29 years = 16%; 30-34 years = 15%; 35-39 years = 17%.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The drug testing process is the main criminal justice route whereby offenders who use drugs 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 all stakeholders regularly. All partners in the DIP process should utilise available data which 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 investigate the reasons for these trends. This should assist in evidencing any process changes that may be needed, in addition to highlighting potential gaps or barriers that may prevent these clients from engaging with treatment services.
- The number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside has decreased substantially (74% decrease between 2014 and 2017), which is likely due to the implementation of targeted testing. Targeted testing aimed to reduce the number of negative tests, and as this profile shows, the positive drug test rate has increased since its implementation. However, research suggests individuals who would be appropriate for treatment are not being drug tested under targeted testing. Collins et al. (2017b) found more than half of a cohort of individuals who tested positive for Class A drugs and continued to offend, were not drug tested at subsequent arrests. Therefore stakeholders should consider ways to increase drug testing and identify offenders for DIP intervention.
- The recording of the arrestee's D(A)AT of residence is valuable for treatment agencies in identifying individuals tested across Merseyside, and is even more critical in areas where there is no custody suite. Between 2014 and 2017, 18% of attempted drug tests were missing the D(A)AT of residence; however the completion of this data item has improved substantially since July 2017 (on average, completion of D[A]AT since July 2017 has been 100%). Merseyside Police should continue to ensure this information is recorded to enable more accurate analysis and a comprehensive understanding of the residents across the five Merseyside areas.
- The police drug testing dataset enables client profiling, including Class A drug use, offending, gender, age, ethnicity and residency. This information is key in identifying 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, this information should be used to ensure these individuals have a successful drug treatment experience. Furthermore, the dataset should be monitored in order to identify any changes in client profiling. For example, a previous drug testing report identified a larger proportion of males testing positive at Sefton's custody suites in 2015/16 (Critchley and Whitfield, 2016), when compared to this profile for 2017 (84% vs. 79%); therefore highlighting to stakeholders that services should ensure they are meeting the needs of female offenders who use drugs.
- It is imperative that there are effective and prompt communication channels between the police in the custody suites, the local treatment agency and all other relevant treatment agencies across Merseyside. Although organisational operations may differ considerably, an overarching aim of assisting offenders who use drugs towards treatment should be shared by all involved with DIP and facilitated as much as possible, with a clear understanding of the RA process. High levels of communication are particularly relevant when out of hours and when dealing with residents of Knowsley and St Helens, who currently do not have a local custody suite. Regular feedback of any issues arising should be encouraged and addressed, as well as adequate training where and when required.

- Treatment agencies can utilise this data to identify peaks in when tests occur to review their coverage time at the custody suite, which could assist in more effective targeting of resources.

These recommendations are unlikely to be achieved without sustained working between all stakeholders; however their implementation would likely ensure offenders who use drugs are referred to treatment services appropriately and have a successful and positive drug treatment experience.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Overview of figures by custody suite area (2017)¹¹

	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral	Merseyside
Overview					
Attempted tests (n)	1,266	423	316	792	2,797
Successful tests (n & % ¹²)	1,254 (99%)	420 (99%)	315 (100%)	781 (99%)	2,770 (99%)
Positive tests (n & % ¹³)	913 (73%)	334 (80%)	223 (71%)	621 (80%)	2,091 (75%)
Test results (%)					
Negative	27%	20%	29%	20%	25%
Positive	73%	80%	71%	80%	75%
<i>Cocaine only</i>	53%	48%	47%	40%	47%
<i>Opiates only</i>	5%	9%	7%	7%	6%
<i>Both (cocaine & opiates)</i>	42%	43%	47%	53%	46%
Midweek vs. weekend (%)					
Midweek	67%	69%	71%	69%	69%
Weekend	33%	31%	29%	31%	31%
% of tests carried out when staffed with drugs worker	81% midweek; 49% weekend	49%	40%	48% midweek; 31% weekend	n/a
Offence (%)					
MDA offences	35%	33%	27%	26%	31%
Theft	32%	35%	40%	46%	38%
Gender (%)					
Females	17%	21%	12%	17%	17%
Males	83%	79%	88%	83%	83%
Age group (%)					
18-24	17%	14%	19%	13%	15%
25-29	17%	17%	16%	15%	16%
30-34	15%	15%	18%	14%	15%
35-39	16%	17%	18%	17%	17%
40-44	15%	14%	12%	16%	15%
45-49	13%	14%	11%	15%	13%
50+	8%	9%	6%	11%	9%
Ethnicity (%)					
White European	95%	98%	99%	97%	96%
Area of residence (%)					
Knowsley	6%	12%	12%	2%	6%
Liverpool	76%	21%	19%	31%	47%
Sefton	5%	35%	5%	8%	11%
St Helens	2%	25%	59%	0%	11%
Wirral	5%	1%	1%	55%	20%
Outside of Merseyside	6%	8%	4%	4%	6%

¹¹ All figures are for January to December 2017 only, although St Helens custody suite closed mid-August 2017. Excluding 'Overview' and 'Test results', figures are for positive tests only.

¹² Per cent of attempted tests.

¹³ Per cent of successful tests. This is different to the positive drug rate reported in the profile, which looks at individuals only.

Overview of figures by area of residence (2017)¹⁴

	Knowsley	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral	Merseyside ¹⁵
Overview						
Attempted tests (n)	154	1,187	257	266	476	2,797
Successful tests (n & % ¹⁶)	152 (99%)	1,172 (99%)	255 (99%)	264 (99%)	472 (99%)	2,770 (99%)
Positive tests (n & % ¹⁷)	111 (73%)	879 (75%)	207 (81%)	200 (76%)	367 (78%)	2,091 (75%)
Test results (%)						
Negative	27%	25%	19%	24%	22%	25%
Positive	73%	75%	81%	76%	78%	75%
<i>Cocaine only</i>	57%	47%	51%	41%	38%	47%
<i>Opiates only</i>	5%	6%	6%	9%	7%	6%
<i>Both (cocaine & opiates)</i>	38%	46%	43%	51%	55%	46%
Offence (%)						
MDA offences	36%	33%	30%	28%	24%	31%
Theft	26%	36%	34%	43%	49%	38%
Gender (%)						
Females	14%	18%	19%	17%	17%	17%
Males	86%	82%	81%	83%	83%	83%
Age group (%)						
18-24	19%	12%	14%	23%	14%	15%
25-29	16%	16%	16%	18%	14%	16%
30-34	11%	16%	20%	14%	11%	15%
35-39	13%	18%	20%	13%	19%	17%
40-44	11%	17%	10%	15%	13%	15%
45-49	15%	13%	12%	13%	16%	13%
50+	15%	8%	9%	6%	13%	9%
Ethnicity (%)						
White European	97%	96%	98%	99%	98%	96%

¹⁴ All figures are for January to December 2017 only, although St Helens custody suite closed mid-August 2017. Excluding 'Overview' and 'Test results', figures are for positive tests only.

¹⁵ Merseyside figures are for drug tests across Merseyside, not Merseyside residents i.e. figures include drug tests for those resident outside of Merseyside.

¹⁶ Per cent of attempted tests.

¹⁷ Per cent of successful tests. This is different to the positive drug rate reported in the profile, which looks at individuals only.

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