

Summary & Key Findings: Cumbria Drug and Alcohol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

December 2022



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Introduction

In response to the national strategy [From Harm to Hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives](#), local partners in Cumbria have produced a Drug and Alcohol Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) presenting key evidence and data to understand local issues and patterns of drug and substance misuse harm which will help to inform and target areas of greatest need. The JSNA draws on existing information and intelligence from across all partners including national datasets and public health tools; local police force assessments; Joint Strategic Needs Assessments; Community Safety Strategic Assessments; Case Studies; Case Reviews; Service Reviews; and Service User feedback.

The Drug and Alcohol JSNA provides a comprehensive assessment of the health, wellbeing and social effects of drug use across Cumbria; it reports on the scale of problematic drug and alcohol dependency; identifies gaps in current service provision; and makes recommendations for changes to meet people's needs.

This summary document presents the key findings from the full Drug and Alcohol JSNA.

Executive Summary

'Substance misuse' is defined in this report as 'intoxication and/or regular excessive consumption of alcohol and/or dependence on – psychoactive substances, leading to social, psychological, physical, or legal problems. It includes problematic use of both legal and illegal drugs'. 'Psychoactive substance' means a substance that changes brain function and results in alterations in perception, mood, consciousness, cognition, or behaviour.

Drugs and alcohol are combined because the use of different substances share a similarity in risk factors and root causes. Dependency on substance misuse does not exist in isolation, effectively addressing an individual and community substance misuse issue means addressing the wider determinants of health, social, economic and environmental factors impacting on people's health. Evidence shows that alcohol alone contributes to more than 60 diseases and health conditions and represents 10% of the burden of disease and death in the UK.

The misuse of drugs has a negative impact on individuals, families and communities, and is often a symptom of wider societal issues. While the proportion of the population who are affected by drug misuse is relatively small, its impacts are significant and often felt across the wider community.

Nationally, the pandemic did not appear to significantly change drug usage levels. In the year ending June 2022, there were an estimated 1 in 11 adults (aged 16 to 59 years) and 1 in 5 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) reporting using drugs; no change from March 2020 and March 2019. Although drug use overall has not changed, there have been decreases in the use of Class A drugs, ecstasy and nitrous oxide, which may have been a result of social contact restrictions. (Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales).

The COVID-19 pandemic did have an impact on a range of services and activity in Cumbria including reductions in all hospital admissions and more specifically a reduction in alcohol-specific hospital admissions for children under 18 years. There were reductions in the number of people accessing substance misuse treatment services, reflecting the national picture. Prior to the pandemic, levels of drug crime had been increasing in Cumbria and had been highlighted as an area of concern, however, more recently drug offences have decreased with levels returning to normal; conversely, alcohol-related crime has increased.

Drugs deaths have been increasing in Cumbria and nationally over the last 10 years, with stark increases in most recent years. Rates of drugs deaths in the county are significantly higher than the national average, more than double.

Key Findings

Prevalence of problematic Drug Misuse

- 2,400 estimated opiate and crack users in Cumbria (15 to 64 years); prevalence rate of 7.86 per 1,000 population, this compares to 8.85 per 1,000 in England.
- 5,337 adults (aged 18+) dependent on alcohol; a prevalence rate of 1.31 per 1,000, similar to England at 1.37 per 1,000.
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there had been a gradual reduction in prevalence estimates of alcohol dependency; since then, nationally alcohol use appears to have increased.
- Nationally, levels of drug use have remained the same compared to pre-pandemic with an estimated 1 in 11 adults (aged 16 to 59 years) and 1 in 5 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) reporting using drugs;
- Nationally there have been decreases in the use of Class A drugs, ecstasy and nitrous oxide, likely resulting from social contact restrictions.
- Nationally, 80% of adults citing club drug use and opiate use reported using NPS, 43% were predominantly cannabinoids. Ketamine is the most cited club drug for non-opiate users (44%), followed by ecstasy (21%).
- 293 adults in treatment report illicit use of prescription-only medicines (POM) or over-the-counter medicines (OTC) accounting for 17%, this compares to 10% nationally.

Adults in Treatment

- There are around 2,500 people in treatment for substance misuse in Cumbria (all drugs and alcohol users).
- Numbers of clients in treatment during the pandemic period declined and are lower compared to previous years.
- Opiate users and alcohol dependent users make up the majority of people in treatment.
- Proportions of people in treatment for opiate use in Cumbria is much higher than England at 60.9% compared to 46.1%.
- The most common cited substances by adults in drug treatment were benzodiazepines and alcohol.
- Numbers of clients successfully completing treatment declined during the pandemic and are below the national average; prior to the pandemic, they were increasing
- Most adults in treatment are male; aged 40-49 years; and are White British;

- There are an estimated 39.9% of opiate and crack users who aren't in treatment in Cumbria; and an estimated 82.1% of people dependent on alcohol who are not in treatment.

Parents with problem alcohol and drug use

- Around half of clients in treatment and presenting for treatment in Cumbria are parents; around 1 in 5 are living with children, while 1 in 3 are not living with children.
- Most parents/adults living with children are in treatment for alcohol dependency (59%).
- There are an estimated 1,070 alcohol dependent adults living with children in Cumbria; an estimated 85% of those are not in treatment.
- There are between 1,622-1,814 children living with an alcohol dependent adult.
- There are an estimated 886 opiate dependent adults living with children; 62% are not in treatment.
- Parents and adults who are living with children spend less time in treatment than those who are not parents (98 days v 103 days).
- Parents or adults with children are more likely to successfully complete their treatment compared to those without children, 47% compared to 29%.

Drug-related harm

- Numbers of drugs deaths have been increasing in Cumbria and England in the last 10 years, with significant increases in most recent years.
- The rate of drug poisoning deaths in Cumbria is significantly higher (double) than England;
- Rates are highest in Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness at 20.8. Rates are significantly higher than the national average in Allerdale, Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle and Copeland;
- Rates are significantly higher in males than females.
- Rates of alcohol-related mortality have increased in Cumbria; they are highest in Carlisle where they are worse than the national average.
- Rates of hospital admissions for poisoning by drug misuse are higher in Cumbria compared to England; despite this, rates have been declining in Cumbria.
- Rates of alcohol-specific hospital admissions have been relatively stable in Cumbria and are below the national average.
- Rates of alcohol-related hospital admissions are worse than the national average; despite this, rates have been declining.

Preventing Infectious Diseases

- Just under half of adult clients in treatment were offered and accepted a Hepatitis C test, of those who test positive, 3 in 4 receive treatment.
- 1 in 3 eligible clients in treatment were offered and accepted a Hepatitis B vaccination.
- Around 1 in 10 adults presenting to drug treatment in Cumbria are currently injecting; and around 1 in 3 had previously injected.

Mental Health conditions

- 60% of adults entering drug treatment in Cumbria have a mental health need.
- Co-occurring mental health needs are more apparent in clients in treatment for alcohol and non-opiates compared to clients in treatment for opiates.

- Rates of hospital admissions for drug related mental and behavioural disorders are just above the national average; rates have been above the national average for a number of years and although they were beginning to decline, they have recently increased.

Homelessness

- 84% of adults presenting for treatment report no housing problem at the start of their treatment; by the end of treatment this increases to 100%.
- 380 referrals were received from young people presenting as homeless and with a drug or alcohol dependency into Cumbria's Youth Substance Misuse Team.

Crime and Exploitation

- Prior to the pandemic, levels of drug crime had been increasing in Cumbria and had been highlighted as an area of concern.
- More recently in 2021/22, drug offences had decreased with levels returning to normal since the pandemic.
- Cannabis remains the most common type of drug involved in offences, despite this cannabis offences have decreased.
- In 2021/22, numbers of possession of Class A drug offences increased, despite this they remain below a 3-year average; while Class A drugs trafficking offences decreased.
- Prior to the pandemic, levels of alcohol-related crime had been decreasing in Cumbria; however, more recently numbers have increased.
- Numbers of crimes where alcohol was a contributing factor have also increased.

Criminal Justice System

- 14% of clients in treatment are in contact with the Criminal Justice Service; clients in treatment for opiate use are more likely to be in contact with the CJS.
- 11% of offenders registered with Cumbria Probation Service relate to drug offences;
- Most drug related offenders are male; aged over 35 years; and are White British.
- 1 in 4 drug offenders have a recorded mental illness.
- 1 in 4 offenders (all) have a recorded drug-misuse need.
- The risk of reconviction for offenders with a drug-misuse need is much greater than those without.
- The greatest proportions of offenders and drug related offenders are located in Carlisle.

Children and Young People

- Nationally, 1 in 5 young people aged 16-24 years had taken a drug in the last year;
- Nationally, cannabis is the most common substance used by young people; and numbers of young people in treatment for cannabis have been increasing;
- Nationally, numbers of young people in treatment for alcohol, cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamines have been decreasing.
- Young people most at risk of drug misuse include: NEET; anti-social behaviour; offending; victims of domestic abuse and sexual exploitation; polydrug use; mental health needs; looked after child or a child in need.

- Numbers of alcohol-specific hospital admissions for under 18s have been declining in Cumbria but remain worse than the national average; rates are worse than the national average in Allerdale and Barrow-in-Furness.

Demography and At-Risk Groups

Adults in treatment

Most adults in treatment for alcohol and substance misuse in Cumbria are male, accounting for 69%. Most adults are aged 40-49 years (37%) and 30-39 years (33%). Reflective of the county's overall population, most adults in treatment are White British (97%); 66% report no religion; 94% report their sexuality as heterosexual; while 76% report having no disability. 54% of adults at the start of their treatment report being unemployed.

Opiate users often face more complex challenges and are much harder to treat than non-opiate users, furthermore, non-opiate users tend to have better lives including their employment, relationships, housing and are more likely to be successful in treatment.

60% of adults entering drug treatment in Cumbria have a mental health treatment need; this is more apparent in clients in treatment for alcohol and non-opiates accounting for 76%; and clients in treatment for non-opiates accounting for 69% (Source: Adult Drug Commissioning Support Pack: 2022-23; OHID).

Mental Health

Just over half (52%) of parents or adults living with children have a mental health treatment need, for parents not living with children it increases to 60%.

Young people most at risk of substance misuse and those who enter substance misuse services often have a range of problems and vulnerabilities including mental health needs.

Mental illness and drug-misuse is reported in approximately 1 in 4 drug related offenders although this may be higher as not all records were complete.

Drugs deaths

Nationally, most drug poisoning deaths are male with rates more than double compared to females, 115 per million v 54 per million respectively; the highest rates of deaths are in those aged 45 to 49 (often referred to as "Generation X" at 136.6 per million).

Following local analysis of drugs deaths in Cumbria, most drugs deaths were males aged between 35-39 years and 45-49 years.

Ethnicity

Most adults in treatment in Cumbria are White British, accounting for 97%; this is reflective of the county's overall population with 94.9% of residents reporting their ethnic group as White British in the 2021 Census.

Most drug related crimes are committed by those of White British ethnicity. Most drug-related offenders in contact with the Criminal Justice System are of White British ethnicity, accounting for 92%, similar to the ethnicity of all offenders.

Ethnicity is not collected at death registration because it is personal information that should be self-reported therefore is not available.

Deprivation

Problem drug use is highly correlated with poverty, and these problems impact on the most deprived communities. Heroin and crack use are strongly linked to deprivation, the demand for opiates and crack/cocaine, and deaths from drugs misuse are also closely associated with poverty and deprivation. (Source: Review of Drugs; Dame Carol Black; February 2020).

Nationally, rates of drug poisoning deaths in males who were living in the most deprived areas in England are almost 7 times greater than those living in the least deprived areas while rates in females who were living in the most deprived areas are almost 5 times greater than those living in the least deprived. (Source: Deaths related to drug poisoning England and Wales, 2019-21).

Following local analysis of drugs deaths in Cumbria, areas with the highest numbers of drugs deaths are deprived areas, with almost half of all drugs deaths of those resident in some of the most deprived areas nationally, in particular in particular within urban areas of Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness.

Drug crime

Most offenders of cocaine possession and supply offences in Cumbria are male, aged between 20-29 years, and are of White British ethnicity. Most offenders of heroin possession in Cumbria are male, aged between 40-49 years and are White British. Cannabis remains the most common type of drug involved in all offences; most offenders of cannabis offences in Cumbria are male and aged between 20-29 years, reflecting the national picture.

Criminal justice System – Offenders

The majority of drug related offenders are male, aged over 35 years, and are of White British ethnicity. Mental illness and drug-misuse is reported in approximately 1 in 4 drug related offenders although this is likely to be higher. The risk of reconviction of offenders with a drug-misuse need is much greater than those without at 1 in 3 compared to 1 in 6. Among non-violence offences, drug offences and drug abuse are frequently associated with the risk of reoffending.

Young people

Young people most at risk of substance misuse and those who enter substance misuse services often have a range of problems and vulnerabilities including polydrug use, mental health needs, being involved with social services such as a looked after child or a child in need, or not in education, employment or training (NEET). Other risk factors include self-harming, sexual exploitation, anti-social behaviour, offending or domestic abuse. Girls tend to report more vulnerabilities than boys, in particular self-harming and sexual exploitation. (Source: Young people's substance misuse treatment statistics, OHID).

Reducing Drug Use

Prevalence of problematic drug misuse

There are an estimated 2,400 opiate and crack users (aged 15 to 64 years) in Cumbria, with prevalence rates lower than the national average (7.86 per 1,000 population compared to 8.85 per 1,000 in England). Prevalence rates for opiate only users are similar to England at 7.76 per 1,000 compared to 7.37; while crack cocaine rates in Cumbria are statistically lower than

England at 2.07 per 1,000 compared to 5.10. (Source: Opiate and crack cocaine use: prevalence estimates by local area - GOV.UK).

Opiate users often face more complex challenges and are much harder to treat than non-opiate users. Adults in treatment citing club drug use with no additional opiate use tend to have better lives including their employment, relationships, housing and are more likely to be successful in treatment.

Nationally, 80% of adults citing club drug use and opiate use reported using new psychoactive substances NPS, 43% were predominantly cannabinoids. In Cumbria, numbers are relatively small therefore caution should be used when drawing conclusions. Nationally, for non-opiate users, ketamine was the most cited club drug accounting for 44%, followed by ecstasy accounting for 21%; the picture in Cumbria is similar although numbers are relatively small. (Source: Adult Drug Commissioning Support Pack: 2022-23; OHID).

Nationally, the pandemic did not appear to significantly change drug usage levels. In the year ending June 2022, there were an estimated 1 in 11 adults (aged 16 to 59 years) and 1 in 5 young people (aged 16 to 24 years) reporting using drugs; no change from March 2020 and March 2019. Although drug use overall has not changed, there have been decreases in the use of Class A drugs, ecstasy and nitrous oxide, which may have been a result of social contact restrictions. (Source: Crime Survey for England and Wales).

Prevalence of problematic alcohol misuse

There are an estimated 5,337 adults (aged 18+) in Cumbria who are dependent on alcohol; with estimated prevalence rates similar to the national average at 1.31 per 1,000 compared to 1.37 (source: Alcohol dependence prevalence in England, GOV.UK).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to previous years there had been a gradual reduction in prevalence estimates of alcohol dependency (source: Alcohol and Drug Misuse Health Needs Assessment 2020); however, since the pandemic, nationally it appears alcohol use has increased. As reported in Public Health England's 'Monitoring alcohol consumption and harm during the COVID-19 pandemic report, nationally the pandemic did not appear to significantly change drug usage levels, however, an increase in sales of alcohol in shops suggests that people are consuming higher amounts at home. Furthermore, between March 2020 to 2021 there was a 58.6% increase in people reporting that they were drinking at increasing and higher risk levels.

Alcohol-specific deaths increased nationally during the pandemic due to alcoholic liver disease, thought to be linked to an increase in heavy drinking habits. Those requiring alcohol treatment are presenting with more complex needs than prior to COVID pandemic.

Misuse of prescription drugs

Concerns are increasing over prescription drugs and their ingredients being increasingly diverted towards recreational drug use and illicit drugs markets. Proportions of adults in treatment in Cumbria reporting illicit use of prescription-only medicines (POM) or over-the-counter medicines (OTC) are above the national average at 17% compared to 10%.

Adults in Treatment services

There are around 2,500 clients in treatment for drug and alcohol substance misuse in Cumbria. Numbers have declined compared to previous years however trends have varied across different drug groups. Numbers of opiate users and non-opiate users have remained relatively stable while numbers of alcohol only users have declined. Opiate users make up the majority

of those in treatment accounting for 60.9% in Cumbria, higher than the national average at 46.1%.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on not only the way in which services were delivered but treatment service figures as well as public mental health, leading to altered patterns of drug and alcohol misuse and increasing demand for services. During the pandemic, numbers of clients successfully completing their treatment declined and are below the national average at 45.8% compared to 50.4%. Prior to the pandemic, proportions of successful completions were increasing in Cumbria and nationally.

The most common cited substances by adults in drug treatment (all drugs) in Cumbria are benzodiazepines (15%) and alcohol (15%). In Cumbria, there are fewer adults in treatment citing alcohol, cannabis, cocaine and crack cocaine compared to the rest of England.

It is estimated that around 39.9% of opiate and crack users aren't in treatment in Cumbria, compared to 54.0% nationally. Furthermore, an estimated 82.1% of people in Cumbria who are dependent on alcohol are not in treatment, similar to national estimates at 80.5%.

Parents with problem alcohol and drug use

The prevalence of parents with problematic alcohol and/or drug misuse is not routinely measured; however, local alcohol and drug treatment services collate data on parents in treatment and on service users who live with children. These data provide some insight into the size of the issue but may not reveal hidden and unmet need.

Between 2019-2020, around half of all adults in treatment and those presenting for treatment in Cumbria were parents or have contact with a child; around 1 in 5 of those were living with children, while 1 in 3 were not living with children. Most adults who are parents are in treatment for alcohol misuse, accounting for 59%. Around 1 in 3 new presentations for treatment are for opiate clients, almost half of those (45%) are parents but who are not living with children while 17% are living with children.

There are an estimated 1,070 adults in Cumbria living with children who are alcohol dependent but who are not accessing treatment, equating to around 85% who are in need but not in treatment; furthermore, there are between 1,622-1,814 children in Cumbria living with an alcohol dependent adult. There are an estimated 886 opiate dependent adults living with children, equating to 62% who are in need but not in treatment. (Source: Parents with problem alcohol and drug use: Data for England and Cumbria, 2019 to 2020; Public Health England).

Parents and adults in treatment who are living with children spend less time in treatment than those who are not parents; the average number of days in treatment for those living with children is 98 days compared to 103 days for those who are not. Length in treatment varies considerably across the different substances with the average number of days much greater for opiate clients.

Parents or adults with children are more likely to successfully complete their treatment compared to those without children, 47% compared to 29%.

Along with parental substance misuse there are often co-occurring issues including mental health problems. Just over half (52%) of parents or adults in treatment living with children have a mental health treatment need, for parents in treatment but not living with children it increases to 60%.

Reducing Drug-Related Harm

Drugs Deaths

Over the last 10 years, drugs deaths have been increasing in Cumbria and nationally, with significant increases more recently. In 2021, there were 65 registered drug poisoning deaths in Cumbria, 43 related to drug misuse. Numbers of drugs deaths have more than trebled compared to numbers registered in 2011.

The rate of deaths related to drug poisoning is significantly higher (double) in Cumbria than the national average at 15.9 per 100,000 compared to 7.9. Across the districts, Carlisle has the highest rate of 23.2 per 100,000, closely followed by Barrow-in-Furness at 20.8. Rates of deaths related to drug poisoning are significantly higher than the national average in the districts of Allerdale, Barrow-in-Furness, Carlisle and Copeland. Rates of drugs deaths are significantly higher in males than females at 23.3 per 100,000 compared to 8.7; furthermore, the rate in Cumbrian men is significantly higher (more than double) than the national average at 23.3 per 100,000 compared to 10.8.

Nationally, rates of drug poisoning deaths in males who were living in the most deprived areas in England are almost 7 times greater than those living in the least deprived areas at 252.9 per 1 million compared to 36.8; rates of drug poisoning deaths in females who were living in the most deprived areas are almost 5 times greater than those living in the least deprived at 112.7 per 1 million compared to 22.8.

Nationally, most drug poisoning deaths are male with rates more than double compared to females, 115 per million v 54 per million respectively; the highest rates of deaths are in those aged 45 to 49 (often referred to as "Generation X" at 136.6 per million. (Source: Deaths related to drug poisoning England and Wales, 2019-21).

Following local analysis of drugs deaths in Cumbria registered between 2018 to mid-2022, the highest numbers were in deprived urban areas of Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness, with almost half of all drugs deaths of those resident in some of the most deprived areas nationally. Most drugs deaths were males aged between 35-39 years and 45-49 years.

Alcohol related deaths

In 2020, there were 237 alcohol-related deaths in Cumbria, although numbers and rates have increased in the last 5 years there is no significant change. The rate of alcohol related mortality in Cumbria is similar to the national average at 42.1 per 100,000 compared to 37.8 per 100,000; although the rate is slightly higher it is not statistically significant. Across the districts, rates are highest in Carlisle and are worse than the national average at 53.2 per 100,000 compared to 37.8 in England. (Source: Local Alcohol Profiles for England, OHID).

Hospital admissions

In 2019-20, there were a total of 1,000 drug-related hospital admissions in Cumbria; the rate of admissions with a primary diagnosis of poisoning by drug misuse is higher than the national average at 38 per 100,000 compared to 31. Rates have recently declined in Cumbria compared to previous years. In the same period, there were 770 hospital admissions for drug related mental and behavioural disorders (*primary or secondary diagnosis*); with rates below the national average at 173 per 100,000 compared to 181 in England (Source: Drug-related hospital admissions, NHS Digital).

In 2020/21, there were 2,650 alcohol-specific admissions to hospital (where the primary or secondary diagnoses are wholly attributable); the rate in Cumbria is below the national average at 529 per 100,000 (Directly Age-standardised) compared to 587 per 100,000 in England. Rates in Cumbria appear to be relatively stable and have been below national averages for the last few years. (Source: Local Alcohol Profiles for England, OHID).

In 2020/21, there were 2,733 alcohol-related admissions to hospital (where the primary or secondary diagnoses are alcohol attributable) in Cumbria. The rate in Cumbria is worse than the national average at 518 per 100,000 (Directly Age-standardised) compared to 456 per 100,000 in England; despite this, rates in Cumbria have been declining in recent years. Across the districts, the rate is highest in Copeland at 661 per 100,000. Rates are worse than the national average in all districts except Eden and South Lakeland.

Alcohol during pregnancy

Alcohol harm during pregnancy is significant including miscarriage, still birth, small for gestational size and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD refers to the range of neurodevelopmental problems caused by pre-natal exposure to alcohol; the effects are wide ranging and impact on the individual throughout their life. FASD is a lifelong condition and can have a significant impact on early-years development and life chances. Nationally and locally there is a lack of reliable data including prevalence estimates and numbers of alcohol-exposed pregnancies. Currently, the most reliable estimates of women who drink during pregnancy are available in the Infant Feeding Survey 2010, it reported that:

- 2 in 5 mothers (40%) drank alcohol during pregnancy;
- Mothers aged 35 or over (52%), mothers from managerial and professional occupations (51%) and mothers from a White ethnic background (46%) were more likely to drink during pregnancy;
- Mothers in England (41%) and Wales (39%) were more likely to drink during pregnancy compared to mothers in Scotland (35%) and Northern Ireland (35%).

A study in 2017 estimated alcohol consumption during pregnancy in the UK at 41%. A further UK cohort study suggested a higher proportion with 79% of pregnant women drinking in the first trimester, declining thereafter). (Source: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Health Needs Assessment; Department of Health and Social Care).

Preventing Infectious Diseases

People who inject drugs are at a disproportionately higher risk of blood-borne viruses (BBVs) and are vulnerable to a range of bacterial infections. The practice of sharing needles, syringes and other injecting equipment and the risk from unsterile injecting increases the risk of developing BBVs. There is also a threat of people who inject contracting life-threatening infections such as anthrax and botulism from using contaminated drugs.

During the period July 2021 to June 2022, 42.5% of eligible clients in treatment in Cumbria were offered and accepted a Hepatitis C test, this compares 50.3% nationally; of those, 78.3% received treatment, similar to the national average of 79.9%. 32.9% of eligible clients in treatment were offered and accepted a Hepatitis B vaccination, this compares to 29.4% nationally. (Source: National Drug Treatment Monitoring System).

In 2020-21, 1 in 10 adults (11%) presenting to drug treatment in Cumbria were currently injecting, just below the England average of 12%. Around 1 in 3 (29%) adults had previously injected, while 2 in 3 (59%) had never injected. 17% of opiate clients in Cumbria were currently injecting, this compares to 22% nationally. 42% (152) of opiate clients had previously injected,

compared to 32% nationally. (Source: Adult Drug Commissioning Support Pack; 2022-23, OHID).

Mental health

The co-occurrence of mental health conditions among people with substance misuse is complex. Substance misuse and addictions may stem from underlying mental health problems, while misusing substances can both generate or worsen mental health conditions.

Along with parental substance misuse there are often co-occurring issues including mental health problems. Just over half (52%) of parents or adults in treatment living with children have a mental health treatment need, for parents in treatment not living with children it increases to 60%.

In 2020-21, 60% of adults who entered drug treatment in Cumbria were identified as having a mental health treatment need, this is just below the national average at 63%. Co-occurring mental health needs were more apparent in clients in treatment for alcohol *and* non-opiates accounting for 76%; for clients in treatment for non-opiates it was 69%; and for clients in treatment for opiates it was 51%. (Source: Adult Drug Commissioning Support Pack: 2022-23; OHID).

Rates of hospital admissions with a primary diagnosis of drug related mental and behavioural disorders in Cumbria are just above the national average at 14 per 100,000 compared to 13 per 100,000 in England. In Cumbria rates have been above the national average for a number of years and although they were beginning to decline, they have recently increased from 11 per 100,000 (in 2018/19) to 14 per 100,000 (in 2019/20).

Homelessness

In 2020-21, 84% of adult clients presenting to treatment services in Cumbria reported no housing problem, this compares to 77% nationally; at the end of treatment, 100% of adults no longer reported a housing need in Cumbria, compared to 83% nationally. (Source: Adult Drug Commissioning Support Pack: 2022-23; OHID)

Nationally, 82.3% of young people starting treatment (drugs and alcohol) report living with parents or other relatives; 7.7% are living in care; 5.2% live in supported housing; while 1.1% report unsettled accommodation/housing problem or no fixed abode. (Source: Young people substance misuse treatment statistics; 2020 to 2021).

In 2021-22, the Youth Substance Misuse Team in Cumbria received 380 referrals for young people presenting as homeless and with a drug or alcohol dependency. Of those, 207 (54%) young people reported drug dependency needs; while 173 (46%) reported alcohol dependency needs, similar to and reflecting the needs nationally (England 58% and 42% respectively). Across the districts, the greatest number of referrals were in Allerdale (133) accounting for 35% of all referrals.

Reducing Supply

County Lines

County Lines (CL) is exploitative drugs supply and a growing issue in Cumbria and nationally. It describes a type of organised crime network that traffics drugs using dedicated mobile phone

lines. Typically, a 'bulk text' is sent out by a 'line controller' advertising the availability of heroin and crack which is then sold to users through local supply networks. Crime groups sometimes exploit children and vulnerable adults to facilitate county lines by having them move and/or store drugs and cash. Cumbria Constabulary are disrupting county lines by identifying those involved and bringing them to justice or safeguarding them from harm and exploitation.

There are between 1 to 5 lines active at any one time in Cumbria, with some short periods where there is no CL drug supply in the county and drug users are having to find alternative sources. Since 2018-19 to 2021-22, numbers of active CL groups in Cumbria have declined; numbers fluctuate and new lines emerge but despite this numbers are showing a downward trend.

Reducing Drug-Related Crime (Crime and Exploitation)

Drug offences

In 2021-22, there were 972 drug offences in Cumbria; numbers of drug offences continued to decrease, a decrease of -15% compared to the previous year. Since the pandemic, drug offences have returned to normal levels despite some spikes and variations likely relating to a number of operations across the County.

Cannabis remains the most common type of drug involved in all offences accounting for around 61%, despite this cannabis offences have decreased. Fluctuations in offences would suggest that COVID restrictions had an influence, with low levels coinciding with lockdown restrictions; and increases when restrictions were relaxed. Most offenders of cannabis offences are male and aged between 20-29 years, reflecting the national picture.

In 2021/22, there were 192 possession of Class A drug offences in Cumbria, compared to the previous year numbers increased (+15%), as expected following low levels during the pandemic; despite this they remain below a 3-year average. Cocaine is the most common drug in possession offences accounting for 70%. Although possession offences for cocaine and crack increased, possession offences for heroin and MDMA decreased. Class A drugs trafficking offences decreased and remain at low levels; as seen in possession offences, cocaine is the most common drug involved in trafficking offences accounting for just over half of all drugs trafficking offences (53%).

Most offenders of cocaine possession and supply offences in Cumbria are male, aged between 20-29 years, and are White British ethnicity. Most offenders of heroin possession are male, aged between 40-49 years and are White British.

There is a well-established and complex link between drugs, alcohol and crime. Alcohol is a factor in 40% of all violent crimes in England, as well as contributing to public disorder and anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, alcohol has a significant impact on levels of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect (Source: Office for Health Improvement & Disparities).

Prior to the pandemic, levels of alcohol-related crime had been decreasing in Cumbria. More recently, alcohol-related incidents have increased (+19%) from 5,269 in 2020-21 to 6,272 in 2021-22. Most alcohol-related incidents are linked to public safety and welfare accounting for 41%, while 31.7% relate to crime.

Numbers of crimes where alcohol was a contributing factor have also increased in Cumbria from 4,423 in 2020-21 to 6,424 in 2021-22 (+45.2%). The majority of crimes where alcohol

was a contributing factor were classified as 'Violence Against the Person' accounting for 65.6%.

Criminal Justice System

A large number of clients in treatment are in contact with the Criminal Justice System (CJS); this is defined as clients who are taken onto a Criminal Justice Intervention Team (CJIT) caseload within 42 days of the earliest triage or the first referral source is a criminal justice referral. Clients in treatment for opiate use are more likely to be in contact with the CJS reflecting the national picture. In April 2022, there were a total of 357 clients in treatment who were in contact with the CJS, accounting for 14% overall.

Around 11% of offenders registered with Cumbria Probation Service relate to drug offences. The majority of drug offence individuals are male (85%); most are aged over 35 years (47.5%); and most are of White British ethnicity (92%).

Around 1 in 4 (24.5%) drug offence individuals have a recorded mental illness although this may be higher as not all records were complete. 34.5% of drug offence individuals had stated they had no disability.

From assessments carried out (of overall offenders), around 1 in 4 (27.6%) had a drug-misuse need recorded. The risk of reconviction of offenders with a drug-misuse need is much greater than those without: 1 in 3 (35.2%) are deemed as 'high risk' compared to 1 in 6 (16.2%). Among non-violence offences, drug offences and drug abuse are frequently associated with the risk of reoffending.

The greatest proportion of offenders in Cumbria are located in the Carlisle area (38.4%); furthermore, the greatest proportion of drug offence cases are also located in Carlisle (41.5%) likely reflecting population levels as well as need.

Children and Young People

Most young people do not use drugs but for those who do, substance misuse can have a significant impact on a young person's health, education, long-term opportunities and chances in life as well as a detrimental impact on the families and friends. Effective substance misuse interventions can significantly improve the overall health and wellbeing of a young person as well as reducing risk taking behaviours.

Young people most at risk of substance misuse and those who enter substance misuse services often have a range of problems and vulnerabilities including polydrug use, mental health needs, being involved with social services such as a looked after child or a child in need, or not in education, employment or training (NEET). Other risk factors include self-harming, sexual exploitation, anti-social behaviour, offending or domestic abuse. Girls tend to report more vulnerabilities than boys, in particular self-harming and sexual exploitation. (Source: Young people's substance misuse treatment statistics, OHID).

It is estimated that 1 in 5 young people aged 16-24 years had taken a drug in the last year (Crime Survey for England and Wales in 2019-20). Nationally, cannabis is the most common substance used followed by alcohol; nitrous oxide is also commonly used. Proportions of young people in treatment for cannabis have been increasing for several years; increases are

also apparent in young people in treatment for benzodiazepines and ketamine but at much lower levels. There have been decreases in proportions of young people in treatment for alcohol, cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamines. (Young people substance misuse treatment statistics; 2005-06 to 2020-21).

Nationally, there has been a reduction in the number of young people accessing substance misuse treatment services due to the COVID-19 pandemic; in Cumbria, historically, numbers of young people in community structured treatment only are very low.

In Cumbria, the Youth Substance Misuse Team provide a point of contact for young people in crisis in relation to alcohol and substance misuse. In the last year (April 2021 to March 2022), the Youth Substance Misuse Team received around 300 referrals for young people; 55% of referrals were for males while 45% were for females. Across Cumbria, referrals are highest in Barrow-in-Furness (27.7%); and lowest in Eden (7.6%).

There are a number of third sector organisations across Cumbria providing advice and support for alcohol and substance misuse including Cumbria Addictions Advice & Solutions (CADAS). During the period March 2021 to October 2022, there were 61 referrals for young people; for those who engaged with the service most (62%) required support for cannabis misuse; while 34% required dual substance support. Substance misuse does not just affect the individual user, it can have a significant impact on friends and family shown by an additional number of referrals (97) received into the service from friends and family members.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on hospital activity in 2020 to 2021, not only a reduction in hospital admissions overall but a reduction in the number of hospital admission episodes for under 18s where the primary or secondary diagnoses are alcohol-specific (wholly attributable). Prior to the pandemic, numbers of alcohol-specific admissions for under 18s were declining in Cumbria, reflecting the national picture; despite this, rates remain worse than the national average at 37.9 per 100,000 compared to 29.3 in England. Across the districts, rates are worse than the national average in Allerdale (46.0 per 100,000) and Barrow-in-Furness (50.6 per 100,000).

In 2021-22, there were 6,272 alcohol-related crime *incidents* in Cumbria, a small proportion of those were 'youth related' accounting for 1.3%; compared to the previous year, youth alcohol-related crime incidents have declined, down -0.8% by from 2.1% in 2020-21).

In 2021-22, there were 1,280 alcohol-related crime offences in Cumbria; 4.4% of offenders were aged under 18 years, 2.2% of those were under the age of 16 years. The most common alcohol-related offence by an under 18 years offender was 'Violence Against the Person', closely followed by 'theft' (all shoplifting).

Links to Data Sources

From Harm to Hope: A 10 year Drugs Plan to cut crime and save lives: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives

Review of Drugs; Dame Carol Black; February 2020: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/897786/2SummaryPhaseOne+foreword200219.pdf
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Cumbria Alcohol & Drug Misuse Health Needs Assessment, December 2020: https://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/crime-community-safety/crime-community-safety-further-information/
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Opiate and crack cocaine use: prevalence estimates by local area: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/opiate-and-crack-cocaine-use-prevalence-estimates-for-local-populations
National Drug Treatment Monitoring System: https://www.ndtms.net/
Alcohol dependence prevalence in England, Public Health England: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-dependence-prevalence-in-england
Crime and Community Safety Strategic Assessment 2020-21: https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/536/671/4674/17217/17222/44560133847.pdf
Deaths related to drug poisoning by local authority England and Wales, 1993 to 2021; Office for National Statistics: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/datasets/drugmisusedeathsbylocalauthority
Local Alcohol Profiles for England: https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/local-alcohol-profiles
Drug related hospital admissions: https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/statistics-on-drug-misuse/2020/drug-admissions-data-tables
Drug Misuse in England and Wales 2022, Office for National Statistics https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/drugmisuseinenglandandwales/yearendingjune2022
Young people substance misuse statistics: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/substance-misuse-treatment-for-young-people-statistics-2020-to-2021/young-peoples-substance-misuse-treatment-statistics-2020-to-2021-report
Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder: health needs assessment 2021: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-health-needs-assessment/fetal-alcohol-spectrum-disorder-health-needs-assessment
Infant Feeding Survey 2010: https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/infant-feeding-survey/infant-feeding-survey-uk-2010
Monitoring alcohol consumption and harm during the COVID-19 pandemic; Public Health England: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002627/Alcohol_and_COVID_report.pdf

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