

Combatting Drugs & Alcohol Update

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Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny on the work of the County Durham and Darlington Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership.
- 2 To inform on the progress of the County Durham and Darlington Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Delivery Plan 2023-2025.

Executive summary

- 3 A Combatting Drugs and Alcohol (CDA) strategic partnership and a CDA operational group were initiated in County Durham and Darlington in 2022/23 following the publication of the national drugs strategy, From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives.
- 4 Alongside this, a joint needs and asset assessment (JNAA) was undertaken, informing the design of a 3-year multi-agency local delivery plan to implement the recommendations of the national strategy.
- 5 The CDA strategic partnership provide governance and oversight, setting the direction of travel for the operational group which works to action the delivery plan.
- 6 The operational group is a multi-agency network which includes designated key partners identified to lead on each objective within the delivery plan. The group works to enhance collaboration, reduce duplication and raise the profile of the drug and alcohol harm reduction agenda across the footprint of Durham Constabulary.
- 7 The work of additional Dame Carol Black grant funding received to enhance treatment services is embed in the delivery plan to inform and support collaboration across agencies.
- 8 A CDA national outcomes framework informs the County Durham and Darlington CDA Power BI dashboard allowing the strategic partnership to monitor performance across all areas of system-wide delivery.

- 9 Performance is positive in County Durham with the successful treatment completions for alcohol, non-opiates and opiates all above the national England average.
- 10 The CDA system-wide structures are established and working well.
- 11 A full service review and evaluation of the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (DARS) is being conducted in County Durham to help inform the changes required if/when the Dame Carol Black funding is maintained, reduced, or terminated.
- 12 The core funding for the DARS supplied by the local Public Health Grant in County Durham and Darlington has been maintained through these structural changes.

Recommendation(s)

- 13 OSC is recommended to:
 - (a) note the content of the report;
 - (b) continue to support the work of the Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership and implementation of the delivery plan;
 - (c) note the improvements in performance indicators for successful treatment completions and continuity of care and that the investment of the additional Dame Carol Black grant funding has contributed to these improvements;
 - (d) note the Dame Carol Black grant funding will end in March 2025 and that the partnership escalates this matter and seek assurance regarding future funding from government.

Background

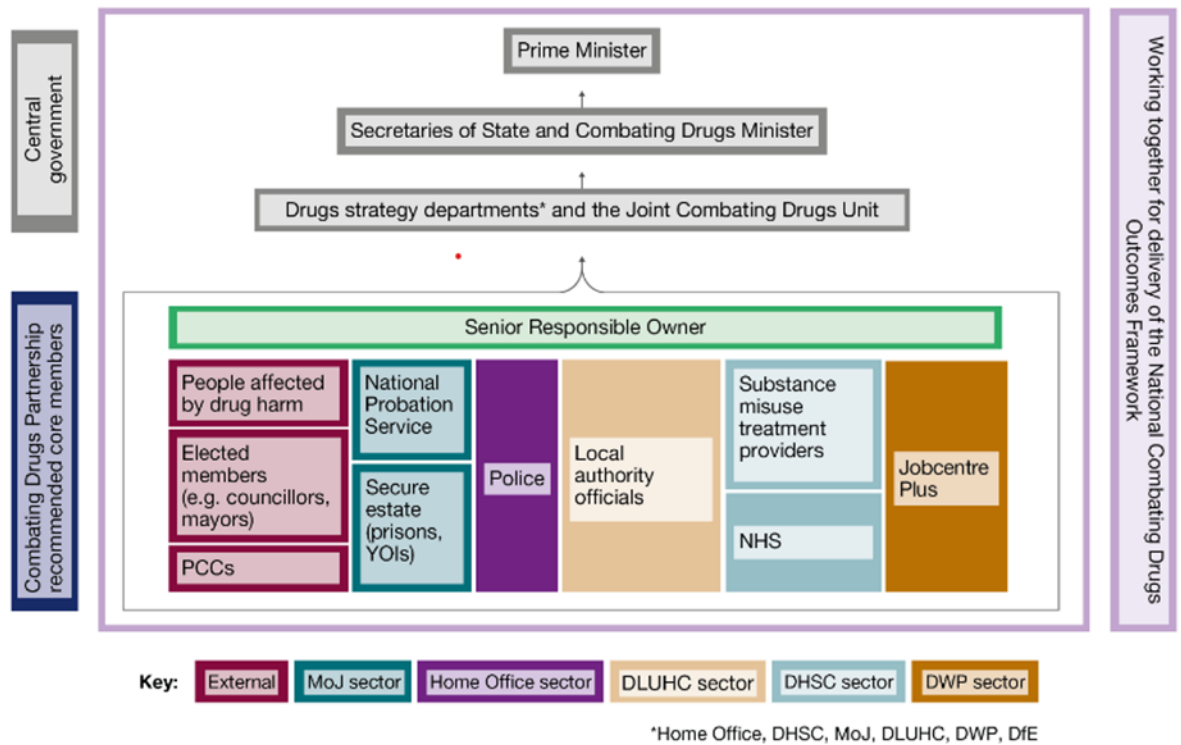
- 14 Following a two-phase independent drugs review by Dame Carol Black in 2021/22 the government published a new drugs strategy: From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives in June 2022.
- 15 The strategy commits the whole of government and public services to work together and share responsibility for creating a safer, healthier, and more productive society via a whole systems approach to reducing drug harms.
- 16 The three key priorities of the strategy are: (1) to break the drugs supply chains, (2) to deliver world class treatment and recovery systems and (3) to achieve a generational shift in the demand for recreational drugs.
- 17 The strategy set out the requirement for:
 - The completion of a local joint needs assessment (JNA)
 - Establishment of local multi-agency Combatting Drugs Partnerships
 - The design of a local delivery plan
 - Development of key performance indicators (KPIs) and reporting mechanisms
- 18 A strategic decision was made to work across a Police Crime Commissioner footprint on this agenda of County Durham and Darlington due to the county-wide work of partners including, Durham Constabulary, County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust (CDDFT) and Tees Esk and Wear Valley Mental Health Trust (TEWV), National Probation Service, prisons housing and the DARS from both areas.
- 19 The Joint Needs and Assets Assessment (JNAA) was completed in November 2022. This comprehensive document includes data from a wide range of services and includes detailed recommendations which helped to inform the delivery plan.
- 20 A strategic partnership, chaired by the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC), and an operational group, chaired by Public Health in County Durham, were established across County Durham and Darlington in early 2023.
- 21 A local decision was made to include alcohol in the frame of this work due to the high level of need, poly substance misuse and joint delivery services in the area.

22 The 3-year multi-agency delivery plan was designed in 2023, based around the 3 objectives of the strategy and the recommendations of the JNAA.

County Durham and Darlington Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Strategic Partnership

23 The strategic partnership is a multi-agency partnership meeting quarterly and chaired by the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC). The governance of the strategic group is detailed in the infographic, figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Reporting and support structures for Combatting Drugs Partnerships



24 The local partnership has developed a forward plan 2023/25 detailing thematic updates covering all three aims of the strategy for each quarterly meeting. The updates enable the CDA Strategic Partnership to conduct a deep dive into the assessment of need within both areas, current system-wide work to address harms and delivery outcomes from the interventions being implemented. The Board are also able to make recommendations to the Operational Group for any further action required. The focus of the thematic updates to date have included:

- ensuring the voice of lived experience is meaningfully embed in all on-going and future work
 - children and young people and families
 - health and justice pathways
 - processes for substance misuse related deaths, including naloxone (an antidote to opiate (heroin/crack) overdose)
 - Opiate pathways including the response to nitazenes (new potent synthetic opioids entering the drugs market).
 - alcohol harm reduction (including the work of Balance as the alcohol-office supporting 7 local authority areas - County Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland).
 - disrupting drug supply
- 25 Upcoming topics include a focus on mental health and dual diagnosis. Deep dives are also scheduled on the strategic meeting agenda ensuring a holistic view of the work is presented.
- 26 The strategic partnership assess performance quarterly using the local outcomes framework to understand the direction of travel on some high level KPIs. This in turn helps to inform future thematic updates and deep dive topics.
- 27 The partnership reports to the Safe Durham Partnership in County Durham and the Community Safety Partnership in Darlington. County Durham also works to keep the Health and Wellbeing Board informed of progress due to the boards objective to reduce alcohol harm.

The County Durham and Darlington Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Operational Group & Delivery Plan

- 28 The Combating Drugs and Alcohol operational Group is a multi-agency partnership with well attended quarterly meetings providing support and detail to the strategic partnership.
- 29 The group works to enhance collaboration, reduce duplication, support mutual goals and enhance the effectiveness of each partner's contributions while raising the profile of the drug and alcohol harm reduction agenda.

- 30 It works towards the implementation of the local delivery plan which was re-designed following publication of the National Combating Drugs Outcomes Framework in May 2023.
- 31 The outcomes framework sets out 6 outcomes, 11 headline metrics and an additional 19 supporting metrics providing a detailed, wider picture of the whole system.
- 32 The delivery plan is based around the 6 outcomes of the national framework with detailed actions against each outcome and the metrics it contributes to.
- 33 The outcomes are themed to the three aims of the national drug strategy with an identified lead agency assigned, providing joint ownership and supporting partnership commitment to the delivery. This is detailed in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: CDA Delivery Plan Framework

Harm to Hope Aims		
To break the drugs supply chains	To deliver world class treatment and recovery systems	To achieve the shift in demand for recreational drugs
Lead Agency		
Durham Constabulary	Treatment Providers – ‘Waythrough’ previously ‘Humankind’ (County Durham) and We Are With You (Darlington)	Public Health – County Durham and Darlington.
National Outcomes and Metrics		
1. Reduce drug and alcohol related crime	3. Increase engagement in drug and alcohol treatment	5. Reduce drug and alcohol use
2. Reduce drug and alcohol supply	4. Improve recovery outcomes	6. Reduce drug and alcohol related deaths and harm

- 34 The identified lead agency works to update the corresponding section of the plan quarterly and provides an overview to the wider group each meeting. A full plan is included in Appendix 2 of this report.

- 35 The delivery plan is a working document that is reviewed and updated quarterly to show progress and highlight areas relevant for partnership support.
- 36 Opportunities for joint working have been identified and included a cross county local drug information system (LDIS) and as a response to a national trend for synthetic opioids a co-produced synthetic opioid action plan.
- 37 Further areas of joint work to highlight which the group support include the implementation of a Drug and Alcohol Care Team (DACT) in TEWV and an Alcohol Care Team (ACT) in CDDFT.
- 38 The group hosted a Rapid Process Improvement Workshop (RPIW) in June as a response to the thematic review of health and justice pathways in the strategic partnership as requested by the chair of the County Durham and Darlington Reducing Reoffending Group
- 39 An opportunity to map current pathways and identify areas for improvement highlighted the strong effective partnerships currently in place but also identified the need for continued commitment to this due to organisational and staff changes across partner organisations. This ongoing work and actions from the RPIW have been incorporated into the CDA delivery plan.
- 40 The operational group is working to gain support for Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) in 2024/25 to help reduce alcohol related harm across the county in line with County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board's objectives.

Additional Drug and Alcohol Grant Funding

- 41 County Durham and Darlington have retained their core budgets funded through the Public Health Grant to maintain DARS within each local authority area.
- 42 Additional funding streams have been made available to local authorities from July 2022-March 2025 to support the delivery of the 2nd outcome of the national drug strategy, to deliver world class treatment and recovery systems.
- 43 County Durham has benefited from five funding grants to enhance treatment and recovery services. These include:
 - The Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG)
 - In-Patient Detoxification (IPD) Grant

- Individual Placement Support (IPS) Grant
- SSMTR Housing Support Grant
- Rough Sleepers Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant (RSDATG)

- 44 Darlington received funding for SSMTRG and IPD only.
- 45 The work of these projects is included in the CDA delivery plan to ensure all partners are informed and collaborated with.
- 46 In a recent national drugs strategy report Dame Carol Black explained that meeting the second objective would in turn meet the remaining objectives, to reduce drug related crime and drug use, and ultimately save lives.
- 47 The outcome for a potential extension the Dame Carol Black funding for drug and alcohol recovery services after 2024/25 is still unknown. To mitigate against the risk of the funding being reduced or terminated, a full review of the County Durham DARS is being conducted. This will be instrumental in developing an options appraisal for any future national funding scenario for combating drugs and alcohol that might be presented by the new government.
- 48 This local process includes the evaluation of a variety of workstreams including harm reduction, criminal justice, inpatient detoxification, enhanced recovery support, mental health, housing and employability. The outcome of this work will help inform future decisions on which elements of the County Durham DARS will be maintained, reduced, or decommissioned in 2025/26.

Performance

- 49 A County Durham and Darlington CDA Power BI dashboard tool has been developed using outcomes and metrics detailed in the national combating drugs outcomes framework as well as relevant local measures. A link to the dashboard is found here [InstantAtlas Durham – Combatting Drugs and Alcohol \(durhaminsight.info\)](https://durhaminsight.info).
- 50 The high level KPIS in this tool are reviewed quarterly by the CDA strategic partnership and operational group.
- 51 Areas to highlight include the ‘successful completions’ metric which refers to the percentage of clients leaving structured treatment having overcome the dependent use of the substance which brought them into treatment.

52 In County Durham over 3000 clients access support on an annual basis. Outcomes for the successful completion of treatment and recovery for alcohol, non-opiates and opiates are all above the national England average.

Table 1. County Durham Successful Completions – Alcohol (NDTMS, October 2024)

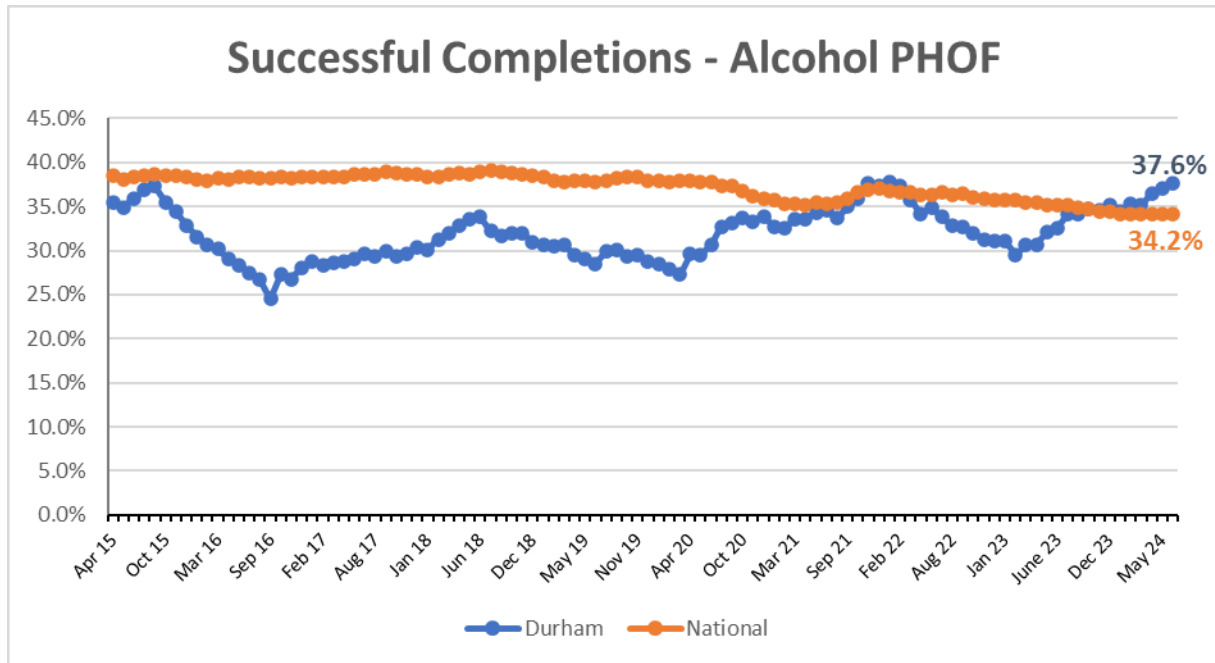


Table 2. County Durham Successful Completions – Opiates (NDTMS, October 2024)

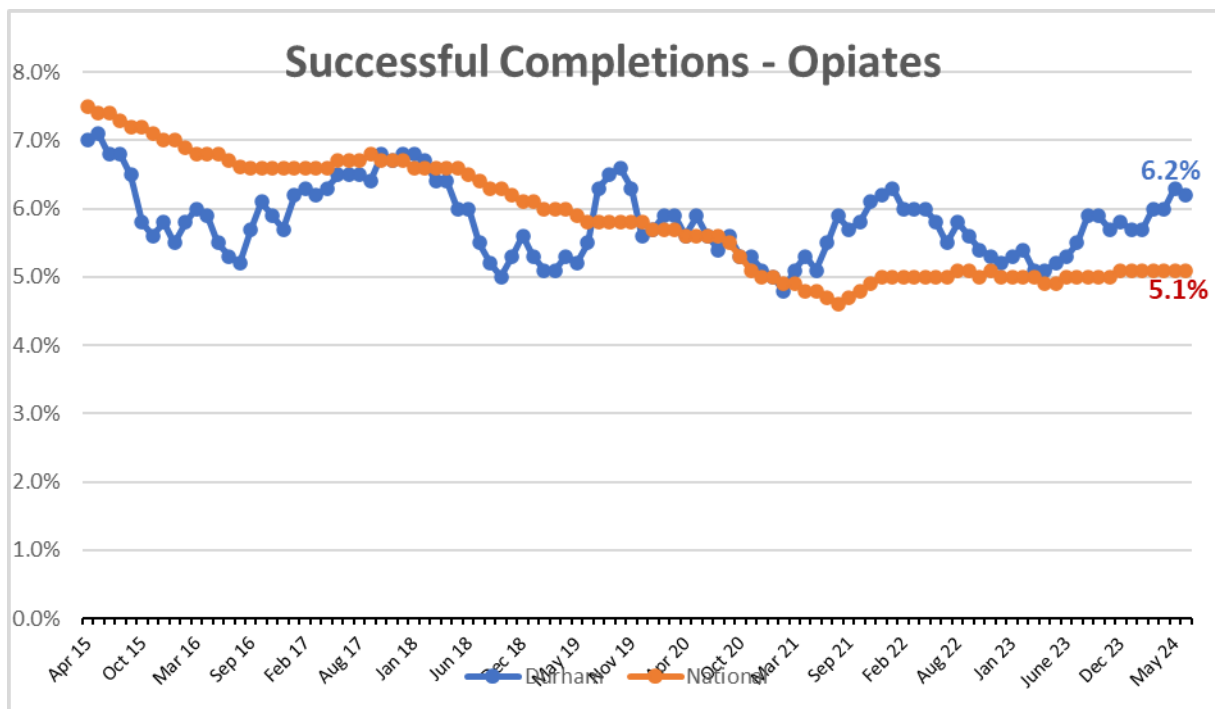
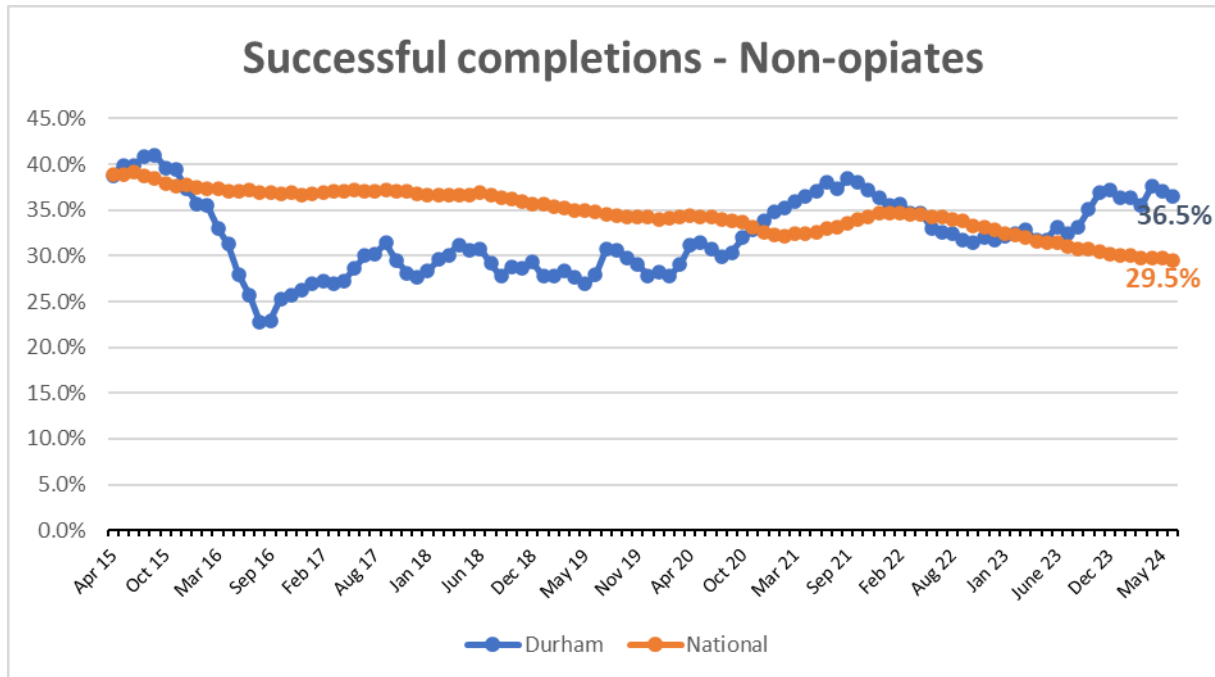
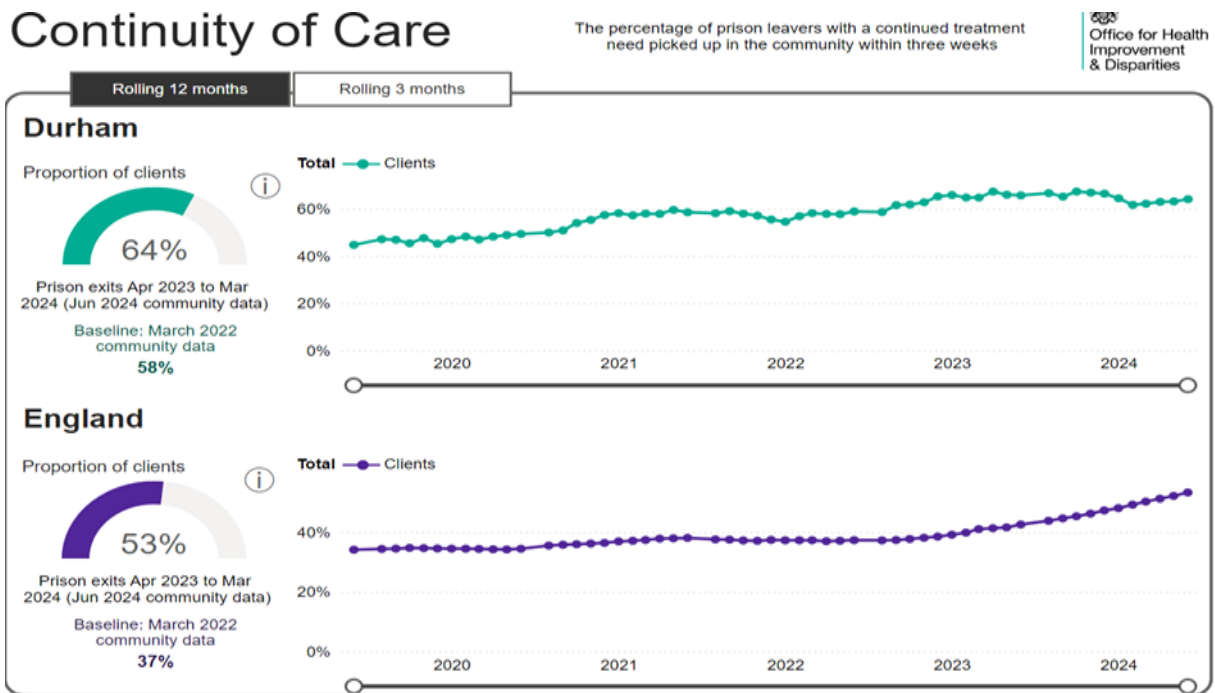


Table 3. County Durham Successful Completions – Non-opiates (NDTMS, October 2024)



- 53 Continuity of Care is a performance measure relating to the improvement of the continuity of care for individuals between prison and the community. This integrated care pathway is crucial for supporting recovery and reducing reoffending among people leaving custody.
- 54 In County Durham, the attainment of this measure is 64% and this sits above the England average of 53%.

Table 4. County Durham Continuity of Care (NDTMS, July 2024)



Conclusion

- 55 The CDA strategic partnership and operational groups are established and well attended with multi-agency support.
- 56 The delivery plan is a useful working document that ensures co-ordination and collaboration as well as provides a focus on the delivery of the national strategy.
- 57 The CDA PowerBI dashboard provides the ability to monitor and track key performance measures.
- 58 Performance is good in County Durham with the successful treatment completions for alcohol, non-opiates and opiates all above the national England average.
- 59 Work is being conducted to assess the impact of the Dame Carol Black funding and mitigate against any risk that maybe incurred if the funding is reduced or terminated after March 2025/26.

Background papers

- List any papers required by law / None

Other useful documents

- Previous reports / None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The SSMTR Funding requires authorisation from the Directors of Public Health for County Durham and Darlington.

Finance

Core funding for the CDDARS has been maintained throughout 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. Dame Carol Black funding still requires confirmation for allocations beyond 2024/25.

Consultation

The voice of service users is within client satisfaction questionnaires are engaged with on an annual basis and active work within the Lived Experience Recovery Organisation within County Durham and Darlington. The CQC outcome reflects the culture of the service user being embedded within the decision-making process of the CDDARS.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Actions from this report are targeted to reduce the health inequalities of these people suffering from or impacted by alcohol and drug-related health harm.

Climate Change

N/A

Human Rights

N/A

Crime and Disorder

Actions from this report are targeted to reduce alcohol and drug related crime and disorder.

Staffing

The ability to successfully continue to deliver on the targets set for Dame Carol Black funding is dependent on the ability to recruit to posts. This has been highlighted within the risk register and will be monitored over time.

Accommodation

No other venues will be required to deliver on the SSMTR proposal currently.

Risk

No corporate risk issues Identified.

Procurement

The report encourages economies of scale and to make best use of available resource and capacity.