

**REPORT TO:** Safer Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Director of Public Health  
Executive Director Environment & Regeneration

**PORTFOLIO:** Public Health  
Community Safety

**SUBJECT:** Alcohol and Substance Misuse in Halton

**WARD(S)** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update the board on both Alcohol and Substance Misuse Services work that provide support for local people.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) The report be noted; and**
- 2) The Board consider the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Partnership Working**

3.1 The Halton Combatting Drugs Partnership was established in September 2022, and brings together key partners, including Council services, CGL, the Prison Service, Probation Service, Police, Local NHS Trusts, and Job Centre Plus, to deliver the Halton Drugs Strategy, with the strategic aims to:

- To improve collaboration, information, and data sharing between partners to inform effective joint working
- To disrupt County Lines, breaking drug supply chains
- To protect vulnerable individuals and groups from becoming involved in, or victims of, drug use and drug-related crime
- To deliver integrated drug and alcohol treatment which offers holistic care for physical and mental health
- To rebuild and transform communities, reducing drug use and preventing drug related harms.

3.2 The Council has recently commissioned Liverpool John Moores University, on

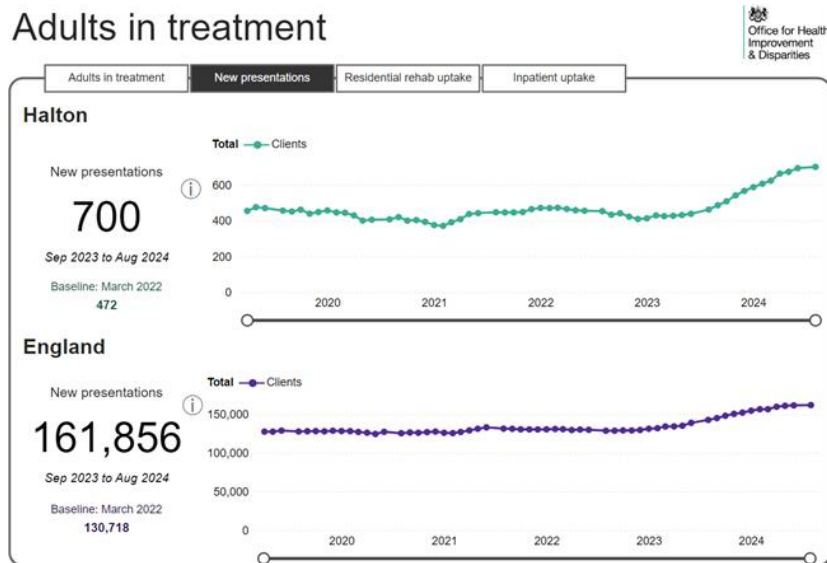
behalf of the partnership and in collaboration with neighbouring Local Authority areas, for the development and implementation a Local Drug Information System. The system, which shares and assesses information relating to any dangerous substance, regardless of its legal status, is now live. The aim is to reduce the harm done by these substances by ensuring that information reaches partners rapidly, and to inform those who use drugs and professionals of immediate risks. so appropriate responses can be actioned in mitigation.

- 3.3 The partnership is currently developing a Synthetic Opioid Preparedness Plan, in response to the rising threat of these substances within Halton.
- 3.4 Substance misuse has also been identified as a Safer Halton strategic priority in the 2024 to 2027 Community Safety Partnership Strategy.

### **Adult Services**

- 3.5 Adult substance misuse services in Halton are provided by Change Grow Live (CGL) who provide assessment and treatment to those aged 18 and over, living within the Halton borough. At the time of reporting, there are currently 833 individuals open to CGL Halton adult substance misuse services. Services are delivered from CGL's hubs in Widnes and Runcorn. In addition, services are delivered within community venues to improve accessibility. Some CGL clients are engaged with multi-agency partners, in community safety and criminal justice, thus CGL delivery supports an integrated approach to managing this cohort, to aid recovery and improve outcomes.
- 3.6 Currently 40% of referrals are for alcohol support, 25% for non-opiate support, 11% for opiate support and 24% being for non-opiates combined with alcohol. The number of service users presenting to treatment has continually increased, with increased capacity provided by additional OHID targeted grant funding, which commenced in 2022, and which has been confirmed until 2025/26. This has allowed CGL to develop referral pathways with partner agencies to recruit further recovery coordinators to provide support to individuals once they engage with services.

## Adults in treatment



*Adults in treatment information taken from NDTMS.net*

### Alcohol

- 3.7 Adults in treatment for alcohol use has continued to increase in the borough and remains the main substance of choice for those referred to CGL.
- 3.8 Alcohol inpatient detoxification remains the most effective means of achieving outcomes for individuals assessed, primarily due to the physical and mental health needs of individuals being referred to the service. However, this is the most expensive form of detoxification and is therefore targeted at individuals with specific needs that are suited to this model of detoxification. Additional IPD (Inpatient detoxification) targeted grants have been provided by OHID for the last two years, which the Council has fully utilised to maximise outcomes for residents requiring this service.
- 3.9 At the end of November 2024, CGL Halton's success rate for treating those misusing alcohol had increased to 42%, performing above both CGL & National averages for the cohort, which stood at 34% and 35%, respectively.
- 3.10 The Council's Health Improvement Team (HIT) carry out Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test Consumption (AUDIT C) with residents attending NHS Health Check, Lifestyle Advisor and Stop Smoking Service appointments (see Appendix A- AUDIT C Pro Forma). The tool assists practitioners and residents to identify potentially hazardous alcohol consumption and alcohol abuse or dependence. Where this is identified, individuals are signposted to services in Halton that can help them to address these disorders.

### Opiate Substitution Therapy

- 3.11 CGL Halton currently has a total of 272 opiate clients in Opiate Substitute Therapy (OST). In 2021, CGL Halton commenced Buvidal which is an injectable form of OST and offer this to 15 clients at any point in time. This allows individuals to receive their Buvidal injections on site at CGL once per

month, eliminating the requirement to attend pharmacy (ranging from daily to once per week) or have medication at home. This has been popular for those who are employed and those who struggle to attend pharmacy regularly or wish to avoid regular pharmacy attendance. Of those in receipt of OST, 16% are supervised within their pharmacies in line with presenting risk and clinical guidance.

### **Prisons**

- 3.12 CGL Halton increased the treatment offer for those released from prison, including assessment by community services for those in custody, supported by additional OHID and Chesire Probation Service funding. The service works closely with local housing support and recovery homes, ensuring prison leavers have adequate places to live on release. CGL Recovery Champions, with visible lived experience, now collect individuals from prison and link individuals into the support immediately upon release from prison.
- 3.13 Agencies across the borough now utilise the CGL Halton Recovery Café, 'The Kitchen Table' which is run by individuals with lived experience, to complete first appointments with agencies following release. This reduces the differing locations individuals need to attend, and encourages collaborative working, putting the individual's needs at the centre of the planning process to maximise the likelihood of positive outcomes for the individual. CGL Halton and partners respond flexibly to unexpected releases, ensuring that a robust plan is always established quickly for the individual being released from prison. These plans include rapid assessment, housing support and collaborative working, ensuring that all people with a drug and/or alcohol related need are well supported upon release from prison.

### **Needle Exchange**

- 3.14 Needle exchange (NEX) provision continues to be delivered across several venues within Widnes and Runcorn. In addition, Halton residents can pre-order needle exchange equipment through the postal NEX service provided by a contractor called NSP Direct.
- 3.15 CGL's on site NEX, has achieved 242 needle exchange transactions between April and September 2024, with the majority (59%) occurring within the Widnes hub. The majority of exchange requests relate to Steroid use, with a small minority of hub transactions relating to the use of heroin and/or crack.

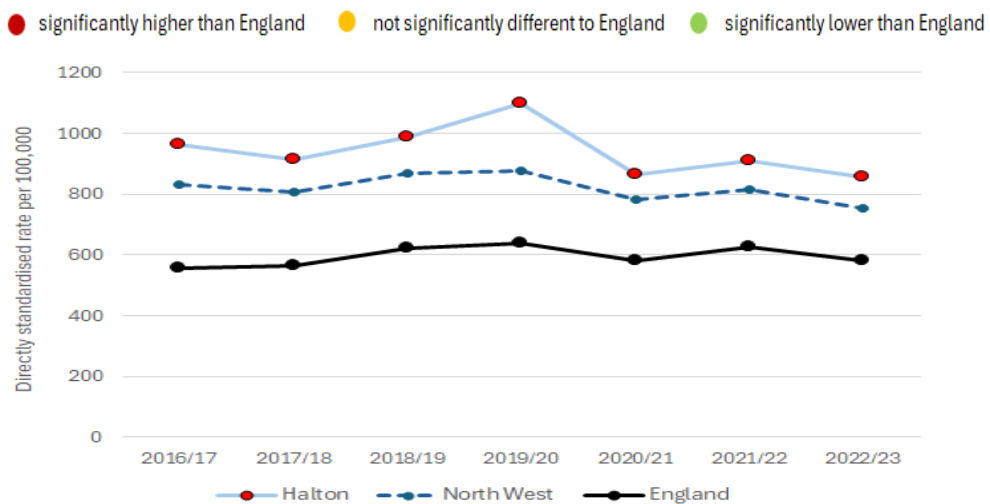
### **Employment Support**

- 3.16 Halton Borough Council in partnership with Warrington Borough Council, has commissioned CGL to deliver Individual Placement and Support for those within Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services. The service engages with individuals towards the start of the treatment journey, where appropriate, and provides targeted support to enable individuals to access employment.

## Hospital Admissions Data

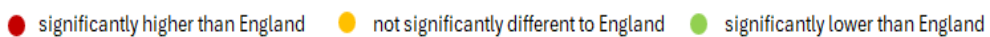
- 3.17 Published data on hospital admissions for alcohol specific conditions have remained similar in Halton over the last 3 years and are consistently significantly higher than the England and North West averages. Rates for males are much higher than for females, but both are significantly higher in Halton than England and the North West. Provisional local data also indicates that the Halton rate increased in 2023/24.

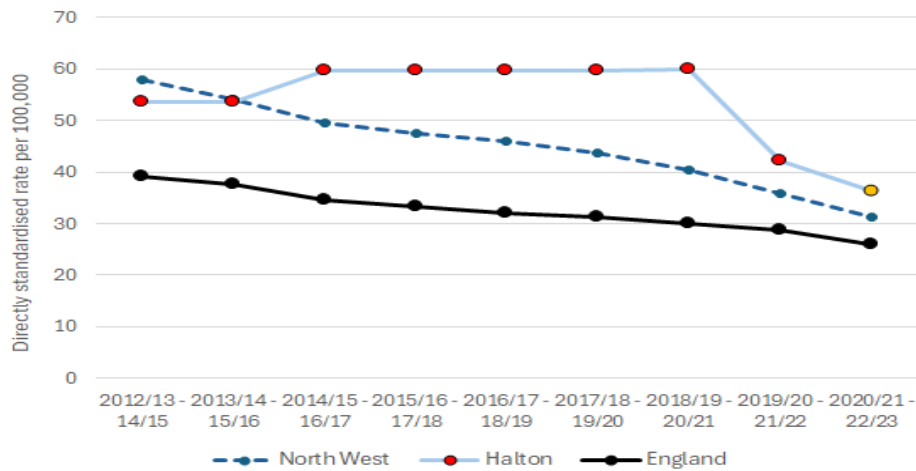
### *Alcohol specific hospital admissions trend: Halton compared to England and NW*



- 3.18 The rate for under 18 alcohol specific admissions has reduced in Halton in the 3-year periods to 2021/22 and 2022/23 and is now statistically similar to the England rate.
- 3.19 Unlike for all ages, for under 18s, rates for females are higher in Halton (this is also the case across England and the North West as a whole). Provisional local data indicates that the Halton rate decreased further for the 3-year period to 2023/24.

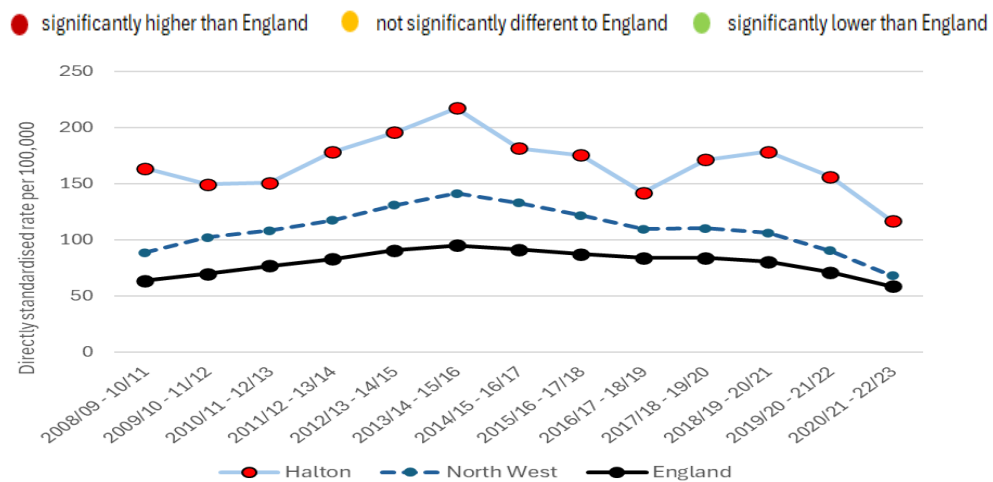
### *Under 18 alcohol specific hospital admissions trend: Halton compared to England and NW*





3.20 Hospital admissions data for substance misuse is only published for 15 to 24 year olds. Halton's rates are persistently significantly higher than the England and North West averages.

*Trend in hospital admissions due to substance misuse (15 to 24 year olds): Halton compared to England and NW*



### Services for Children and Young People

3.21 HIT deliver alcohol awareness workshops as part of the Healthy Schools Programme. In primary schools, delivering a 1-hour workshop to pupils in Year 6 (age 10-11) covering:

- What is alcohol
- Short and long-term effects of drinking alcohol
- Peer pressure
- The law
- Keeping safe, including recovery position

36 primary schools (72%) received this workshop in 2023-24.


3.22 The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) Level 2 Award for Young Health Champions (age 14-24) is delivered in secondary schools. This qualification is

for individuals with an interest in health and wellbeing who want to give peer support through an understanding of the individual and social drivers of healthy and unhealthy behaviours, as well as signpost local health services.





- 3.23 HIT offers training to school staff and children and young people practitioners on Tobacco, Alcohol and Drugs. This training supports schools with Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) session planning and delivery, and other CYP practitioners to discuss these topics and provide support and signposting. This training will be updated and re-launched in early 2025 to coincide with the Ketamine and Drugs awareness event in January. The sessions are typically delivered over two 1-hour sessions. The Early Help Drug & Alcohol Team deliver the drugs and alcohol content and HIT deliver tobacco and vaping.
- 3.24 Due an identified rise in Ketamine use by Young People in Halton that is producing adverse outcomes, including permanent physical harms and exclusions from schools, a series of sessions are planned to raise awareness amongst partners. The sessions, which are funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner’s office, are fully booked and will be facilitated by Halton Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 3.25 The Council also commissions the Healthy Child Programme, which among other services, provides a ‘Clinic in a Box’ service and drop-in sessions, enabling Children and Young People to access information on health issues, including drugs and alcohol, referral onto young people’s substance misuse services and signposting to prevention and community support.

**Progress against Health Policy & Performance Board Quarterly Monitoring Report Targets and Objectives**

- 3.26 Below is the latest Q2 2024/25 Health PPB QMR return relating to drugs and alcohol.

Service Objective 9: Drugs and alcohol		
Linked Indicators: PH15, PH16		
Milestone	Q2 Progress	Supporting Commentary
Work in partnership to reduce drug and alcohol related hospital admissions.		The first plus one for the contract extension with Change Grow Live has now been finalised, there is flexibility for another plus one for 2026/2027, if required. Commissioners in the North West have agreed to collaboratively fund a post to be employed by North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) initially over 2 years. The post will support strategic planning to ensure targeted and tailored support is provided following a non-fatal opiate overdose. This means that every opiate non-fatal

		<p>overdose is automatically referred to the local drug and alcohol service, with or without patient consent.</p> <p>The role is unique to England and is expected to make a significant contribution to improved responses to non-fatal overdoses in the North West and contributing to a reduction in drug-related deaths in the region. The expected outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in referrals into drug and alcohol treatment services;</li> <li>• Contribution towards a reduction in drug-related deaths.</li> </ul> <p>Audit C screenings are delivered during Health Checks and Stop Smoking consultations to clients across Halton. During Q1 Health Trainers/Health Check Officers have delivered <b>974 Audit C screenings</b> in workplaces, GP practices and in the community. During Q1 the Stop Smoking Service have delivered <b>278 Audit C screenings</b> with clients wishing to stop smoking Total combined <b>Audit C screenings delivered = 1,252</b></p>
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Ref	Description	Actual 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Quarter 2	Current Progress	Direction of Travel	Supporting Commentary
PH15	Admission episodes for alcohol-specific conditions (Directly Standardised Rate per 100,000 population)	857 (2022/23)	848 (2023/24)	934 (2023/24 provisional)			Provisional 2023/24 indicates the rate of alcohol-specific admissions has increased and has not met the target.
PH16	Successful completion of drug treatment ( <u>non opiate</u> )	19.1% (2023/24)	19.5% (2024/25)	19.4% (Q1 2024/25)			Data does fluctuate year on year but in 2022/23 and 2023/24, the Halton proportion of successful completions was worse than the England average. The figure has remained similar in Q1 2024/25.

Due to the projected increase in alcohol specific admissions, the target is not predicted to be met for 2023/24. At the time of reporting, it is too early to know if the successful drug treatment target will be met for 2024/25.

## 4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Halton Combating Drugs Partnership was established in September 2022 is a strategic, multi-agency partnership established to support the delivery of the ambitions as set out in “From Harm to Hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives”. The focus is on preventing harm from drugs.

The partnership is required to deliver a focused agenda against the national framework including: -

- Develop a joint strategic assessment of local drug data
- Agree data sharing protocols
- Develop local combating drugs delivery plan



- Develop performance framework
- Monitor local outcomes
- Review progress against plan

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Council has recently been advised that OHID targeted grant funding of £0.599m has been awarded for 2025-2026. £0.026m has been ringfenced to add IPD capacity. Should direct grant funding be withdrawn from 2026 onwards it would have a significant impact on the Drug and Alcohol Services provided.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence**

Services for those living with a substance misuse issue impact positively on the health, well-being and independence of the residents of Halton by reducing the harms caused by drugs and alcohol, referring to and working alongside other services that will benefit individuals and families to live healthier, happier lives, including those that provide housing and employment opportunities and address other wider-determinants of health and wellbeing.

### **6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy**

substance misuse has detrimental effects on individuals and communities; the work outlined in the report strives to ensure multi-agency working for both preventative and responsive approaches to mitigate impacts, support residents to improve their outcomes whilst enabling resilient communities.

### **6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families**

Services for those living with a substance misuse issue impact positively on safeguarding Children, Young People and Families, by providing opportunities for adults, including parents, with substance misuse issues to detox and rehabilitate or manage their substance misuse, enabling them to carry out their family and/or caring responsibilities. Individuals and families are referred to appropriate support to address wider issues and children and young people are provided with education in relation to drugs and alcohol, including the potential harms of misuse.

### **6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need**

Providing services for those living with substance misuse is very important to reduce health inequalities and address the needs of high-risk individuals. The individual, their family, employer, education and wider society all benefit from substance misuse services. Population groups that are assisted by services include rough sleepers and the long-term unemployed. CGL refer those

experiencing wider challenging circumstances to services that can address those specific disadvantages.

## **6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future**

There are no specific implications related to this Council priority that arise from this report or from the delivery of services related to substance misuse.

## **6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community**

Services for those living with a substance misuse issue impact positively on communities in Halton, firstly, by contributing to the improvement of lives for individuals and families through detox and rehabilitation. Services also work closely with the police and probation services, to address the needs of offenders and share intelligence to keep communities safe. A community cafe is operated by CGL, who also organise community events and work closely with other community, charity, and voluntary sector partners to meet the needs of local communities.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 None

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 None

## **9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

## **10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.'