



Wirral DAAT
Drug & Alcohol Action Team



Making a difference

A progress report from
Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team
2006/07

**TACKLING
DRUGS
CHANGING
LIVES**

Foreword

Illegal drug and alcohol misuse can cause damage and ruin to individuals, families and communities. The most vulnerable and deprived among us are often hardest hit. Problems are complex and cannot be solved by any one organisation working in isolation.

The Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) has worked with a wide range of public and voluntary sector agencies to jointly address local problems. Over the past nine years, I have been extremely proud to chair the partnership that leads that response.

I took up my role at the DAAT in 1998, when the Government's current 10-year National Drug Strategy was still in its relative infancy. The DAAT was still a fledgling partnership tasked with responsibility for making the delivery and local strategy happen. It had a dual challenge to harness the shared action that existed to tackle drugs and alcohol, while harmonising the sometimes very different approaches and philosophies of its constituent organisations.

It is with great pleasure that I am able to say, some nine years on, that I truly believe the DAAT has succeeded in this task. Thanks to the willingness of all our colleagues to make the partnership work, the DAAT established itself as one of the most successful and productive of its kind in the country. The Healthcare Commission has rated local drug services as 'excellent' and Wirral's drug treatment system has been highly praised by the National Treatment Agency. In particular, the Wirral Drug Service Shared Care Scheme, which provides shared care for drug users, is supported by every GP practice in the borough.

More importantly, the DAAT has commissioned services that really do make a difference to the lives of people in Wirral. That is why this review of the DAAT's most recent successes is entitled Making A Difference and focuses on real examples during 2006/07 of the way the partnership:

- ensured access to the right **TREATMENT**, in the right place, at the right time (p3)
- worked with **COMMUNITIES** to tackle drug-related crime (p5)
- prevented today's **YOUNG PEOPLE** from becoming tomorrow's problematic drug misusers (p7)
- planned action on **ALCOHOL** misuse in our communities (p9)

- was **ACCOUNTABLE** to the communities we serve (p11).

These local themes reflect the priorities of the National Drug Strategy, which reaches its conclusion in March 2008. The publication of this document, therefore, provides a useful stock take at a time when a new action plan is being drawn up at national level.

March 2008 also marks the end of the DAAT's current three-year strategy, published in 2005 to provide a framework to enable us to meet the goals of the National Drug Strategy and our own local priorities.

It is likely that the local and national drug strategy beyond 2008 will see DAAT's embracing and integrating new partnership working, including Local Area Agreements, to continue to focus on education and supporting young people, providing high quality treatment programmes that service users see through to completion and empowering communities more effectively, reducing drug-related crime. There will also be a much greater onus on partners like the DAAT to address growing concern about alcohol misuse.

Responsibility for guiding the DAAT into this exciting new era will lie not with me, but with my successor Kathy Doran, Chief Executive of Wirral Primary Care Trust. I wish Kathy every success in her role as Chair and know she shares my belief that a balanced approach from all the agencies concerned is the most effective way to address the challenges we face.

Finally, as I retire from my positions as DAAT Chair and Director of Adult Social Services in Wirral, I should like to take the opportunity to thank all those with whom I have worked at the DAAT and its partners. While there is still much to be done, their efforts have changed – and will continue to change – the lives of many thousands of people in Wirral who are affected by drugs and alcohol.



Kevin Miller
Chair
Wirral DAAT

The right **TREATMENT**, in the right place, at the right time

Since April 2005, Wirral DAAT has achieved a 17% increase in the number of substance misusers accessing treatment. The rise is seen as a dramatic improvement in the number of people seeking help, rather than an indication of any increase in drug misuse. This has largely remained stable.

However, in order to ensure those accessing services see their treatment programmes through to completion, the DAAT has been working hard to commission schemes that are open and flexible, and in line with the lifestyles of people affected.

Our priorities, at a glance

- Increase the number and routes of access into specialist treatment and improve access to such services for under-served groups.
- Make available alternative treatment options to methadone prescription for heroin users, to attract a greater number into treatment.
- Work with partners to provide regular support groups for service users, families, carers and homeless drug misusers.
- Extend treatment programme options for stimulant users, to encourage a greater number to seek help.
- Increase service users and carer involvement in service development.
- Improve the size and invest in the skills of the drug treatment workforce to ensure continued quality of service.

Effective treatment works

The DAAT carried out extensive research across Wirral to establish which substances cause the most problems, in which areas and what consequences this had for local communities. This helps to inform and direct its service development.

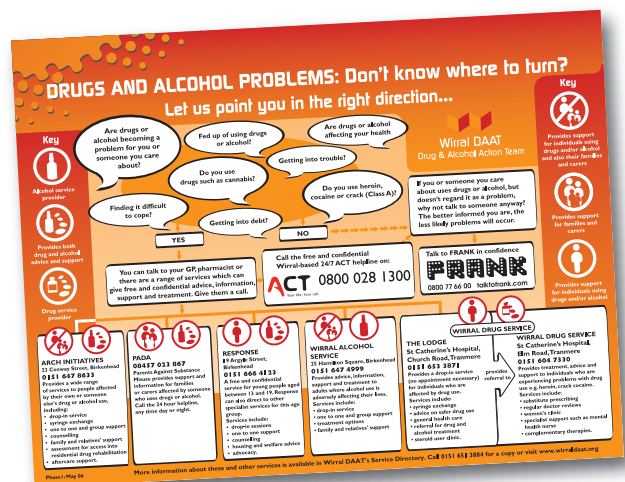
Access to effective treatment reduces the risk of harm to health, breaks the cycle of drug related crime and increases the user's ability to lead fulfilling lives. The number of people seeking help for substance misuse has risen from approximately 550 in 1990 to 2,815 by March 2007.

However, the greatest challenge for drug and alcohol support services is retaining service users and encouraging them to complete treatment. To this end, the DAAT has commissioned a number of different 'care pathways' to ensure all avenues are open and clear to those who seek help.

To ensure that services are meeting the needs of substance misusers, a number of service provider, service user and carer focus groups have been established.

Their feedback on what is working and what could be improved has had a great influence on service developments.

The DAAT is also working hard to ensure that services are increasingly accessible to minority groups.



FULLY INFORMED: A poster produced by the DAAT to illustrate the ways in which people can access support in the borough.



BETTER UNDERSTANDING: Part of the DAAT's role is to challenge stereotypes and myths about substance misuse. That is why members of the Women's Institute were invited to spend a morning at the Phoenix House residential drug rehabilitation centre in Bidston in May 2006. Here, Cherry Grey and some of her fellow members discuss the work of Phoenix House with Service Manager, Nick Wilson.

Partnership in practice

The DAAT is delighted that Wirral has become the first area in the country where all its GP practices are offering 'shared care' to drug misusers, through Wirral Drug Service.

The service, described by the National Treatment Agency (NTA) as 'exemplary', can be the foundation for successful rehabilitation. GPs are supported by experienced drug liaison workers who, alongside primary care workers, help re-establish confidence between patients, families and carers.

Around 730 people have received high standards of treatment through the shared care scheme. The initiative has also led to an increase in GP and pharmacy training, which in turn has generated increased understanding and improved relationships with service users and the wider community.

Did you know that:

- Wirral has already exceeded by 22% its local target for the national 10-year treatment target due by March 2008
- 87% of people accessing drug services stay in treatment for more than 12 weeks, which exceeds national performance by 12%
- in 2006/07 118 people were successful in completing treatment and are now 'drug free'
- all services are available within national waiting time targets, with people waiting no longer than three weeks to access treatment.



Here are just a few examples of the way in which the work of the DAAT and its partners is helping to get people back on track.

"A prolific offender convicted of robbery was contacted by the Pier Project (prolific offenders team) prior to his release from prison. He was given additional support to access treatment, which has seen him remain drug-free for the first time. He has not re-offended since."

"A hostel resident who had been using heroin for more than 20 years, had never previously held a full time job and was separated from his children, through training and support was able to gain full-time employment in the motor industry. He has since secured accommodation and has re-established relationships with his children."

"Following a call from a concerned mother to the ACT helpline, an appointment was made for her son at the local drug service. Her son was in poor health and had been using illicit drugs for many years. He agreed to enter treatment and was soon placed in a detoxification unit. He is now drug free, his health has improved and he is back living with his family."



NEW BEGINNINGS: Brothers Patrick and John McEneaney are shining examples of some of the many people who have turned their lives around thanks to treatment services in Wirral. Here they are congratulated by Kevin Miller, DAAT Chairman, and Francis Cook, Chair of service user support group InnerAction.

Working with **COMMUNITIES** to tackle drug-related crime

The corrosive effects of drugs on communities range from the nuisance and anti-social behaviour associated with drug dealing, to crimes such as burglary committed by those often forced to turn to crime to fund their substance misuse.

Working closely with Merseyside Police and the criminal justice system, the DAAT is committed to tackling these problems. Together great strides are being made by empowering neighbourhoods to report drug-related activity and empowering individuals to regain control of their lives by making treatment easier to access than ever before.

Our priorities, at a glance

- Achieve a significant reduction in crime, particularly by the most persistent offenders.
- Increase the number of those most problematic offenders who remain in treatment for at least 12 weeks.
- Identify more Class A drug-misusing offenders by testing them when they are arrested.
- Ensure more offenders referred for treatment actually engage in programmes and then see them through to completion.
- Increase the number of prisoners with drug problems who enter treatment after their release from custody.
- Ensure more people in Wirral believe they have an influence over the way drugs are tackled by increasing the number of public information events.



A class ACT

February 2005 saw the launch of a pioneering Wirral-based helpline aimed at encouraging drug users into treatment and away from criminal activity.

ACT (**freephone 0800 028 1300**) is one of the first helplines of its type in the country. Funded by the DAATs across Merseyside, it complements the measures put in place through the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP).

Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, ACT is staffed by skilled drug advisors from ARCH Initiatives. They offer support to users, their families and anyone else affected by drugs across Merseyside, pointing them in the direction of services and agencies that can help.

Furthermore, ACT provides, for the first time, a single point of professional advice for the police, social services, the NHS and other agencies that might work with people who use drugs.

Operation Hawk



Wirral DAAT's response to street-level drug dealing is the award winning Operation Hawk, delivered by Merseyside Police.

It is a co-ordinated campaign, which includes police operations, a media and marketing campaign, actively gathering information from the community and promoting drug awareness in the community and schools.

In the 12-month period prior to this report being compiled, 242 searches of properties were carried out as part of Operation Hawk, resulting in 166 arrests of which 82 were for drug dealing.



WINNING WORDS: In 2006 local media students were given the chance to learn more about support services available to drug misusers in Wirral who commit crime. Following a tour of some of the services offered as part of the DIP, each was asked to write an article, with the best published by the Wirral Globe. Here, Rebecca Waugh and Rebecca Yung are congratulated by Mindy Rutherford, Wirral DAAT Strategy Manager, and Nikki Jones, DAAT Information Officer.

Out of crime, into treatment

Did you know that for every £1 spent on delivering treatment to offenders, the criminal justice system, NHS and communities save £9.50?

That is because good drug treatment works. It enables those who commit crimes to fund their drug use to turn their lives around, reducing the impact on everyone who would have otherwise been affected.

Since the launch of the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) in Wirral in April 2004, in partnership with Wirral's Community Safety Team and Merseyside Police, the number of crimes most likely to be committed by drug users has fallen by 42% (as illustrated below). At the same time, by March 2007, the number of people receiving treatment more than doubled to 2,815.

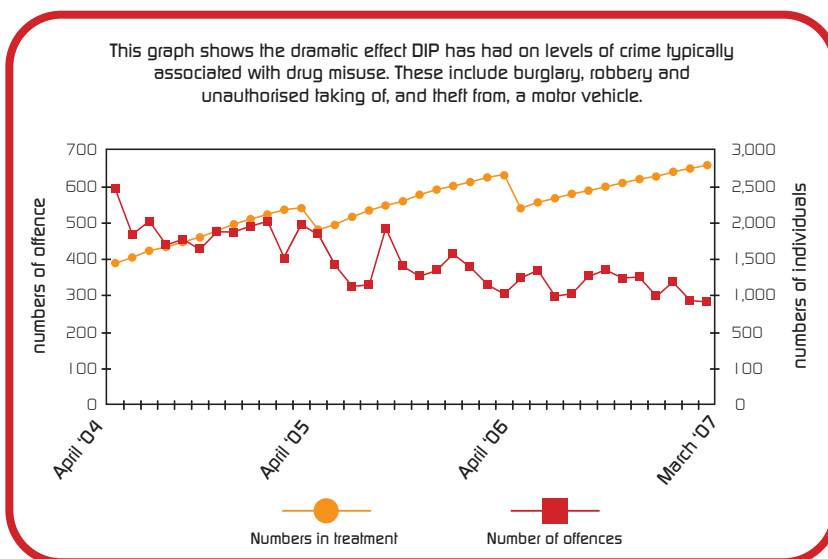
On average 21 drug misusing offenders enter treatment each month thanks to DIP. This means Wirral is on target to contribute to the national target of directing 1,000 offenders across the country into treatment each week.

Importantly, in January 2007 a survey of Wirral's Citizens' Panel revealed that public perception of drug use and drug dealing had fallen by 26% since 2005.

DIP has proven such a success because it has put in place opportunities to access treatment at every stage of an offender's journey through the criminal justice system. In Wirral this includes:

- **Arrest Referral** – five specialist workers from ARCH Initiatives work between 7am and 9pm each day in the police custody suite to identify substance misusers
- **Test on Arrest** – people arrested for certain offences undergo a test and talk to an arrest referral worker. On average 200 tests are carried out monthly and around 40% test positive, with more people now testing negative than before
- **Bail Support** – anyone suspected of committing a crime because of their drug use and likely to re-offend while on police bail can be required to attend ARCH Initiatives for assessment.

- **Restrictions on Bail** – people who test positive for drugs will have the presumption of bail reversed unless they agree to enter treatment and attend ARCH Initiatives for drug testing while on court bail. On average for every two people given restricted bail, one person is remanded in custody
- **Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR)** – convicted offenders given a community sentence must undergo regular drug test and attend treatment or face a more severe sentence. There are around 160 offenders serving DRRs at any one time
- **CARAT (Counselling, Advice, Referral, Assessment and Throughcare)** – delivers treatment in prison and works with community providers, which have a duty to ensure care continues after release
- **Engagement Workers** – trace and work with those who have dropped out of treatment, with 75% of people encouraged to return
- **Pier Project** – the award winning multi-agency initiative between police, probation and ARCH Initiatives works closely with prolific and persistent offenders causing most harm to their communities. The intensive support has led to 50 service users becoming drug alcohol and crime free
- **Progress to Work (P2W)** – managed by Job Centre Plus, the scheme engages with reforming drug misusers to assist them into paid and meaningful work through access to education and training. The approach has helped a number of service users find jobs. Since the beginning of 2007, 84 people have successfully found employment.



Preventing today's **YOUNG PEOPLE** from becoming tomorrow's problematic drug users

Wirral's approach to supporting young people, their parents and carers is three pronged. It ensures universal drug education for all, access to credible and reliable information about substance misuse for those who are more vulnerable and also an array of support services that meet a diverse range of needs.

The agencies concerned with substance misuse and the health and wellbeing of young people in the borough have forged increasingly closer links over the years. Together they form a 'virtual team' offering everything from resources for teachers who provide drug education in schools, through to very specialist treatment for young people with complex substance misuse issues.

Our priorities, at a glance

- Reduce Class A drug use among 16 to 24 year-olds.
- Building on the excellent progress of the Wirral Healthy Schools Programme by ensuring 100% participation by 2009.
- Record and reduce number of drug and alcohol-related exclusions in schools.
- Increase number of looked after children screened for substance misuse issues and ensure those in need are assessed and access treatment swiftly.
- Ensure more young people with drug problems enter and complete treatment programmes.
- Increase proportion of young people whose knowledge and understanding of the harm caused by drugs and alcohol has increased through age-appropriate education.
- Increase number of young people engaged with the Youth Offending Service who attend substance misuse awareness-raising sessions.

A lot of bottle

Alcohol use among young people, and its effects on their health and the communities in which they live, is an issue of growing concern for the public.

Recognising this, Wirral DAAT and its partners have commissioned a high-profile awareness-raising drive called *Don't Bottle It*.

Launched in 2005 by Tranmere Rovers FC star Calvin Zola, the poster and leaflet campaign aimed to encourage young people to engage in more positive activity during their free time. Credit card size leaflets have been widely distributed, detailing local sources of help and advice, together with suggestions of ways to spend free time that cost little or nothing.

A year later, at the 2006 Wirral Show, the second phase of the campaign was launched, this time aimed at encouraging parents and carers to think carefully about where their children are and what they do.



*HARD HITTING: Calvin Zola launches the **Don't Bottle It** campaign with Mindy Rutherford, DAAT Strategy Manager, and Terry White, DAAT Young People's Programme Manager.*



TEENAGE KICKS: The first cohort of participants in the Streetwork Project, a DAAT-supported scheme working with Response Youth Service aimed at deterring young people from becoming involved in risk taking behaviour such as drug misuse or underage drinking.

Support with a TWIST

With such a comprehensive range of services in place to support young people, their parents and carers, it is important that they are directed to the best source of help and support for them.

That is why a special assessment and referral form called TWIST (The Wirral Identification and Screening Tool) has been developed by the DAAT and its partners.

It enables any professional working with a young person to determine the likelihood or extent of any substance misuse issues. Upon completion, that professional is then able – with the young person's agreement – to refer them to the most appropriate service.

Words of praise

- In its 'traffic light' system of assessing the effectiveness of treatment plans for young people, the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse scored Wirral DAAT's 2006/07 plan green (excellent).
- The Isle of Man Government commended our Schools' Drug Advisor for his role in supporting the development of the island's Healthy Schools Programme. His input and that of the rest of the Merseyside School Drug Advisors' Group was described as "outstanding".

Some other developments

- Through the *Participation Project* young people are encouraged to have the opportunity to share their views on substance misuse services.
- A special task group is looking at streamlining the way in which young people with substance misuse issues will be referred to specialist support after attending the children's A&E at Arrowe Park Hospital.
- Services are provided in line with aspirations of national best practice and policy on matters such as child protection, wellbeing and information sharing between organisations.
- A post is being created within Wirral's Adult Social Services Department to ensure the smooth transition of young people to adult services once they become 18.
- Supporting the children of parents who use drugs continues to be an important priority.
- Dedicated posts within Connexions to focus on vulnerable groups such as truants, excludees and children in care of local authority
- Task group devised to draw up action plans on issues relating to young people and steroid use.



ARTISTIC DIVERSIONS: A group of young people unveiled artwork, aimed at encouraging them to explore drug issues, to Wirral's Mayor, Cllr Peter Johnson, and Terry White, DAAT Young People's Programme Manager.

Action on **ALCOHOL** misuse in our communities

The impact of alcohol misuse is felt not only by the individuals and families directly affected, but also communities and public services. Wirral DAAT and its partners have examined closely statistics that reveal the extent of the problem in the borough and have developed a robust strategy to address it.

Delivery of Wirral's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2007 - 2011 will depend upon all the relevant

organisations working together in a similar way to that in which they have implemented the National Drug Strategy locally over the past 10 years. Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership has charged the DAAT with responsibility for co-ordinating this activity, as well as making alcohol a key priority in the Local Area Agreement and allocating Neighbourhood Renewal Funds for the redesign of alcohol treatment services.

The problem

The impact of alcohol misuse on the health and wellbeing of people in Wirral broadly mirrors that of the North West of England in general.

- In 2004 excessive alcohol consumption took an average of almost 11 months off the lifespan of men in Wirral and just over four and a half months off the average lifespan of women.
- In 2004/05 5,717 men and 2,053 women aged between 16 and 64 in the borough were thought to have an alcohol dependency.
- Between April 2006 and March 2007, 2,808 people attended Arrowe Park Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department following an assault. Half of these had been drinking prior to the assault taking place.
- During April 2007 alone there were 22 violent crimes near licensed premises – 68% of which were alcohol related.
- Between January 2004 and December 2006 there were 103 road accidents in which people were tested positive for drink or drugs. There were 33 deaths and serious injuries as a result.
- In 2006/07 our biggest effort has gone into priority access to treatment for people who need it. This has required a redesign of local services.

Figures are taken from a variety of sources, which are referenced in Wirral's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2007 – 2010. To obtain a copy, please contact Wirral DAAT on 0151 488 7754.



STRONG MESSAGE: Some of the alcohol seized by Merseyside Police during an operation to tackle underage drinking in public areas.



CAMPAINING FOR CHANGE: Area Commander of Police, Colin Matthews, launches the domestic violence campaign **Alcohol Abuse is No Excuse** with Ruth Hamilton, Manager of the Wirral Alcohol Service.

The solution

The new strategy reflects the aspirations of the *Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England* and *Safe. Sensible. Social. The next steps in the National Alcohol Strategy*. It focuses on a number of broad strategic priorities in an approach similar to that adopted by the DAAT in implementing the 10-year National Drug Strategy. Action plans are being drawn up to ensure each of these priorities is achieved.

The following gives a flavour of the work to be undertaken over the next three years:

Alcohol-related crime, disorder and communities

- Better co-ordination between agencies on work to tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder.
- Reduce incidence of crime typically linked to alcohol use, particularly domestic violence and abuse, anti-social behaviour and hate crime, weapon crime and acquisitive crime.
- Secure compliance with legislation among licensed trade.
- Support communities and vulnerable people affected by alcohol.

Young people's alcohol misuse

- Provide information and education to young people, families, carers and professionals.
- Increase number of professionals trained in alcohol misuse.
- Address alcohol-related anti-social behaviour among young people.
- Reduce number of young people admitted to hospital.
- Improve access to specialist interventions and programmes.
- Ensure compliance in alcohol sales legislation.

Alcohol misuse identification and treatment

- Improve access to programmes and ensure as many people as possible complete them.
- Reduce alcohol-related admissions to hospital.
- Increase numbers of alcohol misusers entering training, education and employment.
- Support people with housing problems, owing to alcohol misuse.
- Improve quality of treatment service by reducing workers' caseloads.

Being **ACCOUNTABLE** to the communities we serve

We have in place robust organisational structures and reporting mechanisms throughout the Wirral DAAT partnership to ensure full accountability in everything we do.

Performance monitoring

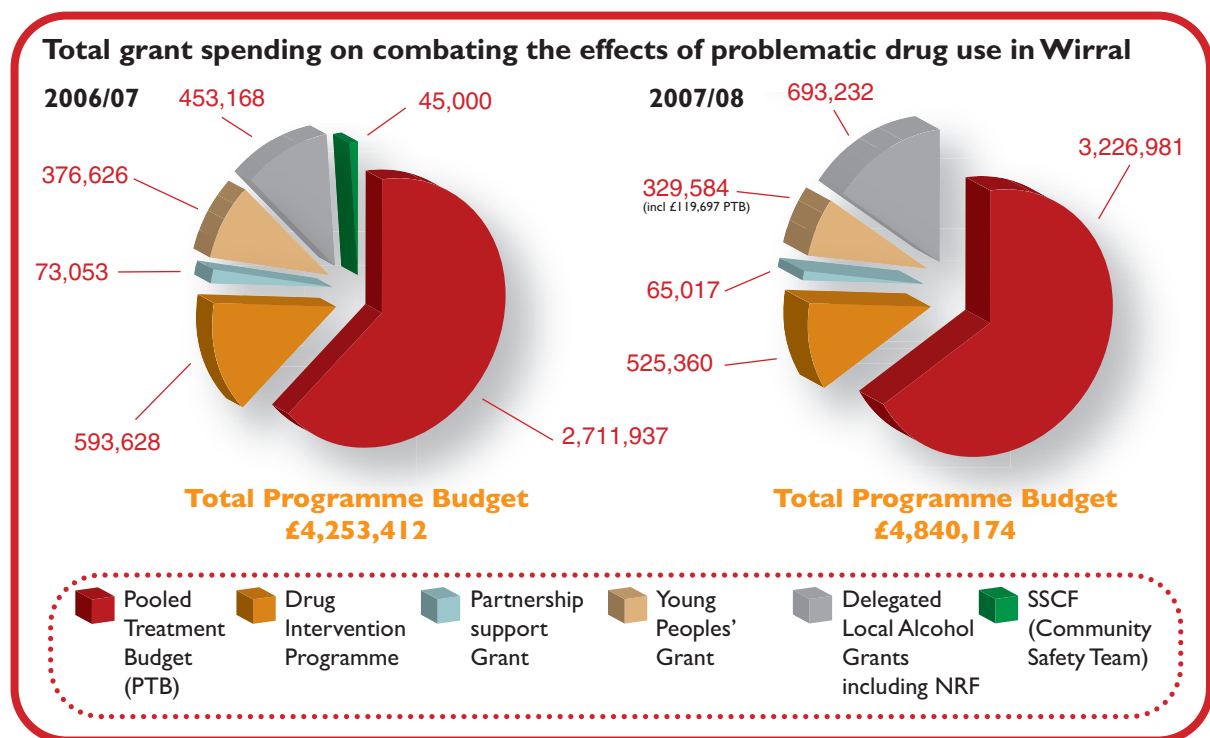
Members, who include representatives from our partner organisations such as the NHS, police, local authority and service providers and service users and carers as well as voluntary agencies, meet on a quarterly basis to debate proposals and ratify plans.

The Drug Strategy is delivered as a government initiative. However, like all drug and alcohol action teams, we are formally accountable to the Home Office and the National Treatment Agency, which is supported by the Home Office teams in the nine Regional Government Offices and centrally by the Crime and Drugs Strategy Directorate.

The new performance monitoring framework placed a requirement to develop an over-arching three-year drug strategy, and annual rolling plans.

The plan's aims and objectives, which have been summarised throughout this document, reflect not only those of the National Drug and Alcohol Strategy, but also local priorities. For that reason our work complements and contributes to the delivering of the priorities of Wirral's Local Area Agreement.

Our current three-year strategy was published in 2005 and will be updated in the next year, in line with the goals of the Government's new drug and alcohol strategies, also due for publication in 2008.



NOTE:

1. There may be a small amount of overlap in the funding for target groups shown as a result of projects that address more than one target.
2. These totals demonstrate the actual direct grant spending on activities to combat the effects of problematic drug use in Wirral, not all of which are managed directly by Wirral DAAT. However, this spending does demonstrate the way in which all agencies in Wirral are investing in meeting the aims of the National Drug Strategy (the local progress on which is overseen by Wirral DAAT). It does not include 'mainstream spend'.
3. These figures apply to spending across Wirral and do not reflect the total resource available for addressing related targets.

All inclusive

Partnerships are also accountable to the communities they serve and the Home Office Crime and Drugs Directorate is committed to ensuring that the National Drug Strategy meets the needs of the whole community. This means ensuring that there is no discrimination in respect of gender, ethnic background, disability or sexual orientation, that partnerships adopt a proactive stance on diversity and a robust anti-discriminatory approach in all aspects of their work.

Produced by Wirral Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), October 2007.

For further information about the DAAT and the range of information resources it has produced:

- visit **www.wirraldaat.org**
- telephone 0151 488 7754
- write to Wirral DAAT, E Block, St Catherine's Community Hospital, Church Road, Tranmere, CH42 0LQ

FRANK

For free and confidential advice about drugs and alcohol, talk to FRANK by visiting **www.talktofrank.com** or call 0800 776 600.

ACT
Your life, Your call

Advice on the range of help and support available locally for people affected by drugs is available by calling the free and confidential 24-hour ACT helpline on 0800 028 1300.