

SANDWELL

SANDWELL SUBSTANCE MISUSE NEEDS ASSESSMENT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

V5.1

NOTE ON THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council commissioned S Squared Analytics to undertake a Substance Misuse Needs Assessment to gather information about the needs of those who are resident in Sandwell and affected by substance misuse (both licit and illicit substances).

A Full Needs Assessment was completed and delivered in the summer of 2022. The Full Needs Assessment is a comprehensive document from which the key findings and recommendations will feed and drive the Substance Misuse Strategy for Sandwell.

In addition to the Full Needs Assessment, this Executive Summary document has been developed, which condenses the key findings and recommendations into a more concise and easy-to-read format suitable for a wider audience.



INTRODUCTION

The following section details Sandwell's Drug and Alcohol Needs Assessment recommendations. The structure used pulls out the key findings from the needs assessment, looks at their impact on drug and alcohol needs in Sandwell, and shows the evidenced-based recommendation.

The following section also includes a summary of the stories and feedback from those with a lived experience of drug and alcohol use in Sandwell. The views and experiences of those who have used services should be used to inform commissioning and strategic decisions as the response to meeting drug and alcohol needs are developed.

LIVED EXPERIENCE RESPONSE

As part of this needs assessment, feedback from survivors with first-hand experience of the drug and alcohol response within Sandwell was collected. There were a range of experiences provided and these are contained in full within the full needs assessment.

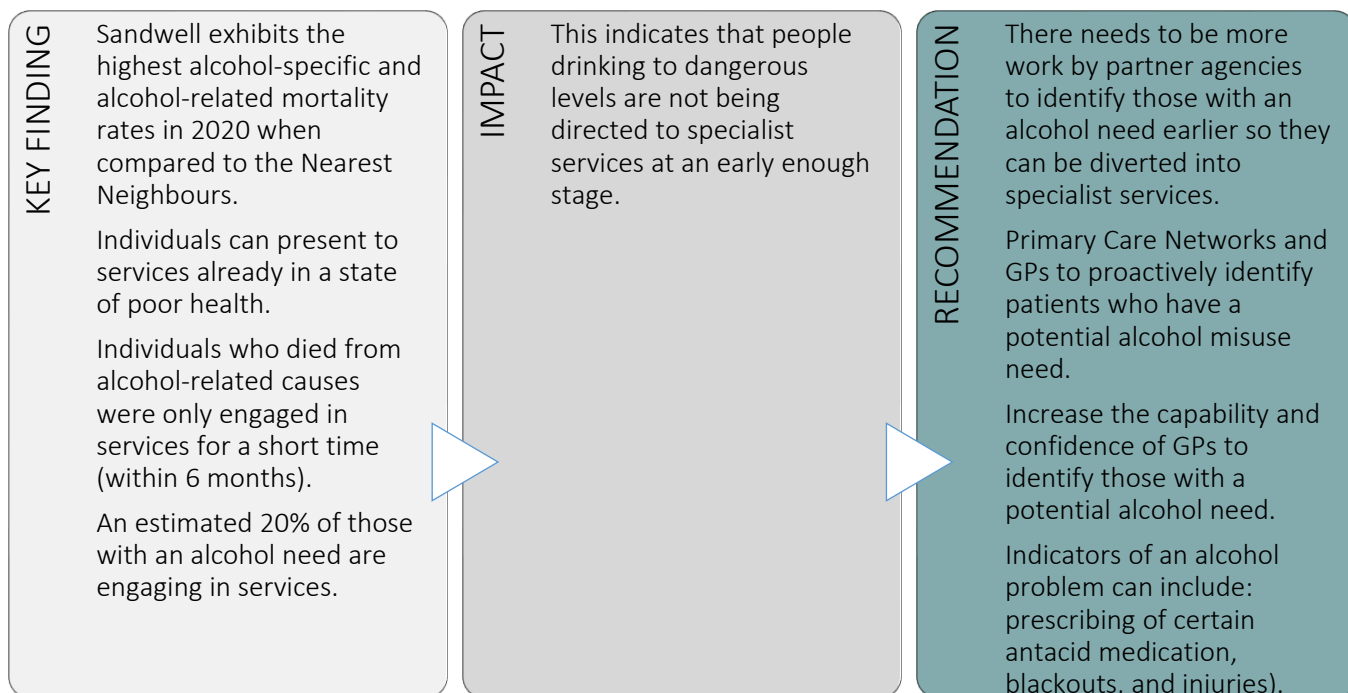
Here is a summary of some of the key issues raised in the focus groups that were ran within Cranstoun:

It is important that in progressing with the development of the drug and alcohol response within Sandwell, the views of those with lived experience are sought and valued.

- Participants provided many reasons as to why they started using substances. What we heard multiple times was that it was a mental health crisis that was the trigger to drug and alcohol misuse.
- Participants shared what it was like to access services for the first time and the fears attached to this.
- There was a mixed response from GPs regarding participant's drug and alcohol problems.
- More could be done regarding the promotion of the help available to those with a drug or alcohol need.

-R- RECOMMENDATIONS

WIDER HEALTH IMPACTS: ALCOHOL

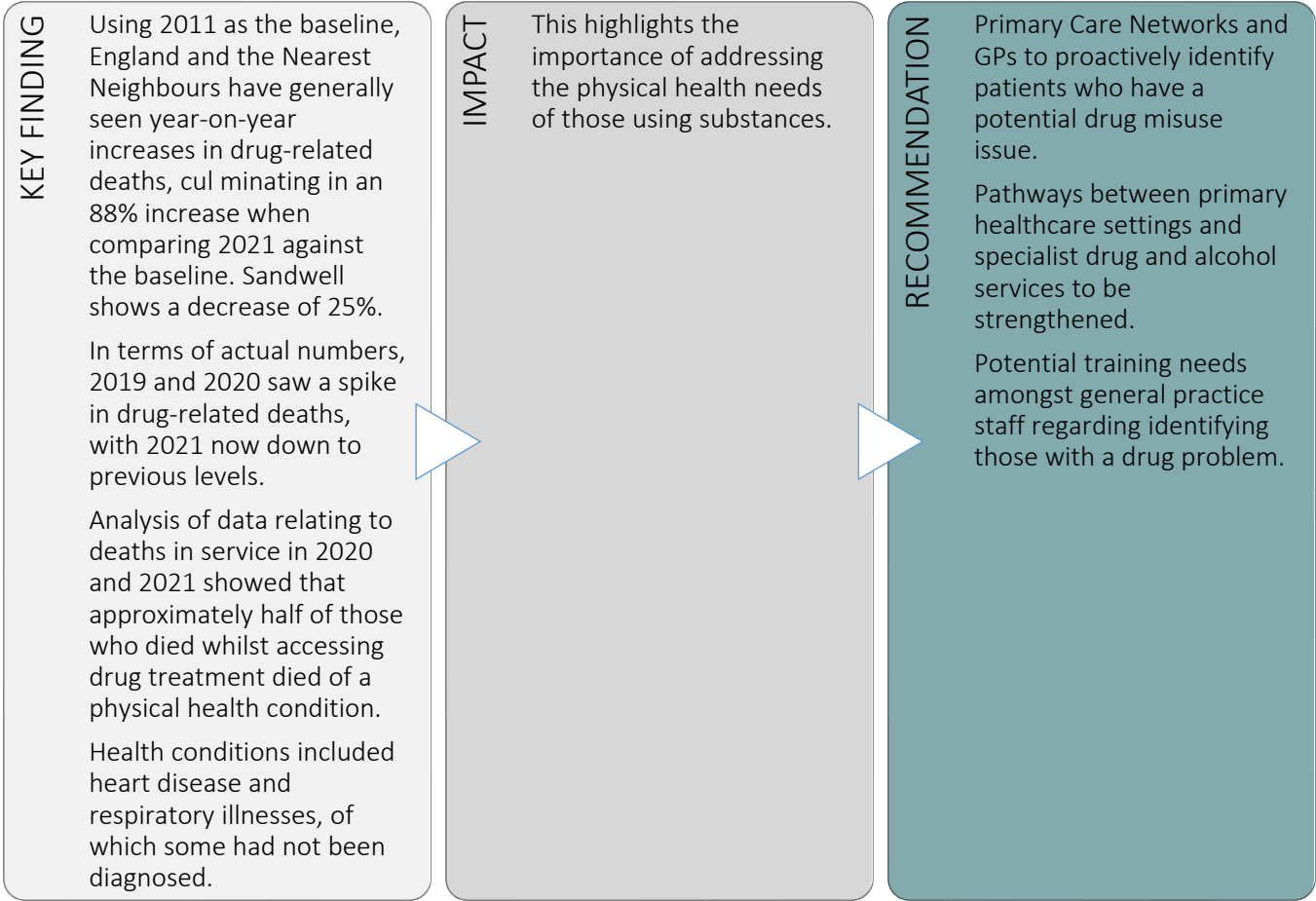


OTHER KEY FINDINGS



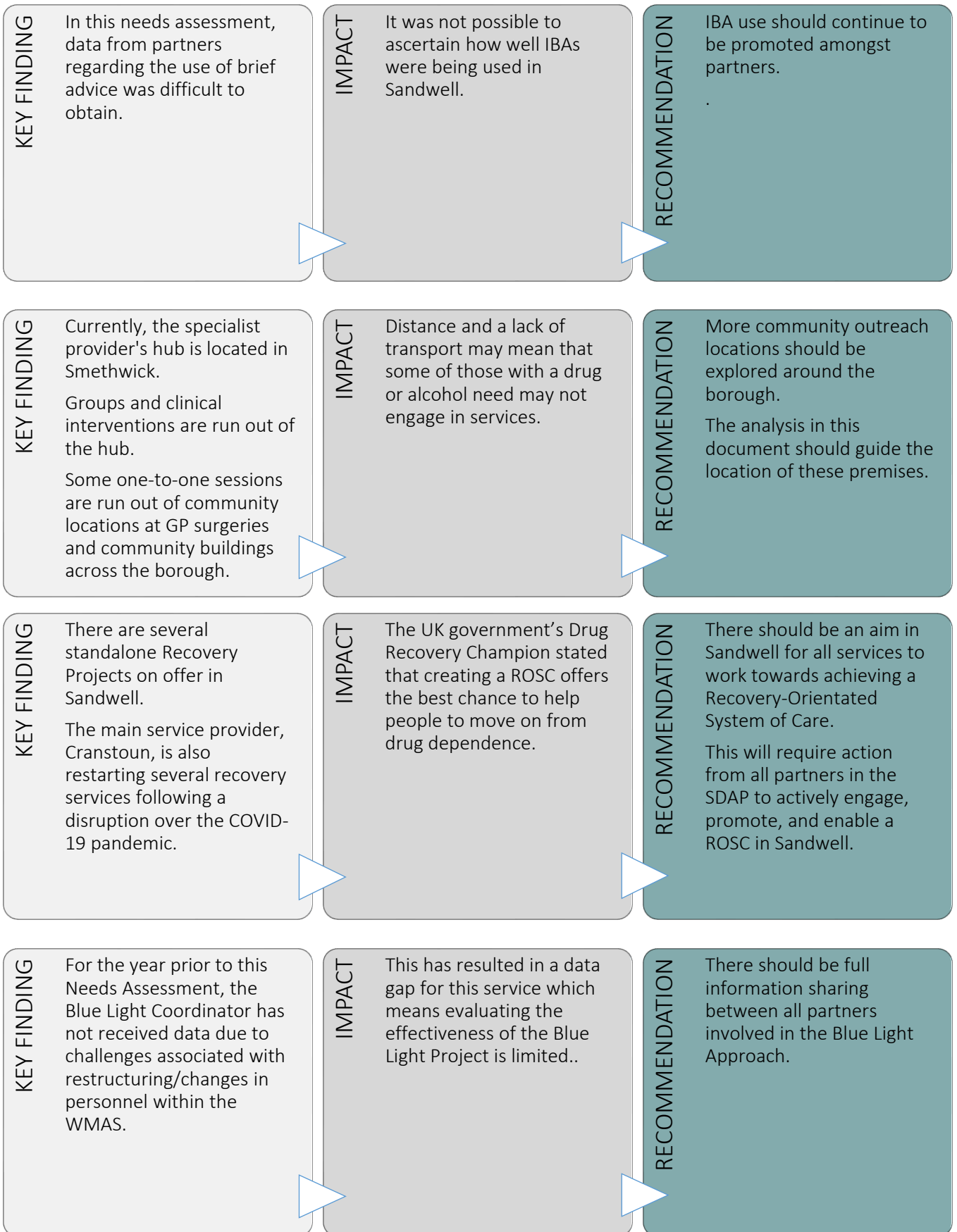
Compared to its Nearest Neighbours, Sandwell has low rates of hospital admission episodes for mental and behavioural disorders due to the use of alcohol (Sandwell, 366; NN, 460).

WIDER HEALTH IMPACTS: DRUGS



MAPPING






KEY FINDING	Naloxone provision and peer-to-peer naloxone distribution have been rolled out across various locations in Sandwell.	IMPACT	Naloxone can reverse the effects of a heroin overdose. The rollout increases the availability of Naloxone across Sandwell and reduces the risks of drug-related deaths.	RECOMMENDATION	Naloxone should continue to be rolled out in Sandwell. SDAP partners should identify practitioners who will benefit from Naloxone training.
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KEY FINDING	<p>There are relatively low numbers of referrals from Children’s Social Care to DECCA.</p> <p>The high turnover of social care staff could impact awareness of drug and alcohol issues and the specialist drug and alcohol pathway in Sandwell. This may affect the number of referrals.</p>	IMPACT	There is a potential unmet need amongst those that children’s social care is working with.	RECOMMENDATION	<p>Drug and alcohol champions amongst social workers who are upskilled in the available services locally and how to identify and work with those young people who have a drug or alcohol problem.</p> <p>The pathway between children’s social care and specialist services to be reviewed and strengthened.</p>
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KEY FINDING	At the time of this assessment, limited interventions are available for children and young people impacted by their parent’s drug and/or alcohol issues.	IMPACT	There is an unmet need for this cohort.	RECOMMENDATION	<p>Explore the commissioning of an evidenced-based family intervention service to work with those families where drug and alcohol use has been identified as an issue.</p> <p>Upskilling of current services working with families regarding drug and alcohol needs.</p>
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OTHER KEY FINDINGS	
	Stakeholder engagement, analysis, and available research indicate that there can be entrenched drinking in families that straddles generations.

THE WIDER PICTURE

KEY FINDING

FP10 prescriptions are purchased by NHS organisations, including Hospital Trusts and are distributed to medical and non-medical prescribers, NHS dentists and other organisations as required.

Items prescribed for opioid dependency show a decrease of 31% when comparing 2021-22 against the previous year.

4 practices account for 87% of the total items prescribed.

The engagement exercise highlighted that it was difficult to link in with GPs to discuss joint working.

IMPACT

There may be opportunities to work with prescribers being missed..

RECOMMENDATION

A strategy for using FP10 for quality improvement purposes should be developed.

KEY FINDING

There are greater opportunities for joint working between specialist drug and alcohol treatment services and housing services.

Feedback received as part of this assessment points to a knowledge gap amongst some housing practitioners regarding the full range of work completed by specialist drug and alcohol services, with housing practitioners focusing on emergency prescribing rather than holistic treatment.

IMPACT

Individuals in receipt of interventions from the housing service may be missing out on support in relation to their drug and alcohol needs due to the focus on pharmacological interventions.

RECOMMENDATION

Explore embedding of housing staff with specialist drug and alcohol treatment providers.

Explore upskilling of housing practitioners.

KEY FINDING

The specialist drug and alcohol treatment provider receives referrals from probation; however, the number tends to fluctuate..

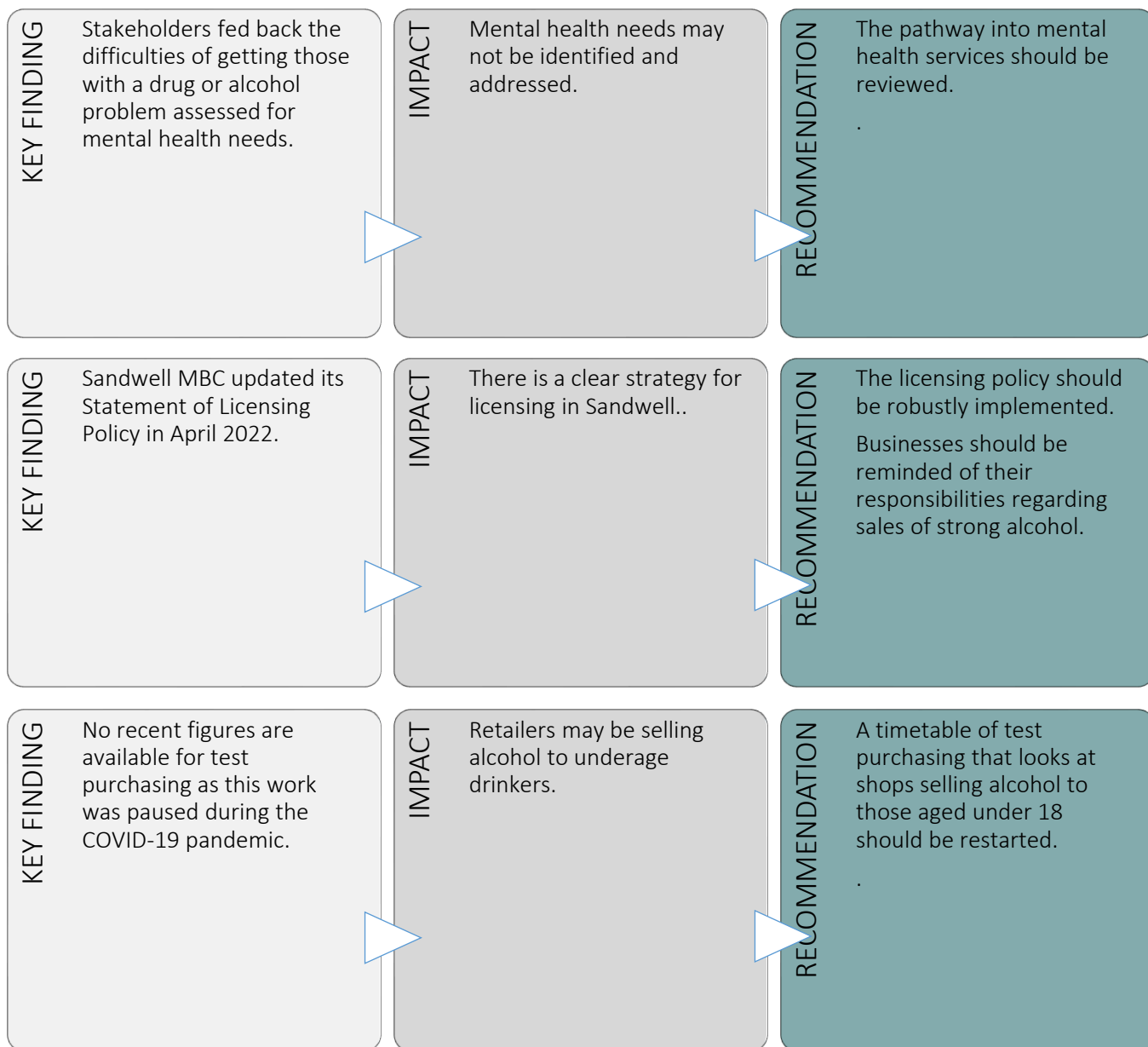
IMPACT

This could indicate potential unmet needs amongst those working with probation..

RECOMMENDATION

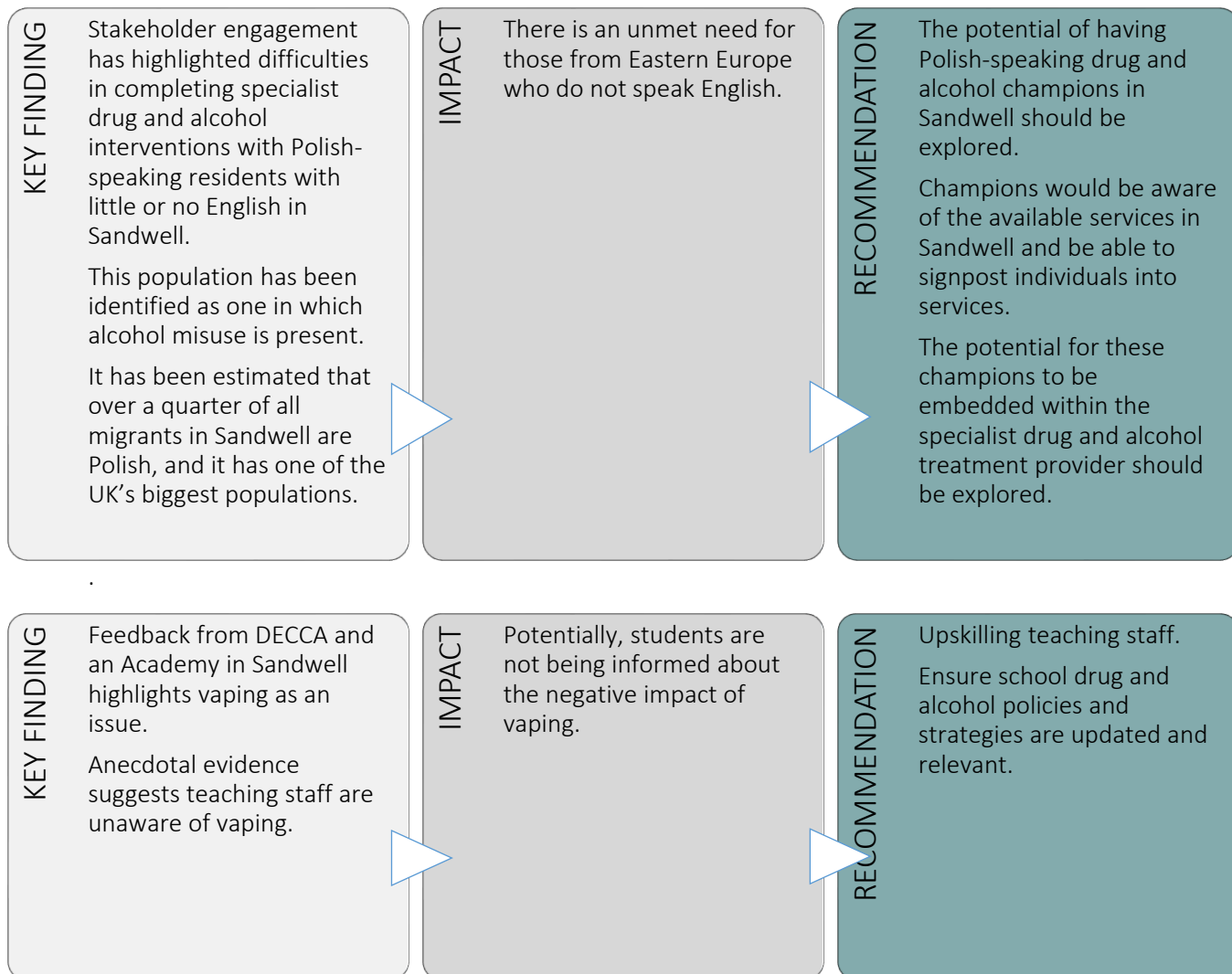
An embedded drug and alcohol practitioner within the probation team/ or champion could help promote drug and alcohol services amongst probation staff.

Probation staff could also be upskilled regarding brief interventions.



OTHER KEY FINDINGS	
☆	The engagement exercise pointed to the difficulties of those with drug and alcohol needs accessing GP appointments.
☆	Drug-related offences are up 70% when comparing 2021-22 to previous years.
☆	New ways of recording crimes by the West Midlands Police have likely contributed to the increase.
☆	Alcohol-related offences are up 91% when comparing 2021-22 to previous years.
☆	Similar to drug-related offences, new ways of recording crimes have impacted the trends.
☆	There is a correlation between drug rates and alcohol rates by ward. 0.92 shows a strong correlation, meaning that wards with high rates of drug offences also have high rates of alcohol offences.

SPECIFIC COHORTS



-1-

PICTURE IN SANDWELL

POPULATION



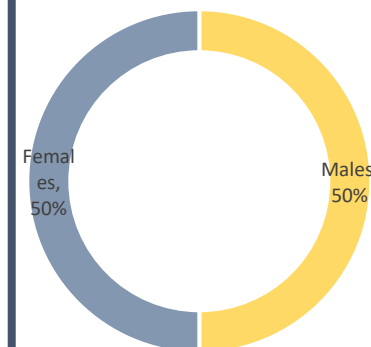
POPULATION

329,049

The latest available ONS Mid-Year estimates provide a figure of 329,042 for Sandwell.

Since 2014, the population has grown by 12,753 residents, equating to an increase of 4%.

The latest population projection gives an estimate of an increase to 347,891 by 2030; an increase of 18,849 (+6%).



GENDER

There is even split between males and females



BAME

34%

The 2011 census data shows that 34% of the population in Sandwell are from a BAME background, however the rate is now likely to be higher.

MEDIAN AGE

37

The median age of 37 in Sandwell is lower than that across England and Wales (40).

There are variances between the wards. For example, 46% of the population in Newton are over the age of 45 compared to 27% in Soho and Victoria. The age profile of the wards will have a bearing on the prevalence of substance misuse.

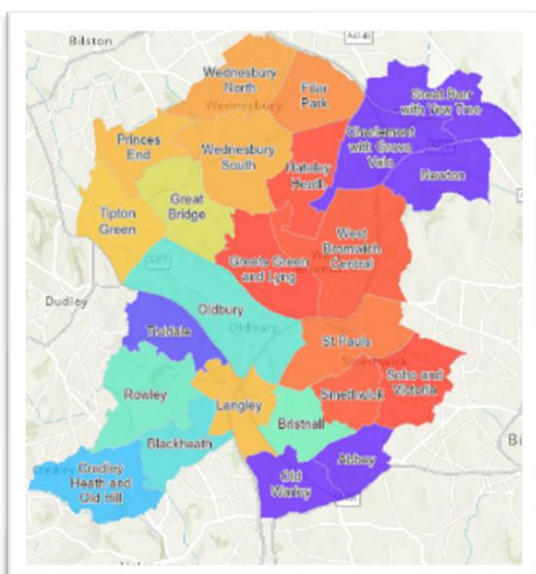
DEPRIVATION

34%

The average deprivation score for Sandwell makes it the 12th most deprived local authority in England.

Deprivation varies greatly between the wards.

There is a significant link between deprivation and substance misuse.



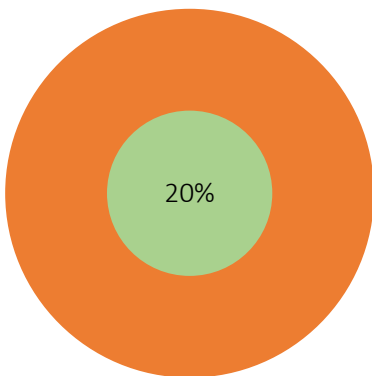
MET NEED

ESTIMATED MET NEED – ALCOHOL

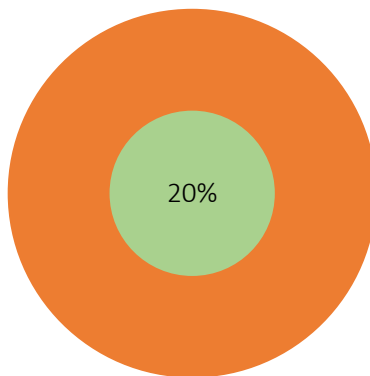
In 2021/22, Sandwell had 20% of the estimated need in treatment. This rate is the highest reported across the analysed time series and is now similar to national rates.

Potential reasons for the increases include increases in partnership working with other agencies such as police and the running of community events and other opportunistic engagement events.

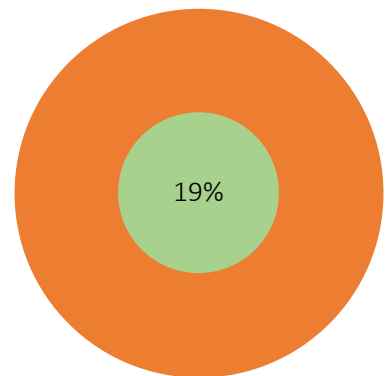
SANDWELL
(2021-22)



ENGLAND
(2021-22)



NEAREST
NEIGHBOURS (2020-
21)

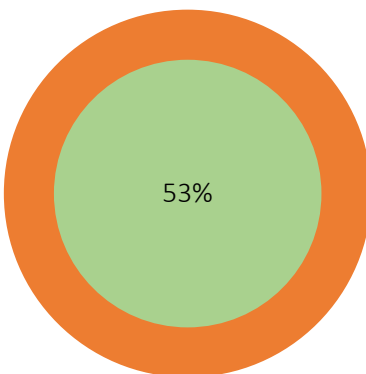


ESTIMATED MET NEED – OPIATES

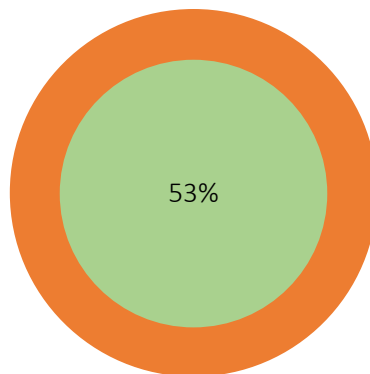
In 2021/22, Sandwell had 53% of the estimated need in treatment.

This is the same as the England average at 53% and less than Sandwell's nearest neighbours at 58%.

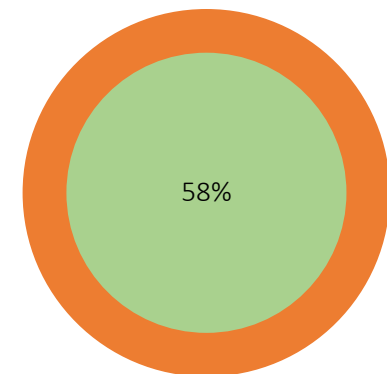
SANDWELL
(2021-22)



ENGLAND
(2021-22)



NEAREST
NEIGHBOURS (2020-
21)



ESTIMATED MET NEED – CRACK

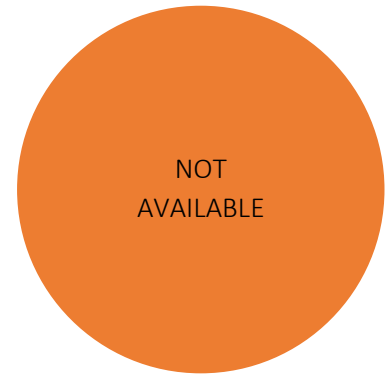
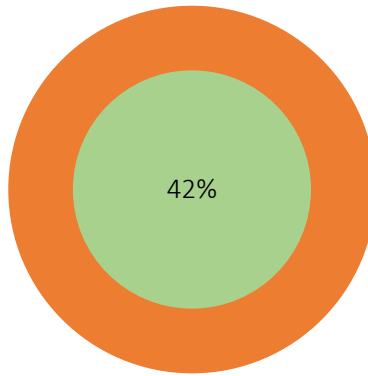
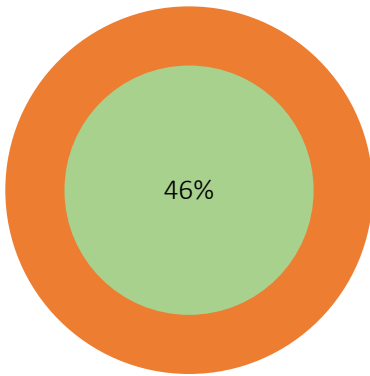
In 2021/22, Sandwell had 46% of the estimated need in treatment.

This is higher than the England average at 42%.

SANDWELL
(2021-22)

ENGLAND
(2021-22)

NEAREST
NEIGHBOURS (2020-
21)



-2-

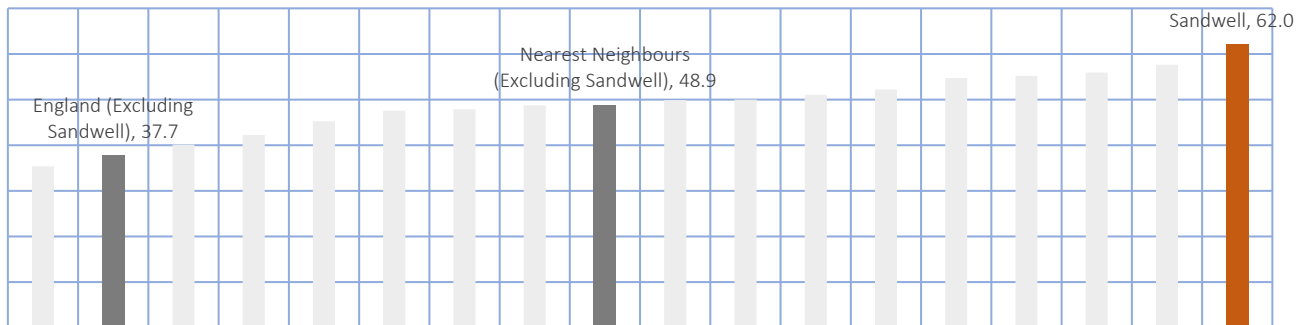
WIDER HEALTH IMPACTS: ALCOHOL

ALCOHOL RELATED DEATHS

173 ALCOHOL RELATED DEATHS IN 2020

There were 173 alcohol related deaths in 2020 which is a 39% increase on the 134 deaths in 2019.

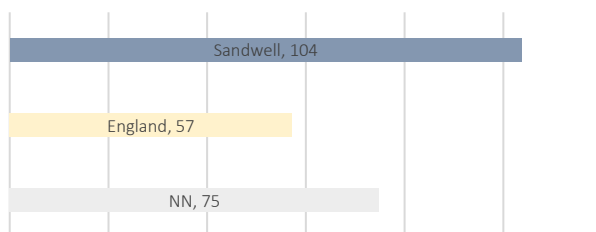
The 62 deaths per 100,000 is the highest out of all the Nearest Neighbours and is significantly higher than the 38 rate for England.



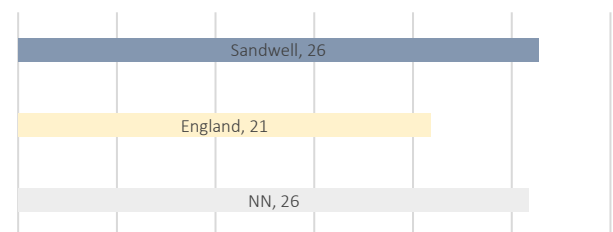
HIGHER RATES IN MALES

The analysis by sex shows that the rates in 2020 for males in Sandwell is significantly higher than the Nearest Neighbours. For females, the rate is comparable.

MALES



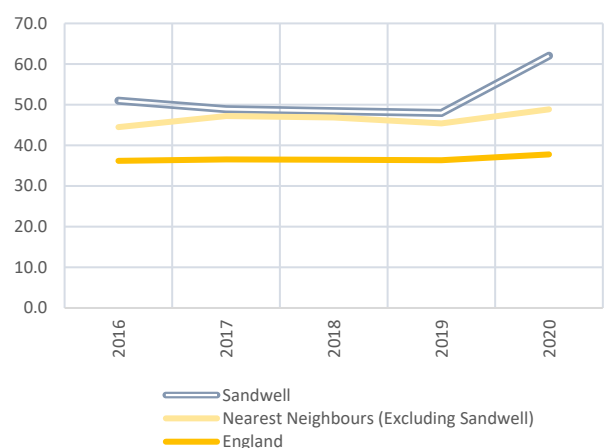
FEMALES



SPIKE IN 2020

There has been significant increase in 2020 compared to previous years. This is not replicated for England or the average for Nearest Neighbours.

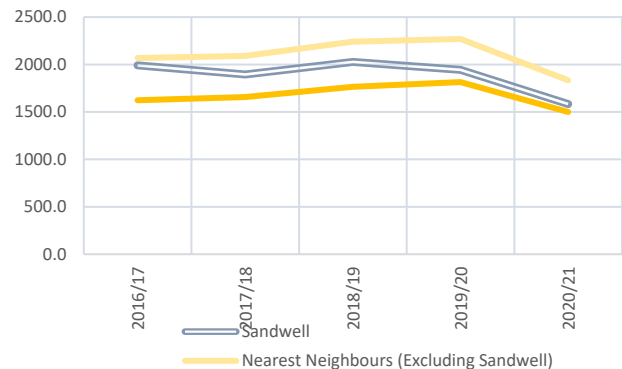
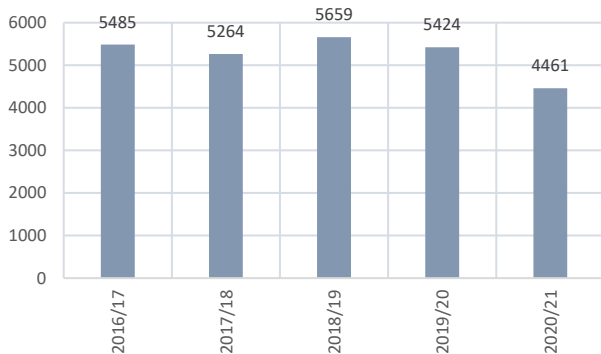
The rate for Sandwell is the highest when ranked against the Nearest Neighbours.



ALCOHOL ADMISSIONS

DECREASE IN ADMISSION EPISODES FOR ALCOHOL-RELATED CONDITIONS

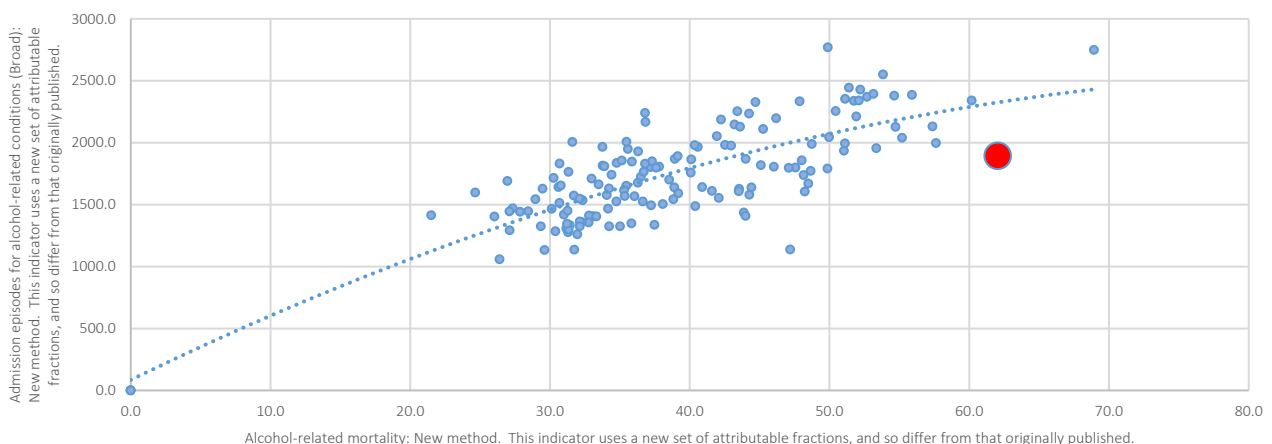
The number of admissions has seen a decrease to previous years and mirrors the rates for England and the Nearest Neighbours. When compared to the Nearest Neighbours, the rate in Sandwell ranks in the lower quartile.



AREA OF FOCUS

Sandwell exhibits high rates of alcohol-related deaths, however the rate for admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions are low in comparison. An exercise was undertaken to look at national rates at a local authority level to examine if there is a link between the two measures. Key findings were:

- Correlation score of 0.72 when using 2020 year for alcohol-related mortality and 2020-21 year for alcohol-related admissions.
- This score increases to 0.80 when using 2017-18 year for alcohol-related admissions.
- Does this indicate that alcohol-related deaths are more closely linked to rates of alcohol-related admissions from 3 years back compared to more recent rates?
- The rates in Sandwell have decreased in recent years. Does this mean that alcohol-related deaths will decrease in the future?



-3-

WIDER HEALTH IMPACTS: DRUGS

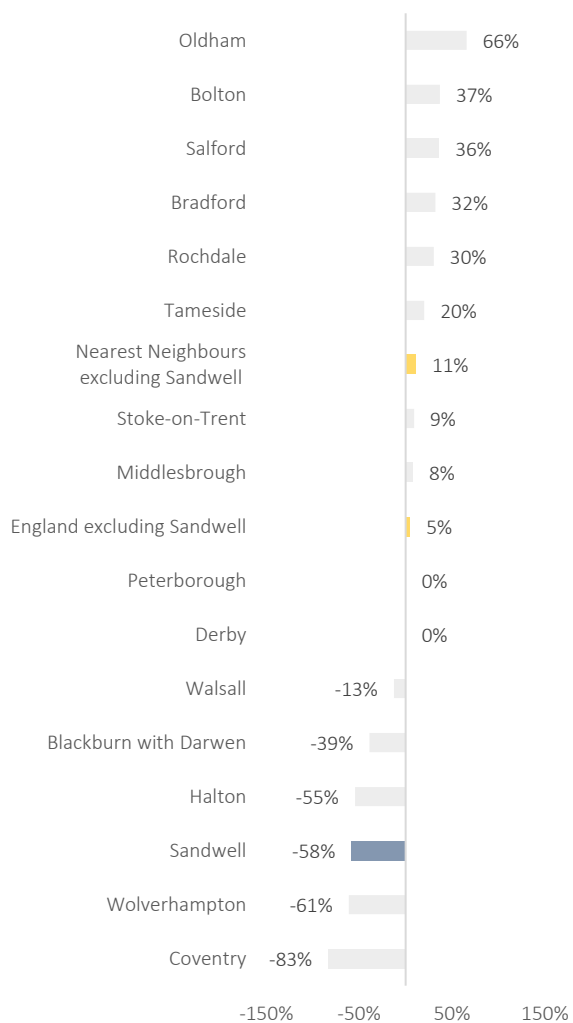
DEATHS RELATED TO DRUG POISONING



A DECREASE IN DEATHS RELATED TO DRUG POISONING

In Sandwell, there were 12 deaths related to drug poisoning during 2021. This is down from 19 during 2020 and represents a decrease of 58%. This is against national trends and that of the Nearest Neighbours.

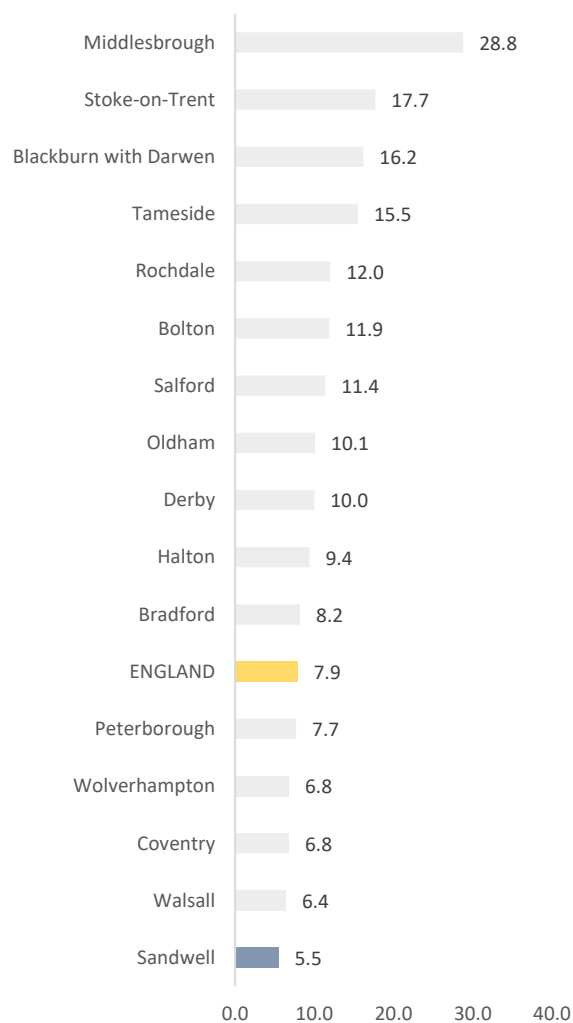
Looking specifically at the Nearest Neighbours, the three areas with high decreases are all within the West Midlands region.



LOW RATES

The age-standardised mortality rate for deaths related to drug poisoning (2019-21 for Sandwell was 5.5.

The rate of 5.5 during this period is the lowest out of all the Nearest Neighbours.



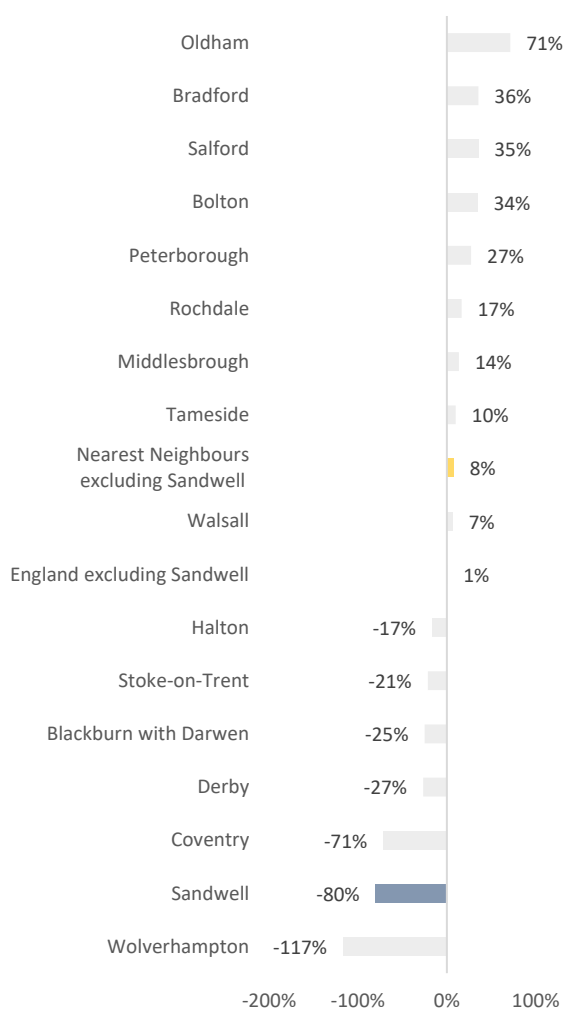
DEATHS RELATED TO DRUG MISUSE



A DECREASE IN DEATHS RELATED TO DRUG MISUSE

In Sandwell, there were 5 drug misuse deaths during 2021 which is an 80% decrease on the previous year. This is against National trends and average for the Nearest Neighbours.

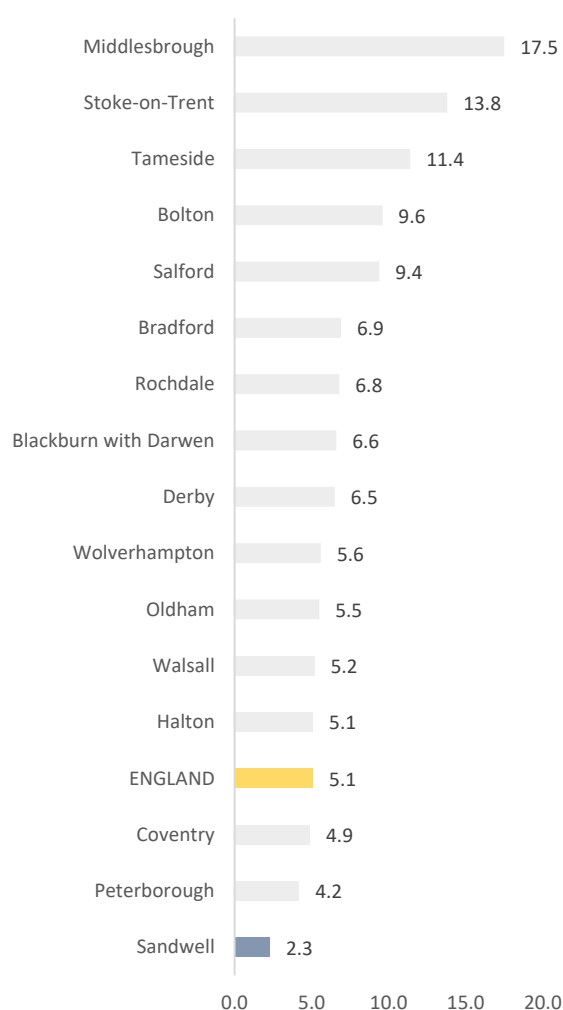
Looking specifically at the Nearest Neighbours, the three areas with high decreases are all within the West Midlands region.



LOW RATES

The age-standardised mortality rate for deaths related to drug misuse (2019-21 for Sandwell was 2.3.

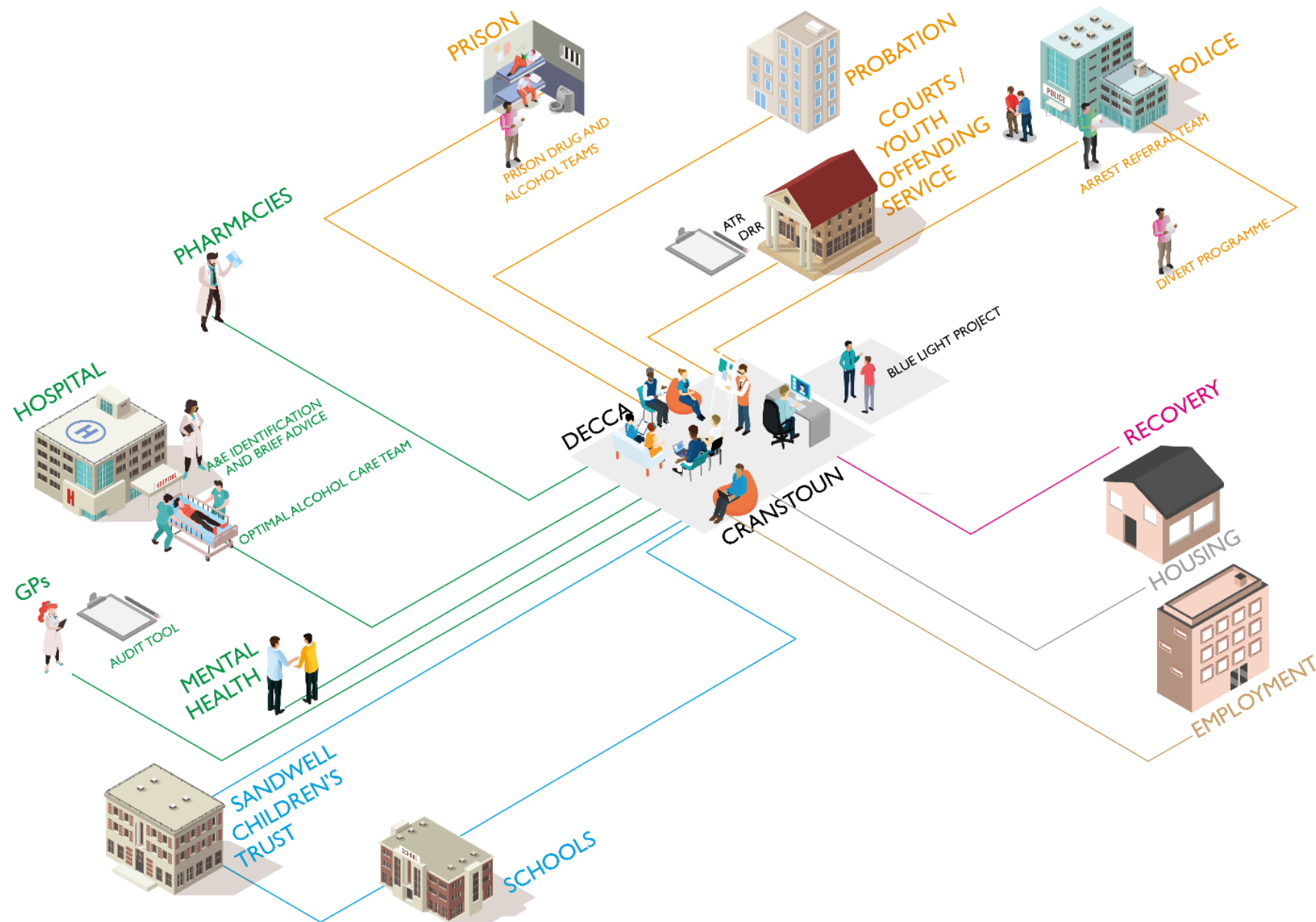
Similar to the patterns expressed for drug poisoning, the rate for deaths related to drug misuse in Sandwell is the lowest out of the Nearest Neighbours.



-4-

MAPPING OF SERVICES

SERVICE MAPPING DIAGRAM



OVERVIEW MAPPING AND PATHWAYS

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSON'S SPECIALIST DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE

DECCA

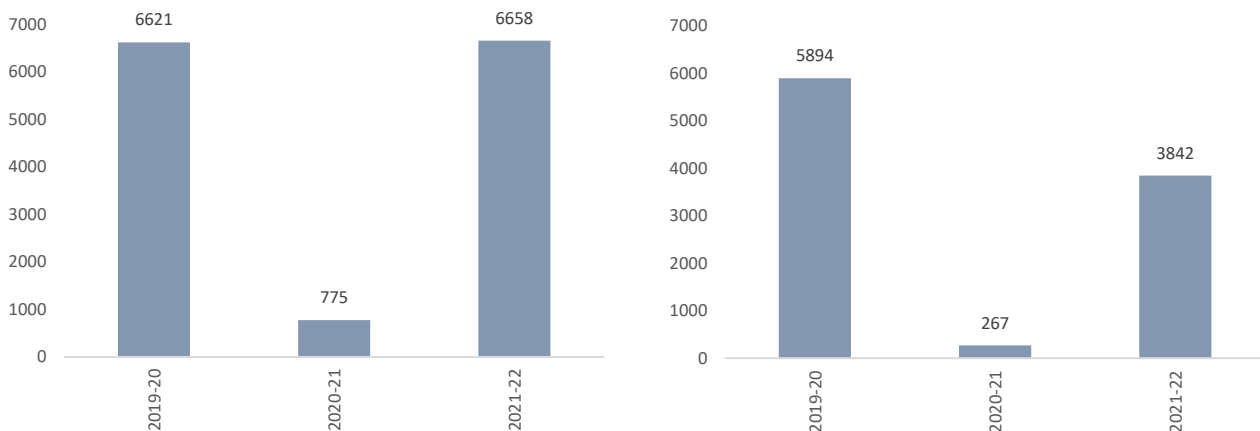
DECCA provide the Young People's (aged 18 and under) Drug and Alcohol Service in Sandwell. The team's remit is multifaceted, fits all areas of provision for young people's services, and is located within Targeted Support Services (TSS) as part of Sandwell Children's Trust (SCT).

COVID HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON INTERVENTIONS

The figures below show the number of universal prevention interventions in primary and secondary schools.

The number of interventions in primary schools has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The number of secondary school interventions has increased post-pandemic but has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. This has led to more cancelled sessions in secondary schools. Potential reasons for this are that secondary schools were more affected by COVID than primary schools seem to have been.



ADULT'S SPECIALIST DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE

CRANSTOUN

Cranstoun are the drug and alcohol treatment provider in Sandwell. Cranstoun provide:

- Psychosocial interventions
- Pharmacological support
- Harm reduction
- Recovery community, including groups

The service is for over 18-year-olds. Cranstoun provides substance misuse prescribing for those under 18 in conjunction with DECCA.

TREATMENT DATA

See page 35 for treatment data.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

HARM REDUCTION INITIATIVES

NALOXONE

NEEDLE AND
SYRINGE
PROGRAMME

DIAMORPHINE
PROJECT

BUVIDAL
PRESCRIBING

The following harm reduction initiatives are run in Sandwell. They are provided by Cranstoun.

TIER 4 SERVICES

RESIDENTIAL
REHABILITATION

Sandwell MBC places individuals in Residential Rehabilitation places located around the West Midlands and the UK. Places are commissioned on a spot purchase basis.

Between 2018 and 2021, an average of 5 individuals per year completed residential rehabilitation (funded by Sandwell MBC). In the 12 months to March 2022, 3 individuals were completing residential rehabilitation.

Patients could also privately pay for residential rehabilitation. No figures are available for this.

INPATIENT DETOXIFICATION	<p>Referrals for inpatient detoxification are made via Cranstoun. Individuals who want to use inpatient detoxification services require preparation work, which Cranstoun completes.</p> <p>In the 12 months to March 2022, there were 0 individuals completing inpatient detoxification. 3 individuals were on hold for an inpatient detoxification place.</p> <p>Patients could also privately pay for inpatient detoxification. No figures are available for this.</p>
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RECOVERY SERVICES	
CRANSTOUN	Cranstoun runs a range of groups and services aimed at recovery.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS/ NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS	There are 38 Alcoholics Anonymous groups located across the Black Country. These are a mixture of in-person and virtual meetings.
COMMUNITY GRANT-FUNDED PROGRAMMES	
KALEIDOSCOPE PLUS GROUP	PLUS programme (mental health and well-being groups), mental health first aid course and work to reduce stigma among the general public and professionals.
EUROPEAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION	Social media messaging to the Polish community regarding alcohol and other drugs, promoting services/signposting, and reducing the stigma of substance misuse in the Eastern European Community.
WEST BROMWICH LEISURE CENTRE	Free 12-week passes for the leisure centre with individualised support to people to help them engage with the offer.
AFRICAN-FRENCH- SPEAKING COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES	Digital skills support, CV writing, access to white goods, football, and basketball (open to all Sandwell residents who use alcohol and other drugs, not just African-French speakers).
COMMUNITY LINK	A café providing a safe space for people and volunteering/training opportunities (food hygiene certificate).

CRIMINAL JUSTICE	
ARREST REFERRAL TEAM	<p>The Arrest Referral Team are based in the Sandwell Police Custody 'Super Block' and works with arrestees who require further support with drug or alcohol issues.</p> <p>The Arrest Referral Team completes drug and alcohol assessments and refers to other statutory services.</p>

	<p>The team completes assessments for out-of-court disposals.</p> <p>The team completes brief interventions in the custody suite, including tailoring advice on use, harm reduction measures, and naloxone.</p>
<p>DIVERT PROGRAMME</p>	<p>The DIVERT programme is available to young people and adults found in possession of any illicit substance; however, it is not available to those suspected of intending to supply an illicit substance.</p> <p>It allows drug users to receive a non-criminal sanction (Community Resolution) rather than a more traditional outcome such as a cannabis warning or arrest and subsequent prosecution.</p> <p>This is a non-statutory, out-of-court disposal for officers to utilise and does not lead to a criminal record.</p> <p>Those who use the programme are offered a 3-hour workshop.</p>
<p>BLUE LIGHT INITIATIVE</p>	<p>The Blue Light Initiative works with individuals who are dependent on alcohol and/or drugs, who place a high demand on public services but are resistant to treatment. The project offers a multiagency package of support so that complex needs are met in a joined-up way. The goal is for those using the service to be stabilised and progressed into core services.</p> <p>The Blue Light Initiative is a collaboration between a range of local partners, including Sandwell Public Health, Cranstoun, NHS partners, the voluntary sector, the police, and housing teams.</p>

<h2 style="text-align: center;">HEALTH</h2>	
<p>HOSPITAL OPTIMAL ALCOHOL CARE TEAM</p>	<p>The team target those who require alcohol detoxification and offer them help on an outpatient basis, outside of the A & E environment.</p> <p>Part of the team's role is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the knowledge of alcohol needs amongst hospital staff. • Provide education on the management of alcohol withdrawal and addiction to frontline practitioners • Prevent unplanned detoxes in hospitals. <p>The OACT is a 7-day service.</p>

-5-
ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY SURVEY

470 RESPONSES

The survey included questions on:

- Respondents' alcohol use
- Knowledge of impact of alcohol use
- Knowledge of local specialist drug and alcohol services
- Respondents' drug use
- Any concerns on drug and alcohol-related activities in respondents' local area.

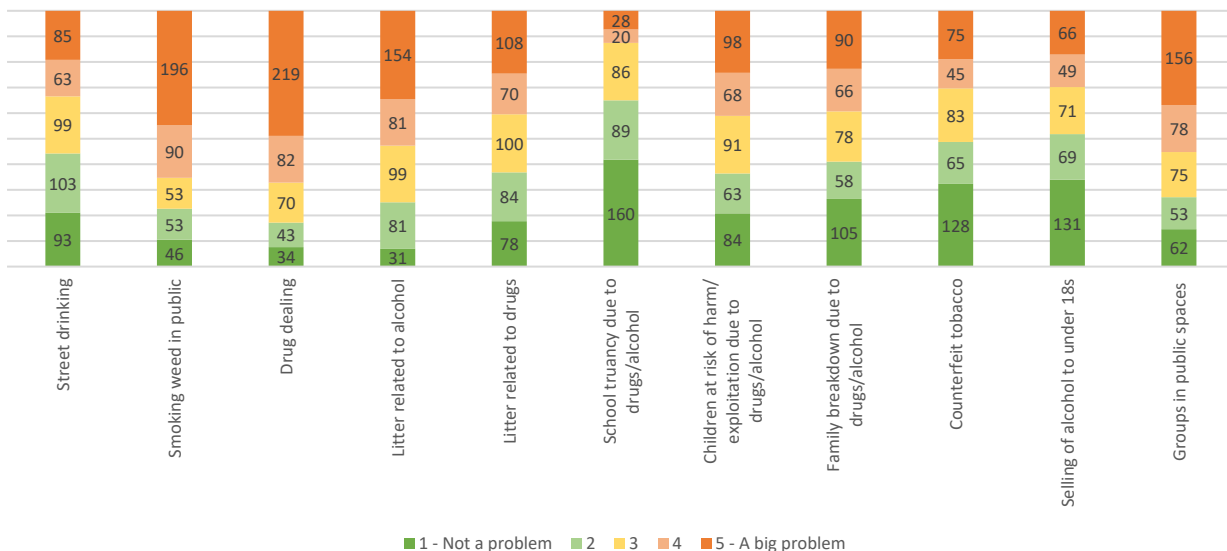
ASB INCIDENTS

The ASB charts show that the concerns of residents in the 6 towns in Sandwell differ.

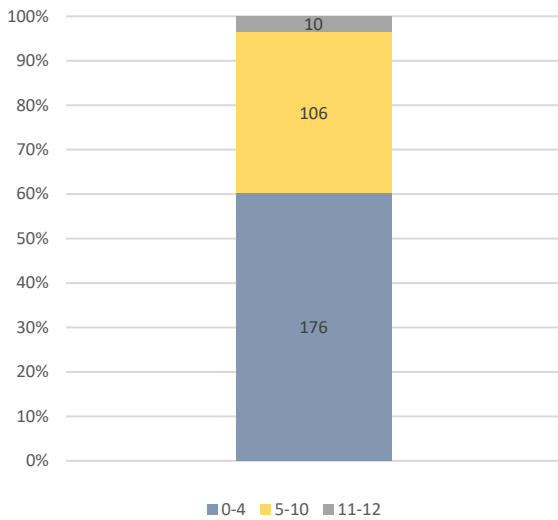
- In Oldbury, respondents were concerned with smoking weed in public.
- In Smethwick, respondents were concerned with drug dealing as well as smoking weed in public.
- In Tipton, drug dealing and litter related to alcohol were raised as problems.
- In Wednesbury and West Bromwich, drug dealing was raised as an issue.

The graph below shows responses to the question “**How much of a problem are the following (1 – no problem, 5 large problem)**” across the whole of Sandwell.

Drug dealing and smoking weed in public were the crimes that respondents found to be the biggest problems across Sandwell.

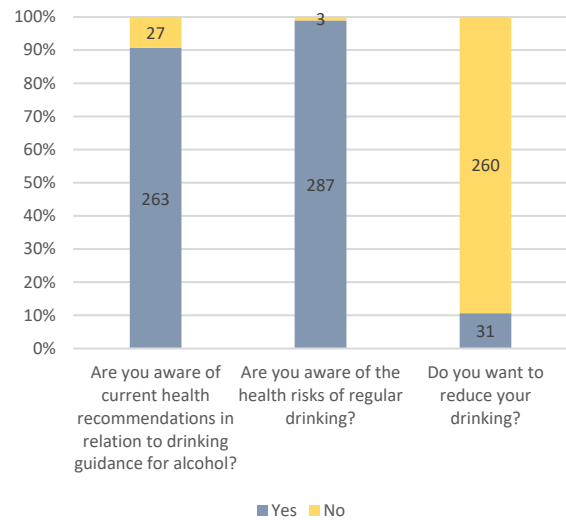


ALCOHOL AUDIT SCORES



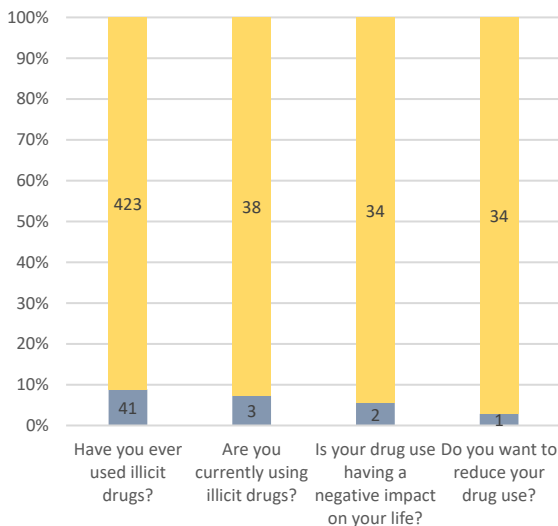
60% were drinking at low-risk levels (0-4 AUDIT score). 36% were drinking at a level that could put their health at risk (5-10 AUDIT score). 4% were drinking at levels where they should speak to their GP (11-12 AUDIT score).

ALCOHOL USE



Approximately 90% of respondents were aware of health recommendations in relation to drinking guidance. Most were aware of the health risks of regular drinking. Only 10% wanted to reduce their drinking.

DRUG USE



There were low rates of illicit drug use amongst respondents. A very low proportion of those who had used illicit drugs felt that their usage had a negative impact on their life. Only one respondent wanted to reduce their drug use.

PRACTITIONER SURVEY 41 RESPONSES

The survey collected respondents' opinions on a wide range of areas that made up the themes of:

- Children and young people
- Drug education
- Treatment services
- Alcohol specific services
- Criminal justice services
- Prevention
- Young people
- Recovery
- Protected characteristics
- Housing and homelessness
- Health
- Mental health
- Employment

POTENTIAL AREAS OF FOCUS

Respondents were asked “**How much are services meeting needs relating to prevention services (1 – meeting need, 5 -not meeting need)**”.

Below are selected areas where 45% or more of respondents thought that needs were not being met in these areas:

- Prevention of underage alcohol sales (50%)
- Mental health and wellbeing support to prevent/reduce the use of drugs and alcohol (45%)
- Drug and alcohol support for those at risk of homelessness (54%)
- Housing options for those with a drug or alcohol need (52%)
- Abstinence based accommodation for those who are homeless (57%)
- Identification of need in Job Centre Plus (47%)

FOCUS GROUPS

The views of those who with lived experience of drug and alcohol need were captured in a day of engagement at Cranstoun, the drug and alcohol service provider.

WHY PEOPLE STARTED DRINKING ALCOHOL

"I started drinking when I had a mental health crisis."

"My drinking is related to my mental health."

"I was trying to deal with the crisis myself."

"I was drinking to self-medicate."

FEARS ABOUT STARTING SERVICES

"It is nerve-wracking to approach services for the first time."

"I had a preconception about Cranstoun."

"There is a stigma and shame associated with drug and alcohol problems."

GPs

"GPs do not understand what is behind your drink and drugs problem."

"My GPs attitude was "man up" and get over it."

"Even for me to admit my drinking problem to my GP took courage. I didn't get help straight away and did not return for 9 years."

LOCATION OF SERVICES

"I came from Tipton and it took an hour to get here on buses."

"If people have to travel miles, they can't be bothered."

FOCUS GROUPS

COMMUNICATION

“I didn’t know what help was out there.”

“How to find out about things if you don’t have a computer to look stuff up on?”

“There is not enough substance misuse information out there.”

INTERVENTIONS

“I received more mental health help from Cranstoun than the doctor.”

“I would be dead if it wasn’t for Cranstoun.”

RECOVERY

“Moving to acceptance is the hardest part.”

“People with lived experience of addiction help more than anyone.”

“Talking to people who suffer the same thing helps.”

-6-

TREATMENT SYSTEM

NEW PRESENTATIONS

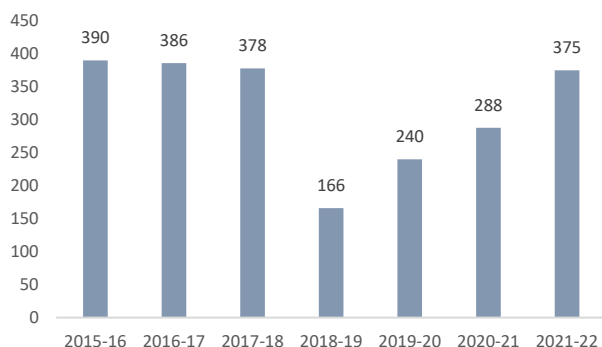
PRESENTATIONS FOR ALCOHOL ONLY SHOWS A GREAT DEGREE OF FLUCTUATION WHILST OPIATE NUMBERS ARE DOWN

Below shows the number of new presentations by financial year.

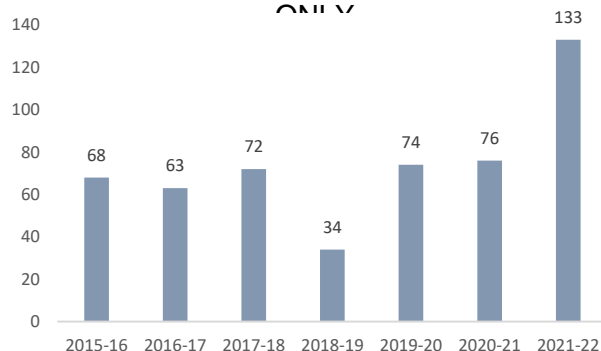
Non-opiate presentations saw a significant decrease in 2018-19, however has since recovered to previous levels. It is not clear what impacted the number of presentations that year. This is likely to be related to the recommissioning and integration of drug and alcohol services.

The number of opiate presentations is down.

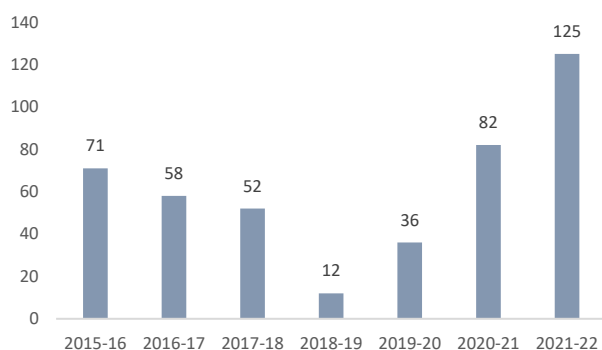
ALCOHOL ONLY



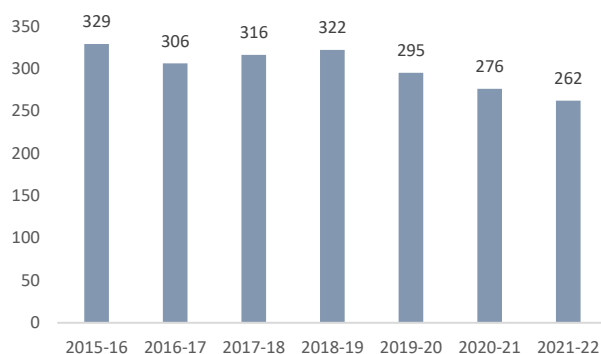
ALCOHOL AND NON-OPIATE ONLY



NON-OPIATE ONLY



OPIATE



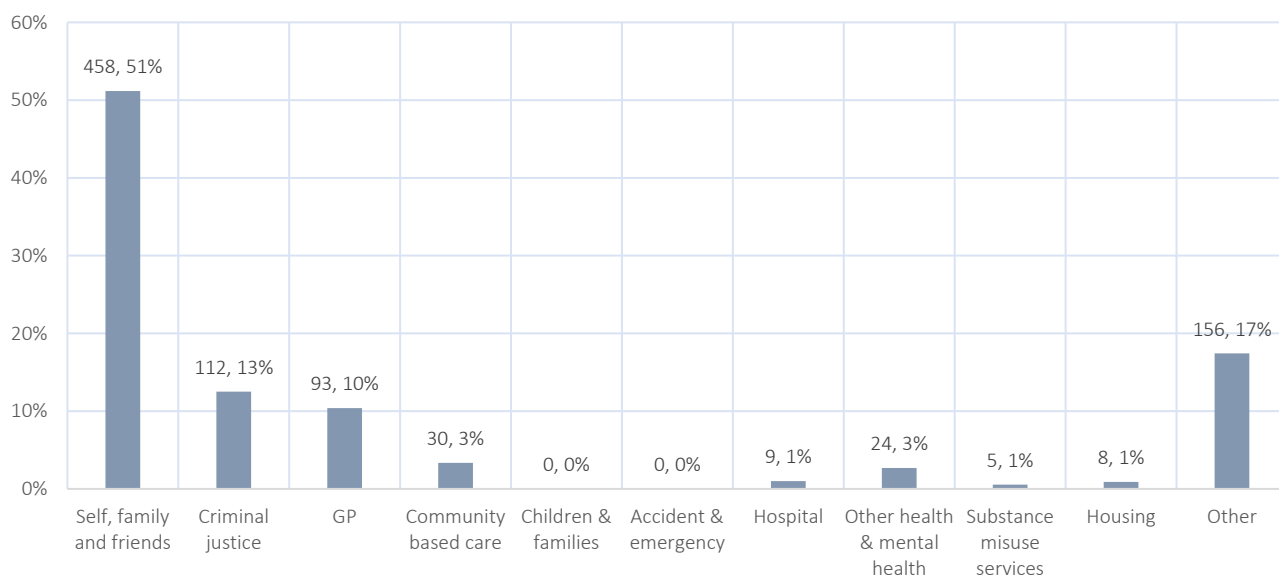
REFERRAL SOURCE

THE LARGEST SOURCE OF REFERRALS IS FROM SELF, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

In 2021-22, this group accounted for 51% of the total referrals, and is similar to the previous year.

Excluding “other”, the second largest group is through the criminal justice route, however the 13% of the total in 2021-22 is a decrease on the previous years.

“Other” accounts for 17% of the total which is an increase on the previous years. Note that for the long-term analysis chart, community-based care, children and families, accident and emergency, hospital, other health & mental health, substance misuse services, and housing has been merged into this category.

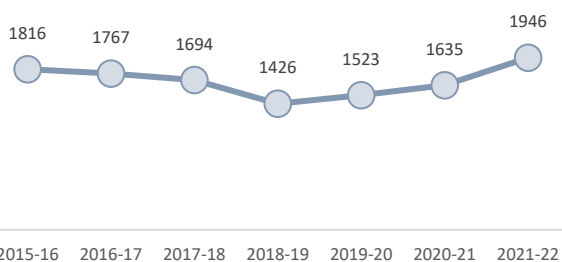


IN-TREATMENT

CLIENTS IN TREATMENT

1946

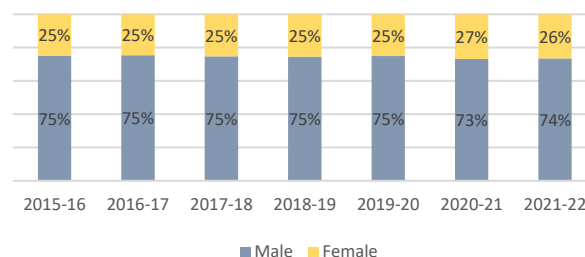
There were 1946 clients in treatment during 2021-22, which is the highest number during any single financial year.



MALES

75%

Males account for around three-quarters of those in treatment during 2021-22. This rate has remained stable during the analysed time-period.



BAME

28%

28% of those in treatment during 2021-22 were from a BAME group.

There has been minimal change when looking at the ethnicity profile of those in treatment between 2015-16 to 2021-22.

INCREASE IN OLDER AGE GROUPS

21% of those in treatment during 2021-22 were over the age of 50. This is in comparison to 14% during 2015-16.

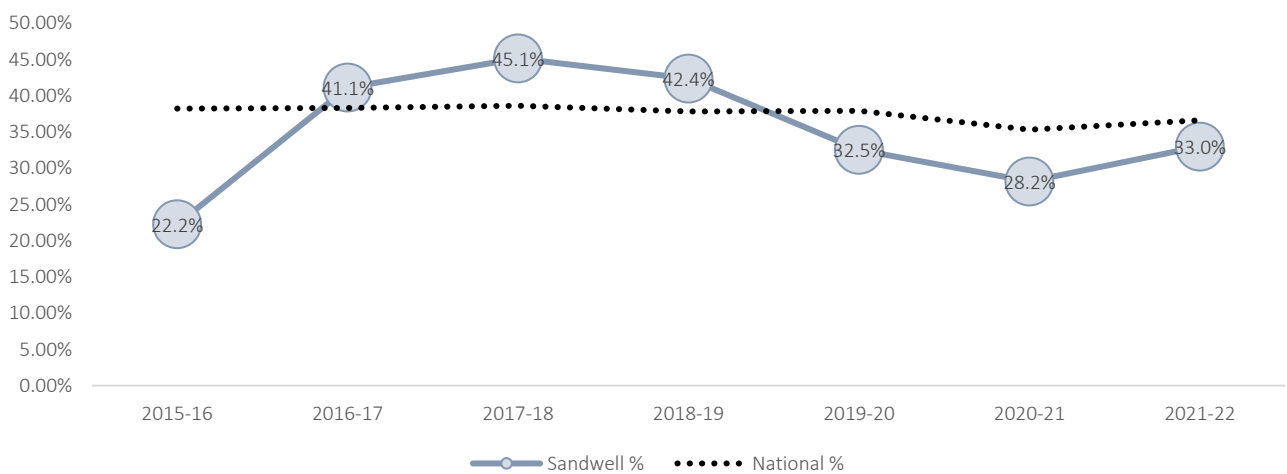
TREATMENT EXITS

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETIONS ARE BELOW THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

ALCOHOL

In 2021-22, 33% of those who successfully completed treatment and did not re-present within 6 months for alcohol. This is an increase on the 2020-21 levels; however, it is below the national average.

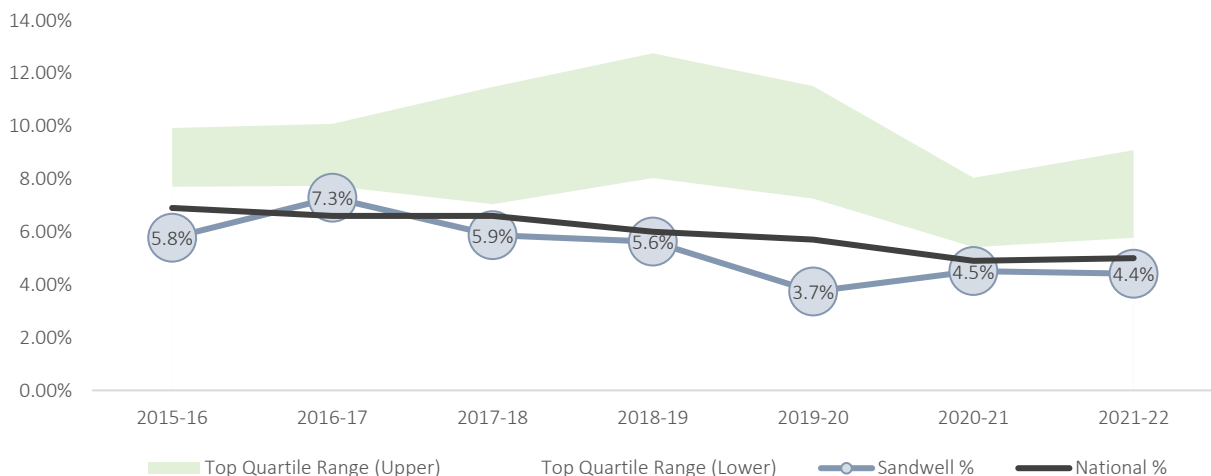
Looking at historical figures, good performance was shown over the 2016-17 to 2018-19 years.



OPIATES

The chart shows the performance threshold for the top quartile range of the comparator local authorities. For example, the performance in Sandwell for Opiates is 4.4%, lower than the 5.77% lower bound to be in the top quartile of comparator local authorities.

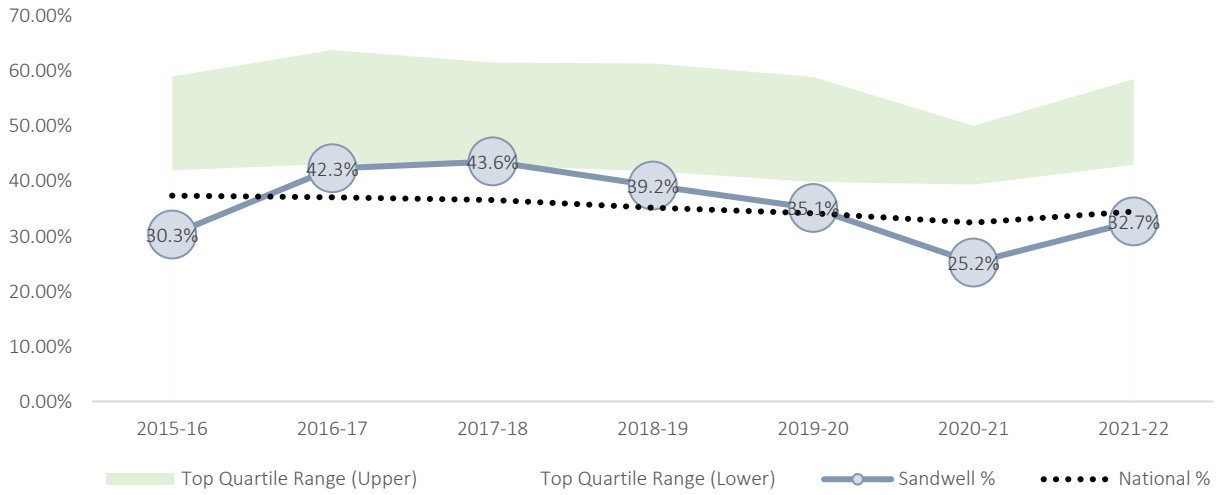
Generally, this metric's performance is lower than the National average and the lower bound of the upper quartile for comparator local authorities.



NON-OPIATES

Before 2020-21, performance in Sandwell was above the national average and just below the lower bound of the upper quartile for comparator local authorities.

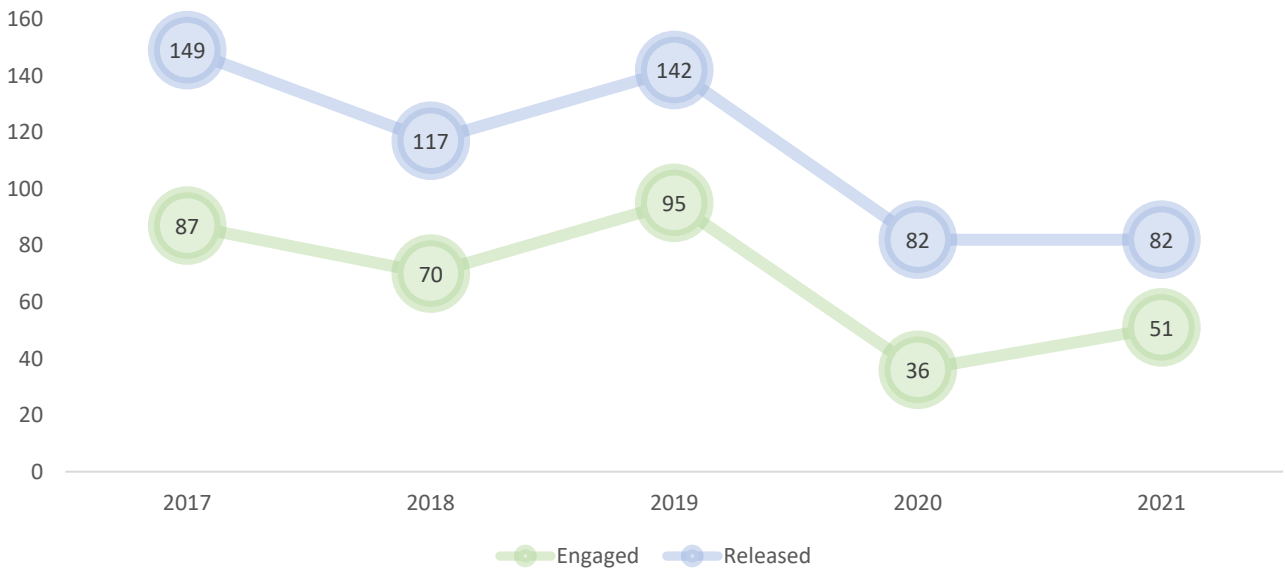
2020-21 saw a significant decrease; however, 2021-22 performance has improved.



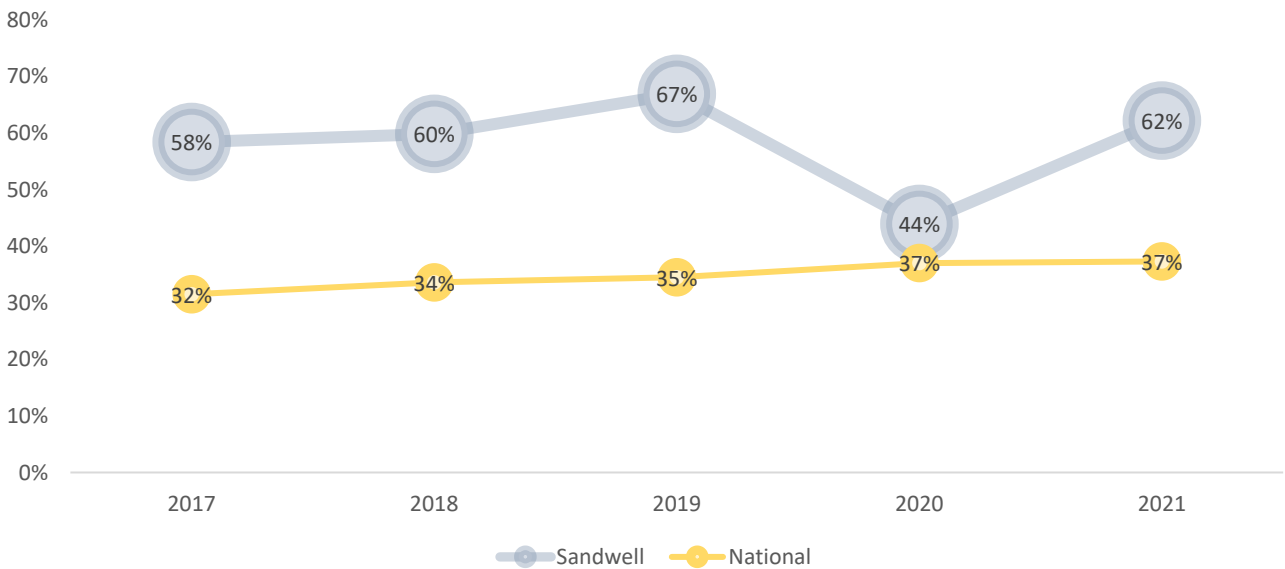
PRISON RELEASES

HIGH RATES OF ENGAGEMENT IN SANDWELL

There were 82 releases in 2021, which is the same as the previous year. However, this number is significantly lower than what was reported from 2017 to 2019.



Comparing the engagement rate, Sandwell has historically performed significantly better than the National average. An exception to this was in 2020.



-7-

THE WIDER PICTURE

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SERVICES

SANDWELL HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Sandwell Housing Solutions follow the Housing First Model.

Within Sandwell Housing Solutions there is the Complex Hub who work with service users with complex needs.

There are 10 support workers within the Complex Hub Team.

Sandwell Housing Solutions run a 33-bed supported housing provision, The Gables. The Gables has 33 self-contained flats and is a type of step-down accommodation for someone who will hopefully move to more permanent accommodation.

RATES ARE LOW IN SANDWELL

There has been an increase in both the number and rate of households owed a prevention or relief duty where drug dependency needs or alcohol dependency needs were identified.

Although there has been an increase when comparing 2020-21 against 2019-20, the rates remain low when compared to the Nearest Neighbours.

Sandwell reports the third lowest rate for drug need and second lowest rate for alcohol need identified in 2020-21 as a rate of households.

2019-20	2020-21
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS ASSESSED AS OWED A DUTY	
1215	1193
DRUG DEPENDENCY NEEDS	
16 (1.3%)	39 (3.3%)
ALCOHOL DEPENDENCY NEEDS	
7 (0.6%)	14 (1.4%)

ESTIMATED ROUGH SLEEPERS (SNAPSHOT)

The latest rough sleeping snapshot comes from Autumn 2021 [DLUHC]. For Sandwell, there was an estimate of 1-4 rough sleepers on a single night in Autumn.

FP10

OVERVIEW

FP10 prescriptions are purchased by NHS organisations including Hospital Trusts and are distributed free of charge to medical and non-medical prescribers, NHS dentists and other organisations as required.

ITEMS FOR OPIOID DEPENDENCY SHOWS A DECREASE OF 31%

4 practices account for 87% of the total items prescribed.

There was a decrease of 217 items when comparing 2021-22 against the previous year. Additional analysis has highlighted the practices accounting for this change.

2020-21 MONTHLY AVERAGE

83



2021-22 MONTHLY AVERAGE

57



ITEMS FOR ALCOHOL DEPENDENCY SHOWS AN INCREASE OF 14%

Practices in the Greets Green and Lyng, Friar Park, and Blackheath wards account for a high percentage of the total, with Greets Green and Lyng ward seeing an increase in dispensed items.

2020-21 MONTHLY AVERAGE

45



2021-22 MONTHLY AVERAGE

51



MENTAL HEALTH

OVERVIEW

Mental health services in Sandwell are provided by Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

The Trust provides a full range of mental health services.

Drug and alcohol need forms part of all mental health assessments.

Data was requested from the Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, however none was able to be provided for this needs assessment.

There is no drug or alcohol policy in the Trust.

ENGAGEMENT

“Across all services, there are a wide range of challenges regarding the drug and alcohol use of patients.”

Mental Health Practitioner

“Patients’ drug and alcohol use is getting more complex.”

Mental Health Practitioner

“There are occasions of patients using drugs or alcohol as a coping mechanism for poor mental health (e.g. depression or anxiety).”

Mental Health Practitioner

“Referrals to Cranstoun are based on whether the patient is willing to engage with services. Patients do not always want a referral to a specialist drug or alcohol service.”

Mental Health Practitioner

“Mental health teams may not take people on until certain substance misuse issues are addressed.”

Cranstoun Practitioner

“We often experience mental health referrals being rejected if someone has a substance misuse need. It is a challenge to get someone to have a mental health assessment.”

Housing Practitioner

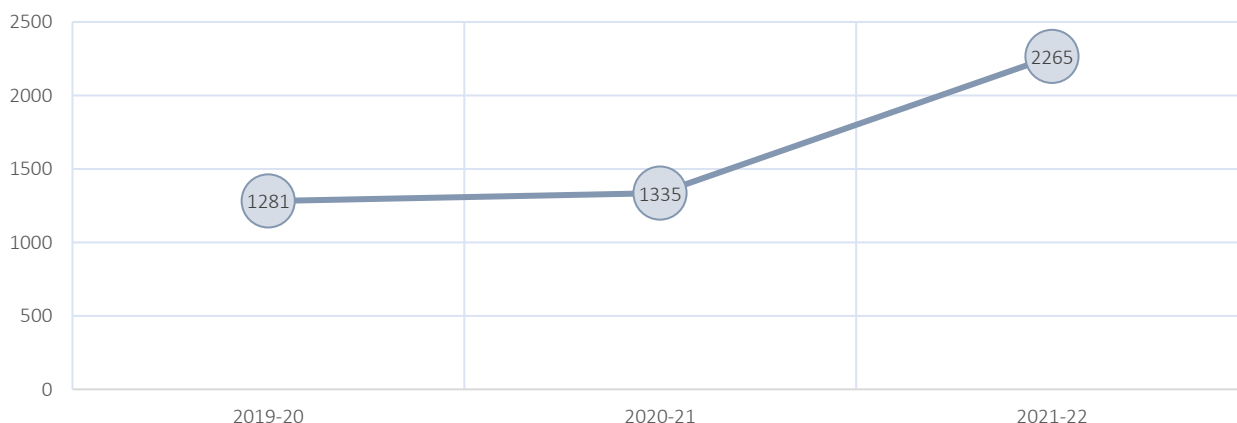
“There are no exclusion criteria for mental health services (e.g. people who have are using substances).”

Mental Health Practitioner

POLICE

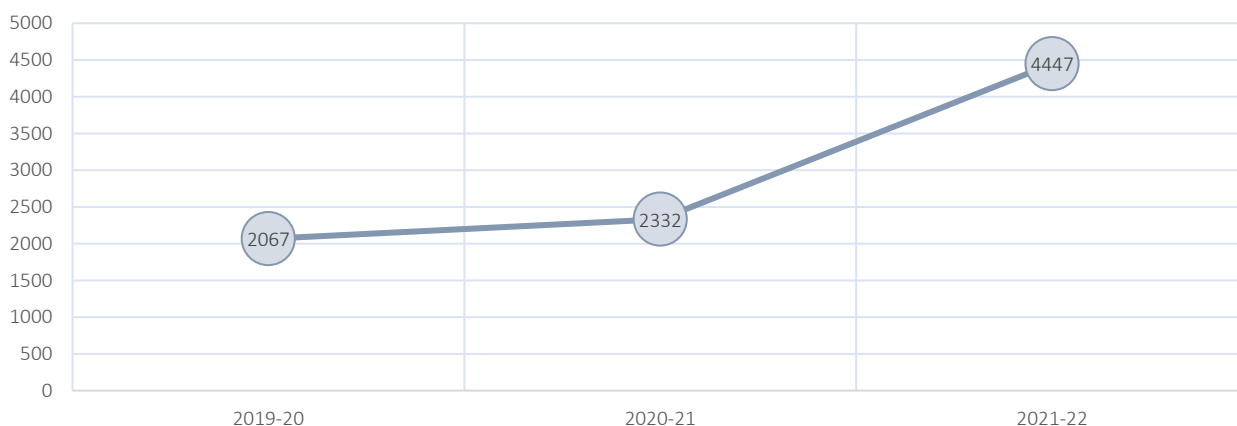
DRUG-RELATED OFFENCES **ARE UP 70%** WHEN COMPARING 2021-22 AGAINST PREVIOUS YEARS.

It is likely that new ways of recording crimes by the West Midlands Police have contributed to the increase.



ALCOHOL-RELATED OFFENCES **ARE UP 91%** WHEN COMPARING 2021-22 AGAINST PREVIOUS YEARS.

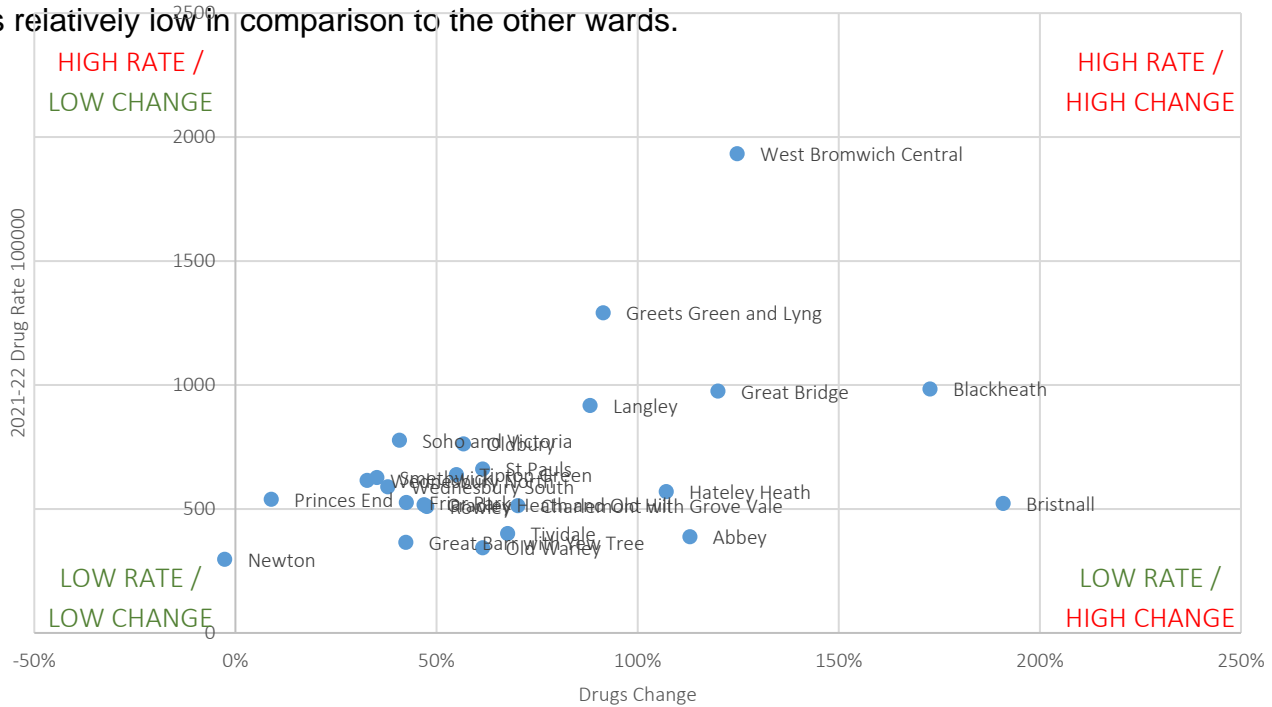
Similar to drug-related offences, new ways of recording crimes have impacted the trends.



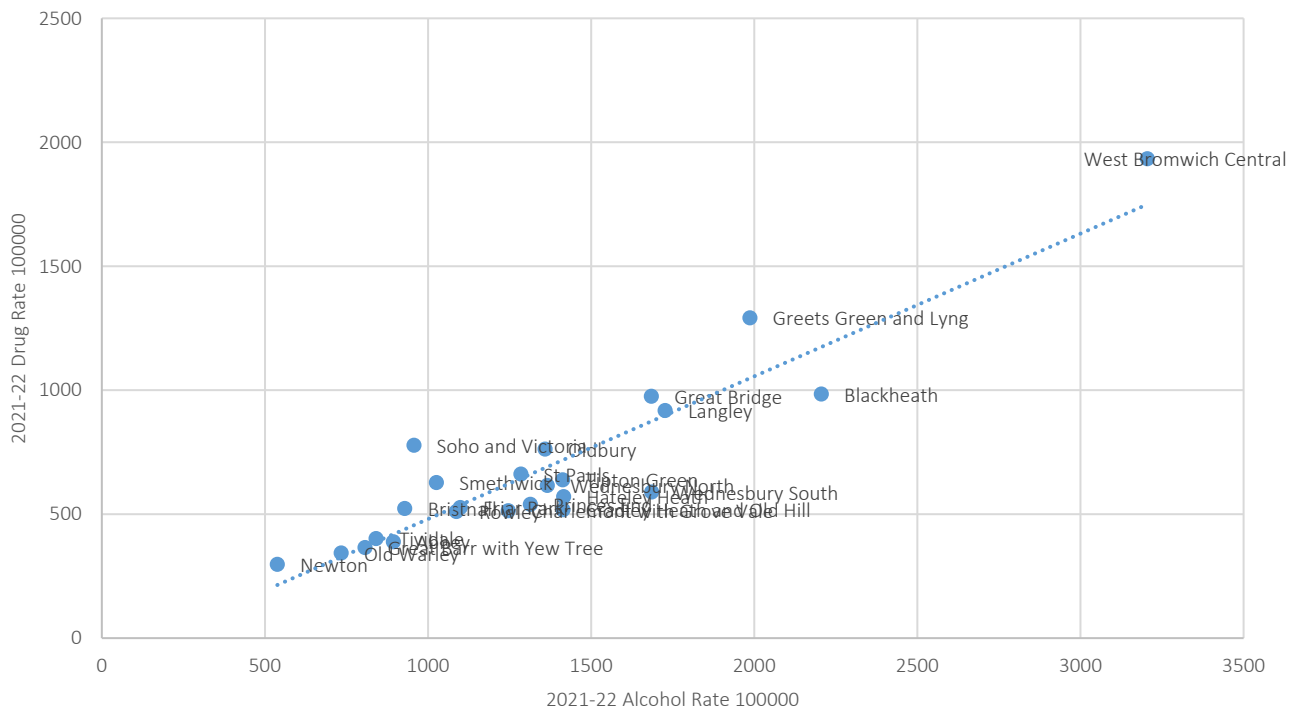
WARD LEVEL ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS AREAS OF CONCERN

Plotting against rate per 100,000 population and change in incidents reported highlights which wards have seen high increases and also exhibit high rates of crimes.

In addition, this analysis identifies wards that have an emerging issue. For example, Bristnall ward has seen a high increase in the number of drug-related crimes, however the crime rate is relatively low in comparison to the other wards.



There is a correlation between drug rates and alcohol rates by ward. 0.92 shows that there is a strong correlation meaning that wards that have high rates of drug offences also have high rates of alcohol offences.



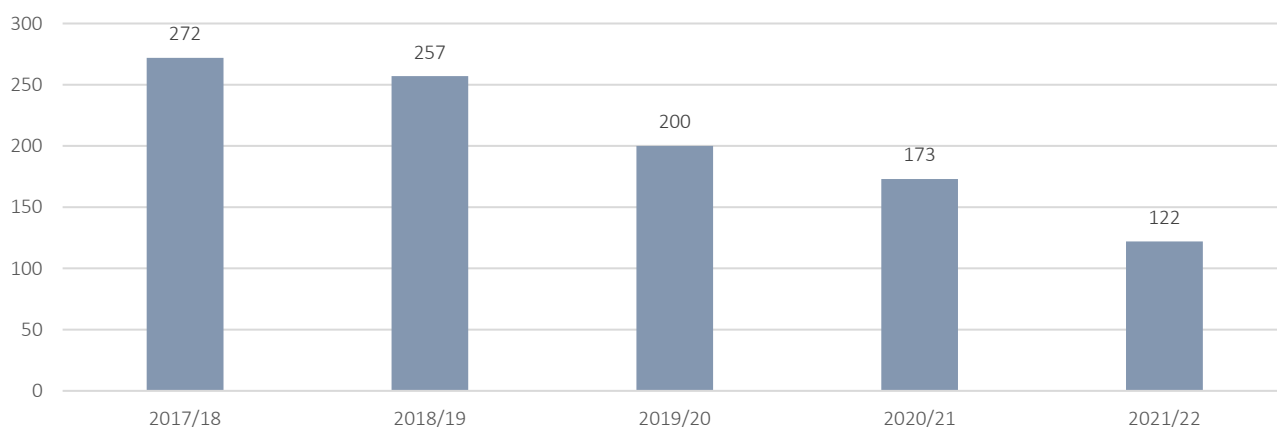
WEST MIDLANDS POLICE ARE LEADING ON THE REGIONAL APPROACH TO COUNTY LINES.

- West Midlands Police are leading on the regional approach to County Lines. From 2018, West Midlands Police have worked to embed a partnership approach to combatting County Lines.
- In October 2021, 2021 County Lines Week work included:
 - 32 people arrested
 - 11 warrants executed
 - 77 wraps of heroin recovered
 - 396 wraps of crack confiscated
 - £237,000 worth of cannabis found
 - £8,305 cash seized
 - 19 weapons recovered.
- 73% of people linked to county lines activity between April 2018 and November 2020 were aged 25 or under.
- Young males of black ethnicity, most often from the most deprived parts of the West Midlands are hugely over-represented in police information about County Lines.
- Multi-agency practitioners have identified concerns that there are low levels of recognition and identification across the sector regarding the ways in which women and girls are exploited through County Lines drug distribution.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS RELATING TO ALCOHOL HAS SEEN YEAR-ON-YEAR DECREASES.

The ward analysis shows that the West Bromwich Central ward generally accounts for a high percentage of the total. An exception was the 2019-20 financial year, when there was a shift towards other wards.



THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE IN CODES

The ASB codes changed during the analysed time period as demonstrated below. For example, the code “alcohol” changed to “Alcohol/Drunken Behaviour/Street Drinking”, and “Drug Taking/Dealing/Crack House” changed to “Drug Use”, therefore the codes were combined when looking at historical trends.

CODE	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Alcohol	0	0	59	173	122
Alcohol/Drunken Behaviour/Street Drinking	272	257	141	0	0
ALCOHOL RELATED	272	257	200	173	122
Misuse of Communal areas/Public Space	1003	707	1123	733	624
Drug Use	0	0	307	445	367
Drug Taking/Dealing/Crack House	457	492	188	0	0
DRUG RELATED	457	492	495	445	367
Drug Cultivation	0	1	55	113	73

LICENSING AND TRADING STANDARDS

OVERVIEW

Trading Standards and Licensing is the responsibility of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

Sandwell MBC updated their Statement of Licensing Policy in April 2022.

The Trading Standards Team provided a draft Action Plan for 2022/23 as part of this needs assessment. There is a plan to resume test purchasing in 2022/23.

TEST PURCHASING WAS PAUSED DURING COVID-19

There are no recent figures available for test purchasing as this work was paused during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Counterfeit e-vapes are an issue in Sandwell.”

Trading Standards Officer

“Some shops have also been found to be selling single cigarettes.”

Trading Standards Officer

“Illegal tobacco is an issue in the borough. There is counterfeit tobacco present in the borough. The tobacco costs £4.50 per packet.”

Trading Standards Officer

LICENSED PREMISES

The Licensing Team had received complaints about nitrous oxide paraphernalia being found within the proximity of licensed premises.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

DECCA

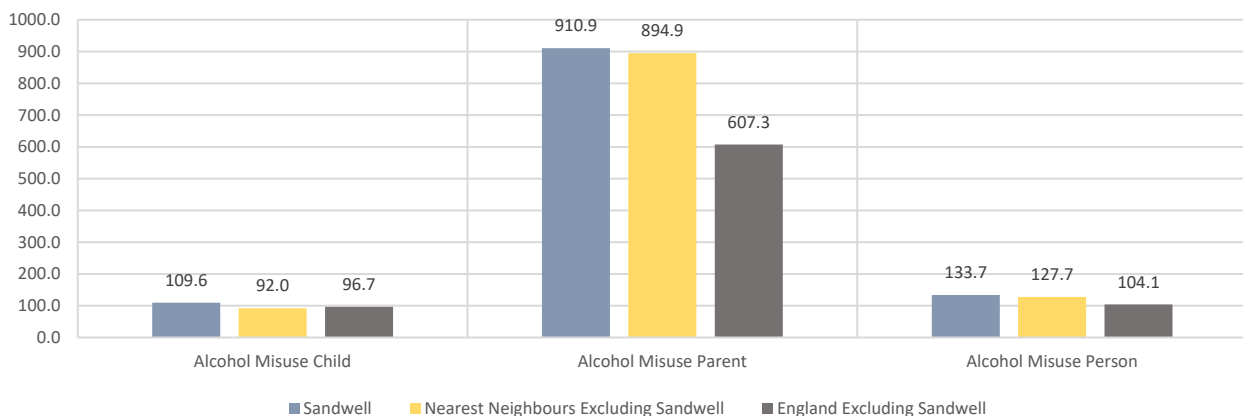
DECCA had a 6-month rolling programme providing social care staff drug and alcohol awareness information.

Feedback from DECCA was that this improved the number of referrals from social care staff; however, this figure was still low. The awareness work served to increase the visibility of DECCA amongst social workers.

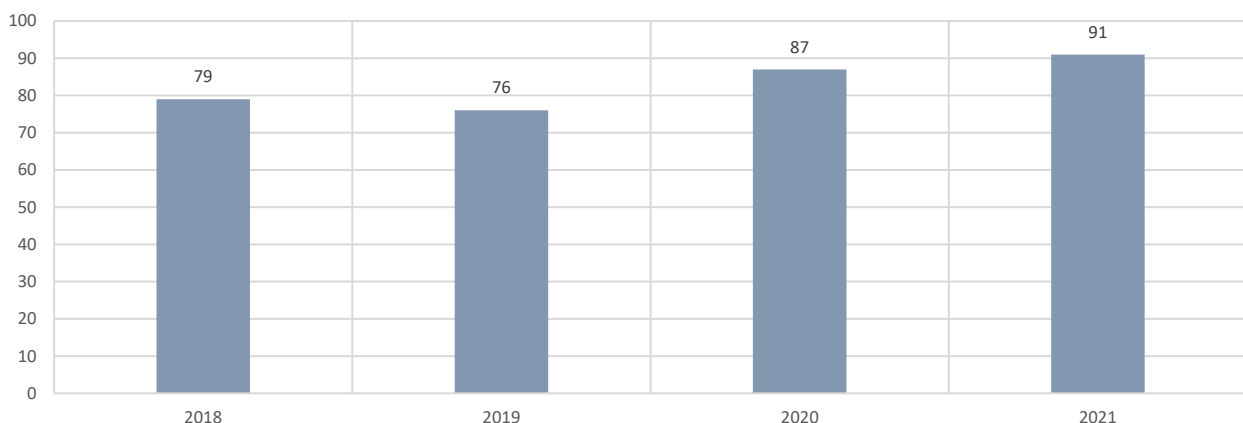
The high turnover of social workers impacted the reach of the awareness work. There appears to be a need for a social work champion within the Children's Social Work Team.

SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENTS - ALCOHOL

As a rate per 100,000 under-18 population with alcohol misuse identified as a factor for the child (2021), the rate in Sandwell is slightly higher than the average for the Nearest Neighbours.

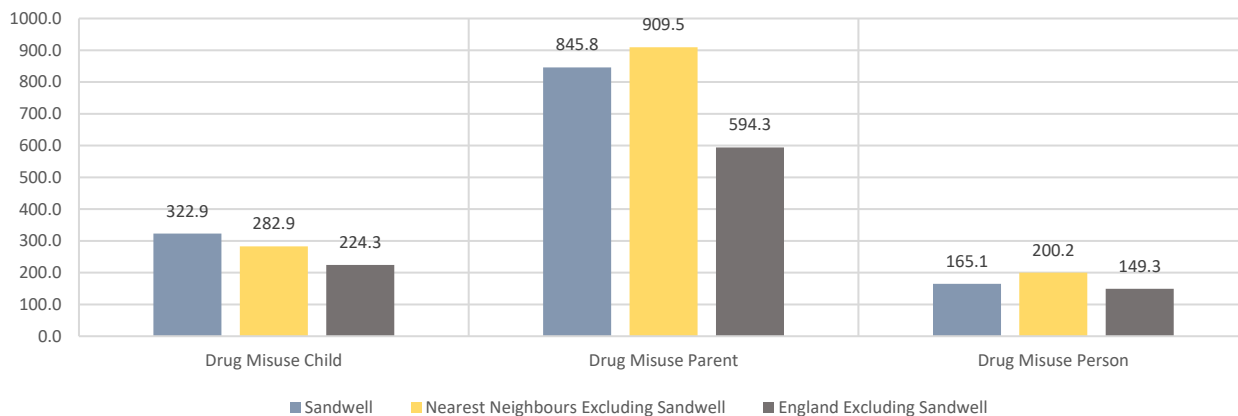


The number identified has seen year-on-year increases since 2019.

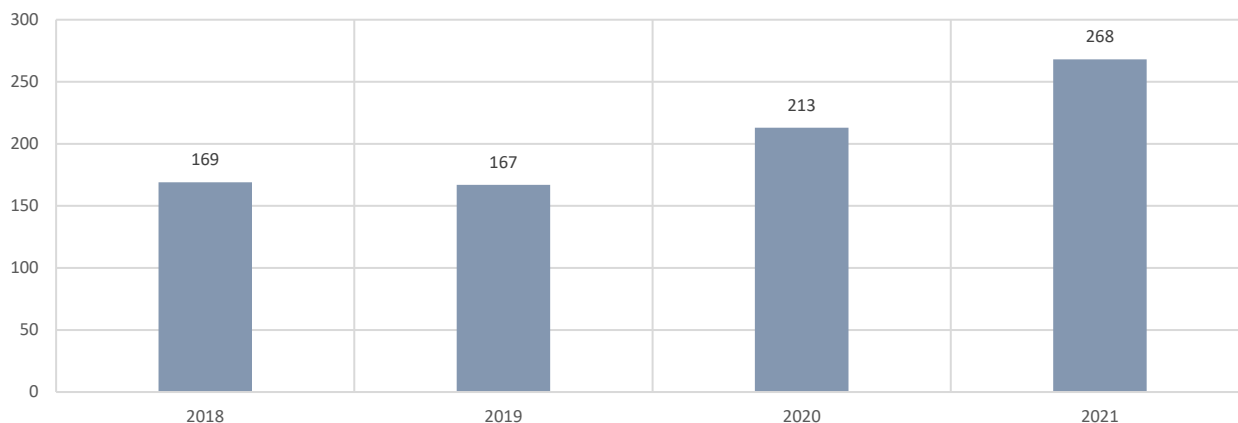


SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENTS - DRUGS

As a rate per 100,000 under-18 population with drug misuse identified as a factor for the child (2021), the rate in Sandwell is slightly higher than the average for the Nearest Neighbours.



The number identified has seen year-on-year increases since 2019.



GAPS

The Needs Assessment incorporated a wide range of datasets to form a comprehensive picture of substance misuse in Sandwell. There were several datasets that were not available at the time of this Needs Assessment, including:

- GP Audit
- Ambulance
- Test purchasing
- SHAPE Survey

END