

# Criminal Justice Project: Class A drug tests in Merseyside Police custody (2016/17 to 2018/19)

# DIP

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## KEY FINDINGS

- There were 8,605 attempted drug tests across Merseyside's custody suites between April 2016 and March 2018. There was a year-on-year increase in the number of drug tests, with a 6% increase between 2016/17 and 2017/18 and a 4% increase between 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- Just over half (51%) of the total 2,256 positive drug tests across Merseyside in 2018/19 were for cocaine only, while the remaining positive tests were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 45%; opiates only = 4%).
- Just over two-thirds (68%) of positive drug tests in 2018/19 occurred on a weekday.
- Positive drug tests peaked between 10:00 and 11:59 both on a weekday and at the weekend in 2018/19.
- Just under two in five (37%) positive drug test records across Merseyside in 2018/19 reported Misuse of Drugs Act offences, followed by theft (33%).
- Men accounted for over four in five (84%) individuals testing positive between April 2018 and March 2019.
- The average age of detainees who tested positive in 2018/19 was 35 years. Numbers peaked for those aged 29 years and 31 years.
- When comparing age group by gender, for men numbers were highest in 18-24 year olds, while women aged 30-34 years and 35-39 years accounted for the largest proportions.
- Detainees testing positive for opiate metabolites increased by age, peaking at 40-44 years, and then decreased by age. For detainees who tested positive for cocaine only, numbers were highest in 18-24 year olds which then decreased by age.
- Of the 1,851 individuals across Merseyside who tested positive for opiates and/or cocaine between April 2018 and March 2019, 15% subsequently re-presented and were successfully tested following the initial positive test during the twelve-month period.
- Of the total number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside between April 2016 and March 2019, 85% had the detainees' local authority (LA) of residence recorded. Of the records where the LA of residence was recorded, 94% were Merseyside residents.
- In 2018/19, where LA of residence stated Merseyside, just under half (48%) of the attempted drug tests were on detainees resident in Liverpool, followed by Wirral residents (22%), Sefton residents (14%), St Helens residents (9%) and Knowsley residents (7%).

The Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) has an overarching aim to identify and engage with offenders in the criminal justice system who use drugs and/or alcohol, and encourage them towards appropriate treatment services in order to reduce acquisitive crime. The DIP process often begins with the police drug testing individuals in the custody suite for specified Class A drugs (opiates and/or cocaine) following an arrest or charge. If detainees test positive, they are served with a Required Assessment (RA) by the police. This is a compulsory legal sanction which requires the individual to attend up to two appointments (initial/follow-up RA) with a drugs worker. During these assessments the drugs worker will assess the individual's drug use and offending behaviour and, if necessary, encourage them to engage with drug treatment services<sup>1</sup>.

In 2015, Merseyside Police introduced targeted drug testing which involves a set list of questions around Class A drug use and drug-related offending that should be considered by the police before a decision is made on whether the detainee is drug tested. The main aim of targeted testing was to reduce the number of negative drug tests, while ensuring offenders who use Class A drugs continue to be drug tested and referred to treatment services through the RA process.

This report presents data on drug tests carried out across Merseyside's custody suites between April 2016 and March 2019, with a particular focus given to positive tests in 2018/19. It contextualises Merseyside Police drug testing records by providing numbers and trends of offenders who use cocaine and/or opiates, identified through this route into DIP, and a demographic overview of this cohort. This report also provides recommendations for stakeholders, in terms of the efficient use of resources and effective services across Merseyside.

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office (2010). *Operational Process Guidance for Implementation of Testing on Arrest, Required Assessment and Restriction on Bail* [online]. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97792/DTOA-Guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97792/DTOA-Guidance.pdf) [accessed May 2019].

OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

There were 8,605 attempted drug tests across Merseyside’s custody suites between April 2016 and March 2019 (Table 1). Notably, over the three-year period there was a year-on-year increase in the number of drug tests, with a 6% increase between 2016/17 and 2017/18 and a 4% increase between 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Of the attempted drug tests across Merseyside during the three-year period, 3,701 (43%) were recorded at St Anne Street (SAS) and Wavertree custody suites in Liverpool, followed by 2,698 (31%) at Wirral custody suite, 1,516 (18%) at Copy Lane custody suite in Sefton and 690 (8%) at St Helens custody suite which closed mid-August 2017 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside by custody suite and year, 16/17-18/19<sup>2</sup>**

Custody suite	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
SAS & Wavertree	1,179	1,330	1,192	<b>3,701</b>
Wirral	694	872	1,132	<b>2,698</b>
Copy Lane	358	492	666	<b>1,516</b>
St Helens	497	193	0	<b>690</b>
<b>Merseyside</b>	<b>2,728</b>	<b>2,887</b>	<b>2,990</b>	<b>8,605</b>

DRUG TESTING ACTIVITY

Figure 1 shows the drug testing activity for those drug tested in Merseyside’s custody suites between April 2018 and March 2019. There were 2,990 attempted drug tests in 2018/19, of which 2,976 were successful (2,493 individuals)<sup>3</sup>. Of the individuals successfully tested, 1,851 individuals tested positive, representing a positive drug test rate<sup>4</sup> of 74%.

Just over half of the total 2,256 positive drug tests in 2018/19 were for cocaine only (n=1,148; 51%), while the remaining positive tests were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 1,024 [45%]; opiates only = 84 [4%]). There were 2,223 Required Assessments (RAs) served to 1,825 individuals in 2018/19 (Figure 1).



51%

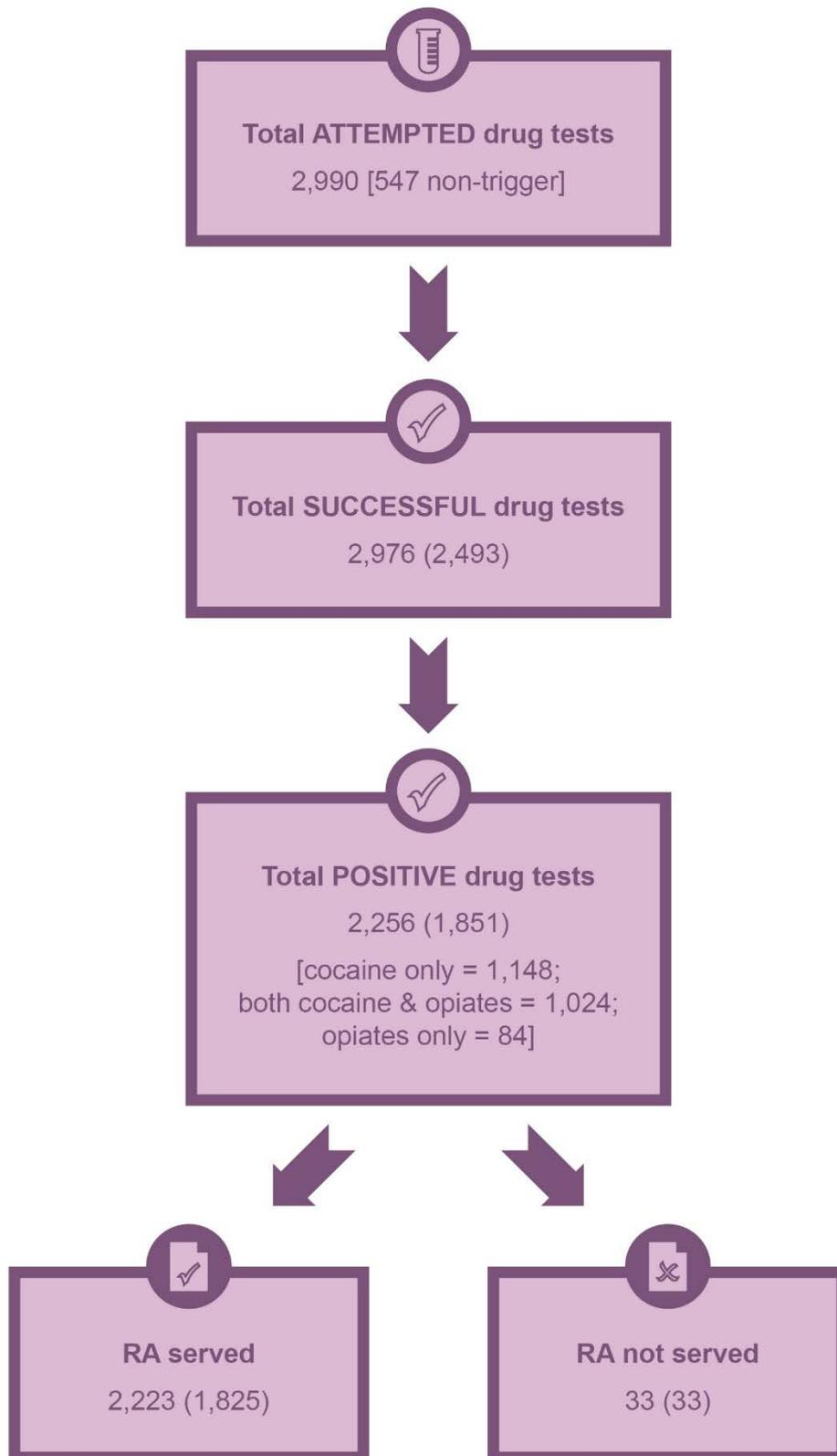
positive tests for cocaine only, 18/19

<sup>2</sup> Please note that St Helens custody suite closed mid-August 2017 and there is no custody suite in Knowsley.

<sup>3</sup> Reasons for drug tests not completed in 2018/19 (n=14): test aborted - equipment failure = 7; test refused = 6; test aborted - unable to provide sample = 1.

<sup>4</sup> Positive drug test rate = (number of individuals testing positive ÷ number of individuals successfully tested) x100.

Figure 1: Drug testing activity in Merseyside's custody suites, 18/19<sup>5,6</sup>

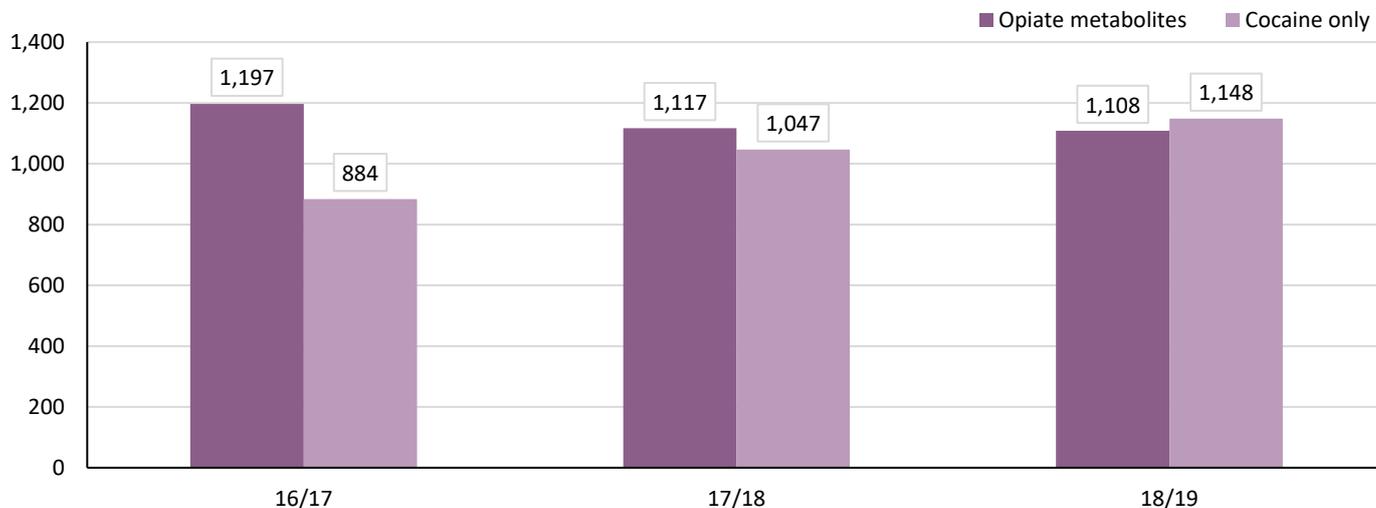


<sup>5</sup> Numbers of individuals at each level are presented in brackets. 'Total attempted drug tests' is a summation of successful tests and those that were refused or aborted.

<sup>6</sup> 'RA served' and 'RA not served' indicate the number of occasions when those testing positive were either served or not served with the requirement to attend an initial RA. There are individuals with more than one positive drug test that are included in both 'RA served' and 'RA not served'; therefore the summation of individuals with an 'RA served' and 'RA not served' does not equal the number of individuals testing positive.

The number of positive tests for opiate metabolites decreased year-on-year, while the number of positive tests for cocaine only increased (Figure 2). In 2016/17 and 2017/18, the number of positive tests were highest for opiate metabolites; however in 2018/19, the number was highest for cocaine only positive tests.

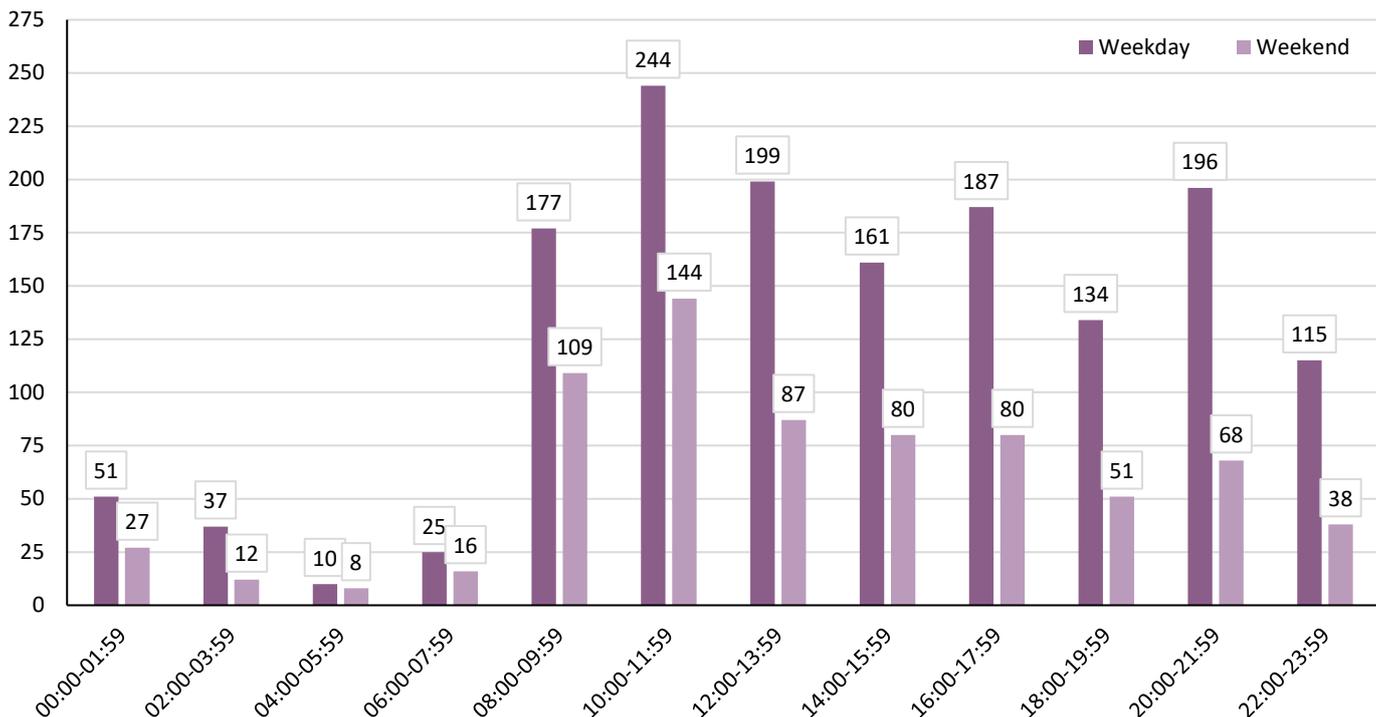
**Figure 2: Positive drug tests across Merseyside by drug test result, 16/17-18/19**



**TIME OF DRUG TESTS**

The preferred option for the initial RA is for it to take place in the custody suite as soon as an RA has been served; therefore the custody suites are staffed with a drugs worker by the local treatment provider at specific times. Of the total 2,256 positive drug tests across Merseyside’s custody suites in 2018/19, just over two-thirds (n=1,536; 68%) occurred on a weekday (Monday to Friday). Figure 3 shows the number of positive drug tests by time of test, comparing those that occurred on a weekday and at the weekend. Positive drug tests peaked between 10:00 and 11:59 both on a weekday (n=244; 16%) and at the weekend (n=144; 20%).

**Figure 3: Positive drug tests across Merseyside by time of test, weekday vs. weekend, 18/19**



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## COPY LANE CUSTODY SUITE, SEFTON

Just under three in five of all positive drug tests at Copy Lane custody suite occurred during the hours when there is a drugs worker present in the suite (08:00-16:00 seven days a week, n=286; 56%) (Appendix A1). Positive drug tests on a weekday peaked between 08:00 and 09:59 (n=48; 14%), 10:00 and 11:59 (n=53; 15%) and 12:00 and 13:59 (n=49; 14%), while they peaked between 10:00 and 11:59 at the weekend (n=36; 22%). Notably, the custody suite was staffed with a drugs worker during these peak times.

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## SAS AND WAVERTREE CUSTODY SUITES, LIVERPOOL

Around four in five positive drug tests on a weekday occurred in the hours when there is a drugs worker present at SAS custody suite (08:00-22:00, n=451; 82%), compared to less than half at the weekend when the staffed hours are between 12:00 and 22:00 (n=138; 48%) (Appendix A2)<sup>7</sup>. Positive drug tests on a weekday peaked between 10:00 and 11:59 (n=78; 14%), 16:00 and 17:59 (n=76; 14%) and 20:00 and 21:59 (n=76; 14%), while the number of tests at the weekend peaked between 08:00 and 09:59 (n=53; 18%) and 10:00 and 11:59 (n=54; 19%). Notably, when positive tests peaked at the weekend, SAS was not staffed with a drugs worker.

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## WIRRAL CUSTODY SUITE

Over half of the positive drug tests on a weekday occurred in the hours when there is a drugs worker present at Wirral custody suite (09:00-17:00, n=345; 54%), compared to over one-third at the weekend when the staffed hours are between 11:00 and 16:00 (n=93; 35%) (Appendix A3). Positive drug tests peaked between 10:00 and 11:59 both on a weekday (n=113; 18%) and at the weekend (n=54; 20%). Notably, when positive tests peaked at the weekend the custody suite was only staffed with a drugs worker from 11:00, although the drugs worker will have been able to see these detainees when they commenced work.

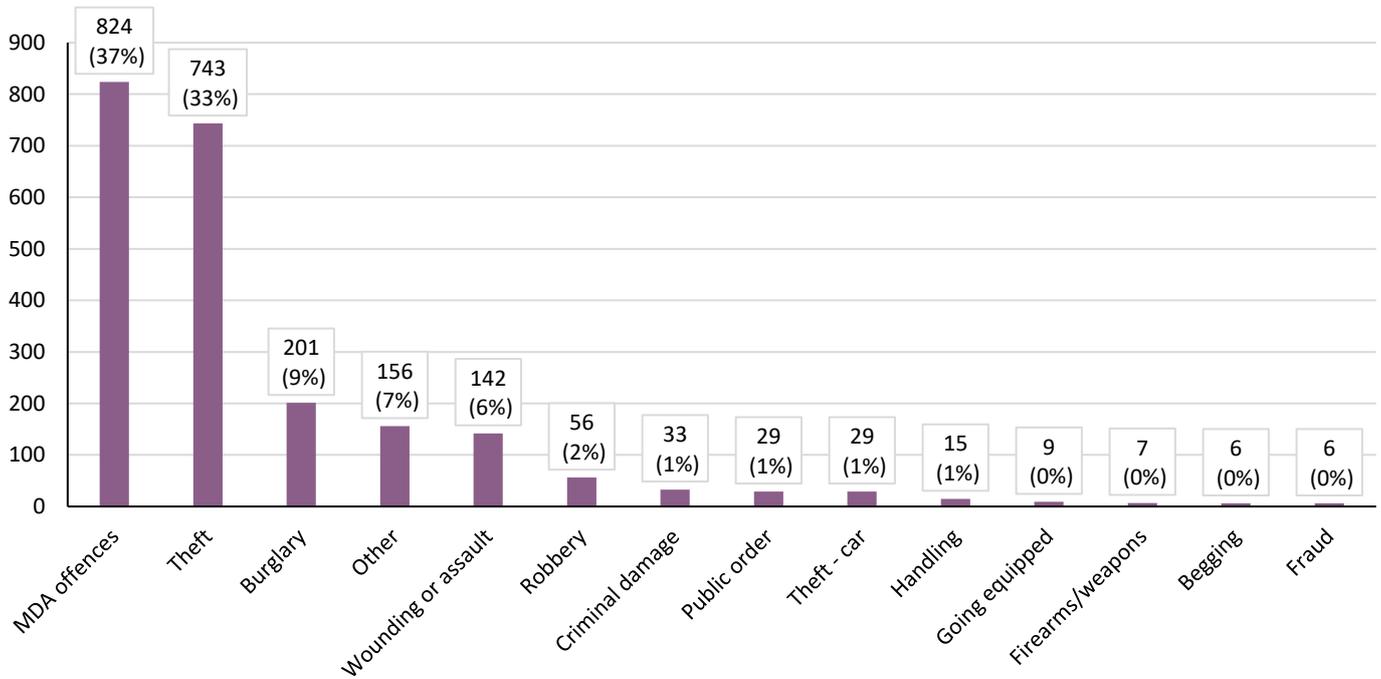
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<sup>7</sup> Please note that these figures are based on when there is a drugs worker present at SAS.

## OFFENCE

Police drug testing records capture the offence that led to the arrest/charge and subsequent drug test. Just under two in five positive drug test records across Merseyside in 2018/19 reported Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences (n=824; 37%), followed by theft (n=743; 33%) (Figure 4). Notably, the proportion of MDA offences has increased year-on-year since 2016/17, while they decreased for theft. Of the positive drug test records in 2016/17, 31% reported MDA offences and 40% reported theft.

**Figure 4: Positive drug tests across Merseyside by offence, 18/19<sup>8</sup>**



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Men accounted for over four in five individuals who tested positive across Merseyside between April 2018 and March 2019 (n=1,553; 84%). This is a similar proportion when compared to the previous year (83%) and the same as 2016/17.

The average age of detainees who tested positive in 2018/19 was 35 years. Numbers peaked for those aged 29 years (n=77) and 31 years (n=78) (Figure 5).



84%

1,553 men



16%

298 women

<sup>8</sup> Other offences: other non-trigger offence = 66; other motoring offences = 43; non-trigger drugs offences = 29; prostitution = 7; driving whilst disqualified = 5; offences against the administration of justice = 4; driving with no insurance = 1; tampering with a motor vehicle = 1.

**Figure 5: Positive drug tests across Merseyside by age at time of drug test (individuals), 18/19**

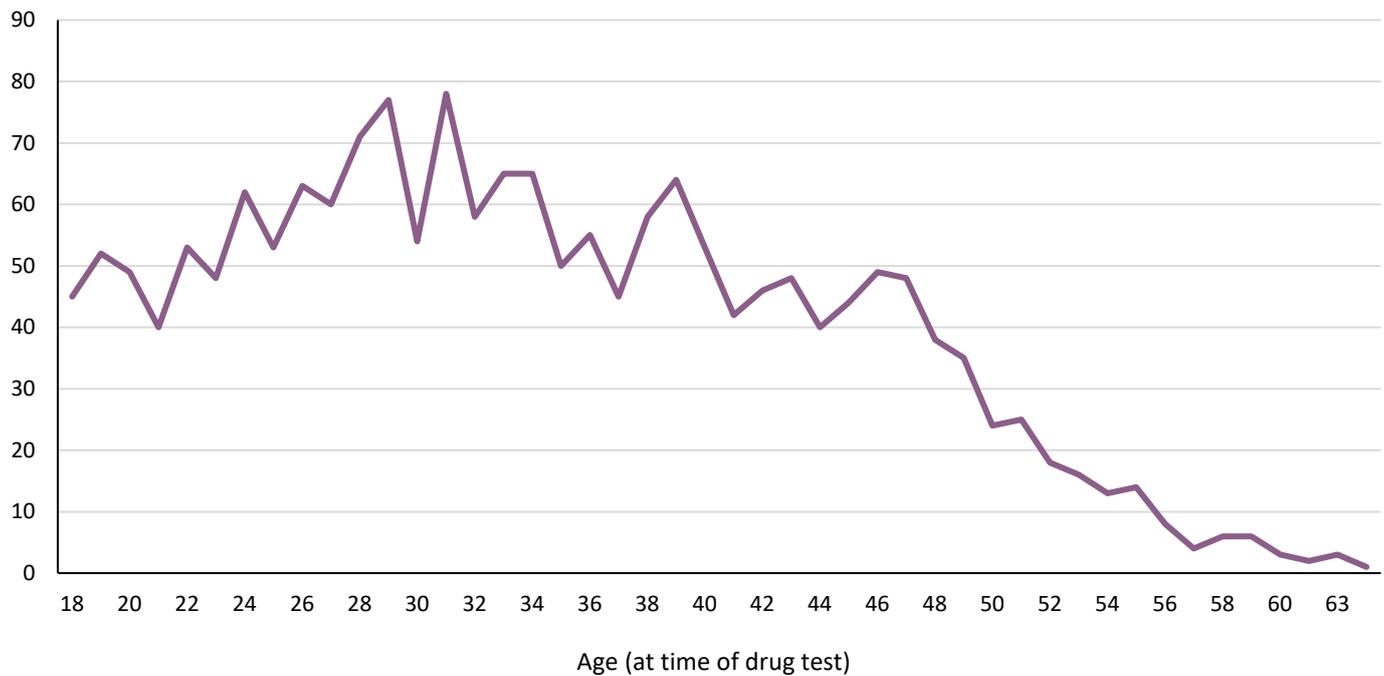


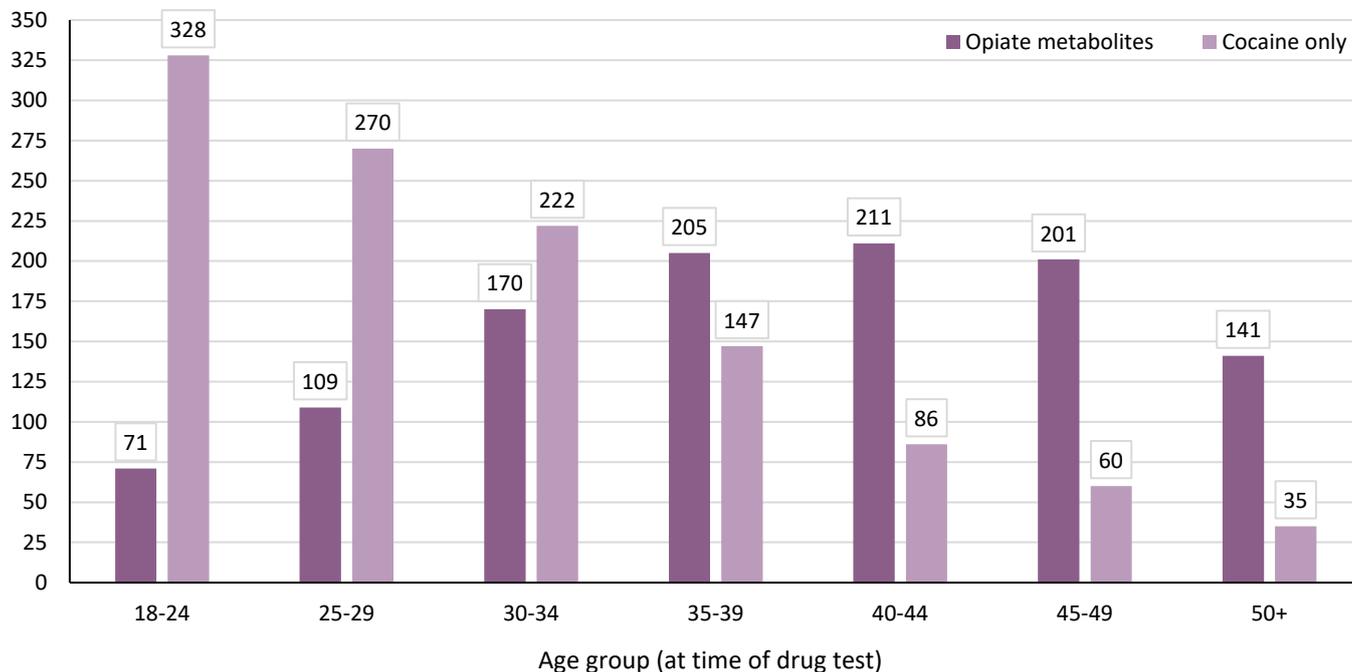
Table 2 shows the age group of detainees who tested positive across Merseyside in 2018/19 by gender. Overall, detainees aged 18-24 years accounted for the largest proportion (n=349; 19%), followed by those aged 25-29 years (n=324; 18%) and 30-34 years (n=320; 17%). There were, however, variations by gender. For men, numbers were highest for 18-24 year olds (n=321; 21%), while women aged 30-34 years (n=60; 20%) and 35-39 years (n=63; 21%) accounted for the largest proportions.

**Table 2: Positive drug tests across Merseyside by age group and gender (individuals), 18/19**

Age group	Men		Women		18/19 Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
18-24	321	21%	28	9%	<b>349</b>	<b>19%</b>
25-29	276	18%	48	16%	<b>324</b>	<b>18%</b>
30-34	260	17%	60	20%	<b>320</b>	<b>17%</b>
35-39	209	13%	63	21%	<b>272</b>	<b>15%</b>
40-44	183	12%	46	15%	<b>229</b>	<b>12%</b>
45-49	177	11%	37	12%	<b>214</b>	<b>12%</b>
50+	127	8%	16	5%	<b>143</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,553</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,851</b>	<b>100%</b>

Positive drug test results are categorised by age group in Figure 6. Positive tests for opiate metabolites increased by age, peaking at 40-44 years (n=211), and then decreased by age, while positive tests for cocaine only were highest in 18-24 year olds (n=328) which then decreased by age.

**Figure 6: Positive drug tests across Merseyside by age group and drug test result, 18/19**



## RE-PRESENTATIONS

Table 3 provides an indication of the rate of re-presentation through the drug testing process. Of the 1,851 individuals across Merseyside who tested positive for opiates and/or cocaine between April 2018 and March 2019, 284 (15%) subsequently re-presented and were successfully tested following the initial positive drug test during the twelve-month period.

**Table 3: Re-presentations of individuals testing positive across Merseyside, 18/19**

Number of drug test occasions	n	%
One	1,567	84.7%
Two	184	9.9%
Three	71	3.8%
Four	17	0.9%
Five	6	0.3%
Six	3	0.2%
Seven	2	0.1%
Ten	1	0.1%
<b>Individuals presenting more than once</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>15.3%</b>

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO PRESENTED MORE THAN ONCE

Of the 284 individuals who presented more than once between April 2018 and March 2019, 230 (81%) were men.



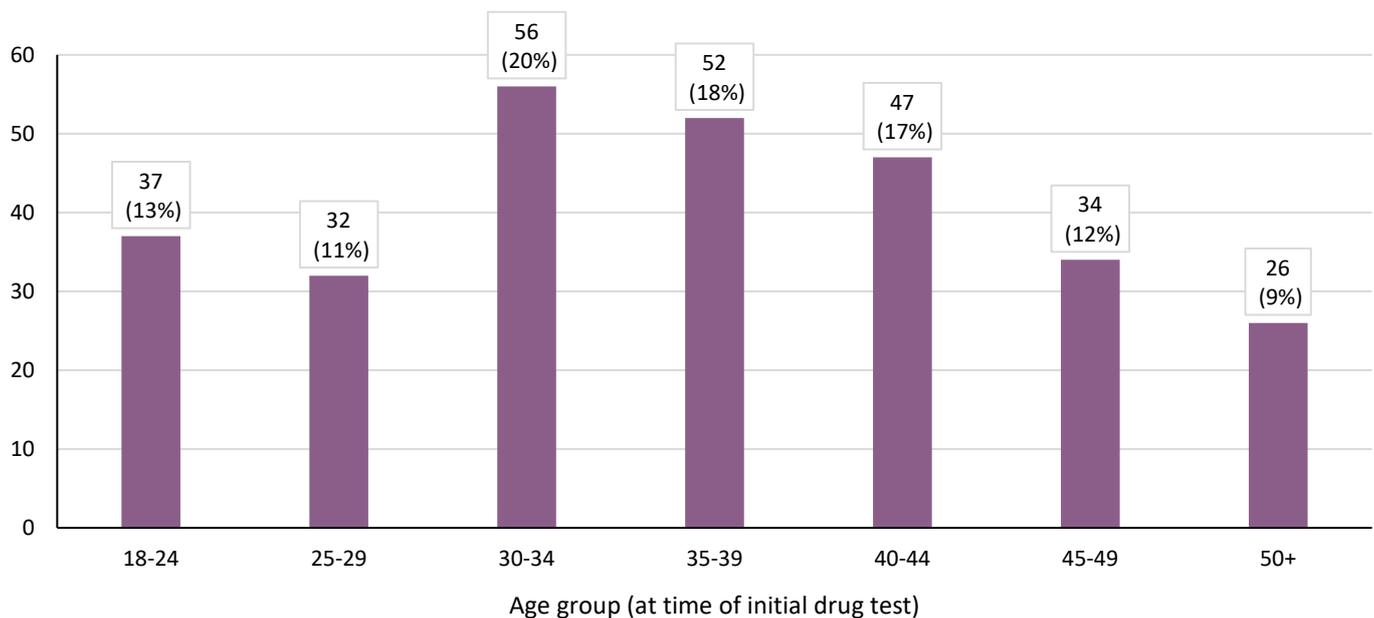
81%  
230 men

One in five detainees who re-presented were aged 30-34 years (n=56; 20%), followed by those aged 35-39 years (n=52; 18%) and 40-44 years (n=47; 17%) (Figure 7).



19%  
54 women

**Figure 7: Re-presentations of individuals testing positive across Merseyside by age group, 18/19**



## MERSEYSIDE RESIDENTS

Of the total 8,605 attempted drug tests across Merseyside between April 2016 and March 2019, 7,329 (85%) records had the detainees' local authority (LA) of residence recorded. Of the records where the LA of residence was recorded, 6,890 (94%) were Merseyside residents (Table 4). It should be noted that figures are a proxy for Merseyside residents as LA of residence was missing for 15% of records during the three-year period; therefore the number of Merseyside residents drug tested may be under-reported.

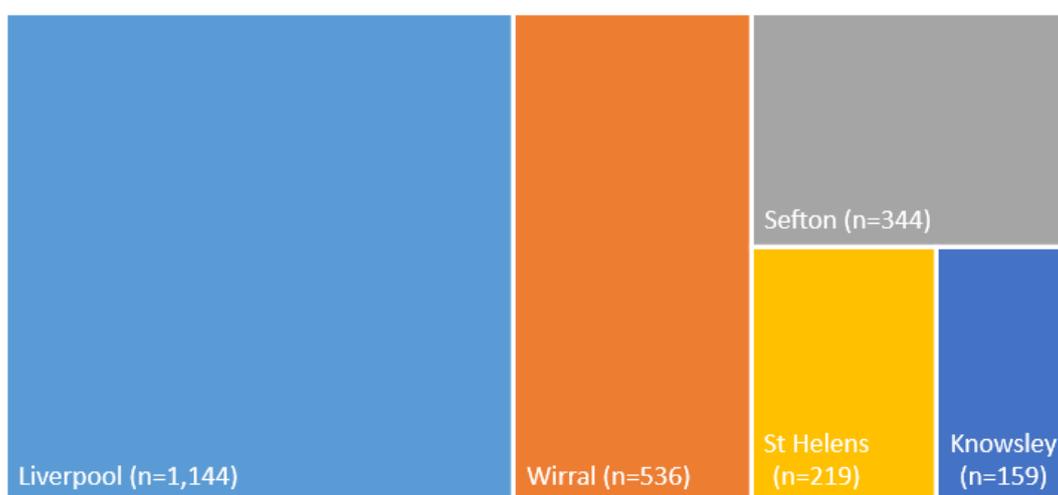
The number of attempted drug tests on Merseyside residents increased by 30% between 2016/17 and 2017/18, while they decreased by 5% in 2018/19 (Table 4). This is attributed to the proportion of records with LA of residence recorded, as 24% of records in 2016/17 were missing LA of residence, compared to 6% in 2017/18 and 15% in 2018/19.

**Table 4: Number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside by LA of residence and year, 16/17-18/19**

LA of residence	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
Knowsley	125	179	159	<b>463</b>
Liverpool	1,011	1,287	1,144	<b>3,442</b>
Sefton	186	296	344	<b>826</b>
St Helens	230	264	219	<b>713</b>
Wirral	398	512	536	<b>1,446</b>
<b>Merseyside</b>	<b>1,950</b>	<b>2,538</b>	<b>2,402</b>	<b>6,890</b>
<b>Outside of Merseyside</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>439</b>
<b>Total (excl. blank records)</b>	<b>2,065</b>	<b>2,711</b>	<b>2,553</b>	<b>7,329</b>

Figure 8 shows the number of attempted drug tests by LA of residence for Merseyside residents in 2018/19 only. There were 1,144 (48%) attempted tests on Liverpool residents, followed by Wirral residents (n=536; 22%), Sefton residents (n=344; 14%), St Helens residents (n=219; 9%) and Knowsley residents (n=159; 7%).

**Figure 8: Number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside by LA of residence, Merseyside residents, 18/19**



## LIVERPOOL RESIDENTS

### OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

Between April 2016 and March 2019, there were 3,442 attempted drug tests on Liverpool residents across Merseyside's custody suites, representing half (50%) of all drug tests on Merseyside residents over the three-year period. The number of attempted drug tests on Liverpool residents increased by 27% in 2017/18 when compared to the previous year, followed by a decrease of 11% in 2018/19 (Table 5).

Of the attempted drug tests on Liverpool residents during the three-year period, around two in three were recorded at SAS and Wavertree custody suites in Liverpool (n=2,264; 66%), followed by 833 (24%) at Wirral custody suite, 253 (7%) at Copy Lane custody suite in Sefton and 92 (3%) at St Helens custody suite (Table 5).

**Table 5: Number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside by custody suite and year, Liverpool residents, 16/17-18/19**

Custody suite	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
SAS & Wavertree	643	916	705	<b>2,264</b>
Wirral	228	261	344	<b>833</b>
Copy Lane	78	80	95	<b>253</b>
St Helens	62	30	0	<b>92</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,011</b>	<b>1,287</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>3,442</b>

### DRUG TESTING ACTIVITY

Figure 9 shows the drug testing activity for Liverpool residents drug tested in Merseyside's custody suites between April 2018 and March 2019. There were 1,144 attempted drug tests in 2018/19, of which 1,139 were successful (977 individuals). Of the individuals successfully tested, 718 individuals tested positive, representing a positive drug test rate of 73%.

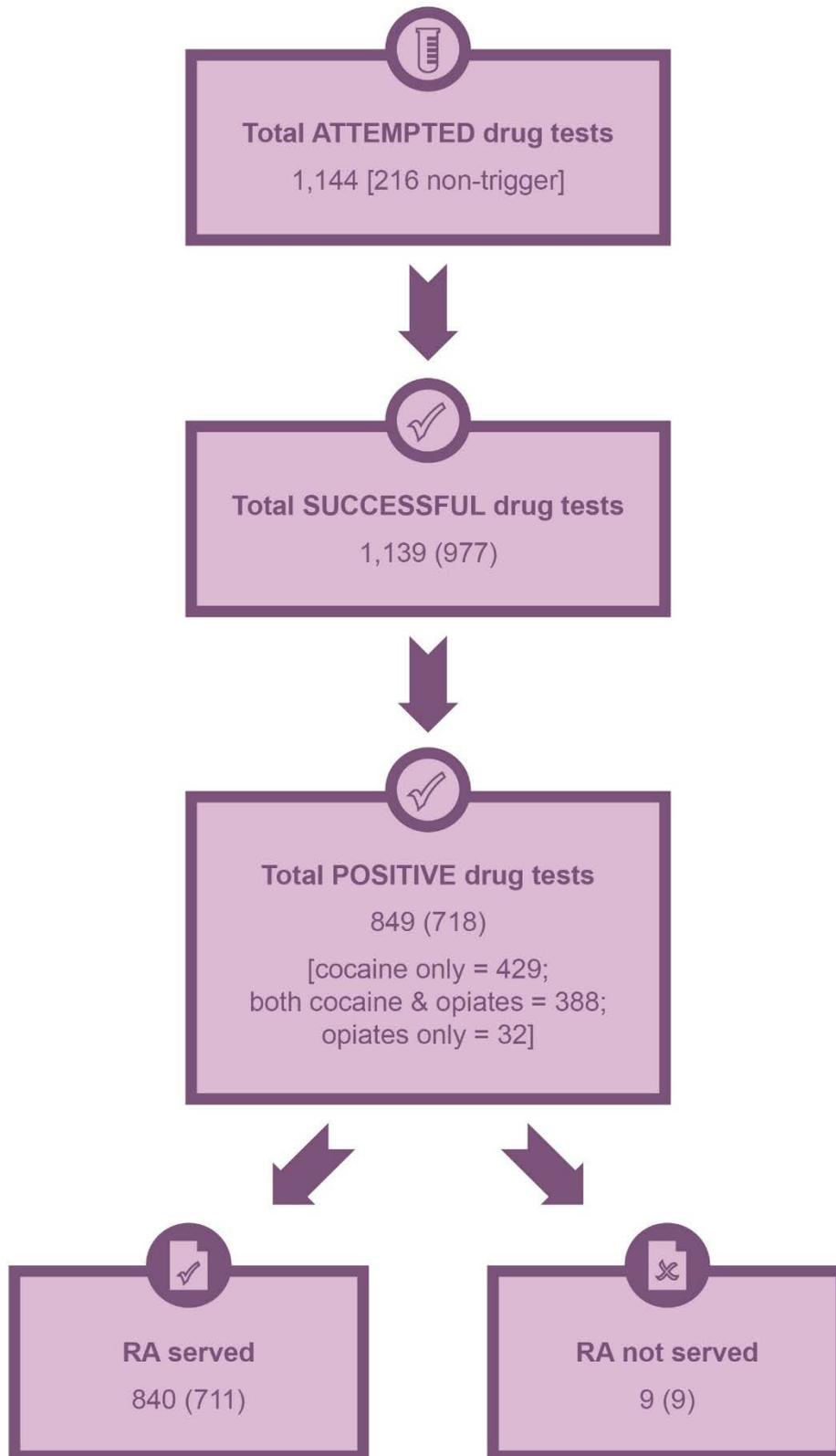
Just over half of the total 849 positive drug tests in 2018/19 were for cocaine only (n=429; 51%), while the remaining positive tests were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 388 [46%]; opiates only = 32 [4%]). Notably, the proportion of positive tests for opiate metabolites decreased year-on-year, while it increased for cocaine only. The proportion of cocaine only positive tests in 2018/19 was higher than that of opiate metabolites, while in the previous two years, proportions were highest for opiate metabolites. There were 840 RAs served to 711 individuals in 2018/19 (Figure 9).



**51%**

**positive tests for cocaine only, 18/19**

Figure 9: Drug testing activity, Liverpool residents, 18/19<sup>9</sup>

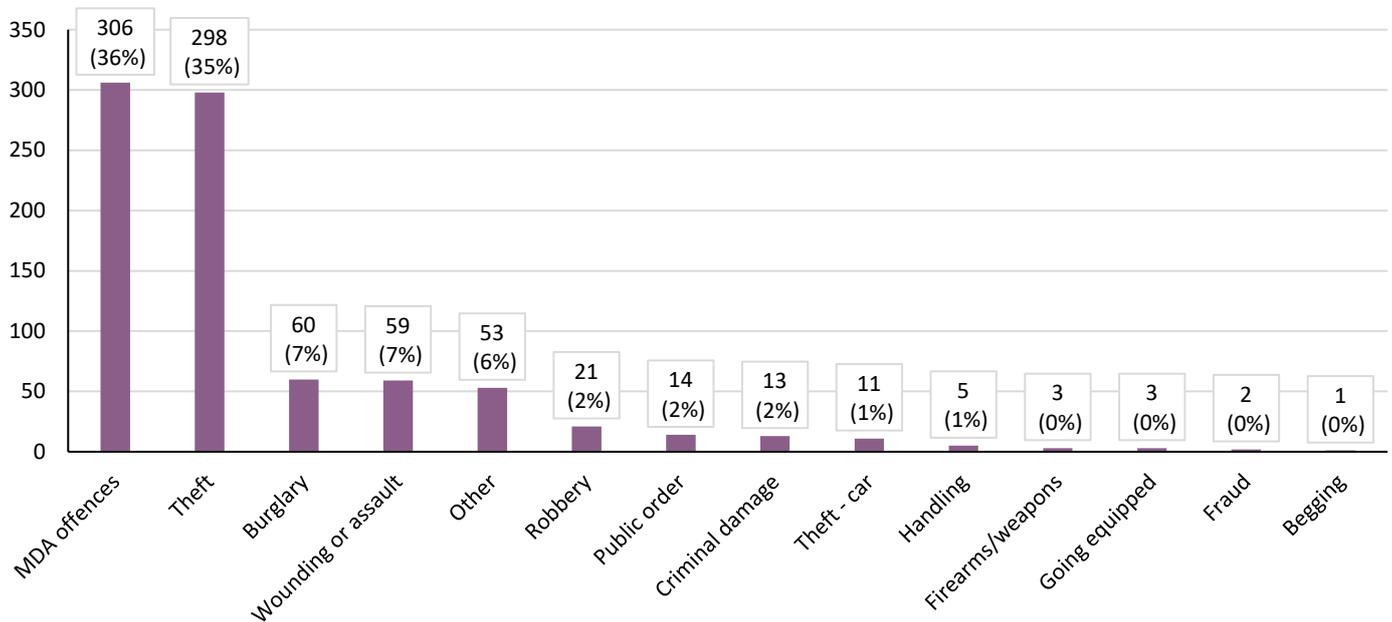


<sup>9</sup> There are individuals with more than one positive drug test that are included in both 'RA served' and 'RA not served'; therefore the summation of individuals with an 'RA served' and 'RA not served' does not equal the number of individuals testing positive.

## OFFENCE

Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences accounted for 36% of positive drug test records in 2018/19 (n=306), followed by theft (n=298; 35%) (Figure 10). Notably, the proportion of MDA offences increased year-on-year, from 30% in 2016/17.

**Figure 10: Positive drug tests by offence, Liverpool residents, 18/19**



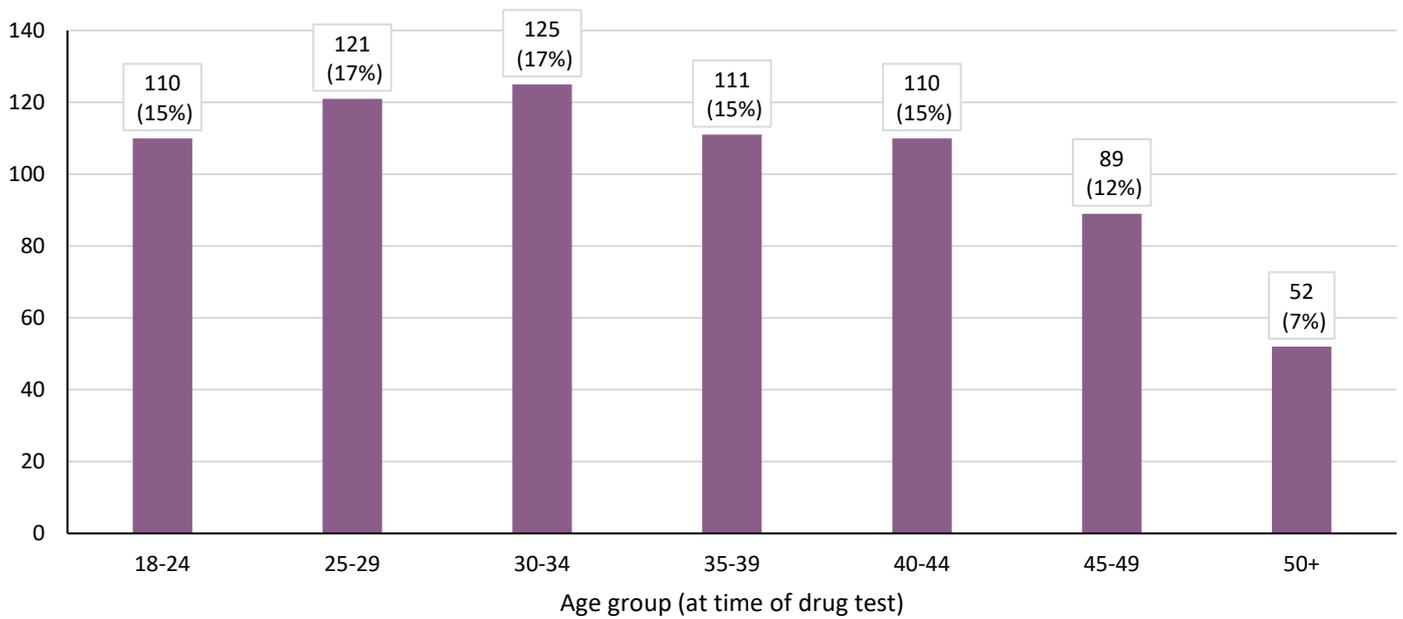
## DEMOGRAPHICS

Men accounted for around four in five individuals who tested positive between April 2018 and March 2019 (n=586; 82%). This is a similar proportion to the previous year (81%), though lower than 2016/17 (84%).

Figure 11 shows the age group of Liverpool residents who tested positive across Merseyside in 2018/19. Detainees aged 25-29 years (n=121) and 30-34 years (n=125) accounted for the largest proportion (17% each).

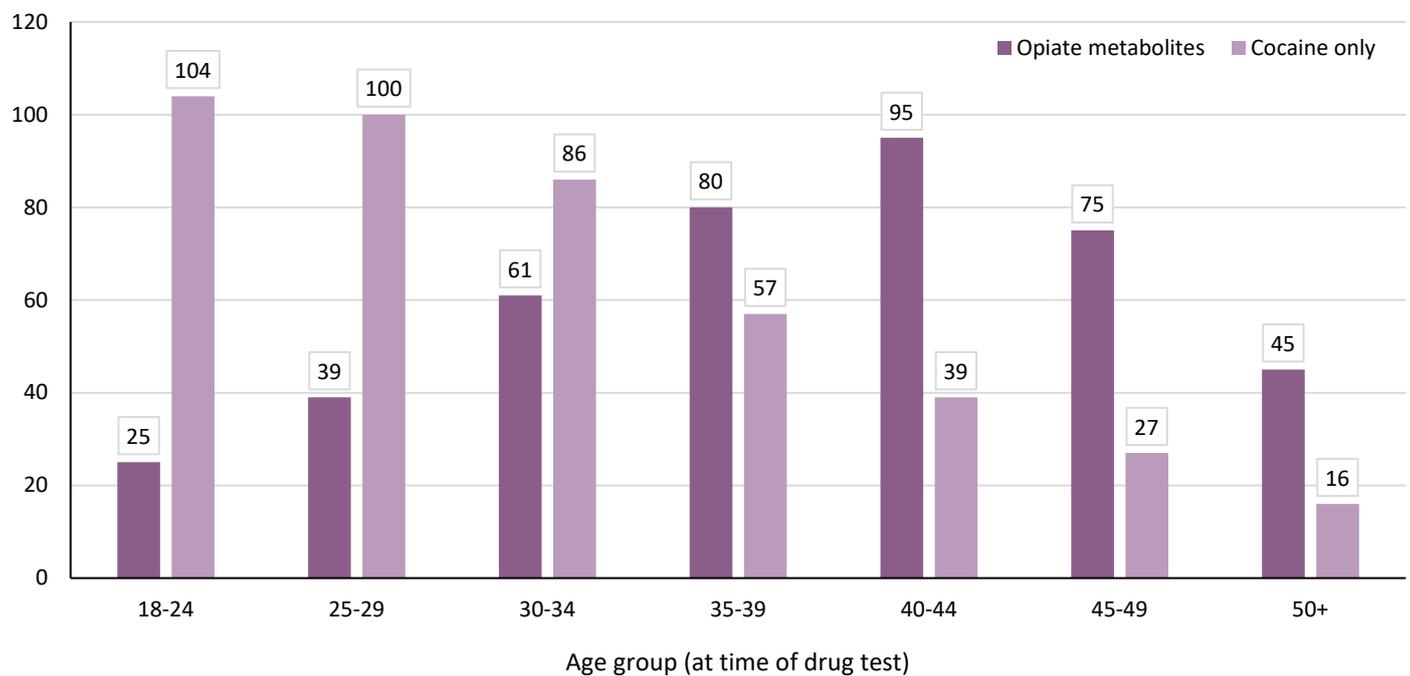


**Figure 11: Positive drug tests by age group, Liverpool residents (individuals), 18/19**



Positive drug test results are categorised by age group in Figure 12. Positive tests for opiate metabolites increased by age, peaking at 40-44 years (n=95), and then decreased by age, while positive tests for cocaine only peaked in 18-24 year olds (n=104) and 25-29 year olds (n=100), and then decreased by age.

**Figure 12: Positive drug tests by age group and drug test result, Liverpool residents, 18/19**



## SEFTON RESIDENTS

### OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

Between April 2016 and March 2019, there were 826 attempted drug tests on Sefton residents across Merseyside's custody suites, representing 12% of all drug tests on Merseyside residents over the three-year period. The number of attempted drug tests on Sefton residents increased by 59% in 2017/18 when compared to the previous year, followed by a further increase of 16% in 2018/19 (Table 6).

Of the attempted drug tests on Sefton residents during the three-year period, around half were recorded at Copy Lane custody suite in Sefton (n=405; 49%), followed by 233 (28%) at Wirral custody suite, 158 (19%) at SAS and Wavertree custody suites in Liverpool and 30 (4%) at St Helens custody suite (Table 6).

**Table 6: Number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside by custody suite and year, Sefton residents, 16/17-18/19**

Custody suite	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
Copy Lane	105	147	153	405
Wirral	15	79	139	233
SAS & Wavertree	45	61	52	158
St Helens	21	9	0	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>826</b>

### DRUG TESTING ACTIVITY

Figure 13 shows the drug testing activity for Sefton residents drug tested in Merseyside's custody suites between April 2018 and March 2019. There were 344 attempted drug tests in 2018/19, of which 343 were successful (308 individuals). Of the individuals successfully tested, 233 individuals tested positive, representing a positive drug test rate of 76%.

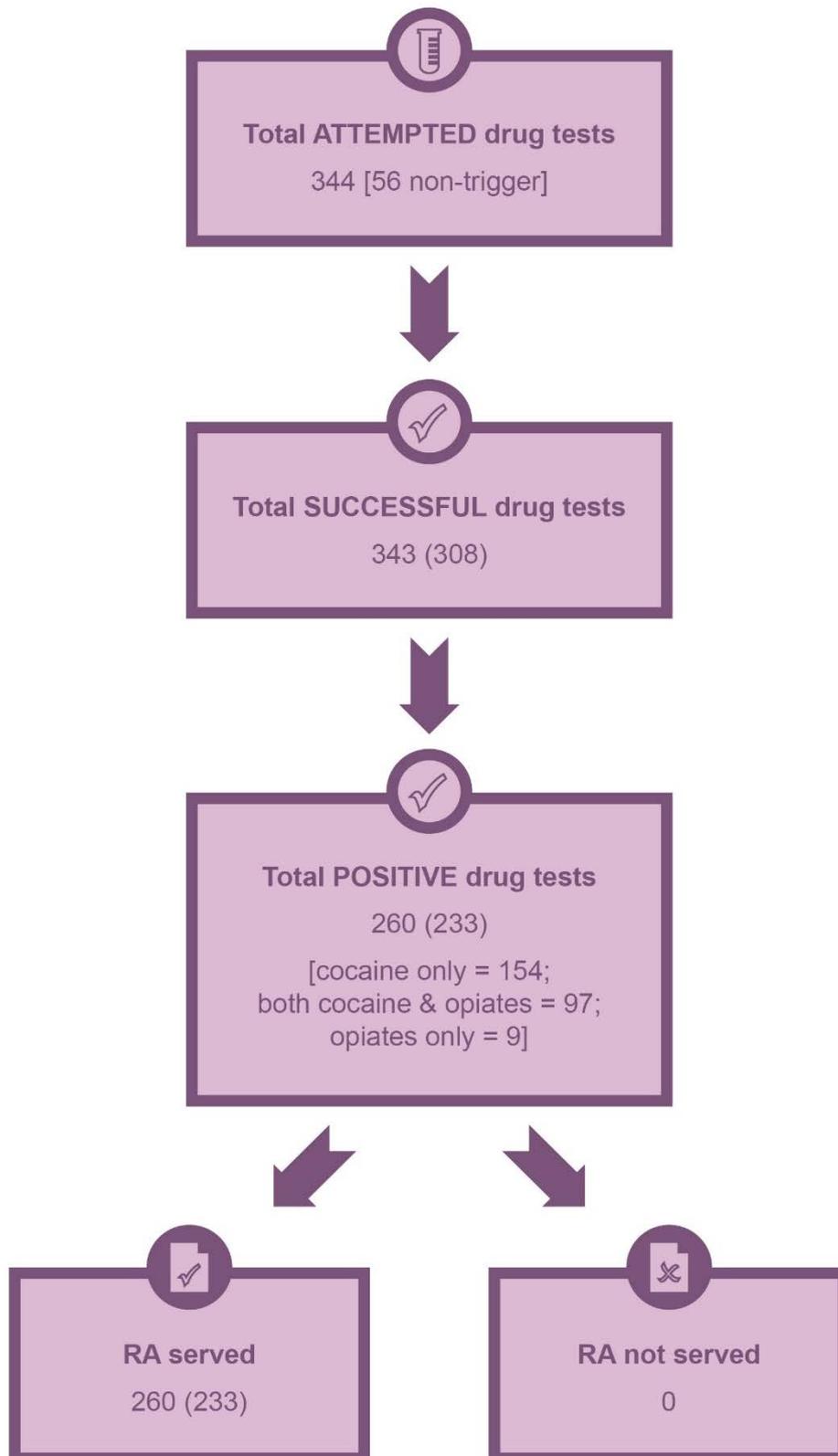
Around three in five of the total 260 positive drug tests in 2018/19 were for cocaine only (n=154; 59%), while the remaining positive tests were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 97 [37%]; opiates only = 9 [3%]). Notably, the proportion of positive tests for cocaine only in 2018/19 is the highest of the three-year period and higher than the total for Merseyside residents (49%). There were 260 RAs served to all 233 individuals who had a positive drug test in 2018/19 (Figure 13).



59%

positive tests for cocaine only, 18/19

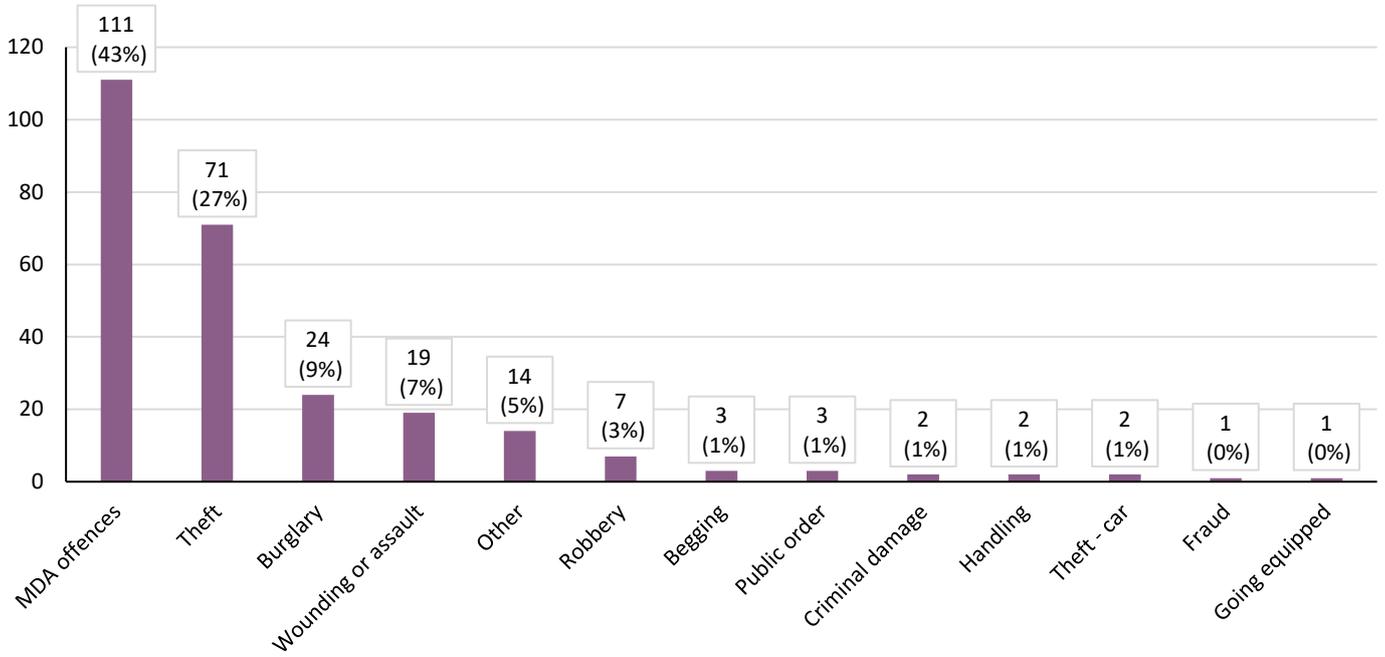
Figure 13: Drug testing activity, Sefton residents, 18/19



## OFFENCE

Over two in five positive drug test records in 2018/19 reported Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences (n=111; 43%), followed by around one-quarter of records which reported theft (n=71; 27%) (Figure 14). The proportion of MDA offences in 2018/19 is the highest of the three-year period and the highest across Merseyside. Comparatively, the proportion of theft in 2018/19 is the lowest proportion of the three-year period.

**Figure 14: Positive drug tests by offence, Sefton residents, 18/19**



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Men accounted for 86% of individuals who tested positive between April 2018 and March 2019 (n=201). This is the highest proportion of men of the three-year period, increasing from 80% in both 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Figure 15 shows the age group of Sefton residents who tested positive across Merseyside in 2018/19. Detainees aged 18-24 years accounted for the largest proportion (n=57; 24%), followed by those aged 30-34 years (n=45; 19%). The proportion of 18-24 year olds is higher than the previous two years (17% in both 2016/17 and 2017/18) and the highest proportion across Merseyside.

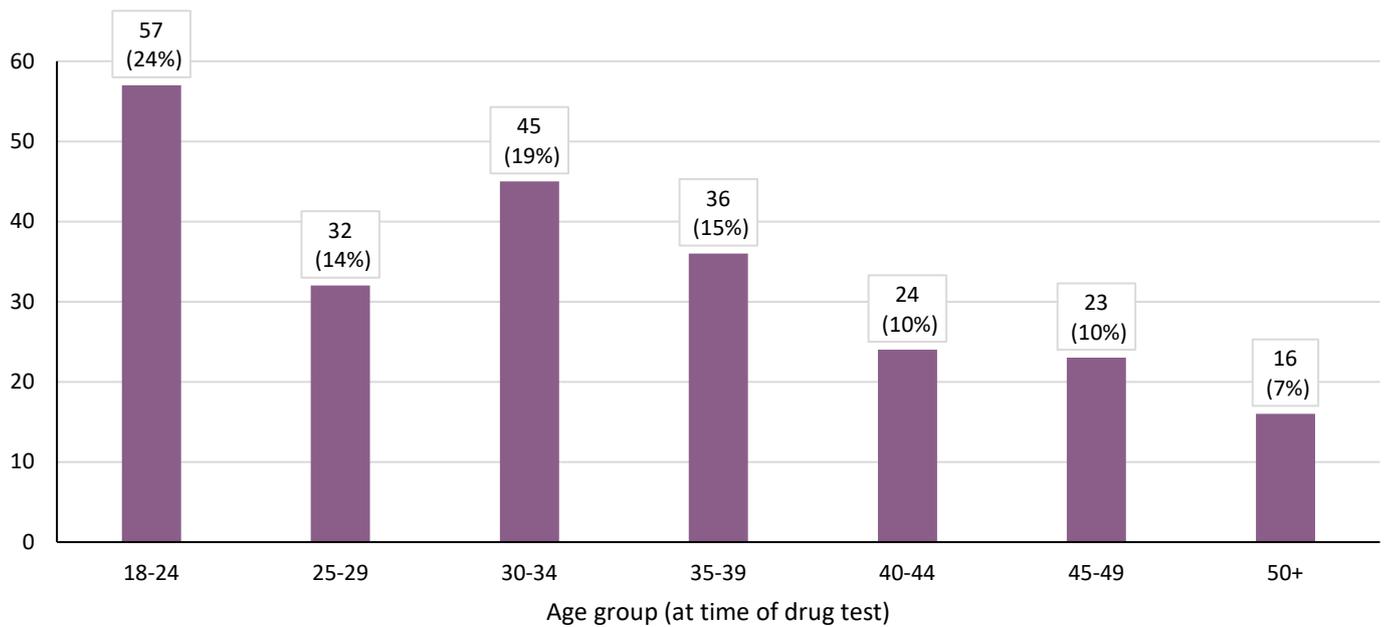


86%  
201 men



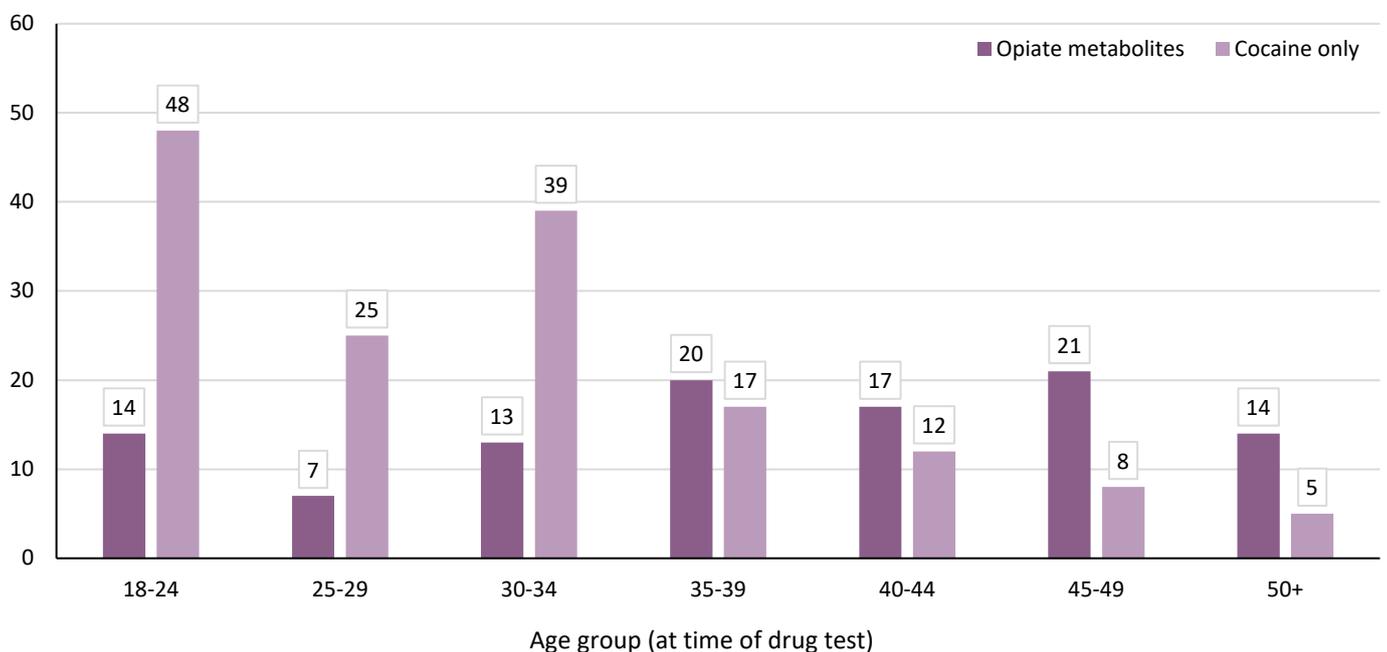
14%  
32 women

**Figure 15: Positive drug tests by age group, Sefton residents (individuals), 18/19**



Positive drug test results are categorised by age group in Figure 16. Positive tests for opiate metabolites fluctuated across age groups, peaking in 35-39 year olds (n=20) and 45-49 year olds (n=21), while for cocaine only they peaked in 18-24 year olds (n=48) and 30-34 year olds (n=39).

**Figure 16: Positive drug tests by age group and drug test result, Sefton residents, 18/19**



## ST HELENS RESIDENTS

### OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

Between April 2016 and March 2019, there were 713 attempted drug tests on St Helens residents across Merseyside's custody suites, representing 10% of all drug tests on Merseyside residents. The number of attempted drug tests on St Helens residents increased by 15% in 2017/18 when compared to the previous year, followed by a decrease of 17% in 2018/19 (Table 7).

Of the attempted drug tests on St Helens residents during the three-year period, just under half were recorded at Copy Lane custody suite in Sefton (n=344; 48%), followed by 297 (42%) at St Helens custody suite which closed mid-August 2017, 57 (8%) at SAS and Wavertree custody suites in Liverpool and 15 (2%) at Wirral custody suite (Table 7).

**Table 7: Number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside by custody suite and year, St Helens residents, 16/17-18/19**

Custody suite	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
Copy Lane	5	150	189	344
St Helens	214	83	0	297
SAS & Wavertree	9	27	21	57
Wirral	2	4	9	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>713</b>

### DRUG TESTING ACTIVITY

Figure 17 shows the drug testing activity for St Helens residents drug tested in Merseyside's custody suites between April 2018 and March 2019. There were 219 attempted drug tests in 2018/19, of which 217 were successful (188 individuals). Of the individuals successfully tested, 146 individuals tested positive, representing a positive drug test rate of 78%.

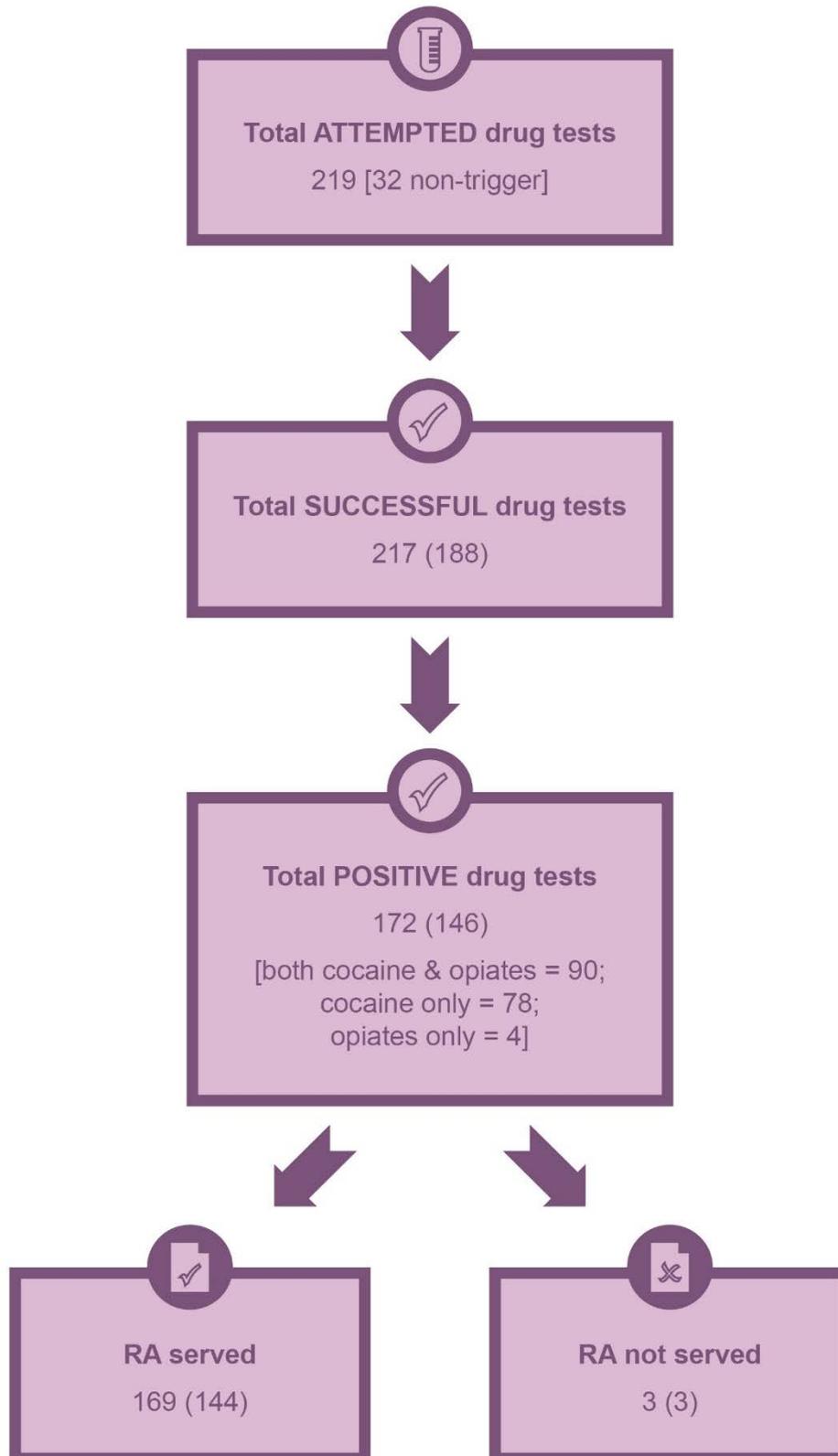
Over half (55%) of the total 172 positive drug tests in 2018/19 were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 90 [52%]; opiates only = 4 [2%]), while the remaining positive tests were for cocaine only (n=78; 45%). Notably, the proportion of positive tests for opiate metabolites has decreased year-on-year, from 61% in 2016/17 and 59% in 2017/18. There were 169 RAs served to 144 individuals in 2018/19 (Figure 17).



55%

positive tests for opiate metabolites, 18/19

Figure 17: Drug testing activity, St Helens residents, 18/19<sup>10</sup>

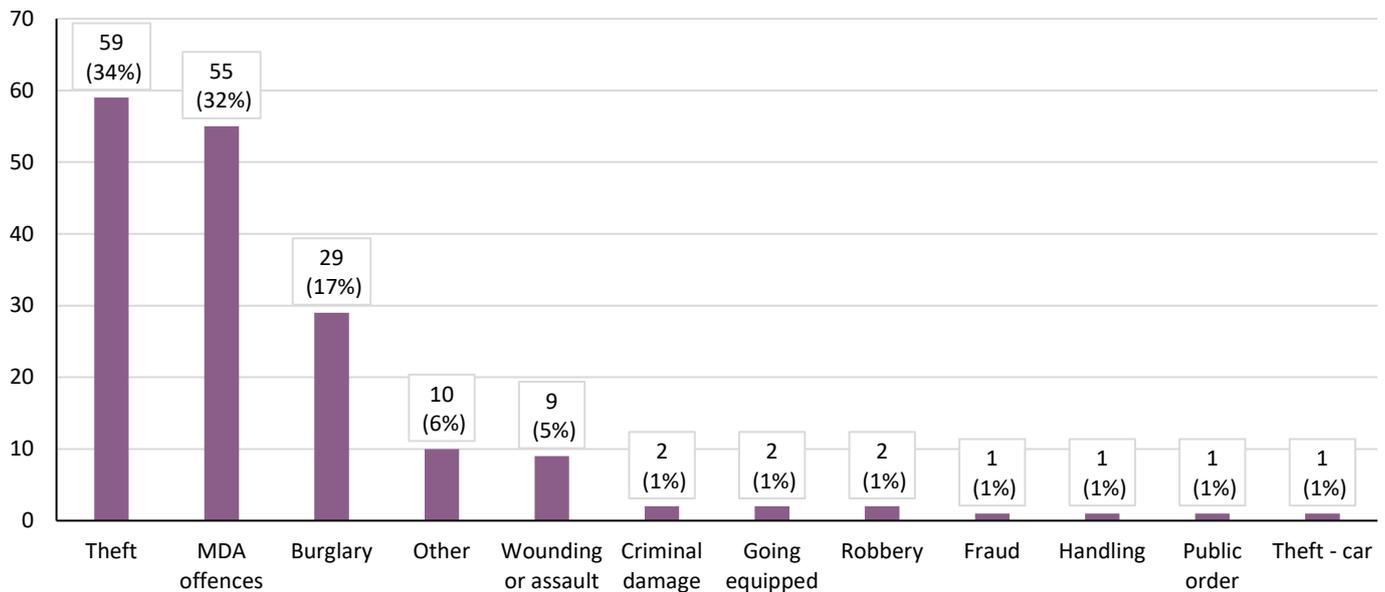


<sup>10</sup> There are individuals with more than one positive drug test that are included in both 'RA served' and 'RA not served'; therefore the summation of individuals with an 'RA served' and 'RA not served' does not equal the number of individuals testing positive.

## OFFENCE

Around one-third of positive drug test records in 2018/19 reported theft (n=59; 34%) and Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences (n=55; 32%), followed by burglary (n=29; 17%) (Figure 18). The proportion of theft has decreased year-on-year, from 46% in 2016/17, while MDA offences in 2018/19 have increased from 26% in the previous year. Burglary has increased year-on-year, from 6% in 2016/17, and the proportion in 2018/19 is considerably more than the total for Merseyside (9%).

**Figure 18: Positive drug tests by offence, St Helens residents, 18/19**



## DEMOGRAPHICS

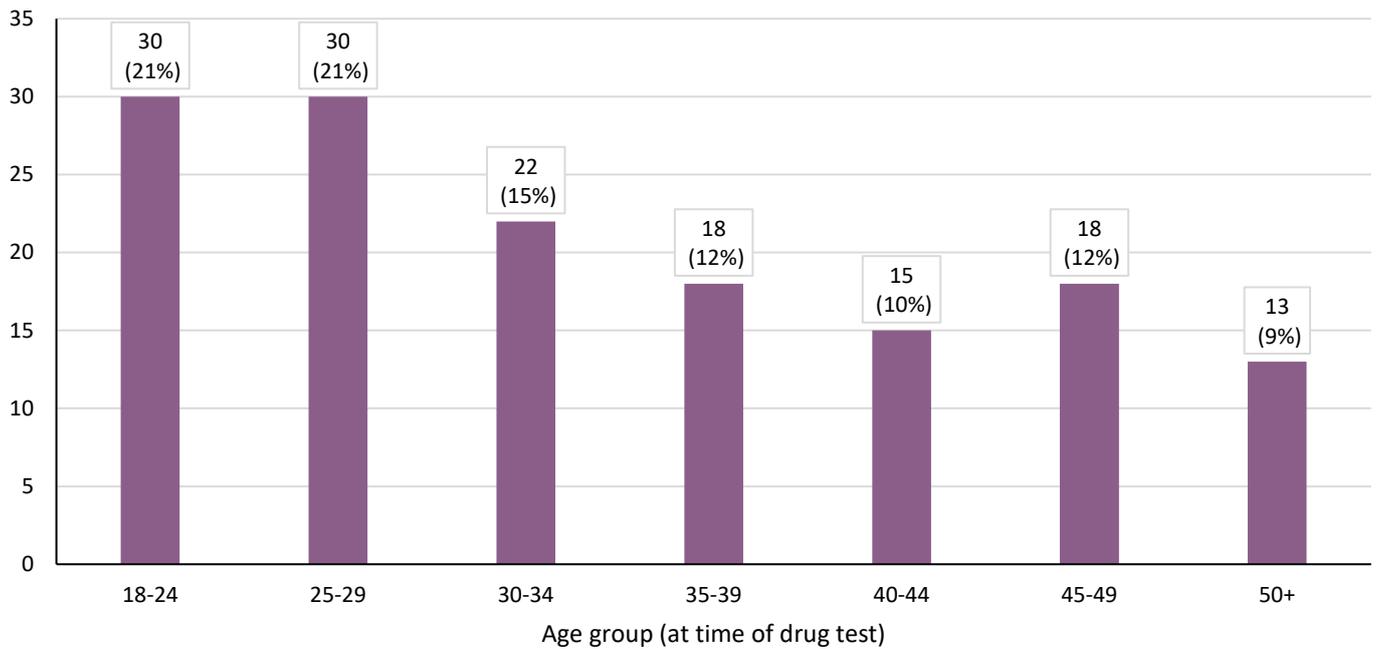
Men accounted for 84% of individuals who tested positive between April 2018 and March 2019 (n=123). This is an increase on the proportion of men in the previous year (81%).



Figure 19 shows the age group of St Helens residents who tested positive across Merseyside in 2018/19. Detainees aged 18-24 years and 25-29 years each accounted for 21% of individuals testing positive (n=30 each). The proportion of 18-24 year olds in 2018/19 is similar to the previous year (20%), though the proportion of 25-29 year olds has increased from 16% and is higher than the total for Merseyside (17%).

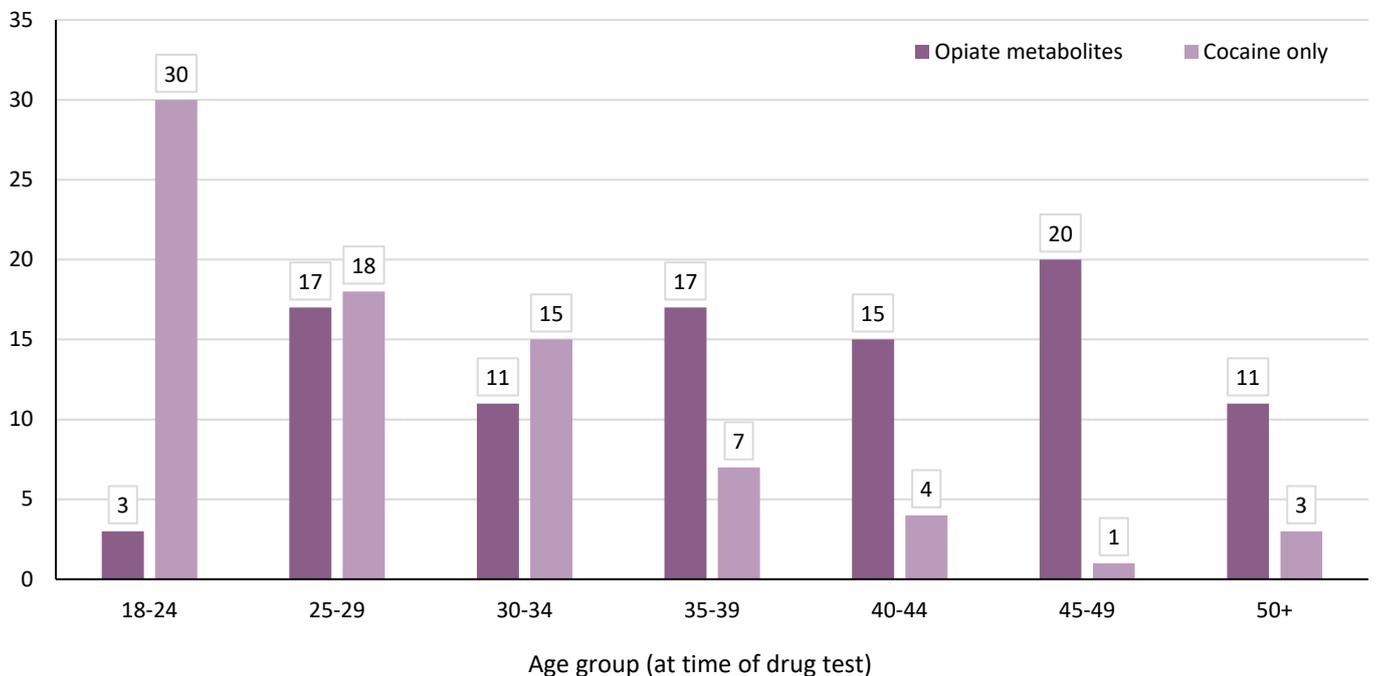


**Figure 19: Positive drug tests by age group, St Helens residents (individuals), 18/19**



Positive drug test results are categorised by age group in Figure 20. Positive tests for opiate metabolites fluctuated by age group, peaking in 45-49 year olds (n=20), followed by 25-29 years olds and 35-39 years (n=17 each). Cocaine only positive tests peaked in 18-24 year olds (n=30) and then decreased by age up until age 45-49 years.

**Figure 20: Positive drug tests by age group and drug test result, St Helens residents, 18/19**



## OVERVIEW AND TRENDS

Between April 2016 and March 2019, there were 1,446 attempted drug tests on Wirral residents across Merseyside's custody suites, representing 21% of all drug tests on Merseyside residents. The number of attempted drug tests on Wirral residents increased by 29% in 2017/18 when compared to the previous year, followed by a further increase of 5% in 2018/19 (Table 8).

Of the attempted drug tests on Wirral residents during the three-year period, the majority were recorded at Wirral custody suite (n=1,275; 88%), while there were 150 (10%) at SAS and Wavertree custody suites in Liverpool, 16 (1%) at Copy Lane custody suite in Sefton and five (<1%) at St Helens custody suite (Table 8).

**Table 8: Number of attempted drug tests across Merseyside by custody suite and year, Wirral residents, 16/17-18/19**

Custody suite	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
Wirral	345	454	476	1,275
SAS & Wavertree	45	53	52	150
Copy Lane	4	4	8	16
St Helens	4	1	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>1,446</b>

## DRUG TESTING ACTIVITY

Figure 21 shows the drug testing activity for Wirral residents drug tested in Merseyside's custody suites between April 2018 and March 2019. There were 536 attempted drug tests in 2018/19, of which 535 were successful (424 individuals). Of the individuals successfully tested, 339 individuals tested positive, representing a positive drug test rate of 80%.

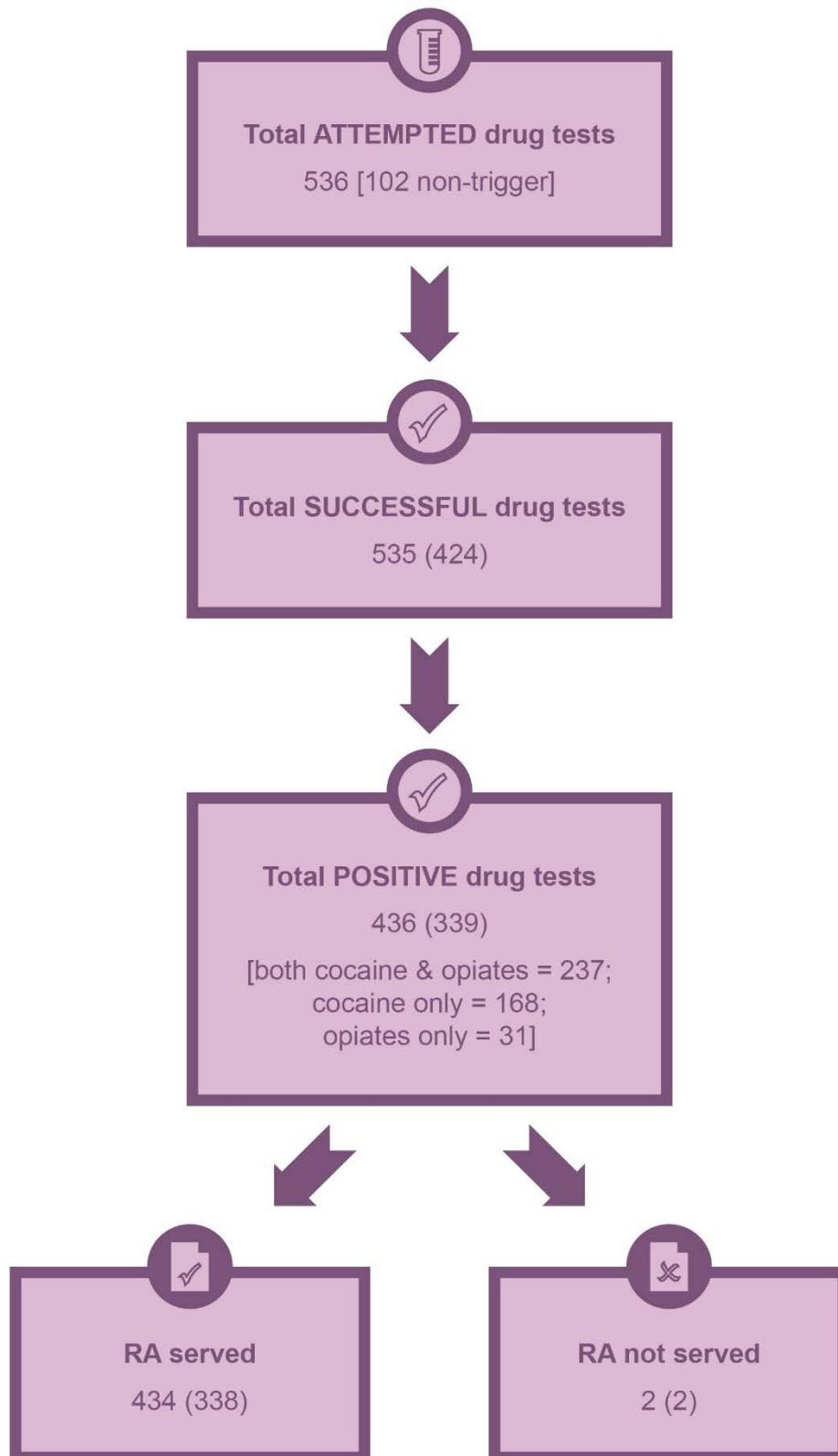
Around three in five (61%) of the total 436 positive drug tests in 2018/19 were for opiate metabolites (both cocaine and opiates = 237 [54%]; opiates only = 31 [7%]), while the remaining positive tests were for cocaine only (n=168; 39%). Although this is the highest proportion of positive tests for opiate metabolites across Merseyside, the proportion has decreased year-on-year, from 69% in 2016/17 and 63% in 2017/18. There were 434 RAs served to 338 individuals in 2018/19 (Figure 21).



61%

positive tests for opiate metabolites, 18/19

Figure 21: Drug testing activity, Wirral residents, 18/19<sup>11</sup>

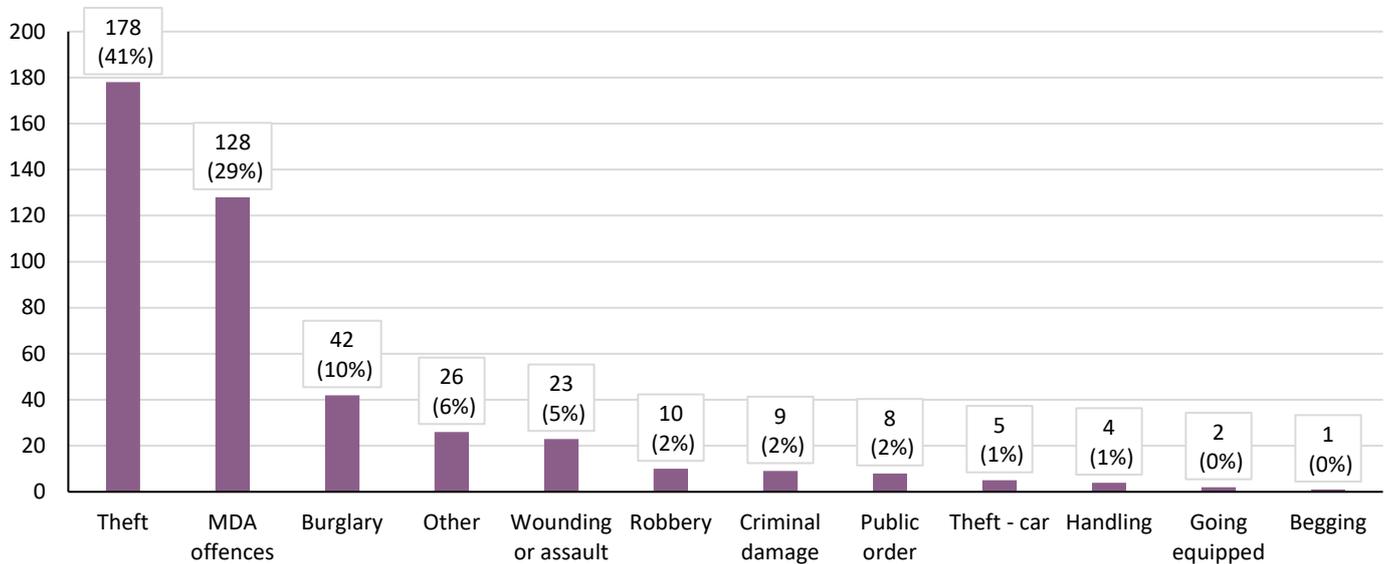


<sup>11</sup> There are individuals with more than one positive drug test that are included in both 'RA served' and 'RA not served'; therefore the summation of individuals with an 'RA served' and 'RA not served' does not equal the number of individuals testing positive.

## OFFENCE

Around two in five positive drug test records in 2018/19 reported theft (n=178; 41%), followed by Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) offences (n=128; 29%) (Figure 22). Although the proportion of theft is the highest across Merseyside in 2018/19, proportions have decreased year-on-year, from 57% in 2016/17. Comparatively, MDA offences have increased from 18% in 2016/17.

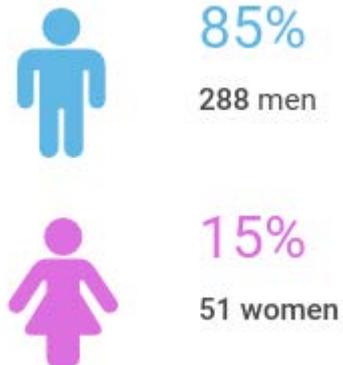
**Figure 22: Positive drug tests by offence, Wirral residents, 18/19**



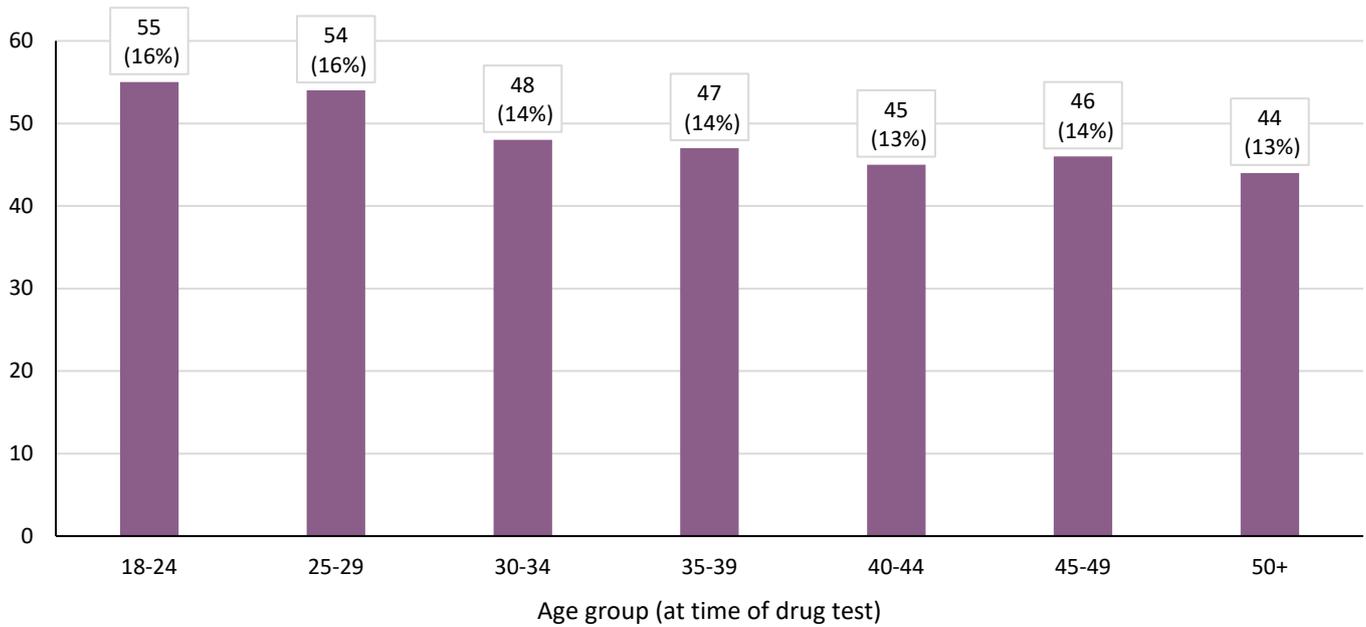
## DEMOGRAPHICS

Men accounted for 85% of individuals who tested positive between April 2018 and March 2019 (n=288). There has been a slight year-on-year increase in the proportion of men, from 83% in 2016/17.

Figure 23 shows the age group of Wirral residents who tested positive across Merseyside in 2018/19. Proportions were similar across the age groups, though were highest in 18-24 year olds (n=55; 16%) and 25-29 year olds (n=54; 16%). Detainees aged 30-34 years, 35-39 years and 45-49 years each accounted for 14%, while those aged 40-44 years and 50 years and over accounted for 13% each. These proportions are similar to the previous year, though the proportion of individuals aged 50 years and over in 2018/19 is higher than other Merseyside areas.

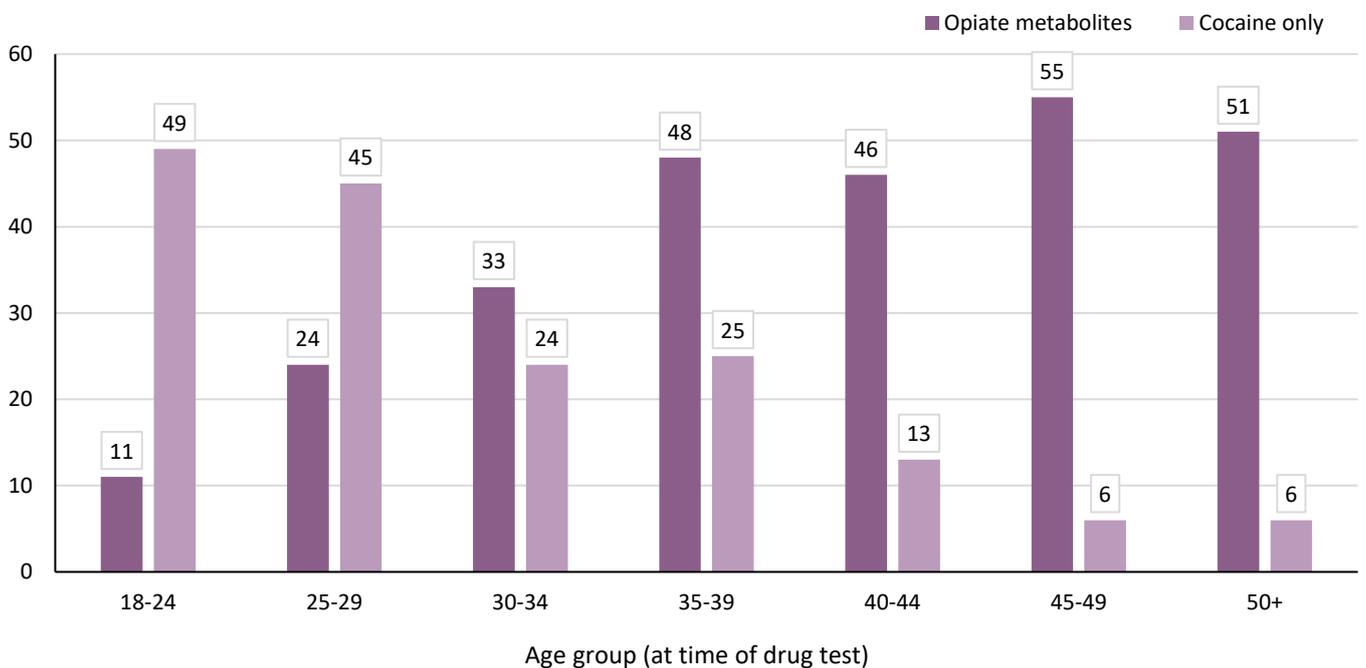


**Figure 23: Positive drug tests by age group, Wirral residents (individuals), 18/19**



Positive drug test results are categorised by age group in Figure 24. Detainees who tested positive tests for opiate metabolites were generally older, peaking in 45-49 year olds (n=55) and those aged 50 years and over (n=51), while positive tests for cocaine only peaked in 18-24 year olds (n=49) and 25-29 year olds (n=45).

**Figure 24: Positive drug tests by age group and drug test result, Wirral residents, 18/19**



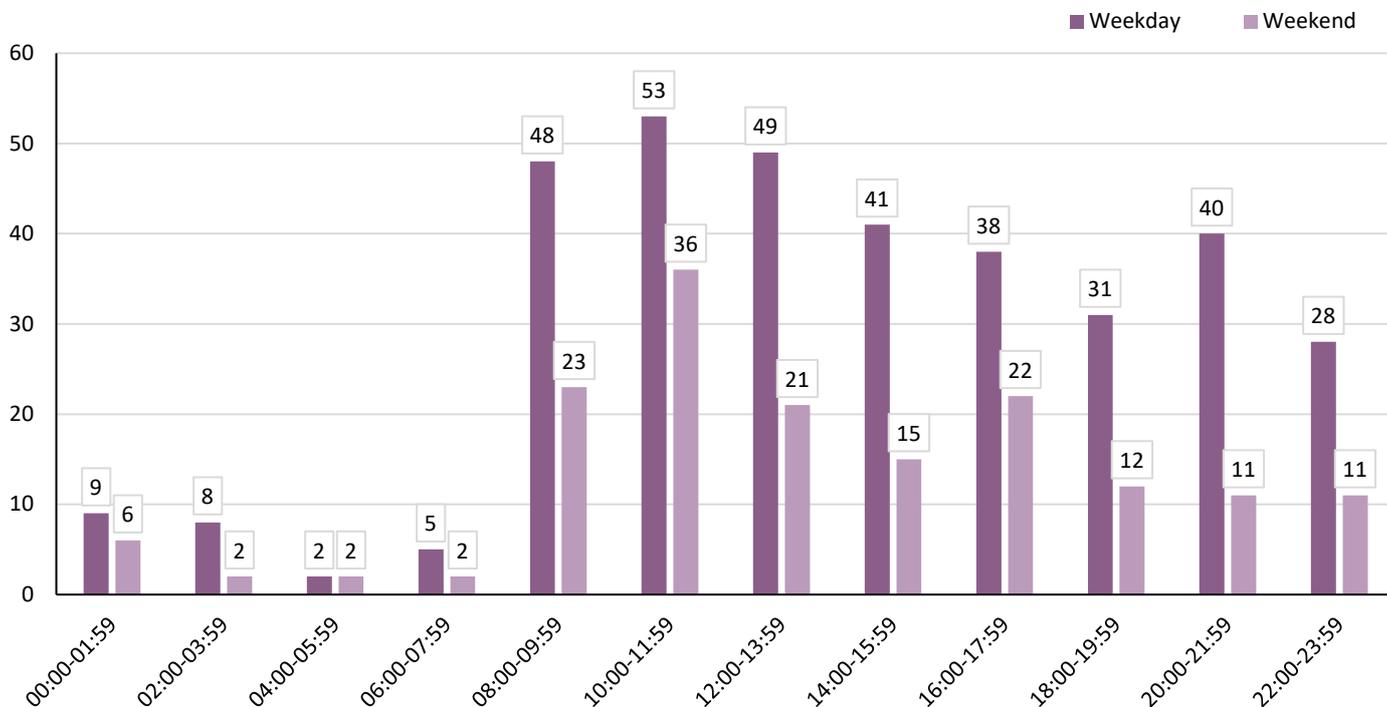
## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The RA process is the main criminal justice route whereby offenders who use Class A drugs are identified and assessed for treatment. Local police drug testing data are not available through other reporting mechanisms; therefore this resource should be utilised by all stakeholders regularly. All partners in this process should use available data which look at trends over time; for example, total attempted drug tests and positive drug test rates. This information will enable stakeholders to observe any changes and/or trends within their local area and across Merseyside, as well as investigate the reasons for these trends. This should assist in evidencing any process changes that may be needed, in addition to highlighting potential gaps or barriers that may prevent these clients from engaging with treatment services.
- Police drug testing records enable client profiling, including Class A drug use, offending and demographics, and can identify peak times for those who test positive. This information is key in identifying likely presenters through drug testing, and can impact on the resources and services required to cater for the needs of these individuals in an efficient manner in the custody suite, drug treatment service and/or local community. With resources and budgets constantly under scrutiny, this information should be used to ensure these individuals have a successful drug treatment experience. Furthermore, the dataset should be monitored in order to identify any changes in client profiling or drug trends. For example, the proportion of positive tests for cocaine only has increased year-on-year from 42% in 2016/17 to 51% in 2018/19.
- This report found that in some instances there were peak times for positive drug tests when there was no drugs worker present in the custody suites. Treatment providers in Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral should monitor and review their coverage time at the custody suites, which could assist in more effective targeting of resources. Furthermore, the treatment providers in Knowsley and St Helens should consider resources and support in the custody suites where their residents are most likely to be conveyed following an arrest.
- The recording of the detainees' LA of residence is valuable for treatment agencies in identifying individuals tested across Merseyside and is even more critical in areas where there is no custody suite. Between April 2016 and March 2019 overall, 15% of attempted drug tests were missing the LA of residence. Merseyside Police should continue to ensure the LA of residence is recorded to enable more accurate analysis and a comprehensive understanding of the residents across Merseyside.
- It is imperative that there are effective and prompt communication channels across the police in the custody suites, the local treatment provider and all other relevant treatment providers across Merseyside. Although organisational operations may differ, an overarching aim of assisting offenders who use drugs towards treatment should be shared by all stakeholders and facilitated as much as possible, with a clear understanding of the RA process. High levels of communication are particularly relevant at times when there is not a drugs worker present in the custody suite and when dealing with residents of Knowsley and St Helens where there is no local custody suite. Regular feedback of any issues arising should be encouraged and addressed, as well as adequate training provided where and when required. Merseyside Police intend to set up operational meetings to discuss issues with the RA process, for example, missing RA paperwork. These meetings should take place routinely, with attendance from all relevant stakeholders, where possible.

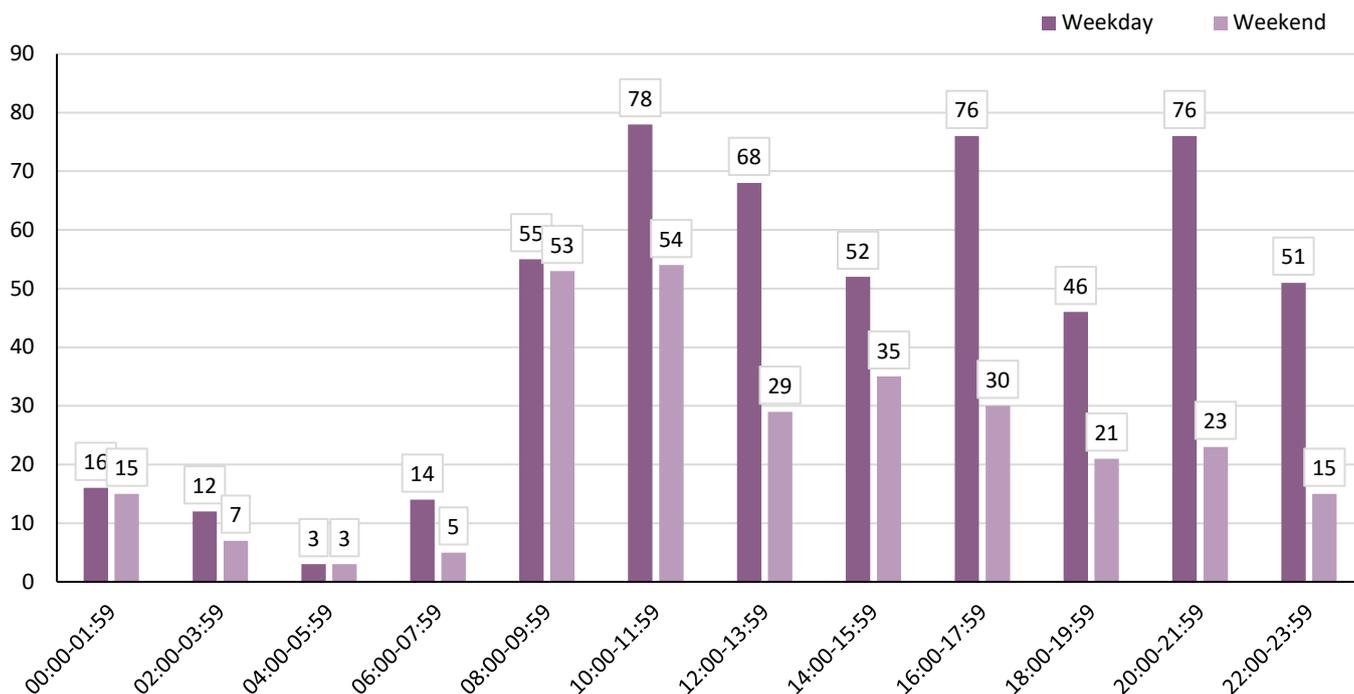
These recommendations are unlikely to be achieved without sustained working between all stakeholders; however their implementation would likely ensure offenders who use drugs are referred to treatment services appropriately and have a successful and positive drug treatment experience.

APPENDIX A

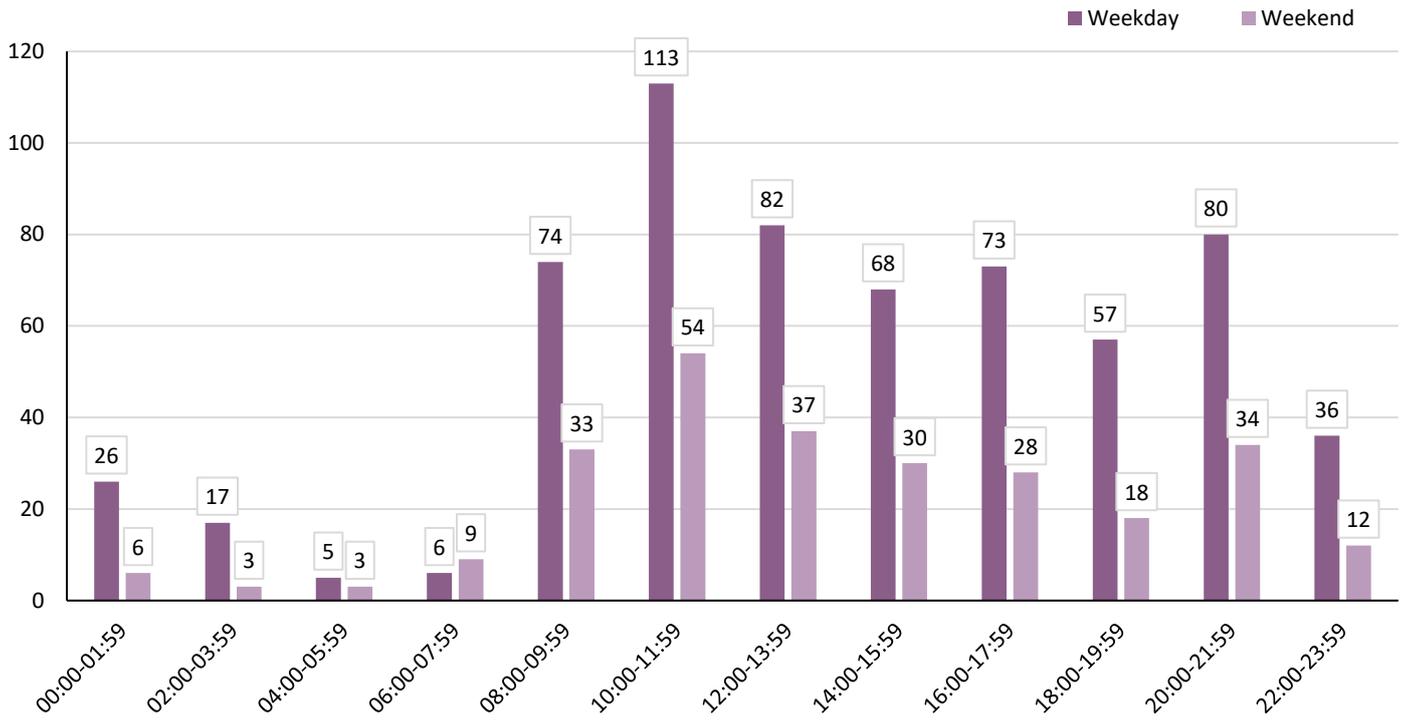
APPENDIX A1: POSITIVE DRUG TESTS AT COPY LANE CUSTODY SUITE BY TIME OF TEST, WEEKDAY VS. WEEKEND, 18/19



APPENDIX A2: POSITIVE DRUG TESTS AT SAS AND WAVERTREE CUSTODY SUITES BY TIME OF TEST, WEEKDAY VS. WEEKEND, 18/19



APPENDIX A3: POSITIVE DRUG TESTS AT WIRRAL CUSTODY SUITE BY TIME OF TEST, WEEKDAY VS. WEEKEND, 18/19



SUMMARY OF FIGURES BY LA OF RESIDENCE, MERSEYSIDE RESIDENTS, 18/19<sup>12</sup>

	Liverpool	Sefton	St Helens	Wirral	Merseyside Total
<b>Attempted tests</b>	1,144	344	219	536	<b>2,402</b>
<b>Successful tests</b>	1,139	343	217	535	<b>2,392</b>
<b>Positive tests</b>	849	260	172	436	<b>1,825</b>
Both cocaine & opiates	388 (46%)	97 (37%)	90 (52%)	237 (54%)	<b>848 (46%)</b>
Opiates only	32 (4%)	9 (3%)	4 (2%)	31 (7%)	<b>77 (4%)</b>
Cocaine only	429 (51%)	154 (59%)	78 (45%)	168 (39%)	<b>900 (49%)</b>
<b>Offence</b>					
Burglary	60 (7%)	24 (9%)	29 (17%)	42 (10%)	<b>166 (9%)</b>
MDA offences	306 (36%)	111 (43%)	55 (32%)	128 (29%)	<b>641 (35%)</b>
Theft	298 (35%)	71 (27%)	59 (34%)	178 (41%)	<b>628 (34%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>					
Men	586 (82%)	201 (86%)	123 (84%)	288 (85%)	<b>1,284 (83%)</b>
Women	132 (18%)	32 (14%)	23 (16%)	51 (15%)	<b>257 (17%)</b>
<b>Age group</b>					
18-24	110 (15%)	57 (24%)	30 (21%)	55 (16%)	<b>276 (18%)</b>
25-29	121 (17%)	32 (14%)	30 (21%)	54 (16%)	<b>261 (17%)</b>
30-34	125 (17%)	45 (19%)	22 (15%)	48 (14%)	<b>259 (17%)</b>
35-39	111 (15%)	36 (15%)	18 (12%)	47 (14%)	<b>229 (15%)</b>
40-44	110 (15%)	24 (10%)	15 (10%)	45 (13%)	<b>205 (13%)</b>
45-49	89 (12%)	23 (10%)	18 (12%)	46 (14%)	<b>182 (12%)</b>
50+	52 (7%)	16 (7%)	13 (9%)	44 (13%)	<b>129 (8%)</b>

<sup>12</sup> Figures for offence, gender and age group are for positive drug tests only; figures for gender and age group are for individuals. Please note that the Merseyside total includes Knowsley residents.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With special thanks to Merseyside Police for providing drug testing records and their ongoing support. Thank you also to the commissioners and treatment providers across Merseyside. Finally, thank you to Petra Collins at the Public Health Institute for her help in proof reading this profile and Laura Heeks for providing the report covers.

