



Merton Council
Adult Substance Misuse
Needs Assessment
2023/24
(Summary)

Version 4
07/05/2024

Lead Authors: Barry Causer and Ted Sherman

Contributors: Russell Styles, Dr Dagmar Zeuner, Samina Sheikh, Jacqueline Nanteza
Alex Hatfield, Sarah Brewster, Angela Chu, Barrie Capper, Megan Hatton, Keith
Shipman.

1. List of Notable Information.

Throughout the Adult Substance Misuse Needs Assessment 2023/24 any pieces of notable or key information have been captured as short statements alongside this symbol,



All of the pieces of notable information along with the page number on which they appear are included in the table below.

Notable information	Page
Merton has a higher level of unmet need amongst the OCU cohort compared with England.	9
Merton has a higher level of binge drinking compared with England.	9
Drug and alcohol related health conditions resulting in ambulance call outs of hospital admissions are concentrated in the east of Merton.	14
There is a higher rate of deaths from chronic liver disease in Merton than England.	14
There is a large amount of crime committed by people with drug and alcohol problems prior to engagement with specialist treatment services.	17
Violent and sexual offences significantly dominate the crime types in Merton.	17
Acquisitive crime types, when combined, made up the second highest number of offences in 2022/23.	17
There is an increasing trend in robbery and shoplifting offences.	17
Drug and alcohol use is a concern for a large proportion of Merton residents.	18
The social and economic benefits of substance misuse treatment and support are significant, especially in the context of drug treatment.	20
The percentage of referrals from GPs and hospital/A&E are higher for alcohol treatment than drug treatment.	22
The percentage of referrals from the criminal justice system and social services are higher for drug treatment than alcohol treatment.	22
The rate of engagement with Merton community substance misuse treatment services following release from prison is lower than the England average.	23
Starting in June 2022 the total number of adults accessing structured treatment in Merton has been on a declining trend.	26
The number of alcohol users and the number of non-opiate (excluding crack) users have been on a long-term increasing trend, with a recent drop in numbers.	26
The number of opiates users, crack users and non-opiate and alcohol users have been decreasing since 2021	26
The declining trend in numbers in treatment is also being experienced in Merton's neighboring boroughs.	26
Of those reporting a problem with an NPS or club drug in Merton the majority are using Methamphetamine (3 times the proportion reporting Methamphetamine use in England).	27
[Redacted] of adults accessing structured drug treatment in 2021/22 were recorded as being "other Asian", compared with [Redacted] of people accessing structured alcohol treatment.	30
There was a higher level of mental health treatment need amongst those accessing drug treatment in 2021/22 compared with those accessing alcohol treatment.	31
A greater proportion of people with an alcohol problem received mental health treatment from a GP compared with those with a drug problem.	31
A greater proportion of people with a drug problem received mental health support from an IAPT service compared with those with an alcohol problem	31
Overall, there is a higher level of housing related need amongst those adults accessing drug treatment.	31
The level of urgent housing problems amongst those accessing alcohol treatment is double that of those accessing drug treatment.	31
The proportion of successful completions is declining for all treatment cohorts except alcohol only.	33
Successful completions for opiate users have been consistently low.	33
The most recent successful completion outcomes for opiate users are 9.4% lower than the baseline.	33
Opiate users make up most criminal justice clients in Merton.	33
Overall, the proportion of criminal justice clients successfully completing treatment is decreasing	33
The proportion of opiate using criminal justice clients who successfully completed treatment in Merton between 01/04/2022 and 31/03/2022 was low (a decline of 28.3%)	33
Representation rates for opiate users are high and outside of the top quartile range.	34
The highest discharge reason for opiate users, between April '22 and March '23 was "dropped out."	36
The proportion of eligible clients offered and accepting a HCV test in Merton is lower than the national average.	37
The proportion of people testing positive for HCV antibodies is lower in Merton than the national average.	37

Between April 2022 and March 2023 there were no positive PCR results for HCV amongst those accessing structured substance misuse treatment.	37
The proportion of people accessing structured substance misuse treatment in Merton between April 2022 and March 2023 who were HIV positive was 1.75 times greater than the national average.	38
The proportion of opiate users accessing structured treatment in Merton who were issued with naloxone between April 2022 and March 2023 is nearly 1.5 times greater than the national average.	39
The proportion of opiate users accessing structured treatment in Merton between April 2022 and March 2023 who had naloxone administered is 2.4 times the national average.	39
The overall proportion of adults dying whilst in structured treatment in Merton is lower than the national level (January 2023) – [Redacted]	40
There is a large variance between the proportion of deaths in treatment between opiate and alcohol users in Merton (January 2023) – [Redacted]	40
The rate of both alcohol and opiate dependent parents is lower in Merton than England.	41
The level of unmet need amongst alcohol dependent parents in Merton is lower than England.	41
The level of unmet need amongst opiate dependent parents in Merton is higher than England.	41
The majority of parents starting structured treatment in Merton in 2019/20 had an alcohol problem.	42
The level of mental health treatment needs, for all parental status groups, is higher in Merton compared with the benchmark areas.	44
Parents living with children who accessed structured treatment in Merton in 2019/20 had the lowest level of mental health treatment needs.	44
Parents not living with children had the highest level of mental health treatment needs.	44
The level of unmet mental health treatment needs amongst those adults that started structured treatment in Merton in 2019/20 was lower for all parental status groups when compared with the benchmark areas.	44
The level of unmet mental health treatment needs was highest amongst those who were not parents.	44
The proportion of adults who were currently injecting at the start of structured treatment in Merton during 2019/20 was higher amongst parents than those who were not parents.	45
The proportion of parents living with children who started structured treatment in Merton during 2019/20 and were currently injecting was higher in Merton than the benchmark area (Merton 6%, benchmark areas 2%)	45
Parents not living with children were the group, amongst those who started structured treatment in Merton in 2019/20, with the highest level of severe alcohol dependency.	45
Parents living with children had the highest rate of successful treatment completions, compared to the other parental status groups, in Merton during 2019/20.	46

The Merton Combating Substance Misuse Partnership jointly discussed the notable information (listed above), grouped the information; and produced a list of 10 overarching themes. These ‘themes’ are listed in the table below, how these themes relate to the three domains of the 10 year national drug strategy (From Harm to Hope) is also indicated.

Adult Substance Misuse Needs Assessment Themes	Drug Strategy Domains		
	Tackling Supply	Reducing Demand	Improving Treatment
When compared to problem alcohol users, Merton’s problem drug users are less likely to access treatment and have poorer treatment outcomes.			X
Effectively addressing problematic drug and alcohol use is important for Merton – it is essential in tackling crime and addressing health inequalities.	X	X	X
Some of the referral routes into specialist drug and alcohol treatment are ineffective – particularly in relation to the prison to community treatment pathway.			X
The number of people entering and successfully completing specialist drug and alcohol treatment in Merton is decreasing.			X
The treatment needs of non-opiate users, ‘binge drinkers, and individuals identified as “other Asian” require further exploration.			X
Mental health and housing related needs are common amongst people with drug and alcohol problems and the Merton substance misuse system must ensure these needs are being met.			X
Criminal justice focused treatment in Merton is not effective, especially for opiate users			X
There are some gaps in the provision of harm reduction and physical health interventions for drug and alcohol users in Merton.			X
Merton’s system of preventing substance related deaths is not effective for drug users.			X
Engaging parents with drug and/or alcohol problems into specialist treatment is essential in safeguarding their children. Where parental substance misuse is contributing to child neglect or abuse there is an increased risk of the children also experiencing substance misuse problems. There is an association between parents living with their children and successful completion of substance misuse treatment, however this requires further consideration. Merton substance misuse services need to increase engagement with drug using parents and must ensure that all parents who inject drugs are provided with a comprehensive and ongoing programme of harm reduction interventions.		X	X