

Rotherham Combatting Drugs Partnership Progress Report 2024

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Background

As part of the 2021 drugs strategy: From Harm to Hope, every local area across England was requested to form a Combating Drugs Partnership (CDP).

These partnerships bring together a range of local partners - including enforcement, treatment, recovery, and prevention – and provide a single setting for understanding and addressing shared challenges related to drug-related harm, based on local context and need.

Rotherham Combatting Drugs Partnership

The Rotherham Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) is jointly Chaired by Rotherham Council’s Director of Public Health and South Yorkshire Police’s District Commander for Rotherham and has a Vision to “Work together to combat illegal drug use in Rotherham—reducing crime, saving lives, and challenging the notion of ‘recreational drug use’, which fuels a violent and exploitative market”. The Partnership meets on a quarterly basis and is an active partner in the South Yorkshire Combatting Drugs Partnership that meets and enables collaboration and joint working across the larger sub region.



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Membership

The Combatting Drugs Partnership is made up of strategic decision makers across key partner organisations involved in addressing the challenges of drug related harm. These include:

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC)
- Rotherham Alcohol and Drugs Service (ROADS), provided by WithYou
- South Yorkshire Police (SYP)
- The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (formally South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office)
- Probation Service Yorkshire and The Humber
- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust
- Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust
- Voluntary Action Rotherham
- Job Centre Plus
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

Aims

The Rotherham CDP Aims are to:

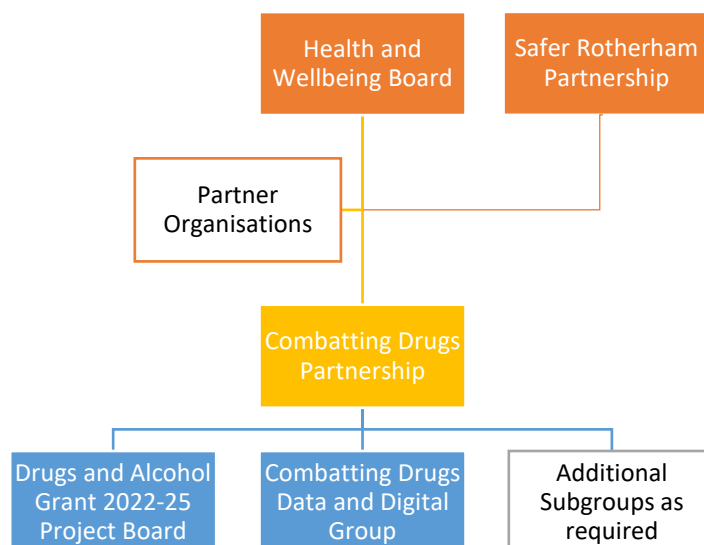
- Work together to understand the local population and how both drugs and alcohol are causing harm in Rotherham.
- Identify challenges in the system and the changes needed to address them.
- Identify, consider and/or support external funding opportunities to enhance or increase the partnership’s ability to deliver its responsibilities and objectives.
- Complete key tasks as set out by the Joint Combatting Drugs Unit (JCDU)- the central government cross departmental body responsible for the Drug strategy.

Governance

Nationally, Combatting Drugs Partnerships provide assurance into the government’s Joint Combatting Drugs Unit which coordinates delivery of the national drug strategy. In Rotherham, the Combatting Drugs Partnership reports to the Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board and also to the Safer Rotherham Partnership.

The following subgroups take a lead on specific areas of work, reporting to the Rotherham CDP:

- Children and Young Peoples CDP Subgroup
- Dual Diagnosis Subgroup
- Drug and Alcohol Related Death review panel and Local Drug Information System
- Data and Digital Group
- Drug and Alcohol Grant Project Board



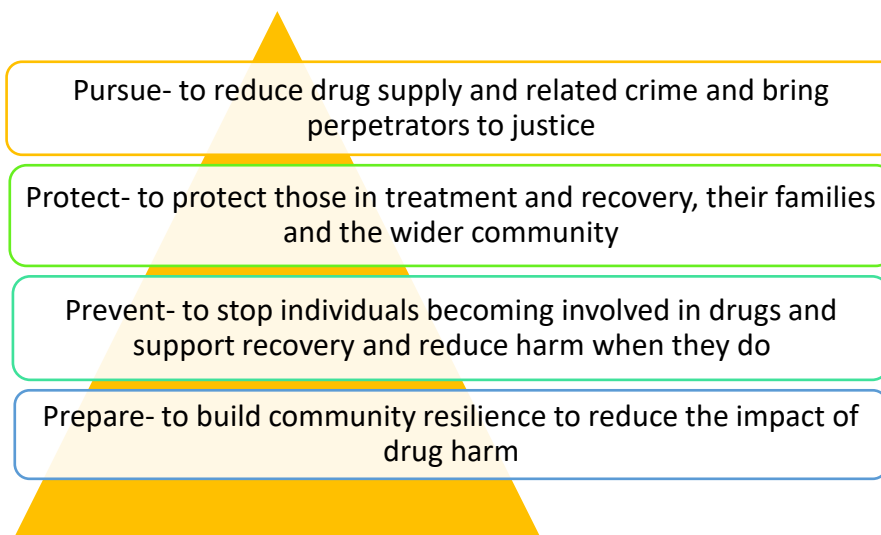
Drugs and alcohol in Rotherham

Rotherham's Drug and Alcohol Joint Needs Assessment 2022 tells us that:

- 2/3 offences linked to alcohol were violence against a person
- Families were concerned about young people being drawn into drug taking
- Local shops and businesses were concerned that alcohol and substance misuse in public places was deterring customers
- 31.1% of adults in Rotherham drank over the recommended 14 units of alcohol per week
- It is estimated that a significant proportion of people who use opiate and crack or who have a dependency on alcohol may not be in drug and alcohol treatment
- The majority of drug and alcohol treatment service users also had a mental health need and the majority of drug and alcohol service users were not in employment when first presenting to the service.
- The proportion of Rotherham Adults leaving treatment successfully was lower than England Average
- Alcohol/Substance Misuse was one of ten top presenting needs for early help, family support (2021/2022)
- There were 708 drug offences in Rotherham in 2020-2021
- Between 2019-2020, there was a decrease in identified County Lines/CCE offences by 60%
- During 2020, 741 Organised Crime Gang related offences were recorded within Rotherham

Rotherham CDP's local delivery plan

The CDPs delivery plan has been co-produced with members of the partnership and is informed by the Needs Assessment and the lived experience of service users and those impacted by drug harms and drug related crime. The plan is structured around the 4 Ps approach: Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue and describes how the CDP aims to tackle drugs and drug harm at all levels- from creating resilient communities to addressing supply at its source. The objectives under each of these 4 Ps as well as key progress made against each area are outlined below.



Prepare

Objectives:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve information sharing (including with IT systems) to improve joint working and further develop the CDP’s understanding of how Drugs and Alcohol are causing harm in Rotherham, and the impact of the work being done to address it. ● Explore drug and alcohol workforce training needs across key services and equip workers by providing education for professionals to improve reporting, referrals and information sharing to aid in early identification of drug and alcohol issues. ● Develop Combatting Drugs Communications and Engagement Strategy to help communicate the harms of drugs and alcohol, educate our communities to spot the signs and seek help, and improve messaging around drugs and alcohol.

Key Progress:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The data and digital subgroup, established with intelligence leads from across members, developed a CDP report for sharing key data on progress to be refreshed and presented at each Partnership meeting. ● Established two new systems to improve our intelligence and learning on harms from drugs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A Local Drug Information System, involving key experts to monitor and respond to new and harmful drugs or drug trends such as the presence of Synthetic Opioids in Rotherham. This includes a partner reporting form and South Yorkshire wide processes. ○ A new system for collecting intelligence on drug related deaths to support Drug and Alcohol Related Death review processes. ● Police intelligence is co-ordinated through a number of SYP led meetings including a new Serious and Organised Crime Tasking Group. ● Over 1,100 staff, across a variety of sectors, have received training on drug and alcohol topics.

Prevent

Objectives:

- Develop pathways between prison, criminal justice and drug and alcohol services including use of court orders, better prisoner release, and connections with probation services.
- Develop whole family approach to support and break intergenerational cycles of substance use.
- Develop wider support offer and capacity for increased numbers for alcohol and drugs treatment/support, in order to reduce drug related harm and impacts on wider community.

Key Progress:

- Several enhancements have been made to improve the rate of those leaving prison engaging with community drug and alcohol treatment services in Rotherham, such as a probation caseload audit which was completed to identify opiate and cocaine users who were not in treatment. Criminal Justice Capacity in the treatment service has been increased and staff are now co-located with probation services.
- Drug and Alcohol Early Help Team have been established within RMBC Family Hubs, upskilling workers including the use of screening tools, co-working cases, and making referrals to ROADS.
- In addition to the above capacity has been expanded both within and externally to the treatment service including: increasing residential rehabilitation placements, a new online alcohol support service and increased clinical capability to deliver community alcohol detoxification.

Protect

Objectives:

- Reduce drug related harm and drug and alcohol related deaths by providing services and tools which minimise the negative impacts of drug use, improving our intelligence sharing about and preparedness to respond to harmful substances.
- Implement dual diagnosis pathways and improved psychological support. Increasing access to psychological therapies to promote long term recovery for people with both mental health and substance misuse needs.
- Develop and implement recovery pathway including independent recovery community, housing, and employment support.

Key Progress:

- Availability of opioid overdose reversal drug, Naloxone, has been widened. Naloxone is offered to all ROADS clients and Naloxone training has been provided to key agencies.
- New roles are in place in the ROADS service to help support including dual diagnosis workers and Mental Health Wellbeing Practitioners.
- Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service in place to support people recovering from drug and alcohol issues into paid employment. Rotherham are within the top performing IPS areas in the country for job starts and sustainment.
- Rotherham Recovery Community has been established, with Lived Experience Champions and public forums in place. Recovery grants have been awarded to community groups across the borough to deliver activities to support people in recovery from Drugs and Alcohol.

Pursue

Objectives:

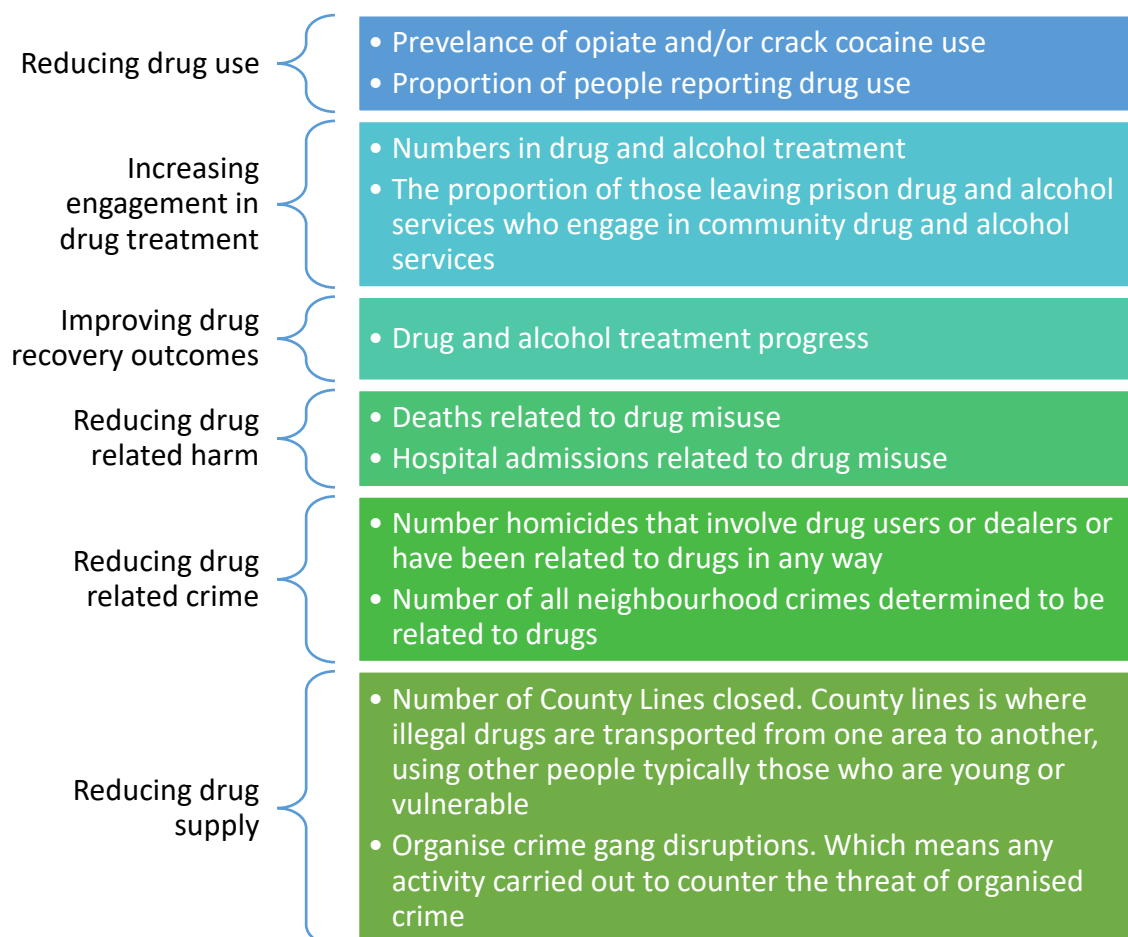
- Develop and effective pursue response with partners
- Disrupt organised crime
- Develop increased focus on county lines/ exploitation of children in line with child exploitation strategy and target OCGs which use most exploitive business/operational models with regards to child exploitation

Key progress :

- A number of warrants have been executed and managed by appropriate trained officers under the supervision of an inspector working in conjunction with trained Drug Expert Witnesses within the police as per ongoing work.
- Additional Drug Expert Witnesses are in place.
- Several arrests have been made and cases progressed to the crown prosecution service for judicial outcomes.
- A large amount of drugs and cash have been recovered and intelligence has increased.

Progress of Rotherham CDP

Progress of the Rotherham CDP is measured against the ‘National Combatting Drugs Outcomes Framework’ which is the mechanism for monitoring progress across central government and in local areas. The areas and measures within the framework are summarised below:



The data and digital subgroup of the Rotherham CDP, provides regular reporting on progress to the CDP. Together with the delivery plan this enables the CDP to monitor the delivery of local objectives and the national drug strategy in Rotherham. An overview of the progress against these measures, where data is able to be shared, is provided below:

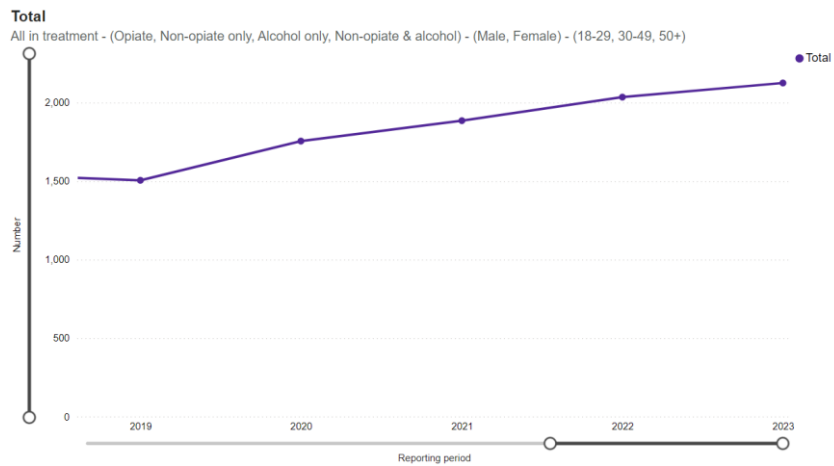
Reducing drug use

Updated data since the commencement of the Combatting Drugs Partnerships on the prevalence of drug use is not available but the most recent (2019-20) estimates show an estimate of 721 estimated opiate or crack cocaine users in Rotherham.

Increasing engagement in drug treatment

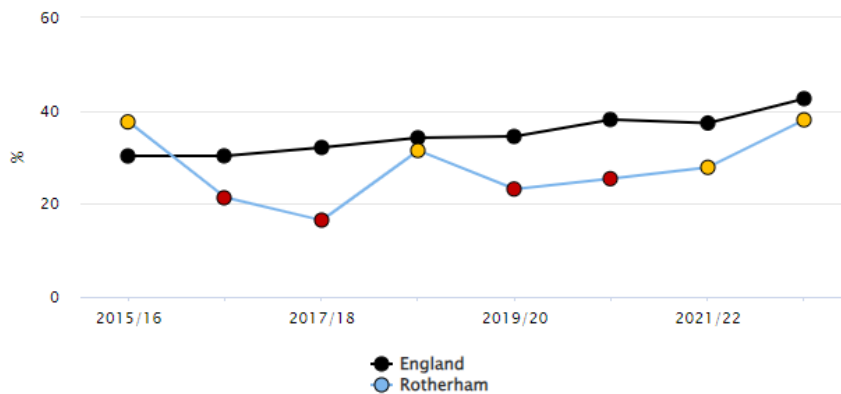
The number of adults in treatment have increased significantly, from 1,885 in 2020/21 to 2,125 in 2022/23 (an increase of 11.3%). The number of children also increased significantly, from 30 in 2020/21 to 45 in 2022/23 (and increase of 50%). The graph below shows the figures for the past 4 years.

Rotherham Combatting Drugs Partnership Progress Report – November 2024



In addition to numbers in drugs and alcohol treatment more people have been supported through residential rehabilitation placements and inpatient detoxification.

In Rotherham, the proportion of prison leavers with substance misuse issues who successfully engaged in treatment after leaving prison has increased substantially from 28% between 2021/2022 and 38% between 2022/2023, as shown in the graph below.



Improving drug recovery outcomes

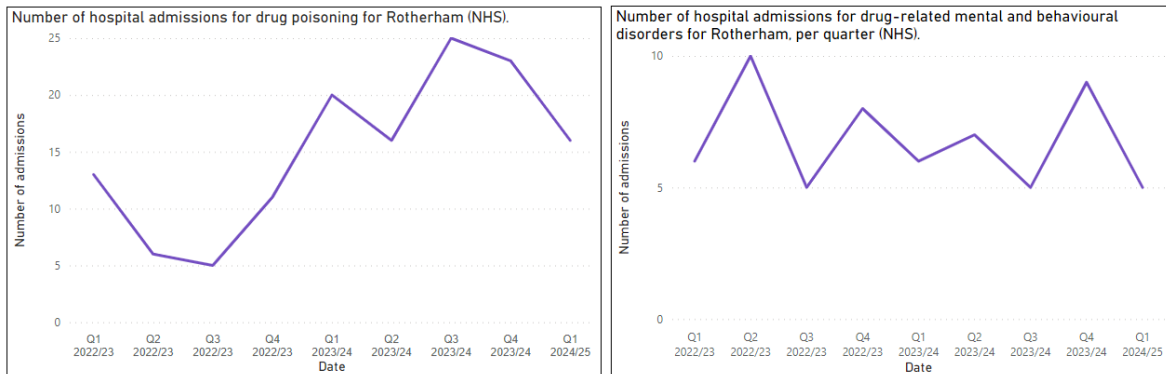
The proportion of people exiting treatment successfully has increased in Rotherham, from 30% in 2020/21 to 36% in 2022/23, as shown below.



Reducing drug related harm

There were 24 deaths from drug misuse registered in Rotherham in 2023, an increase from 20 in 2022. The mortality rate for drug misuse registered in Rotherham for 2021-23 was 7 (per 100,000 people), an increase from 6.5 for 2020-22. Rotherham’s mortality rate is lower than the South Yorkshire rate (8.6), but higher than the England rate (5.5)

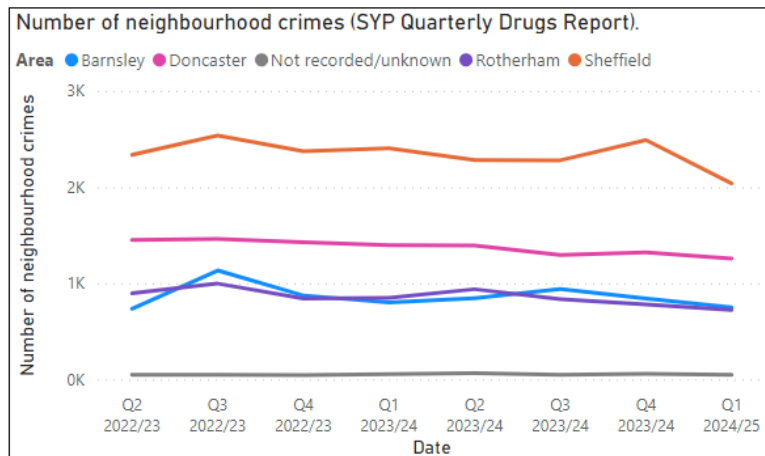
The numbers for hospital admissions related to drug misuse for drug poisoning and drug related mental and behavioural disorders are shown in the graphs below.



The number of admissions fluctuates due to the low numbers. The CDP will continue to monitor trends over time as more data is reported.

Reducing drug related crime

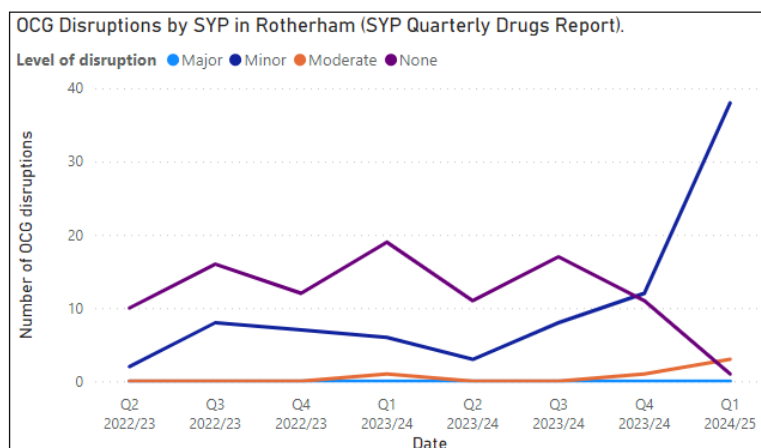
There has been a decreasing trend in the number of neighbourhood crimes in Rotherham over time, as shown in the graph below. There were 723 neighbourhood crimes in Rotherham in the first three months of 2024/25, the lowest number out of all the areas covered by SYP.



Reducing drug supply

SYP have a strong focus on tackling organised crime and the disruption of the supply of drugs.

Disruptions of organised crime gangs in Rotherham are increasing as is shown in the graph below. Rotherham had the most OCG disruptions of all the SYP areas in this period.



Public Involvement

Since the establishment of the Combatting Drugs Partnership work has been ongoing to develop involvement from people affected by drug harms and drug related crime, using their lived experience to help identify challenges and make improvements.

Public involvement to the Rotherham CDP is now supported by the development of the independent Rotherham Recovery Community. The importance demonstrated by the fact that each partnership meeting includes a section on Public Voice and Lived Experience to ensure senior leaders are hearing directly from those impacted by drugs in our communities.

The Combatting Drugs Partnership's, partnership lead has also attended the Rotherham Recovery Forum to present about the Combatting Drugs Partnership and engage with the Recovery Community about ways in which people with lived experience might prefer to be involved.

Plans to develop public involvement include a Recovery Community led CDP session. The CDP plan to continue to build on and improve this involvement, including by involving wider groups affected by harms related to substance use.

The CDP will publish a progress report annually and are happy to receive feedback to: publichealthadmin@rotherham.gov.uk