



ROTHERHAM COMBATTING DRUGS PARTNERSHIP

Progress Report 2025

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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), to work together at a local level to reduce drug-related harm¹.

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 and Barnsley and Rotherham Probation Delivery Unit (PDU)
- NHS South Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust
- Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust
- Voluntary Action Rotherham and the Rotherham Recovery Community
- Job Centre Plus
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

¹ [Drugs strategy guidance for local delivery partners - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/drugs-strategy-guidance-for-local-delivery-partners)

Aims

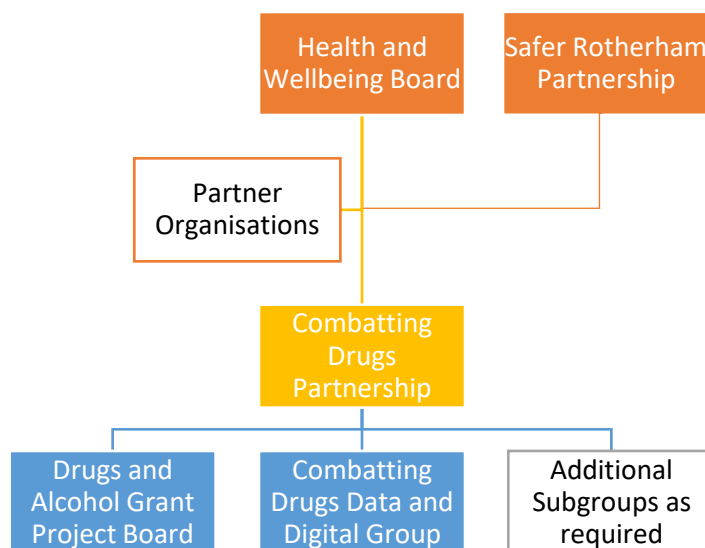
The Rotherham CDP Aims are to:

- 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 primarily to the Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board.

Sub-groups, or working groups, take a lead on specific areas of work as required, reporting to the Rotherham CDP such as the Drug and Alcohol Related Death review panel and Local Drug Information System.



Drugs and alcohol in Rotherham

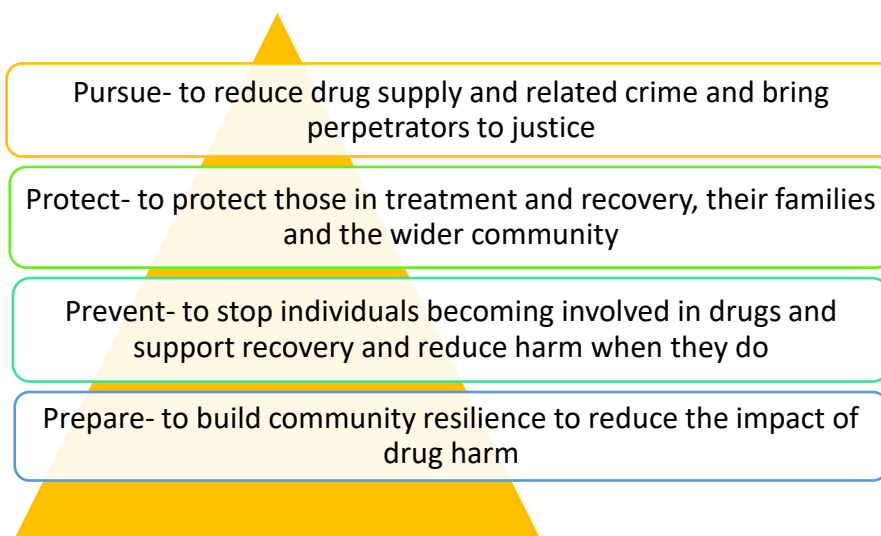
Rotherham's Drug and Alcohol Joint Needs Assessment 2022 tells us that:

- 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
- From 2019-2020, there was a 60% decrease in identified County Lines/CCE offences
- During 2020, 741 Organised Crime Group 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 new progress made in 2025 against each area are outlined below.

Prepare

Objectives	Key Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate improved information sharing including with IT systems, including Increased intelligence and information sharing around exploitation of vulnerable people• Explore training needs across the system across the system and equip workers by providing education for professionals to improve reporting, referrals and information sharing and aid in early identification. Including communicating to workers the harmful impacts of drugs and alcohol• Develop Combatting Drugs Communications and Engagement approach aiming to reduce use and tackle stigma	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CDP report for sharing key data on progress is refreshed and presented at each Partnership meeting.• South Yorkshire Police' Intelligence Reporting form has been promoted to partners to provide intel to disrupt organised crime groups.• Drug and Alcohol Training offer expanded to include training on families, anti-stigma, and bespoke training sessions for hospital teams.• New workstream and resource for Implementation of new Challenging Stigma work being developed in collaboration with our Rotherham Recovery Community and learning from individuals with Lived Experience

Prevent

Objectives

- Develop continuity of care in criminal justice pathway 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, reducing drug related harm and impacts on wider community. Including an offer for drug users – increasing access to a wider range of services aimed at raising awareness of harm and early identification

Key Progress

- Efforts are being made to focus on the quantity and quality of community treatment orders (community sentences designed to help individuals address substance use issues and reduce the risk of reoffending) by working with courts to maximise opportunities for those who are suitable and a review for the court orders with a focus on harm reduction.
- Drug and Alcohol Early Help Team has continued to support the identification of substance use in families by embedding screening tools in assessments and establishing drug and alcohol champions working across Rotherham.
- Two new drug and alcohol school workers in ROADS (the Drug and Alcohol Service) providing outreach to primary and secondary schools
- New Drug and Alcohol Outreach service at MESMAC (Sexual Health Services) has been supporting people in the community with advice and referrals
- ROADS' Outreach and engagements has expanded including through a market stall in the town centre raising awareness and identification of drug and alcohol issues.

Protect

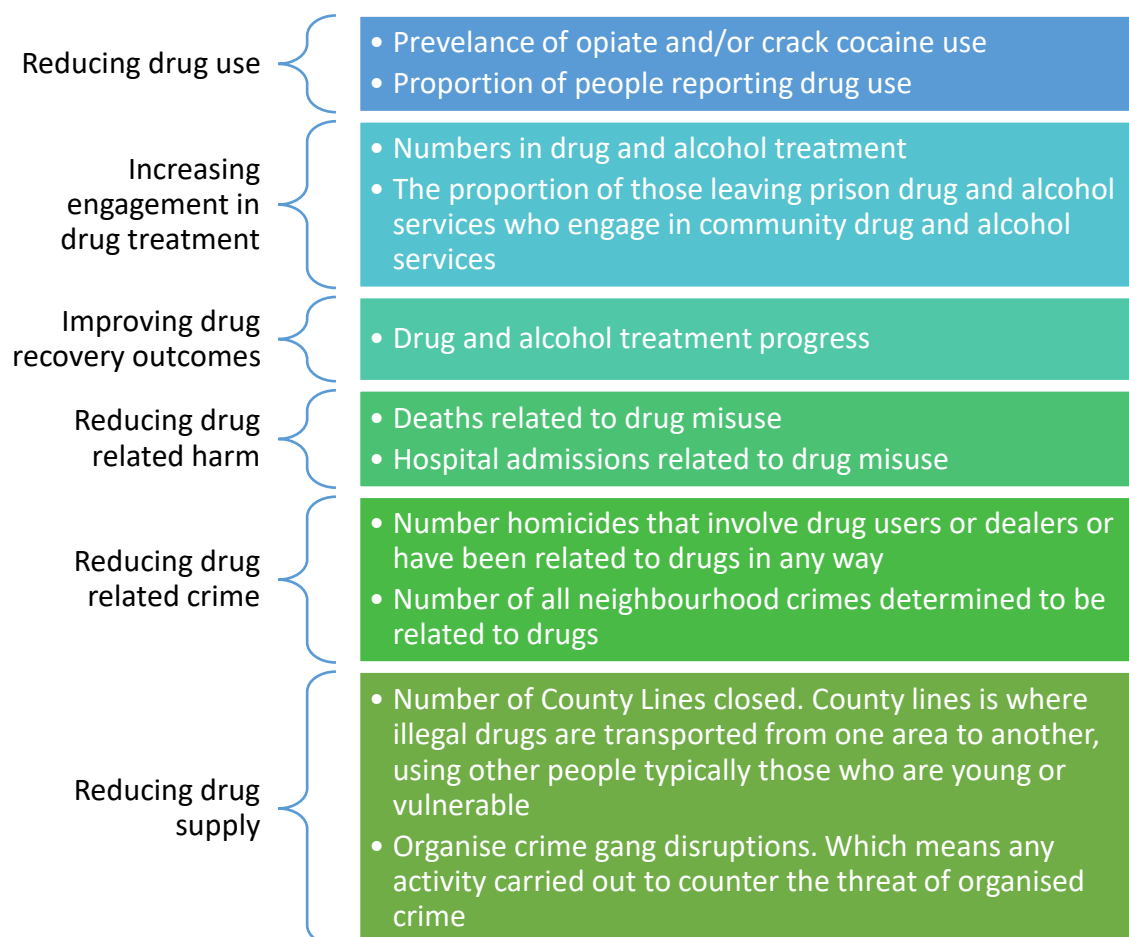
Objectives	Key Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce drug related harm• Protect vulnerable people• Implement co-occurring conditions pathways and improved psychological support. Increasing access to physical and mental healthcare to promote long term recovery.• Develop and implement recovery pathway including independent recovery community, housing, and employment support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Availability of opioid overdose reversal drug, Naloxone, continues to be widened. Police officers have been trained and can carry Naloxone to respond to possible opiate overdoses and peer distribution of take home naloxone is now in place• South Yorkshire wide Emergency Plan created to help services and respond to the identification of harmful substances in the region• A number of systems are in place including the Mental Health Community Connector pathway with VAR and the Mental Health Wellbeing Practitioners to support those with mental health needs• The Rotherham Recovery Community continues to grow, this year having several achievements including a consultation which has generated a plan for further development. The Rotherham Lived Experience Recovery Organisation (LERO) is now established

Pursue

Objectives	Key progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and effective pursue response with partners• Develop increased focus on county lines/ exploitation of children in line with child exploitation strategy and target Organised Crime Groups which use most exploitive business/operational models with regards to child exploitation• Disrupt organised crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Increase in skills and expertise with Drug Expert Witnesses and Financial Investigator training and support.• Several operations, local and national, have been carried out resulting in arrests and seizures.

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 can be shared, is provided below:

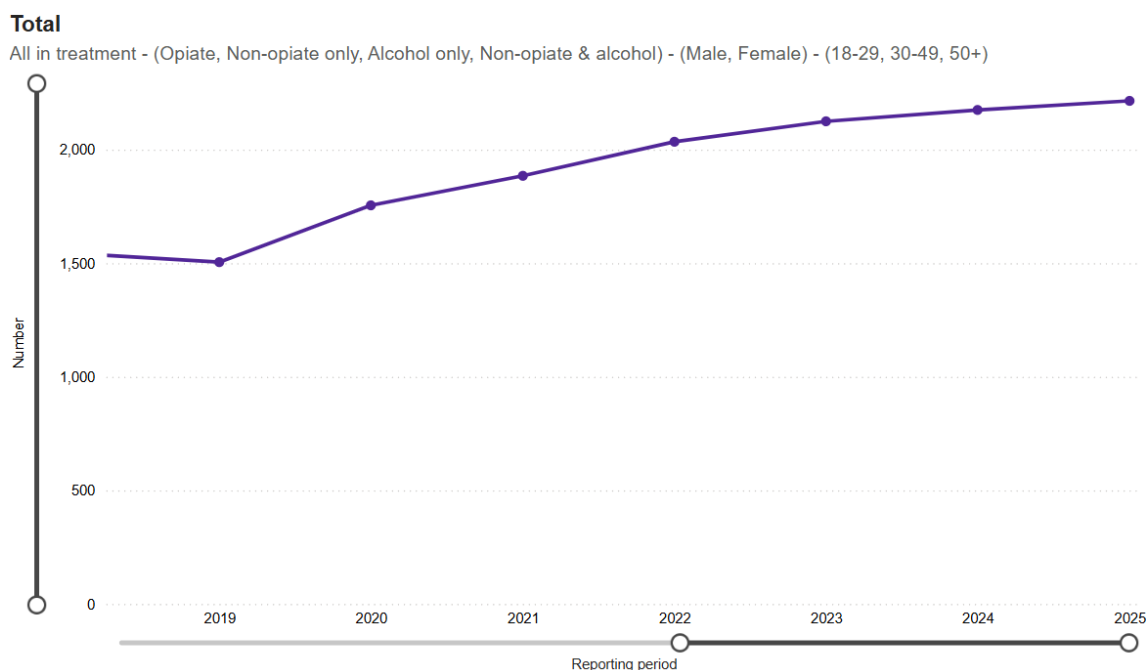
Reducing drug use

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.

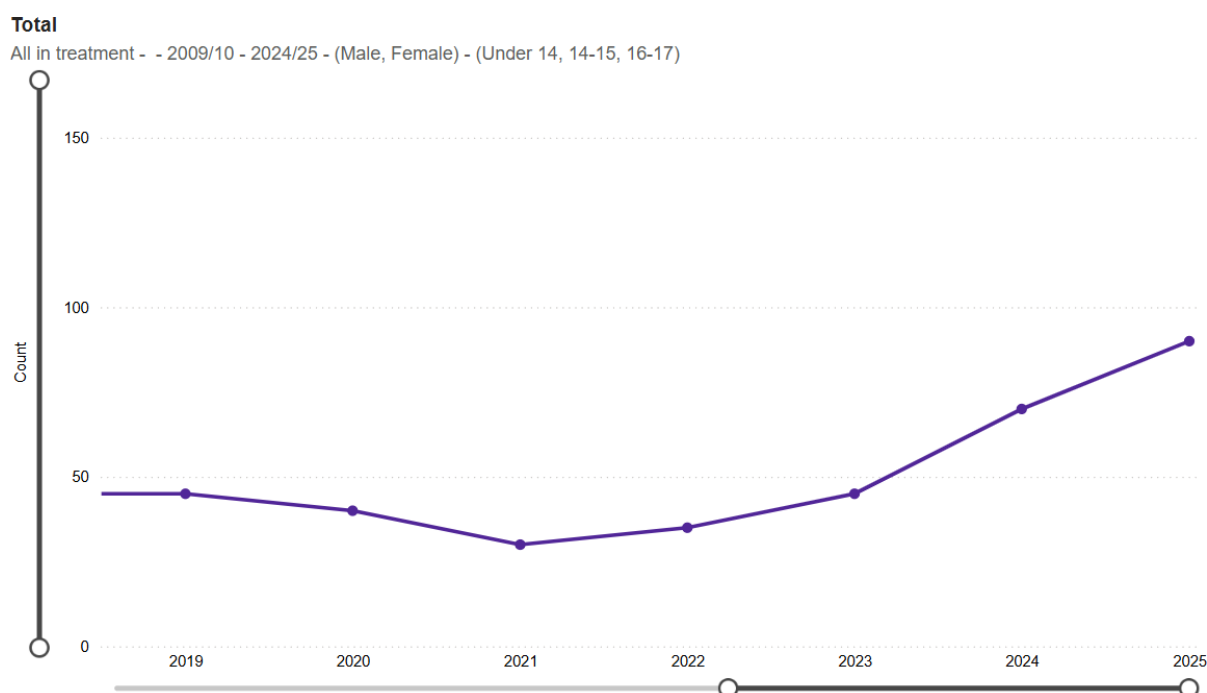
Increasing engagement in drug treatment

The number of adults in treatment have increased significantly, from 1,885 in 2020/21 to 2,215 in 2024/25 (an increase of 17.5%). Since the previous report, there was an increase from 2,125 in 2022/23 to 2,215 in 2024/25 (an increase of 4.2%). The graph below shows the figures for adults in treatment the past 6 years.

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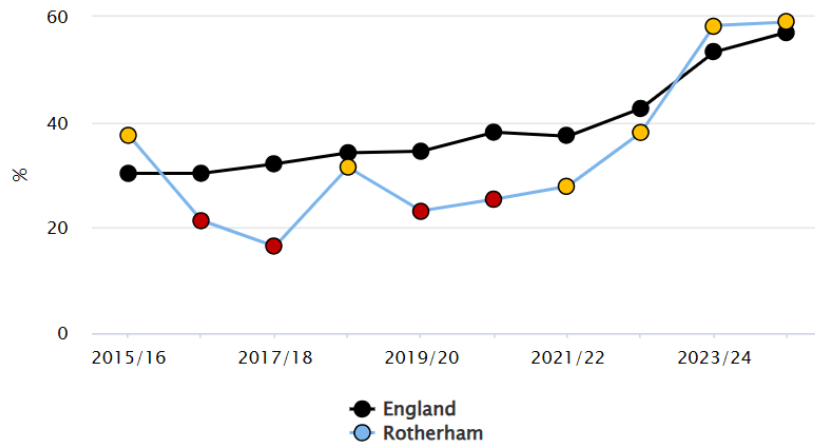
The number of children also increased significantly, from 30 in 2020/21 to 90 in 2024/25 (and increase of 200%). Since the previous report, there was an increase from 45 in 2022/23 to 90 in 2024/25 (an increase of 100%).



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 increased substantially from 38% to 58% between and 2022/23 and 2023/24. This remained consistent in the following year, at 59% in 2024/25:

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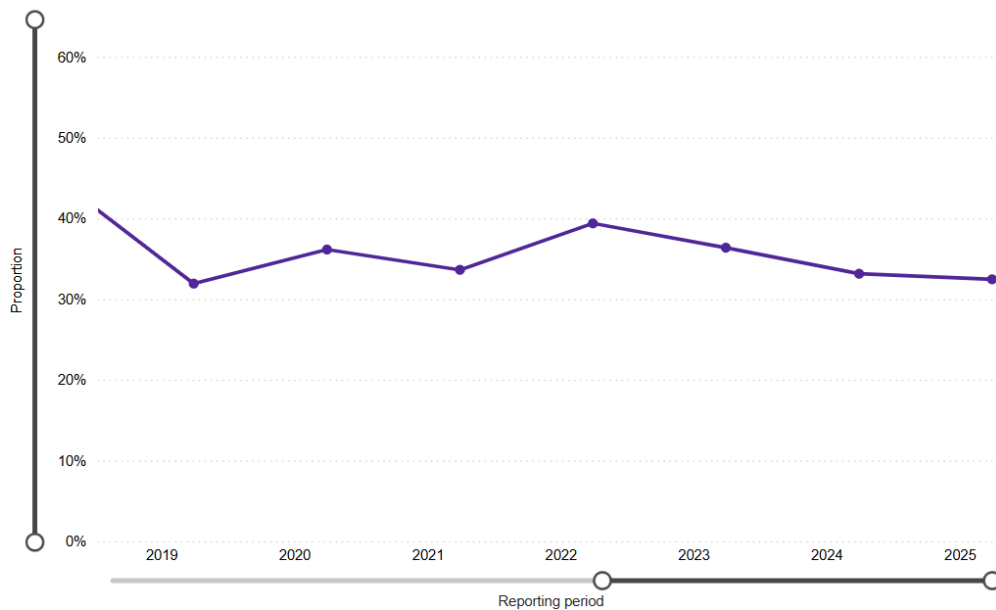


Improving drug recovery outcomes

The proportion of people exiting treatment successfully has decreased in Rotherham, from 36% in 2022/23 to 32% in 2024/25, as shown below.

Treatment exits

All in treatment - (Opiate, Non-opiate only, Alcohol only, Non-opiate & alcohol) - (Male, Female) - (18-29, 30-49, 50+)



Reducing drug related harm

There were 20 deaths from drug misuse registered in Rotherham in 2024, a decrease from 24 in 2023. 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 (7.5), 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. This

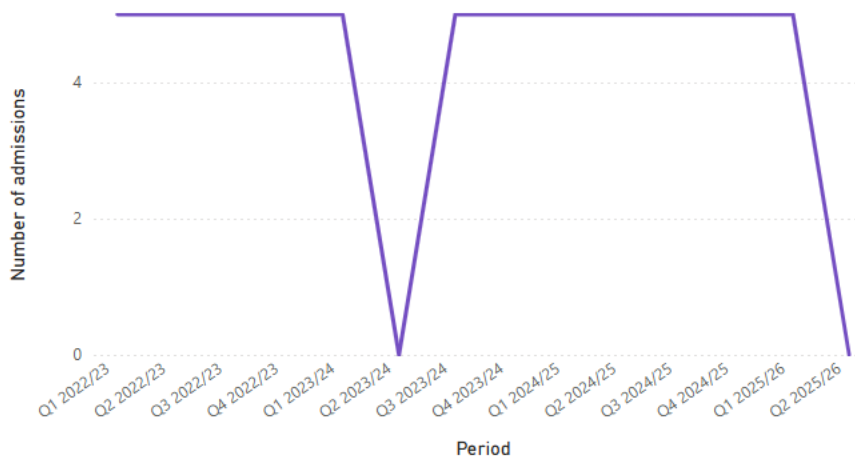
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is an age-standardised metric, drug misuse for those aged 15-24, and drug misuse for those aged 25 and over.

In the previous progress report, two all-ages metrics were shared, one for admissions for drug poisoning, and one for admissions for drug-related mental and behavioural disorders, as this was how the data was shared to the CDP at the time.

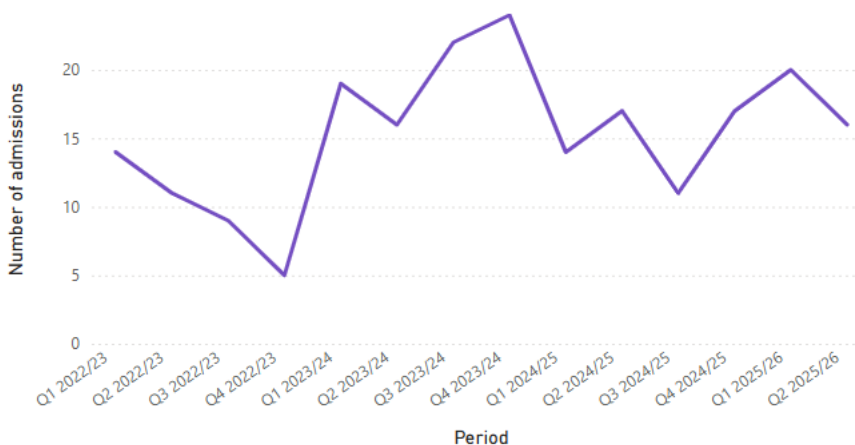
For those aged 15-24, there have consistently been 5 or fewer admissions for drug misuse for Rotherham, aside from 2 quarters where there were no admissions. Data has been suppressed for small numbers (of less than 5) for confidentiality. As such, for this metric, the figures are actually 5 admissions or fewer, and not necessarily 5 itself.

Aged 15-24: number of hospital admissions for drug misuse (drug poisoning and drug-related mental and behavioural disorders) (Rotherham Foundation Trust).



For those aged 25 and over, the number of admissions in Rotherham has fluctuated throughout the period. There were 16 admissions in Quarter 2 of 2025/26, compared to 14 at the beginning of the data period in Quarter 1 of 2022/23. The greatest number of admissions for drug misuse in Rotherham was 24 in Quarter 4 of 2023/24.

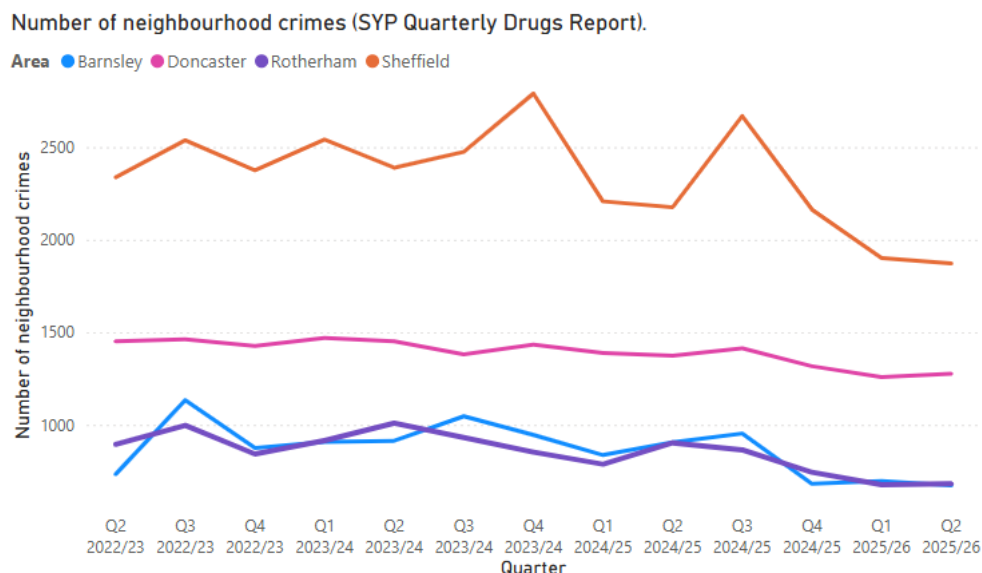
Aged 25 and over: number of hospital admissions for drug misuse (drug poisoning and drug-related mental and behavioural disorders) (Rotherham Foundation Trust).



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 682 neighbourhood crimes in Rotherham in Quarter 2 of 2025/26, compared to 895 at the beginning of the data period in Quarter 2 of 2022/23.



Reducing drug supply

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

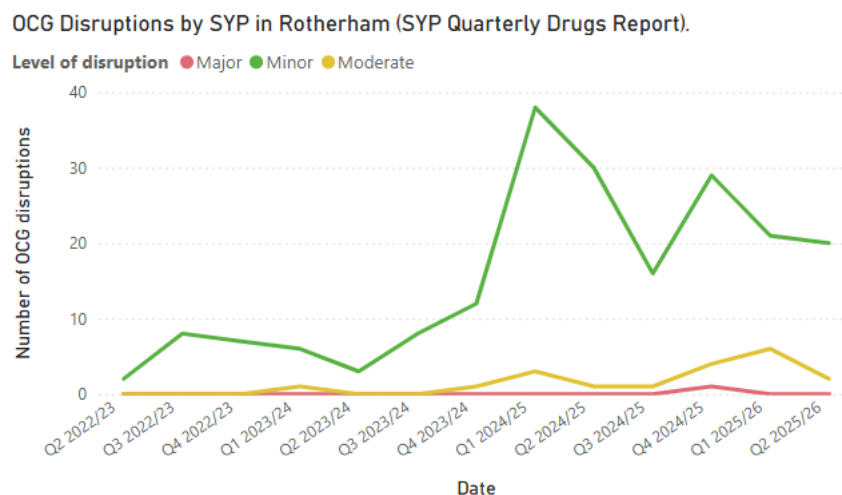
Disruptions of organised crime gangs (OCGs) in Rotherham are increasing as is shown in the graph below, although the number of minor disruptions has decreased following a peak of 38 in Quarter 1 of 2024/25.

The number of moderate OCG disruptions has increased over the period, with a peak of 6 in Quarter 1 of 2025/26, although this decreased to 2 disruptions in the following quarter.

There was one major OCG disruption in Rotherham in Quarter 4 of 2024/25.

In the most recent quarter in Rotherham, there were 20 minor disruptions, 2 moderate disruptions and no major disruptions.

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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, and more recently the establishment of the Rotherham Lived Experience Recovery Organisation. As well as increasing involvement on subgroups and wider areas of work Public Involvement is facilitated by the following:

- 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.
- Rotherham CDP has established that every 1 out of 4 meetings is led by the Recovery Community and focuses on a recovery related topic. Most recently, the Recovery Community hosted the CDP in November 2025, bringing in lived experience voices, the Community Consultation and future plans. This has continued to generate a way forward for lived experience involvement and the future CDP plan will involve lived experience voice, including affected others, in a way that's relevant, accessible and supportive.
- The Combatting Drugs Partnership's members also will attend the Rotherham Recovery Forum.

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