



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

5 March 2024

REPORT TITLE:	NATIONAL SUBSTANCE MISUSE GRANT FUNDING UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DAVE BRADBURN, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

As part of the government’s national drugs strategy (2021), Wirral Council has received grant funding from central government to tackle drug-related harms each year since 2021/22. This report updates the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee on the progress made in the delivery of these grant allocations. It also sets out the continued funding due to be received in 2024/25. This includes:

- £4,376,408 Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery (SSMTR) grant funding
- £111,364 Inpatient Detoxification grant funding
- £151,632 grant funding for Individual Placement Support, an employment support programme (receipt of this 2024/25 funding was approved by the Committee in March 2023 and is therefore not mentioned further in this report)

To guide the delivery of this national grant funding, Public Health has produced a Wirral Drugs Strategy and successfully established a nationally mandated local Combatting Drugs Partnership with a number of supporting thematic delivery groups.

As a supplementary grant, this funding is enabling additional investment in Wirral’s core drug treatment and recovery system. It is improving the quality and capacity of the treatment service and delivering improvements in the wider system. The work Wirral has done to date has been recognised as good practice nationally by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID).

Identified projects funded through Project ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) and through SSMTR from 2022 onwards are enabling local support to developments and improvements in the quality and capacity of drug and alcohol treatment. The provisional 2024/25 delivery plan sets out Wirral’s plans for the coming year.

These activities and initiatives support the Council Plan: Wirral Working Together Plan 2023 – 2027, specifically the Safe, Resilient and Engaged Communities theme. They also support the delivery of Wirral’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the commissioning of the Risk and Resilience offer to support children and young people in relation to health and risk-related behaviours.

This report is a key decision because it affects all wards and relates to financial decisions in excess of £500,000.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is recommended to:

1. Accept the scheduled 2024/25 SSMTR grant of £4,376,408 from OHID and agree the provisional Delivery Plan outlined for this funding (Appendix 1).
2. Accept and approve the provisional utilisation of the 2024/25 Inpatient Detoxification grant of £111,364.
3. Note the progress made to date in delivering the SSMTR and Inpatient Detoxification grant funding programmes.
4. Note the successful establishment of the Wirral Combatting Drugs Partnership and the publication of the Wirral Drugs Strategy.
5. Authorise the Director of Law and Governance to finalise the legal documentation arising from the acceptance of the grant funding referred to in recommendations 1 and 2.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Delivery of the three national drug strategy programmes (SSMTR, Inpatient Detoxification and Individual Placement Support) has strengthened local capacity to reduce drug-related harms for people who use drugs, and for the wider communities that they live in.
- 1.2 The SSMTR grant funding continues to build on the work of Project ADDER, though the remit has expanded to include children and young people, and to acknowledge the interactions between alcohol and drug misuse.
- 1.3 All local authority Directors of Public Health have been asked to lay out the purpose, aims and objectives of their 2024/25 SSMTR grant spending. This includes the reminder that this funding is supplementary to a sustained local grant and may not be used to replace existing local funding.
- 1.4 The grant funding is to be utilised within the 2024/25 financial year.
- 1.5 Proposals for local spend of the SSMTR grant have been developed with support from the Wirral Combatting Drugs Partnership and are subject to approval by OHID. Proposals include investment in the wider system, beyond direct drug treatment services, to deliver the aims and objectives of the 10-year National Drugs Strategy.
- 1.6 Local Combatting Drugs Partnerships have been mandated by government to deliver the aims of the National Drugs Strategy. The Wirral Combatting Drugs Partnership brings together a wide range of partners to reduce drug-related harms in Wirral. The partnership is chaired by the Director of Public Health and reports locally to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Safer Wirral Partnership Board, and the Merseyside Policing Partnership Board regionally.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A range of possible investment options were considered when developing the provisional Wirral SSMTR Delivery Plan for 2024/25. The provisional plan has been designed to ensure that Wirral is best able to deliver the aims of the national drugs strategy and align with the Wirral Drugs Strategy. This plan has been developed following a progress review of the in-year SSMTR programme, the previously delivered Project ADDER, local data, and consultation with a wide range of partners. The provisional plan is subject to approval by OHID, which is expected in early March.
- 2.2 In 2023/24, the plans for the Inpatient Detoxification grant were developed collaboratively with the Cheshire and Merseyside Inpatient Detoxification Consortium. In line with the agreed plan, there are four block contracts with the four providers in, or closest to, the Consortium's area. The decision to pursue block contracts with four providers was made to build stability, resilience, and capacity in the Inpatient Detoxification estate, to provide choice of placements, and to reduce

waiting times. Early signs are that these objectives are being achieved. The 2024/25 plan is therefore to continue with this approach.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Wirral Project ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) Programme

3.1.1 Between 2021/22 and 2022/23, Wirral was one of 13 local authorities in England granted Project ADDER funding. This aimed to reduce drug-related crime, improve the adult treatment and recovery system, and reduce drug-related deaths. Wirral was selected as a Project ADDER site based on key indicators including high-levels of drug use, drug-related deaths, and drug-related offending.

3.1.2 The Project ADDER programme ran for 2 years (2021/22 – 2022/23) and was replaced by SSMTR grant funding in 2023/24, continuing the delivery of the national drugs strategy.

3.2 Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery (SSMTR) Grant Update

3.2.1 In 2023/24 the SSMTR grant expanded the Project ADDER remit to include children and young people, and to acknowledge the interactions between alcohol and drug misuse. It also extended funding to all local authorities, with allocation based on need.

3.2.2 Both Project ADDER and the subsequent SSMTR funding have enabled additional investment in Wirral's core drug treatment service to improve its quality and capacity. Funding has delivered improvements in the wider system; for example, improving access to health care interventions, improving connections between hostels, probation, prisons, and the treatment system, enhancing community recovery services, and strengthening efforts to reduce drug-related deaths.

3.2.3 To date, the implementation of the previously agreed delivery plans has seen:

- Improved caseload and assessment capacity through the drug treatment provider - increasing treatment quality and numbers in treatment and reducing waiting times into treatment.
- Specialist key worker teams - providing enhanced support to those referred from the criminal justice system or those with a long-term health condition.
- Increased street outreach capacity - strengthening links with the rough sleepers' team and hostels to reach more vulnerable people and support them to a place of safety.
- Substance misuse liaison workers recruited to Wirral Multicultural Organisation and Wirral Change - ensuring services can reach Wirral's diverse communities and deliver culturally appropriate services.
- Strengthened links with local community policing teams - developing fast track referral routes into treatment by the Police, reducing drug-related crime, ensuring people in contact with the criminal justice system with a drug need get the

support they need, and appropriately diverting people from the criminal justice system.

- Partnership with the Probation Service - increasing integration in treatment within community sentencing provision.
- Over 40 people commenced pioneering new long-acting treatment for opiate use (Buvidal) - freeing them from the constraints of regular pharmacy visits.
- Additional residential rehabilitation placements - supporting those with the highest needs to move into recovery.
- Enhanced support for people with housing needs, through Citizens Advice and specialist hostel drug workers - targeting social and financial inequalities.

3.2.4 In 2023/24, Wirral was allocated £2.26 million in SSMTR grant funding. For 2024/25, Wirral has been allocated an uplift to £4,376,408, with a requirement to build or enhance lived experience initiatives. Continuation of the grant with the uplift will enable the sustainability and expansion of local programme successes.

3.2.5 A provisional Delivery Plan for the 2024/25 SSMTR grant is attached in Appendix 1. This is being developed with partners to ensure Wirral continues to meet the goals of the programme and the developing Wirral Drugs Strategy. It is subject to approval from OHID, which is due in early March.

3.3 Wirral Drugs Strategy

3.3.1 The Wirral Drugs Strategy was published in Summer 2023. A wide range of stakeholders were engaged in its production. The strategy will serve as the framework for future work tackling drug-related harms in Wirral, against which progress will be reported annually. Headline themes of the strategy are:

- Challenging stigmatisation and promoting the voice of people with lived experience
- Crime: Police, Probation and Prevention
- Supporting children, young people, and families
- Maintaining excellence in treatment and recovery
- Challenging health inequalities faced by people who use drugs
- Building a system-wide response to drug use

3.4 Wirral Combatting Drugs Partnership

3.4.1 The Wirral Combatting Drugs Partnership is a nationally mandated forum, bringing together a wide range of key stakeholders. Members include leaders from Police, Probation, NHS, drug use treatment and recovery services, the Voluntary and Community Sector and local authority teams. An early priority for the partnership was to develop lived experience membership.

3.4.2 The partnership is chaired by the Director of Public Health and reports locally to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Safer Wirral Partnership Board, and the Merseyside Policing Partnership Board regionally.

3.5 Joint work with Merseyside Police

3.5.1 The Project ADDER/ SSMTR programme has significantly strengthened joint working between Merseyside Police, and Wirral Ways. This has included the development of joint training and major strengthening of referral pathways between the Police and other services. Partnership activity and referrals to treatment have both increased substantially since the mobilisation of this programme, and there is a commitment on both sides to sustain this improvement in partnership working.

3.6 Inpatient Detoxification Funding Update

3.6.1 The Department of Health and Social Care is providing additional funding for Inpatient Detoxification to collective consortia across the country. This funding has 2 main purposes:

- To increase this treatment modality and improve treatment outcomes.
- To support the Inpatient Detoxification estate, prevent further closures of services, and to drive growth in the sector.

3.6.2 Wirral is part of the Cheshire and Merseyside Consortium and is fulfilling the central coordinating role. In 2023/24 the Cheshire and Merseyside Consortium was allocated £651,991, with Wirral allocated £111,364. The same allocations have been made for 2024/25.

3.6.3 The Consortium members previously agreed to establish four block contracts with the four providers in, or closest to, the Consortium's area. The decision to pursue block contracts with these providers was made to build stability, resilience, and capacity in the Inpatient Detoxification estate, to provide choice of placements, and to reduce waiting times.

3.6.4 National Inpatient Detoxification data shows a substantial increase in the number of placements made by the 9 Consortium members in the first 2 years of this programme. Wirral alone has significantly increased the number of placements and is making by far the greatest use of the new placement capacity provided by the new block contract arrangements.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The provisional spend of this grant is laid out in appendix 1.

4.2 The delivery of the SSMTR programme is funded via a ring-fenced annual grant from OHID.

4.3 This funding can only be used to deliver those activities outlined within the Menu of Interventions that comes with the programme. The expenditure is monitored monthly to ensure that it stays within plan and does not overspend or underspend. The Council is required to return any unused funding to central government.

4.4 There is a strong case for investment in this field and the whole-system approach that the ADDER/SSMTR grant promotes. In 2018, Public Health England

estimated a £4 social return for every £1 invested in drug treatment, with this increasing to a total of £21 over 10 years.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Prior to receipt of funding for each of the grants covered by this paper, approval of detailed spending plans by OHID is required. All grants are covered by Memoranda of Understanding co-signed by council officers and the awarding government body. Regular financial and performance reporting to OHID is required as a condition of the grants.
- 5.2 Grants for 2024/25 and beyond are subject to the same process as laid out in paragraph 5.1.
- 5.3 All commissions established as a result of funding have been, or will be, undertaken in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations and Wirral Contract Procedure Rules.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Details of interventions to be funded utilising these Wirral grants are outlined in the proposed Delivery Plan, Appendix 1. Retention/recruitment is planned to a number of SSMTR posts that will enable the delivery of the plan and the Wirral Drugs Strategy.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There is little risk to the council in accepting this grant funding. The funding can only be used to deliver these specific activities as outlined within the Menu of Interventions in the Planning and Commissioning Guidance provided by the Home Office. The grant cannot be overspent. The council is required to return any unused funding to national government.
- 7.2 Risks to the delivery of the programmes include:
- Time taken / required to implement new proposals and projects and recruit to council posts while meeting procurement, commissioning, and legal requirements.
 - Further expansion of programmes will require further recruitment of specialist and non-specialist drug workers and other health professionals. There are difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified and experienced staff from an available national workforce.
 - Continuation of service developments and enhancements and additional posts now being put in place, including posts beyond the 1 remaining year of the current predictive funding proposals if this central grant funding is not extended beyond this time frame.
- 7.3 These risks will be managed and mitigated by the Wirral Combatting Drugs Partnership and monthly programme review meetings with national programme co-

ordinators from OHID. Conversations are already planned with partners to identify how Wirral can ensure an efficient and sustainable programme expansion and mobilisation beyond the financial year, 2024/25.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 In order to co-ordinate and develop the provisional delivery plan for spend in 2024/25, and to ensure successful delivery and reporting, the plan is being developed with support from partners on the Wirral Combating Drugs Partnership led by the Wirral Council Public Health team.
- 8.2 Future investment plans will be shaped by the Combatting Drugs Partnership, with the addition of and stronger input from people with lived experience of drug use. The Wirral Drugs Strategy will guide the direction of all future investments and is being developed in close consultation with people with lived experience, and an extensive range of stakeholders.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.
- 9.2 EIAs were undertaken in June 2022 for Project ADDER, Inpatient Detoxification grant and Individual Placement Support. An updated EIA was completed following confirmation of funding for the SSMTR grant for 2023-24. This can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>.
- 9.3 Previous EIAs are available here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-january-202-6>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Climate implications are being considered as part of the delivery of the interventions outlined above. For example, one aim of the Wirral Drugs Strategy is to increase the capability of the system to take the services closer to where the people live. This is primarily to facilitate increased accessibility, but it will also reduce the environmental impact of people needing to travel to appointments.
- 10.2 As part of the Naloxone distribution programme, reclaimed bicycles donated by Merseyside Police are being used to transport Naloxone (a drug that can reverse opioid overdose) around the community. This will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions.

10.3 The global drugs trade damages the environment in a number of ways. It is hoped that by reducing demand for illicit substances, the interventions outlined in this report will minimise environmental harm.

- The cultivation of cocaine is a significant contributor to deforestation in Latin America
- Opium production contributes to water shortages in Afghanistan
- Dumping of chemical waste from MDMA and ecstasy production causes environmental harm.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Delivery of the Wirral SSMTR programme will support community wealth building and provide significant local social value by working to improve the lives of some of our most vulnerable residents. Interventions delivered as part of the programme will support:

- Community development through building resilient local communities and community support organisations – this activity will be focused in areas and communities with the greatest need.
- The creation of a significant number of local employment and training opportunities.
- Increasing the number of people with jobs from areas of Wirral with the highest levels of social deprivation and health inequalities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Proposed Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery (SSMTR) Grant Delivery Plan 2024/25.

This appendix is exempt from publication pursuant to paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972 (**Information relating to the financial or business affairs** of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Action to tackle misery of drug misuse - GOV.UK
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-to-tackle-misery-of-drug-misuse>

From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives>

Extra funding for drug and alcohol treatment: 2024 to 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extra-funding-for-drug-and-alcohol-treatment-2024-to-2025>

Public Health England: Alcohol and Drug Treatment and Recovery: Why invest?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alcohol-and-drug-prevention-treatment-and-recovery-why-invest>

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee in accordance with its Terms of Reference:

c) all Public Health functions (in co-ordination with those functions reserved to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's statutory health functions).

e) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners, and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:

(i) furthering public health objectives through the development of partnerships with other public bodies, community, voluntary and charitable groups and through the improvement and integration of health and social care services.

g) in respect of the Health and Social Care Act 2006, the functions to:

(iii) investigate major health issues identified by, or of concern to, the local population.

(v) scrutinise the impact of interventions on the health of local inhabitants, particularly socially excluded and other minority groups, with the aim of reducing health inequalities.

(vi) maintain an overview of health service delivery against national and local targets, particularly those that improve the public's health.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	13 th June 2023
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	6 th March 2023
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	14 th June 2022
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	7 th June 2021
Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	8 th September 2021
Health and Wellbeing Board	15 th December 2021