The Inter Agency Drug Misuse Database (IAD), which was set up by the four Merseyside Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams (DATs), Merseyside Police and the Public Health Sector in 1997, is intended to help fulfil the need for local information on drug misuse. In particular the IAD aims to enable DATs to report on local progress towards performance targets outlined in Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain (UKADCU, 1998). Unlike other local databases, the IAD reports data on drug misusers who come into contact with the criminal justice system (CJS), as well as health services. In addition, DATs are continuing to highlight further services that could enhance the information available to the IAD. Since the last IAD report, three further agencies have commenced reporting.

The first youth offending team (YOT) on Merseyside, St. Helens YOT, reported data on all young offenders who were misusing drugs. Further YOTs are now operating on Merseyside and data from these will be reported in future reports. Lancaster Farms, a Young Offenders Institution (HMYOI) that receives Merseyside residents, also reported data since October 1999. A further agency that commenced reporting to the IAD in P5 was the Bail Support scheme now operating in Liverpool. This agency offers treatment to problematic drug users who are on bail.

This report discusses data from the first six months of 1999 (P4) and the second six months of 1999 (P5). The format of this report differs from previous reports in several ways. Most importantly, an additional chapter has been included for each agency type reporting to the IAD (Chapters 4 to 10) in order to highlight the particular issues concerning the different agency types.

How many drug users are being seen by agencies? (Figure ES.1)

In P4, 9626 reports were made to the IAD, a 19% increase on the previous period. In P5 there was a decrease of 4% to 9263 reports. Whilst syringe exchange schemes (SESs) report steady numbers of around 2000, specialist drug agencies (SDAs) report an overall increase from 3377 reports to 4950 reports. When only those SDAs who have reported in each period since P2 are considered, there has been an increase from 4285 to 4651 reports, as shown in Figure ES.1. The Police reported a reduction in the number of arrests across the periods from 1695 arrests to 1070 arrests representing a reduction in the number of people arrested, from 1618 to 998 individuals.

![Figure ES.1 Number of people reported by SDAs*, SESs, and Police: all periods](image)

SDA = specialist drug agency, SES = syringe exchange scheme.
*Analysis limited to agencies reporting every period since P2 (see Appendix C for agencies)

Relapse prevention, training and education schemes (RPTs) began reporting to the IAD in P2, although only one RPT has reported in each period since this time. This RPT reported increasing numbers of individuals in each period up until P5 when there was a slight decrease in the number of reportees (P2 = 80, P3 = 97, P4 = 142, P5 = 126). Arrest referral, which also began reporting in P2, increased the numbers of individuals reported to the IAD from 71 in P2 to 226 in P5. This substantial increase occurred when the scheme completed its pilot stages and became fully operational.
What age are drug users? (Figure ES.2)

The mean age of individuals reported to the IAD rose slightly between P1, P2 and P3 but remained steady at around 30 years in P4 and rose slightly again to 31 years in P5. In all five periods mean ages of each agency type differed, as can be seen in Figure ES.2. SDAs reported the oldest cohort with mean ages staying steady in the last three periods at around 32 years. SESs reported the next oldest cohort, with average ages of these clients having risen until P3 when they levelled off at 31.7 years. Probation reported a mean age of 29 years, making this cohort consistently younger than that reported by SESs but older than the police cohort, whose mean age was 25 years. RPT and AR clients fluctuated in their mean ages. These are likely to steady as more AR schemes are running and reporting to the IAD and if more of the RPTs on Merseyside start reporting in each period.

What percentage of reported drug users are female? (Figure ES.3)

In P4, the ratio of female to male reportees (of those individuals whose sex was recorded) was 1: 4.1 (24.2% female), whilst in P5 it was slightly lower at 1:4.0 (25.1% female). There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of female reportees over the five periods (from 21.4% in P1 to 25.1% in P5), mainly due to an increase in the percentage of arrestees who were female. Despite this increase in the percentage of female arrestees reported, the Police still only report 9.8% females whereas SESs report 15.0% females and SDAs report 33.3% females. Probation, AR and RPTs fluctuate in the percentage of females with a maximum of 35.3%. The percentage of females reported to the IAD in each period by the largest contributing agency types is shown in figure ES.3.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Total no. of reportees</th>
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<th>P3</th>
<th>P4</th>
<th>P5</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1519</td>
<td>1333</td>
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SDA = specialist drug agency, SES = syringe exchange scheme

Figure ES.3 Percentage of females reported to the IAD by agency type across the five periods

Periods: P1 (1 Jul 31 Dec ’97), P2 (1 Jan 30 Jun ’98), P3 (1 Jul 31 Dec ’98), P4 (1 Jan 30 Jun ‘99), P5 (1 Jul 31 Dec’99)
Which drugs are being misused? (Figures ES.4 - ES.8)

As in previous periods, Police data were dominated by cannabis arrests whilst SDAs and SESs reported high percentages of heroin, methadone and, in the case of SESs, anabolic steroid users. SDAs reported a decrease in the percentage of users reporting methadone as their primary drug and a corresponding increase in primary heroin use (see Figure ES.4a). SESs continued to report heroin as the most frequently reported primary drug of use, followed by anabolic steroids and then methadone (see Figure ES.4b). SESs reported a gradual decline in primary methadone use since P1 (from 10.1% to 7.5%). There were no other consistent trends in drugs of use.

![Graphs showing drug use trends](image)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>P4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SDA = specialist drug agency, SES = syringe exchange scheme

![Graphs showing primary drug of use](image)

**Figure ES.4 Primary drug of use for a) SDA and b) SES**

Of the Police reports in P4, 73.2% involved cannabis; an increase from 72.0% in P3. In P5, 67.9% of arrests were for crimes involving cannabis. There were corresponding increases in the percentages of incidents involving heroin (from 8.1% to 12.1%) and crack cocaine (from 2.5% to 3.5%). This slight increase in crack cocaine incidents was the second successive increase in 1999 (Figure ES.5a).

![Graphs showing primary drug of use](image)

**Figure ES.5 Primary drug of use for a) Police and b) RPT**

RPTs reported mainly people who were primarily using either heroin or methadone or who were drug free. In P4, there was a reduction in the percentage of clients reporting methadone as their primary drug and increases in the number reporting heroin or being drug free. There was little change in drugs of use in P5 (Figure ES.5b). The differences in the percentage of users reporting each drug may be due to the differences in the agencies that report in each period. In P4 and P5 the same two RPTs reported and similar patterns in the percentage of users reporting each drug were found.

Periods: P1 (1 Jul 31 Dec ’97), P2 (1 Jan 30 Jun ’98), P3 (1 Jul 31 Dec ’98), P4 (1 Jan 30 Jun 99), P5 (1 Jul 31 Dec ’99)
Heroin and Methadone (Figures ES.6)
In 1999 each agency type reported increases in the percentage of users reporting heroin use except SESs, which reported a slight decrease in P4 and RPTs which reported a decrease in P5. The percentages for the last five periods are shown in Figure ES.6a. The percentage of users who reported using methadone decreased in both P4 and P5. As can be seen in Figure ES.6b, all agency types apart from Police (who report very small numbers of methadone users) reported fewer methadone users in P4 and in P5.

a) Heroin  

\[\text{Percentage of clients from each agency type who reported using a) heroin and b) methadone}\]

SDA = specialist drug agency, SES = syringe exchange scheme, RPT = relapse prevention, education and training scheme  
For numbers see table in Figure ES.4

Cocaine and Crack Cocaine (Figure ES.7)
The overall percentage of people who were using cocaine increased in P4, from 5.9% to 7.4%, and remained stable in P5 at 7.3%. All agency types have followed a similar, fluctuating, pattern across the last two and a half years (Figure ES.7a). SDAs report the highest number of cocaine users followed by the Police. RPTs and SES continue to report relatively low numbers of cocaine users. Reported crack cocaine use rose from 3.7% in P3 to 6.4% in P4 and to 8.5% in P5. Although these percentages are low, there is an increasing trend in reported use across all periods. SDAs and the Police report the largest percentage of crack cocaine users (Figure ES.7b). From P2 onward (when all drugs, not just primary drugs were reported) both Police and SDAs reported increasing percentages of crack cocaine users. The destructive and addictive effects of this drug make it a particularly disturbing trend.

a) Cocaine  

\[\text{Percentage of clients within each agency type who reported using a) cocaine and b) crack cocaine}\]

SDA = specialist drug agency, SES = syringe exchange scheme, RPT = relapse prevention, education and training scheme  
For numbers see table in Figure ES.4
Amphetamine (Figure ES.8)
Reported amphetamine use remained stable in P4 and P5, at 6.2%. Figure ES.8 shows that the Police, who have reported the greatest percentage of amphetamine users, reported decreases in P3 and P4 and no change in P5. SESs, the other agency type to report substantial numbers of amphetamine users, have reported similar percentages across the five periods.

Figure ES.8 Percentage of clients within each agency type who reported using amphetamine

Cannabis and Other Drugs
The main source of data for cannabis users continued to be the Police. In P4, there was an increase in the number of arrests involving cannabis from 75.6% to 77.2%, followed by a fall in P5 to 72.2%. Of the other drugs, SDAs continued to report mainly benzodiazepines users, SESs reported mainly anabolic steroid users and the Police reported mainly people arrested for offences involving ecstasy.

The Government’s Ten-year Strategy
The IAD aims to enable the DATs on Merseyside to monitor progress towards the Government’s objectives as outlined in their Ten-year Strategy Tackling Drugs to Build a Better Britain (UKADCU, 1998). In this strategy the Government outlines four main objectives. The following four sections discuss findings from the IAD in the context of each of these objectives: Young People, Services, Communities and Availability.

Young People
An important focus of the Government’s Ten-year Strategy is on young people (those under the age of 25 years). The aim is to reduce substantially the proportion of people under 25 reporting use of illegal drugs in the last month and previous year substantially. Specific targets are to reduce reported heroin and cocaine use by 25% by 2005 and 50% by the year 2008 (UKADCU, 1999).

SDAs
Of the 4929 SDA clients whose age was reported in P4, 10.9% (539 individuals) were under the age of 25. In P5, 8.4% (416 individuals) of SDA clients whose age was reported were under 25. These figures continue a trend of decreasing percentages since P2 when 12.5% of reportees were under 25. The percentage of SDA clients under 25 who reported using heroin rose both in P4 and in P5 (from 64.7% in P3 to 73.3% in P4 and 79.6% in P5). The percentage of under 25s reporting the use of cocaine continued to rise in P4 to 9.2% from 7.6% in P3. In P5 there was a decrease to 6.8%. The percentage of under 25s reporting the use of crack cocaine increased dramatically from 9.4% in P3 to 13.4% in P4 and again to 18.6% in P5.

SESs
SESs reported little change in the percentage of their clients who were under the age of 25 years and the numbers of individuals under 25 remained the same at 287 individuals (17.2% and 17.6% of total individuals respectively). Unlike SDAs, who have reported an increase in the percentage of under 25s reporting heroin use, SESs reported a steady decrease in the first four periods, from 45.5% in P1 to 34.5% in P4 followed by a slight increase to 35.5% in P5. Very few SES clients under 25 report using cocaine so any trend is difficult to determine. Anabolic steroid use in under 25s increased sharply in P4 from 41.7% to 49.8% but remained stable in P5.
RPTs
RPTs have reported fluctuating percentages of under 25s across the periods (between 7.1% and 14.3%).

Probation
There was a large increase in the percentage of Probation clients under 25, from 10.1% in P3 to 25.8% in P4, which remained steady in P5 at 25.6%. It is likely that the improvements in Probation’s reporting system has now given a more accurate picture of the percentage of clients under 25.

Arrest Referral
AR reports showed a decreasing percentage of clients as under 25 years old (36.6% in P2, 23.0% in P3 and 21.1% in P4) until P5 when there was an increase to 27.1%. These changes may be due to small numbers of reports in early periods and the project being fully operational in P5.

Police
The Police report the youngest cohort of users with a mean age of approximately 25 years. Therefore, the percentage of arrestees under the age of 25 years is high and changes little. The largest increase was in P3 when the percentage of arrestees under 25 rose from 54.8% to 58.6%, stabilising in P4 and P5 to 59.5% and 58.8%. The drug most commonly involved in arrests either as a primary or subsidiary drug is cannabis (83.2% in P4 and 79.8% in P5). However, the percentage of young people arrested for heroin has risen in each period since P2 (See Figure ES.9) as have arrests of young people for offences involving crack cocaine (Figure ES.9).

![Graph showing percentage of young arrestees who were arrested for offences involving heroin, cocaine or crack cocaine](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total no. of reportees</th>
<th>P1</th>
<th>P2</th>
<th>P3</th>
<th>P4</th>
<th>P5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>937</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>941</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>608</td>
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</table>

**Figure ES.9** Percentage of young arrestees who were arrested for offences involving heroin, cocaine or crack cocaine

DAT areas
Over the five periods Liverpool DAAT reported reducing percentages of young people while Sefton and St. Helens & Knowsley have reported decreases apart from a transient increase in P4. Wirral DAT has reported fluctuating percentages of young people. Analyses by drug of use show no trends for any of the DATs with the percentages of heroin, cocaine and crack cocaine users fluctuating across periods.

Communities
The Government’s Key Objective regarding communities is “To Reduce levels of repeat offending amongst drug misusing offenders”. The data reported by the Police show that the percentage of arrestees who were rearrested in the same period has increased slightly between P1 (4.1%) and P5 (7.1%), although there has been some fluctuation between these periods. When broken down by DAT areas there are no obvious trends, with the percentage of arrestees being rearrested ranging from 0.0% to 8.5%.

One of the key performance indicators for this key objective is an increase in the number of offenders referred to and entering treatment. The percentage of arrestees who were also reported in the same period by SDAs range from 4.0% to 6.9% with an average of 5.3%. The average percentage of arrestees reported by SDAs in subsequent periods shows a
slight but consistent fall the further removed the period of the SDA report is from the arrest. There are no trends in the data over time, suggesting that the percentage of drug crime offenders accessing treatment services has changed little, staying at around 5%. A similar analysis carried out on the numbers and percentages of arrestees accessing SESs revealed similar patterns to the SDAs, although the percentages were much lower, ranging from 1.5% to 2.9% (an average of 2.4%) of arrestees being reported by SESs in the same period as the arrest.

There has been a decreasing overlap between Probation and health services, especially SDAs (from 42.9% to 25.6%). The effects of the changes in Probation’s reporting method are as yet unclear, although future monitoring should identify any trends.

The percentage of people reported by AR who were also reported by SDAs in the same or subsequent periods is much larger than the percentage of Police arrestees also reported by SDAs (between 19.7% and 49.5% for AR compared to 4.1% and 7.1% for arrestees). This large percentage of AR clients being reported in the same and subsequent periods is encouraging. Until earlier this year only one AR has been running on Merseyside (Wirral) although new schemes that are now operating in Merseyside are to commence reporting to the IAD.

**Services**

The Government strategy aims to increase the proportion of drug misusers accessing services. As the exact size of the drug misusing population cannot be determined it is not possible to monitor this objective directly. However, it is possible to monitor the number of drug misusers accessing services. The number of people reported by SDAs increased from 4194 individuals in P3 to 4929 individuals in P4 and 4949 individuals in P5. Liverpool and Wirral have reported increases in the number of people accessing SDAs in 1999 and for Wirral this is part of a continuing increase. The number of people reported by Sefton SDAs has changed little over the periods whereas St. Helens & Knowsley reported a slight decrease in P4 but very little other change (Figure ES.10).

![Figure ES.10](image_url)

*Figure ES.10  Number of individuals reported by SDAs in each DAT area across the last four periods*

SESs are also drugs services, although they are not specifically treatment services. Numbers reported by SESs have remained fairly steady at between 1868 individuals and 2085 individuals. The number of people reported to SES in Merseyside have changed little for any of the four DATs although there has been a gradual increase in the number of reports by St. Helens & Knowsley SESs.

The Government strategy also aims to decrease the number of users injecting drugs. In P4, only SDAs reported the route of administration of drugs, whereas in P5 the YOT and HMYOI also reported route of administration. The percentage of SDA clients who reported injecting fell in P4 (from 35.5% in P3 to 32.2% in P4) but remained steady in P5 at 32.0%. Of the youth agencies, only one of 36 YOT clients was injecting their drugs whereas the HMYOI reported four of eight offenders injecting their drugs. The numbers for these agencies are at present too small for any conclusions to be drawn, but future periods will be monitored.
**Availability**

The Government's Ten-year Strategy aims to reduce access to drugs amongst 5 to 16 year olds and to increase the number of arrests for supply of illegal substances.

Despite the overall decrease in the number of arrests for Merseyside, the number for trafficking offences (i.e. supply, possession with intent to supply, production and cultivation) increased in both P4 and P5. There was little change in the type of drugs involved in arrests for supply in P4, although the type of drugs involved in other trafficking offences did change. Importantly there was an increase in the percentage of arrests for possession with intent to supply crack cocaine and a decrease in that for amphetamines.

In P5 there was a large reduction in the number of arrests for the supply of cannabis (from 27 to 5) and an increase in the number of arrests for the supply of heroin (From 11 to 45) and crack cocaine (from 2 to 10). Arrests for possession with intent to supply in P5 involved more arrests for ecstasy (7 compared to 20) and fewer arrests for cannabis (109 compared to 68).

In summary, despite fewer arrests for drug crimes in P4 and P5 there has been an increase in arrests for trafficking offences, especially for those drugs targeted by the Government, namely heroin and cocaine (including crack cocaine).