

Benchmarking Report 2023-2024 Summary

INTRODUCTION

The Drug Deaths Taskforce published 10 standards of care for medication assisted treatment in May 2021. This was followed by the Scottish Government plan for the National Mission on Drugs (2022) and the National Strategy for Community Justice (2022).

The purpose of this document is to provide an update on the implementation of the medication assisted treatment (MAT) standards across all 29 Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) areas in Scotland as of April 2024 and to provide information that ADPs can use for benchmarking and improvement.

The full benchmarking report is available on the [PHS website](#).

NATIONAL FINDINGS

The report for the year up to April 2024 again shows good progress, particularly on MAT standards 1–5 as well as some really good results on standards 6–10. Local areas now have systems in place to assess the experiences reported from people using services, but we still have to demonstrate clearly that the experiential feedback is leading to change and improvement. This work is a collaborative effort, involving numerous partners involved in delivery at both the local and national level.

Overall the results are extremely good and demonstrate year on year improvement and consistency in standards of care across all 29 ADP areas. This is a reflection of innovation, hard work and sharing of good practice by local teams.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE SPECIFIC

North Lanarkshire Comparison Table:

Reporting Year	North Lanarkshire										
	MAT 1	MAT 2	MAT 3	MAT 4	MAT 5	MAT 6	MAT 6 & 10	MAT 7	MAT 8	MAT 9	MAT 10
2022	Red	Amber	Amber	Amber	Amber	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2023	Amber	Provisional Green	Amber	Amber	Amber	Red	N/A	Red	Amber	Red	Red
2024	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	N/A	Provisional Green	Provisional Amber	Provisional Green	Amber	N/A

RAGB colour legend
■ Red
■ Provisional Amber
■ Amber
■ Provisional Green
■ Green

2022 – MAT 6 to MAT 10 were not assessed
 2023 – MAT 6 and MAT 10 were assessed separately
 2024 – MAT 6 and MAT 10 were assessed jointly

MAT standard 1: Access

The standard is fully implemented (RAGB green) in 23 out of 29 ADPs where 75% of people received a first MAT assessment within one day of presentation.

North Lanarkshire Urgent Response Team was developed to meet MAT 1, ensuring that anyone who required MAT would be assessed and receive a prescription within 24 hours of receipt of referral. Data submission to MIST shows 81% of people referred received a prescription within 24 hours, bypassing the 75% requirement.

MAT standard 2: Choice

The standard was assessed as fully implemented (RAGB green) in 28 out of 29 ADP areas. National data show a 10% decrease in methadone prescribing from 75% in 2022 to 65% in 2024 and an increase of 12% in prescribing of long-acting injectable buprenorphine from 6% in 2022 to 18% in 2024.

North Lanarkshire shows an 8% decrease in methadone prescribing and a 9% increase in long-acting injectable buprenorphine.

MAT standard 3: Assertive outreach and anticipatory care

The standard was assessed as sustained implementation (RAGB blue) in one ADP area, full implementation (RAGB green) in 25 ADP areas and provisional green in two ADP areas.

More work is required on data sharing and pathways to increase collaboration with family members, police, homeless services, third sector services and primary care. This is because as well as early notification of events, these partners can have a crucial role in the initial response and future care planning.

North Lanarkshire commissioned Turning Point Scotland Crisis Outreach Team to provide a bespoke service including assertive outreach, crisis intervention and overdose response. ART and Harm Reduction Team work closely with Turning Point Scotland to engage with the most vulnerable, hard to reach cohort of service users. North Lanarkshire achieve both criteria for MAT 3, contact within 24 hours and physically seen within 72 hours of notification.

MAT standard 4: Harm reduction

The standard was assessed as sustained implementation (RAGB blue) in two ADP areas, fully implemented (RAGB green) in 25 ADP areas and provisional green in two ADP areas.

All ADP areas report that blood-borne virus (BBV) testing, injection equipment provision, naloxone and overdose awareness, and wound care are available for at least 75% of the caseload at all MAT appointments.

North Lanarkshire developed a recording tool to capture every Harm Reduction intervention, this is now imbedded into service practice.

MAT standard 5: Retention as long as needed

This standard was assessed as fully implemented (RAGB green) in 27 out of 29 ADP areas.

A key intention of this standard is to help reduce unplanned discharge because this can pose an increased risk of harm if people are not supported in the transition from care. All but one ADP area achieved the benchmark of 75% of people retained in care for six months.

North Lanarkshire ensures that people are supported to discharge when they are ready, 87% of people supported by ART have been linked for more than a year. This is exceptional in comparison to other areas. North Lanarkshire ART are using a variety of measures to support retention including use of NEO system to detect non engagement with pharmacies.

MAT standards 6 and 10: Psychological support and trauma- informed care

MAT standards 6 and 10 were assessed separately in 2023 but assessed jointly in 2024 because there is a lot of overlap with process documentation and delivery. All but one ADP area were assessed as provisional green because they have a service delivery plan in place and evidence of staff completing appropriate tier 1 training over the last two years.

North Lanarkshire have a clear and concise implementation plan for MAT 6+10. The plan includes commissioned services as well as ART to ensure consistency in service provision across North Lanarkshire. We have a 10-month plan to ensure all staff receive the appropriate training and collate monthly stats on completion rates across ART.

MAT standard 7: Primary care

A total of 22 areas were assessed as provisional green but this does not always translate into shared care happening, usually due to insufficient resources and lack of GP involvement. Experiential evidence indicates that shared care between substance use and primary care services is limited across the country – it has been described in experiential feedback from a person accessing treatment as 'a postcode lottery'.

"Borders, North and South Lanarkshire and Shetland have no pathways to systematically share care

between specialist services, GPs, community pharmacies and others". Direct from Benchmarking Report 2024

MAT standard 8: Independent advocacy and social support

All 29 ADP areas were assessed as provisional green which means that all areas have commissioned (or engage with) independent advocacy services and have advocacy training plans in place for staff. However, the intention of MAT 8 is to ensure that all people have access to support for housing, welfare and income support as well as independent advocacy.

North Lanarkshire has specialist commissioned Advocacy service who provide support to Under 65s and Over 65s.

MAT standard 9: Mental health

This standard was assessed as provisional green in 25 out of 29 ADP areas where there are documented procedures for joint working to care for people with co-occurring mental health and substance use issues.

North Lanarkshire Urgent Response Team are able to screen for mental health which allows for MAT 9 criteria to be met for a small cohort of people. A Pan Lanarkshire scoping exercise is underway to gather data to allow for planning and moving forward

JUSTICE

North Lanarkshire case study used in Benchmarking Report pg54:

MAT 2: HMP Shotts

Prison healthcare staff liaised with the MAT standards lead at NHS Lanarkshire to adapt MAT 2 standard operating procedures developed for community services. This was supported by regular staff meetings and input from the PHS MAT programme.

A survey was undertaken with 16 residents prescribed long-acting injectable buprenorphine for more than six months. Prescriptions were initiated in the community or the prison. The majority (15) of residents spoke positively about the therapeutic benefits with only one expressing negative views. People fed back that not having to take a drug each day led to positive identity changes and one person said they 'forgot' they were on prescription drugs. One person spoke about suppressed emotions returning after decades of being prescribed methadone and another described the challenges of revisiting old memories. The survey will be repeated over the next year with plans to share learning at the new prison recovery hub. Residents' views on the other MAT standards and care will be sought at that time.

Key learning points

Continuous feedback can help enhance service delivery by providing valuable insights into lived experiences and the impact of prescription choice on wellbeing within a prison setting.

Prison-based and community-based staff can work together by using MAT resources and learning to support the implementation of standards in prison settings

FURTHER READING

Infographic

<https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/27743/v5-progress-of-mat-standards-1-2-3-5-and-9-in-scotland-infographic-2024-1536-240718.pdf>

2 Page Summary

<https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/27787/v11-2page-summary-benchmark-report-on-mat-standards-stats-summary.pdf>

Executive Summary

<https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/27927/v11-executive-summary.pdf>