The government has launched a pilot scheme to target the many underlying social needs of recovering addicts

Cathy Pryor

Standing on the long, flat, grey sands of the beautiful National Trust-owned beach at Formby, north of Liverpool and looking out towards the Irish Sea, the notion of deprived city areas and severe drug problems seems a very long way away. Sadly, however, that is not the case. Just a few miles to the south of this affluent coastal town – which has been home to several Premier League footballers such as Steven Gerrard and Wayne Rooney – and in the same Merseyside borough of Sefton lies the very different urban area of Bootle.

In this part of Sefton, there are pockets of council housing where poverty and unemployment is ingrained and where there is a high incidence of substance abuse. It is here that Sefton Drug Action Team (DAT) focuses its resources and it is this area that is likely to benefit greatly from the radical project that the team currently have under way.

Sefton is one of seven partnerships of government’s pioneering Drug System Change Pilot Programme, which is aimed at helping drug users achieve better outcomes. It is here that Sefton DAT, which is the gov...