

Drug Treatment in Ireland 2010 - 2016

Introduction

The **National Drug Treatment Reporting System** (NDTRS) records cases of treated problem drug and alcohol use in Ireland. This bulletin reports on cases of treated **problem drug use** (excluding alcohol) between 2010 and 2016.

Overview

In this seven-year period, 63,187 cases were treated. The number of cases rose from 8,806 in 2010 to 9,892 in 2015. In 2016 the number of cases fell to 9,227.

- The proportion of *new* cases decreased from 42.5% in 2010 to 38.2% in 2016.
- The majority of cases were treated in outpatient facilities (63.4%) over the period, similar to previous years.
- The proportion of cases treated in prison decreased from 10.6% to 8.0% over the reporting period.
- The proportion of cases treated in residential facilities increased from 14.0% in 2010 to 20.4% in 2016.

Main problem drug (excluding alcohol):

- **Opiates** (mainly heroin) were the most commonly reported drug. The proportion of cases treated decreased from 58.1% in 2010 to 47.0% in 2016.
- **Cannabis** was the second most common drug among those treated. The proportion of cases who reported cannabis increased from 23.0% in 2010 to 26.4% in 2016.
- Cannabis is the most common drug reported by *new* cases.
- **Cocaine** remains the third most common drug reported. In 2016, 12.3% of cases reported problem cocaine use, the highest proportion since 2010.
- The proportion of cases who reported **benzodiazepines** as a main problem drug increased from 4.1% in 2010 to 9.7% in 2016.
- The proportion treated for **Z-drugs** increased from 0.1% in 2010 to 1.1% in 2016.

- Reported problem use of **novel psychoactive substances** (NPS) as a main problem peaked in 2010, at 2.5% of all cases treated, and dropped to 0.4% of all cases treated in 2012. Since then it has increased slightly to represent 0.8% of all cases treated in 2016.

Polydrug use

- The majority of cases reported problem polydrug use (62.7%) over the period.
- The proportion who reported polydrug use decreased from 66.7% in 2010 to 61.8% in 2016.
- Up to 2013, alcohol was the most common additional drug reported. Since 2014 benzodiazepines have been the most common additional drugs reported.

Socio-demographics

- The **median age** of cases has increased from 28 years in 2010, to 30 years in 2016.
- The majority of cases, seven in every ten, reported were **male**.
- The proportion who were **homeless** increased from 5.1% in 2010, to 9.6% in 2016.
- The proportion of **Travellers** treated increased marginally from 2.8% in 2010 to 3.2% in 2016.

Injecting behaviour

- The proportion of all cases treated who reported **ever injecting** remained relatively stable over the reporting period at around one third of all cases.
- The proportion of **new cases who reported ever injecting** has decreased from 15.2% in 2010 to 13.5% in 2016.

NDTRS data

This bulletin presents **drug treatment data** (excluding alcohol) from the NDTRS for the period 2010–2016. NDTRS data in this bulletin include cases treated in all types of services: outpatient, inpatient, GPs, low threshold and those treated in prison.¹

In the seven-year period 2010 to 2016, **a total of 63,187 cases were treated for problem drug use** (excluding alcohol).^{2,3} The number of cases treated increased from **8,806** in 2010 to **9,227** in 2016 (Table 1). The proportion of **new** cases treated has decreased from 42.5% in 2010 to 38.2% in 2016.

In 2016 the NDTRS began the implementation of a new web based data collection tool; this has significantly changed the way the NDTRS works and this transition may have contributed to the reduction in the number of cases reported to the NDTRS for 2016. While the number of cases reported for 2016 decreased, the trends remained consistent with those reported for 2010 to 2015.

Data in this bulletin supercedes all previously published data from NDTRS publications.

Table 1 Number of cases treated for problem drug use, by treatment status, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) |
| Revised total | 8806 | | 8361 | | 8005 | | 9006 | | 9890 | | 9892 | | 9227 | |
| New cases | 3741 | (42.5) | 3316 | (39.7) | 3272 | (40.9) | 3475 | (38.6) | 3776 | (38.2) | 3742 | (37.8) | 3526 | (38.2) |
| Previously treated cases | 4842 | (55.0) | 4862 | (58.2) | 4518 | (56.4) | 5239 | (58.2) | 5643 | (57.1) | 5855 | (59.2) | 5335 | (57.8) |
| Treatment status unknown | 223 | (2.5) | 183 | (2.2) | 215 | (2.7) | 292 | (3.2) | 471 | (4.0) | 295 | (3.0) | 366 | (4.0) |

Incidence and prevalence of treatment

Annual rates for the incidence (new cases) and prevalence (all cases) of treated problem drug use were calculated per 100,000 of the population age 15 to 64 years based on census figures from the CSO⁴ (Figure 1). Incidence has decreased from 118.7 per 100,000 in 2010, to 111.0 in 2016.

Prevalence, which includes new cases and those cases returning to treatment, has increased from 282.3 per 100,000 in 2010 to 293.1 per 100,000 in 2016. This could be an indicator of the chronic, relapsing nature of addiction.

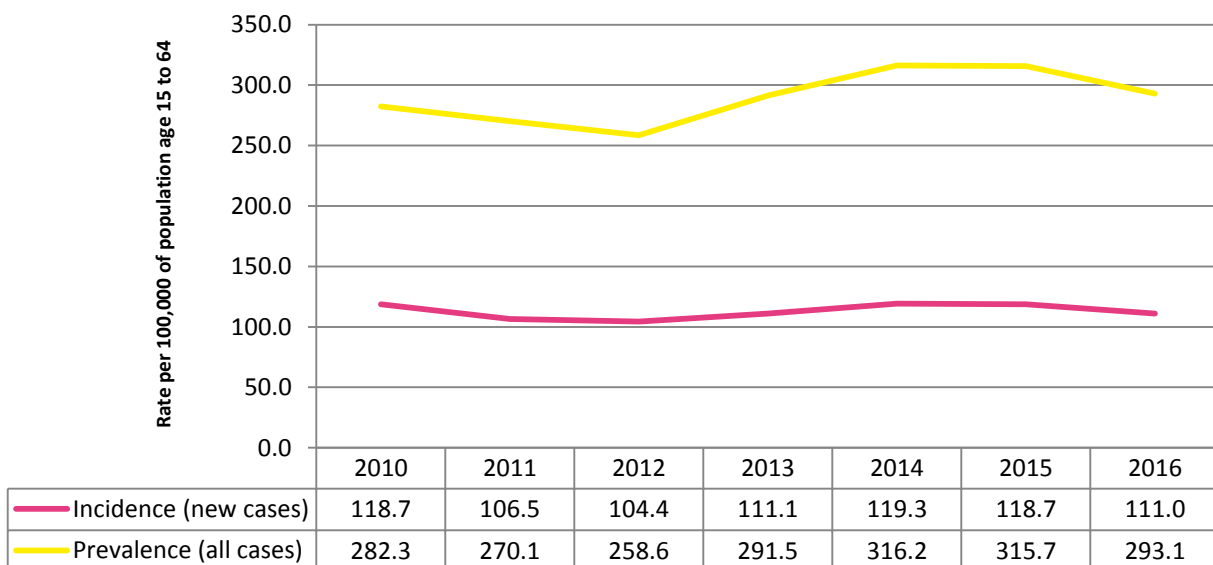


Figure 1 Incidence and prevalence of treated problem drug use, per 100,000 of the 15-64 year-old population, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

Type of service provider

Over the period the majority of cases were treated in outpatient facilities (63.4%), dropping slightly from 63.2% in 2010, to 59.4% in 2016 (Table 2).

Between 2010 and 2016, 8.7% of cases were treated in prison, the proportion decreasing from 10.6% in 2010, to 8.0% in 2016.

Between 2010 and 2014, the proportion of cases treated in residential settings remained stable, between 13% and 14%. However in 2015, the proportion of cases treated in residential facilities increased to 18.0%, and to 20.4% in 2016.

Table 2 Number of cases treated for problem drug use, by type of service provider, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|----------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) |
| All cases | 8806 | | 8361 | | 8005 | | 9006 | | 9890 | | 9892 | | 9227 | |
| Outpatient | 5563 | (63.2) | 5623 | (67.3) | 5299 | (66.2) | 5998 | (66.6) | 6251 | (63.2) | 5818 | (58.8) | 5481 | (59.4) |
| Inpatient* | 1232 | (14.0) | 1107 | (13.2) | 1124 | (14.0) | 1233 | (13.7) | 1348 | (13.6) | 1779 | (18.0) | 1885 | (20.4) |
| Low threshold | 793 | (9.0) | 642 | (7.7) | 711 | (8.9) | 812 | (9.0) | 1190 | (12.0) | 1197 | (12.1) | 886 | (9.6) |
| Prison | 930 | (10.6) | 761 | (9.1) | 642 | (8.0) | 747 | (8.3) | 844 | (8.5) | 827 | (8.4) | 737 | (8.0) |
| General practitioner | 288 | (3.3) | 228 | (2.7) | 229 | (2.9) | 216 | (2.4) | 257 | (2.6) | 271 | (2.7) | 238 | (2.6) |

* Includes any service where the client stays overnight e.g. in-patient detoxification, therapeutic communities, respite and step down

Main problem drug

All cases

Opiates (mainly heroin) remain the main problem drug reported over the period. However, as a proportion of total cases reported there has been a drop year-on-year from 58.1% in 2010, to 47.0% in 2016 (Table 3).

Cannabis remains the second most common main problem drug. The proportion of cases who reported cannabis increased from 23.0% in 2010 to 28.2% in 2015 before falling to 26.4% in 2016.

Cocaine remains the third most common main drug. The proportion who reported cocaine fell from 9.9% in 2010 to 7.9% in 2013. Since 2013 the proportion has increased each year with 12.3% reporting cocaine in 2016.

The proportion of cases who reported problem **benzodiazepine** use increased. As a proportion of all cases treated, problem **benzodiazepine** use increased from 4.1% in 2010 to 9.7% in 2016.

The proportion of cases with problem use of **Z-drugs** rose from 0.1% in 2010 to 1.1% in 2016.

The proportion of cases who reported problem use of **NPS** peaked in 2010, at 2.5% of all cases treated, and dropped to 0.4% of all cases treated in 2012. Since then it has increased slightly to 0.8% of all cases treated in 2016.

New cases

In 2016, cannabis (41.2%) was the most common main problem drug reported by *new* cases, followed by opiates (26.9%). The proportion of new cases who reported benzodiazepines as a main problem drug rose from 4.7% in 2010 to 10.0% in 2016.

Previously treated cases

In 2016, opiates (60.1%) were the most common problem drug reported by previously treated cases, followed by cannabis (17.0%).

Table 3 Main problem drug (excluding alcohol) reported in 30 days prior to treatment, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) |
| All cases | 8806 | | 8361 | | 8005 | | 9006 | | 9890 | | 9892 | | 9227 | |
| Opiates | 5115 | (58.1) | 4549 | (54.4) | 4164 | (52.0) | 4625 | (51.4) | 4948 | (50.0) | 4732 | (47.8) | 4341 | (47.0) |
| Cannabis | 2025 | (23.0) | 2161 | (25.8) | 2290 | (28.6) | 2583 | (28.7) | 2730 | (27.6) | 2786 | (28.2) | 2439 | (26.4) |
| Cocaine | 869 | (9.9) | 770 | (9.2) | 666 | (8.3) | 708 | (7.9) | 853 | (8.6) | 1026 | (10.4) | 1138 | (12.3) |
| Benzodiazepines | 365 | (4.1) | 572 | (6.8) | 636 | (7.9) | 810 | (9.6) | 953 | (9.6) | 873 | (8.8) | 897 | (9.7) |
| Z Drugs* | 13 | (0.1) | 31 | (0.4) | 43 | (0.5) | 73 | (0.8) | 155 | (1.6) | 154 | (1.6) | 103 | (1.1) |
| NPS | 221 | (2.5) | 95 | (1.1) | 34 | (0.4) | 46 | (0.5) | 71 | (0.7) | 85 | (0.9) | 72 | (0.8) |
| Amphetamines | 57 | (0.6) | 51 | (0.6) | 50 | (0.6) | 54 | (0.6) | 58 | (0.6) | 63 | (0.6) | 55 | (0.6) |
| MDMA | 54 | (0.6) | 51 | (0.6) | 47 | (0.6) | 44 | (0.5) | 56 | (0.6) | 51 | (0.5) | 53 | (0.6) |
| Volatile Inhalants | 33 | (0.4) | 26 | (0.3) | 21 | (0.3) | 13 | (0.1) | 15 | (0.2) | 15 | (0.2) | 11 | (0.1) |
| Other | 54 | (0.6) | 55 | (0.7) | 54 | (0.7) | 50 | (0.6) | 51 | (0.5) | 107 | (1.1) | 118 | (1.3) |
| New cases | 3741 | | 3316 | | 3272 | | 3475 | | 3776 | | 3742 | | 3526 | |
| Opiates | 1456 | (38.9) | 1115 | (33.6) | 1059 | (32.4) | 1034 | (29.8) | 1036 | (27.4) | 971 | (25.9) | 950 | (26.9) |
| Cannabis | 1338 | (35.8) | 1369 | (41.3) | 1499 | (45.8) | 1633 | (47.0) | 1696 | (44.9) | 1693 | (45.2) | 1452 | (41.2) |
| Cocaine | 496 | (13.3) | 396 | (11.9) | 297 | (9.1) | 320 | (9.2) | 425 | (11.3) | 513 | (13.7) | 568 | (16.1) |
| Benzodiazepines | 175 | (4.7) | 269 | (8.1) | 279 | (8.5) | 345 | (9.9) | 419 | (11.1) | 340 | (9.1) | 353 | (10.0) |
| Z Drugs* | 7 | (0.2) | 10 | (0.3) | 19 | (0.6) | 22 | (0.6) | 58 | (1.5) | 46 | (1.2) | 41 | (1.2) |
| NPS | 160 | (4.3) | 57 | (1.7) | 20 | (0.6) | 25 | (0.7) | 43 | (1.1) | 53 | (1.4) | 36 | (1.0) |
| Amphetamines | 34 | (0.9) | 31 | (0.9) | 27 | (0.8) | 32 | (0.9) | 30 | (0.8) | 33 | (0.9) | 24 | (0.7) |
| MDMA | 24 | (0.6) | 23 | (0.7) | 32 | (1.0) | 27 | (0.8) | 37 | (1.0) | 31 | (0.8) | 39 | (1.1) |
| Volatile Inhalants | 26 | (0.7) | 18 | (0.5) | 16 | (0.5) | 9 | (0.3) | 6 | (0.2) | 6 | (0.2) | 8 | (0.2) |
| Other | 25 | (0.7) | 28 | (0.8) | 24 | (0.7) | 28 | (0.8) | 26 | (0.7) | 56 | (1.5) | 55 | (1.6) |
| Previously treated | 4842 | | 4862 | | 4518 | | 5239 | | 5643 | | 5855 | | 5335 | |
| Opiates | 3538 | (73.1) | 3347 | (68.8) | 3012 | (66.7) | 3463 | (66.1) | 3658 | (64.8) | 3619 | (61.8) | 3204 | (60.1) |
| Cannabis | 632 | (13.1) | 736 | (15.1) | 723 | (16.0) | 859 | (16.4) | 932 | (16.5) | 1023 | (17.5) | 908 | (17.0) |
| Cocaine | 347 | (7.2) | 356 | (7.3) | 349 | (7.7) | 352 | (6.7) | 381 | (6.8) | 487 | (8.3) | 541 | (10.1) |
| Benzodiazepines | 181 | (3.7) | 291 | (6.0) | 337 | (7.5) | 437 | (8.3) | 487 | (8.6) | 504 | (8.6) | 500 | (9.4) |
| Z Drugs* | ~ | ~ | 20 | (0.4) | 22 | (0.5) | 48 | (0.9) | 86 | (1.5) | 99 | (1.7) | 58 | (1.1) |
| NPS | 60 | (1.2) | 36 | (0.7) | 12 | (0.3) | 19 | (0.4) | 26 | (0.5) | 29 | (0.5) | 34 | (0.6) |
| Amphetamines | 20 | (0.4) | 18 | (0.4) | 23 | (0.5) | 20 | (0.4) | 27 | (0.5) | 28 | (0.5) | 29 | (0.5) |
| MDMA | 25 | (0.5) | 26 | (0.5) | 13 | (0.3) | 17 | (0.3) | 18 | (0.3) | 19 | (0.3) | 13 | (0.2) |
| Volatile Inhalants | 6 | (0.1) | 7 | (0.1) | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | 9 | (0.2) | 9 | (0.2) | ~ | ~ |
| Other | 29 | (0.6) | 25 | (0.5) | 24 | (0.5) | 20 | (0.4) | 19 | (0.3) | 38 | (0.6) | 45 | (0.8) |
| Treatment status unknown | 223 | | 183 | | 215 | | 292 | | 471 | | 295 | | 366 | |

* Z Drugs are non-benzodiazepine hypnotic sedative drugs e.g. zolpidem, zopiclone

Polydrug use

The majority of cases (62.7%) reported polydrug use (problem use of more than one drug) over the period 2010-2016. However, the proportion of polydrug users among all cases decreased from 66.7% in 2010 to 61.8% in 2016 (Table 4).

Since 2014, benzodiazepines have replaced alcohol as the most common **additional** drug reported by polydrug users, followed by cannabis (Table 5). More cases reported **MDMA** as an *additional* problem

drug (465) (Table 5) than a *main* problem drug (53) in 2016 (Table 3). However, the proportion of cases who reported MDMA as an additional drug dropped from 12.1% in 2010 to 8.2% in 2016.

The number of cases who reported **Z-drugs** as additional problem drugs increased year on year. More cases reported a Z-drug as an additional problem drug (438) in 2016 (Table 5) than a main problem drug (103) in 2016 (Table 3). The proportion who reported Z-drugs as an additional problem drug increased from 1.8% in 2010 to 7.7% in 2016.

Table 4 Polydrug use in cases treated for problem drug use, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|-------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) |
| Total | 8806 | | 8361 | | 8005 | | 9006 | | 9890 | | 9892 | | 9227 | |
| One drug only | 2935 | (33.3) | 2847 | (34.1) | 3083 | (38.5) | 3340 | (37.1) | 3993 | (40.4) | 3872 | (39.1) | 3524 | (38.2) |
| Two or more drugs | 5871 | (66.7) | 5514 | (65.9) | 4922 | (61.5) | 5666 | (62.9) | 5897 | (59.6) | 6020 | (60.9) | 5703 | (61.8) |

Table 5 Polydrug use - additional problem drugs: all cases and new cases, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|--------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) |
| All cases | 5871 | | 5514 | | 4922 | | 5666 | | 5897 | | 6020 | | 5703 | |
| Benzodiazepines | 1928 | (32.8) | 1905 | (34.5) | 1819 | (37.0) | 2103 | (37.1) | 2294 | (38.9) | 2316 | (38.5) | 2105 | (36.9) |
| Alcohol | 2331 | (39.7) | 2295 | (41.6) | 2080 | (42.3) | 2336 | (41.2) | 2078 | (35.2) | 2051 | (34.1) | 1943 | (34.1) |
| Cannabis | 2103 | (35.8) | 1744 | (31.6) | 1515 | (30.8) | 1836 | (32.4) | 2012 | (34.1) | 1953 | (32.4) | 1878 | (32.9) |
| Cocaine | 1789 | (30.5) | 1616 | (29.3) | 1274 | (25.9) | 1335 | (23.6) | 1289 | (21.9) | 1360 | (22.6) | 1475 | (25.9) |
| Opiates | 914 | (15.6) | 974 | (17.7) | 927 | (18.8) | 1073 | (18.9) | 1082 | (18.3) | 1060 | (17.6) | 1222 | (21.4) |
| MDMA | 711 | (12.1) | 625 | (11.3) | 500 | (10.2) | 481 | (8.5) | 431 | (7.3) | 519 | (8.6) | 465 | (8.2) |
| Z Drugs | 105 | (1.8) | 157 | (2.8) | 210 | (4.3) | 307 | (5.4) | 355 | (6.0) | 436 | (7.2) | 438 | (7.7) |
| Other | 136 | (2.3) | 141 | (2.6) | 194 | (3.9) | 162 | (2.9) | 156 | (2.6) | 222 | (3.7) | 224 | (3.9) |
| Amphetamines | 200 | (3.4) | 152 | (2.8) | 153 | (3.1) | 178 | (3.1) | 162 | (2.7) | 138 | (2.3) | 128 | (2.2) |
| NPS | 309 | (5.3) | 199 | (3.6) | 135 | (2.7) | 142 | (2.5) | 98 | (1.7) | 108 | (1.8) | 115 | (2.0) |
| Volatile inhalants | 34 | (0.6) | 24 | (0.4) | 16 | (0.3) | 18 | (0.3) | 21 | (0.4) | 14 | (0.2) | 13 | (0.2) |
| New cases | 2452 | | 2077 | | 1832 | | 2062 | | 2115 | | 2077 | | 2016 | |
| Alcohol | 1154 | (47.1) | 1024 | (49.3) | 939 | (51.3) | 1030 | (50.0) | 925 | (43.7) | 910 | (43.8) | 861 | (42.7) |
| Cannabis | 928 | (37.8) | 644 | (31.0) | 529 | (28.9) | 623 | (30.2) | 661 | (31.3) | 632 | (30.4) | 603 | (29.9) |
| Benzodiazepines | 609 | (24.8) | 555 | (26.7) | 538 | (29.4) | 614 | (29.8) | 646 | (30.5) | 644 | (31.0) | 636 | (31.5) |
| Cocaine | 660 | (26.9) | 546 | (26.3) | 437 | (23.9) | 465 | (22.6) | 478 | (22.6) | 465 | (22.4) | 585 | (29.0) |
| MDMA | 374 | (15.3) | 291 | (14.0) | 232 | (12.7) | 260 | (12.6) | 237 | (11.2) | 253 | (12.2) | 237 | (11.8) |
| Opiates | 229 | (9.3) | 211 | (10.2) | 204 | (11.1) | 234 | (11.3) | 220 | (10.4) | 213 | (10.3) | 297 | (14.7) |
| Z Drugs | 24 | (1.0) | 41 | (2.0) | 59 | (3.2) | 96 | (4.7) | 78 | (3.7) | 102 | (4.9) | 111 | (5.5) |
| Other | 56 | (2.3) | 60 | (2.9) | 84 | (4.6) | 74 | (3.6) | 61 | (2.9) | 83 | (4.0) | 85 | (4.2) |
| Amphetamines | 99 | (4.0) | 71 | (3.4) | 79 | (4.3) | 83 | (4.0) | 70 | (3.3) | 58 | (2.8) | 53 | (2.6) |
| NPS | 204 | (8.3) | 116 | (5.6) | 57 | (3.1) | 47 | (2.3) | 36 | (1.7) | 42 | (2.0) | 50 | (2.5) |
| Volatile inhalants | 15 | (0.6) | 10 | (0.5) | 9 | (0.5) | 9 | (0.4) | 8 | (0.4) | 10 | (0.5) | ~ | ~ |

Risk factors

Risk factors recorded on the NDTRS include injecting and sharing of needles and syringes and also other drug paraphernalia.

The proportion of all cases treated for problem drug use who reported **ever injecting** remained relatively stable over the reporting period at around one third of all cases (Table 6). There were differences in injecting behaviour depending on treatment status, whether new to treatment or previously treated.

The proportion of **new cases who reported ever injecting** decreased over the period, from 15.2% in 2010 to 13.5% in 2016.

The proportion of **previously treated cases who reported ever injecting** decreased from 47.3% in 2010 to 44.6% in 2016.

The proportion of all cases (including new and previously treated) who reported **current injecting**

(past 30 days prior to treatment) remained relatively stable over the period.

Prior to 2016, information on **sharing of any drug paraphernalia** was collected in a single question. From 2016 this question has been changed as sharing of needles and syringes will now be reported separately from other drug paraphernalia e.g. straws, pipes etc. This is in order to comply with reporting requirements to Europe (EMCDDA). Mapping pre-2016 data to the new questions has resulted in a large number of unknown values. Therefore sharing of any drug paraphernalia is not reported in this bulletin for 2016.

Between 2010 and 2014, the proportion of all cases (including new and previously treated) who reported **ever sharing** remained relatively stable over the period. However, the proportion of previously treated cases who reported sharing dropped from 52.4% in 2014 to 48.5% in 2015, the lowest rate reported in the six year period.

Table 6 Injecting history in cases treated for problem drug use, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) |
| Ever injected | 8806 | | 8361 | | 8005 | | 9006 | | 9890 | | 9892 | | 9227 | |
| All cases | 2915 | (33.1) | 3054 | (36.5) | 2882 | (36.0) | 3254 | (36.1) | 3528 | (35.7) | 3330 | (33.7) | 2960 | (32.1) |
| Total new cases | 3741 | | 3316 | | 3272 | | 3475 | | 3776 | | 3742 | | 3526 | |
| Ever injected | 570 | (15.2) | 571 | (17.2) | 590 | (18.0) | 591 | (17.0) | 642 | (17.0) | 541 | (14.5) | 476 | (13.5) |
| Total previously treated | 4842 | | 4862 | | 4518 | | 5239 | | 5643 | | 5855 | | 5335 | |
| Ever injected | 2289 | (47.3) | 2432 | (50.0) | 2232 | (49.4) | 2575 | (49.2) | 2730 | (48.4) | 2701 | (46.1) | 2379 | (44.6) |
| Current risk | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All cases | 2915 | | 3054 | | 2882 | | 3254 | | 3528 | | 3330 | | 2960 | |
| Currently injecting* | 991 | (34.0) | 971 | (31.8) | 1026 | (35.6) | 1182 | (36.3) | 1304 | (37.0) | 1223 | (36.7) | 984 | (33.2) |
| Ever shared | 1465 | (50.3) | 1589 | (52.0) | 1422 | (49.3) | 1583 | (48.6) | 1744 | (49.4) | 1519 | (45.6) | N/A** | |
| New cases | 570 | | 571 | | 590 | | 591 | | 642 | | 541 | | 476 | |
| Currently injecting* | 240 | (42.1) | 247 | (43.3) | 261 | (44.2) | 275 | (46.5) | 298 | (46.4) | 228 | (42.1) | 186 | (39.1) |
| Ever shared | 230 | (40.4) | 238 | (41.7) | 203 | (34.4) | 209 | (35.4) | 255 | (39.7) | 192 | (35.5) | N/A** | |
| Previously treated cases | 2289 | | 2432 | | 2232 | | 2575 | | 2730 | | 2701 | | 2379 | |
| Currently injecting* | 732 | (32.0) | 706 | (29.0) | 745 | (33.4) | 873 | (33.9) | 920 | (33.7) | 937 | (34.7) | 760 | (31.9) |
| Ever shared | 1215 | (53.1) | 1334 | (54.9) | 1191 | (53.4) | 1345 | (52.2) | 1431 | (52.4) | 1309 | (48.5) | N/A** | |

*In the 30 days prior to treatment

** Not available for 2016, see description above

Socio-demographic characteristics

The median age of cases increased over the seven year period, from 28 years in 2010 to 30 years in 2016 (Table 7). In this period the proportion of cases aged under 18 years was highest for *new* cases. However this has decreased from a peak of 15.6% in 2012 to 13.3% in 2016. The majority of cases for this period were male (73.2%). The proportion of cases who were homeless increased from 5.1% in 2010 to 9.6% in 2016.

The proportion of cases who identified as Travellers increased from 2.8% in 2010 to 3.2% in 2016. The proportion of Travellers in the general population is 0.7% (2016 Census).⁵

The proportion of cases who ceased education (for the first time) before the age of 16 years decreased from 38.1% in 2010 to 35.1% in 2016.

A very high proportion of *all* cases were unemployed. Unemployment rates in this group did not drop below 60% for all the years reported. In the period 2010-2016 unemployment rates were higher among *previously treated* cases than *new* cases.

Table 7 Socio-demographic characteristics of cases treated for problem drug use, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|---|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) |
| All cases | 8806 | | 8361 | | 8005 | | 9006 | | 9890 | | 9892 | | 9227 | |
| Median age (range) | 28 | 17-43 | 28 | 17-44 | 28 | 16-44 | 29 | 17-45 | 29 | 17-45 | 30 | 17-46 | 30 | 17-47 |
| Under 18 | 744 | (8.4) | 614 | (7.3) | 673 | (8.4) | 669 | (4.4) | 747 | (7.6) | 685 | (6.9) | 629 | (6.8) |
| Male | 6632 | (75.3) | 6222 | (74.4) | 5826 | (72.8) | 6554 | (72.8) | 7202 | (72.8) | 7146 | (72.2) | 6676 | (72.4) |
| Homeless | 453 | (5.1) | 518 | (6.2) | 464 | (5.8) | 581 | (6.5) | 840 | (8.5) | 910 | (9.2) | 886 | (9.6) |
| Traveller | 245 | (2.8) | 217 | (2.6) | 227 | (2.8) | 231 | (2.6) | 313 | (3.2) | 282 | (2.9) | 296 | (3.2) |
| Education ceased before 16 yrs | 3354 | (38.1) | 3244 | (38.8) | 3047 | (38.1) | 3244 | (36.0) | 3486 | (35.2) | 3511 | (35.5) | 3236 | (35.1) |
| Employed | 678 | (7.7) | 670 | (8.0) | 578 | (7.2) | 706 | (7.8) | 816 | (8.3) | 880 | (8.9) | 1028 | (11.1) |
| Unemployed | 5547 | (63.0) | 5411 | (64.7) | 5362 | (67.0) | 5910 | (65.6) | 6368 | (64.4) | 6368 | (64.4) | 6107 | (66.2) |
| Retired/unable to work including disability | 1208 | (13.7) | 998 | (11.9) | 854 | (10.7) | 1009 | (11.2) | 1135 | (11.5) | 1136 | (11.5) | 805 | (8.7) |
| New Cases | 3741 | | 3316 | | 3272 | | 3475 | | 3776 | | 3742 | | 3526 | |
| Median age (range) | 24 | 16-42 | 24 | 16-42 | 25 | 15-42 | 25 | 15-43 | 25 | 15-44 | 25 | 16-45 | 25 | 16-46 |
| Under 18 | 542 | (14.5) | 435 | (13.1) | 510 | (15.6) | 523 | (15.1) | 566 | (15.0) | 498 | (13.3) | 469 | (13.3) |
| Male | 2937 | (78.5) | 2545 | (76.7) | 2456 | (75.1) | 2656 | (76.4) | 2842 | (75.3) | 2814 | (75.2) | 2628 | (74.5) |
| Homeless | 105 | (2.8) | 127 | (3.8) | 128 | (3.9) | 152 | (4.4) | 248 | (6.6) | 212 | (5.7) | 223 | (6.3) |
| Traveller | 124 | (3.3) | 110 | (3.3) | 101 | (3.1) | 92 | (2.6) | 135 | (3.6) | 107 | (2.9) | 102 | (2.9) |
| Education ceased before 16 yrs | 1173 | (31.4) | 1049 | (31.6) | 1001 | (30.6) | 1004 | (28.9) | 1046 | (27.7) | 1011 | (27.0) | 969 | (27.5) |
| In paid employment | 361 | (9.6) | 343 | (10.3) | 297 | (9.1) | 356 | (10.2) | 424 | (11.2) | 507 | (13.5) | 537 | (15.2) |
| Unemployed | 2053 | (54.9) | 1898 | (57.2) | 1916 | (58.6) | 1989 | (57.2) | 2091 | (55.4) | 2099 | (56.1) | 1990 | (56.4) |
| Retired/unable to work including disability | 556 | (14.9) | 397 | (12.0) | 334 | (10.2) | 348 | (10.0) | 364 | (9.6) | 322 | (8.6) | 242 | (6.9) |
| Previously Treated | 4842 | | 4862 | | 4518 | | 5239 | | 5643 | | 5855 | | 5335 | |
| Median age (range) | 30 | 18-44 | 30 | 18-45 | 30 | 19-44 | 31 | 19-46 | 31 | 19-45 | 32 | 19-46 | 32 | 19-47 |
| Under 18 | 185 | (3.8) | 170 | (3.5) | 138 | (3.1) | 138 | (2.6) | 168 | (3.0) | 171 | (2.9) | 141 | (2.6) |
| Male | 3516 | (72.6) | 3543 | (72.9) | 3204 | (70.9) | 3695 | (70.5) | 4041 | (71.6) | 4117 | (70.3) | 3782 | (70.9) |
| Homeless | 336 | (6.9) | 385 | (7.9) | 327 | (7.2) | 417 | (8.0) | 526 | (9.3) | 660 | (11.3) | 617 | (11.6) |
| Traveller | 116 | (2.4) | 98 | (2.0) | 113 | (2.5) | 135 | (2.6) | 159 | (2.8) | 172 | (2.9) | 183 | (3.4) |
| Education ceased before 16 yrs | 2113 | (43.6) | 2134 | (43.9) | 1964 | (43.5) | 2180 | (41.6) | 2328 | (41.3) | 2440 | (41.7) | 2162 | (40.5) |
| In paid employment | 298 | (6.2) | 313 | (6.4) | 263 | (5.8) | 326 | (6.2) | 375 | (6.6) | 354 | (6.0) | 464 | (8.7) |
| Unemployed | 3378 | (69.8) | 3403 | (70.0) | 3348 | (74.1) | 3751 | (71.6) | 3955 | (70.1) | 4080 | (69.7) | 3872 | (72.6) |
| Retired/unable to work including disability | 605 | (12.5) | 576 | (11.8) | 465 | (10.3) | 630 | (12.0) | 714 | (12.7) | 790 | (13.5) | 533 | (10.0) |
| Treatment status unknown | 223 | | 183 | | 215 | | 292 | | 471 | | 295 | | 366 | |

Focus on cases who reported cocaine as main problem drug

This section focuses on the socio-demographic characteristics of cases who reported cocaine as their main problem drug (Table 8).

The median age increased over the seven year period, from 27 years in 2010 to 29 years in 2016. The proportion aged under 18 years increased from 1.8% in 2010 to 2.4% in 2016. Over the period the majority of cases were male (81.1%). The proportion who were female increased from 13.7% in 2010 to 22.8% in 2016.

In 2016, 11.3% reported **crack** as their main problem an increase compared to 9.1% in 2010.

The proportion in **employment** increased from 15.4% in 2010 to 28.4% in 2016.

The proportion of problem cocaine users who reported **polydrug** use decreased from 83.0% in 2010 to 69.6% in 2016. In 2016, the most common additional drug was alcohol, followed by cannabis and benzodiazepines.

Table 8 Socio-demographic characteristics of cases treated for cocaine as a main problem, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | | 2016 | |
|---|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) | n | (%) |
| All cases | 869 | | 770 | | 666 | | 708 | | 853 | | 1026 | | 1138 | |
| Median age (range) | 27 | 19-41 | 28 | 19-41 | 29 | 19-43 | 29 | 19-44 | 30 | 19-44 | 30 | 19-44 | 29 | 18-44 |
| Under 18 | 16 | (1.8) | 10 | (1.3) | 9 | (1.4) | 11 | (1.6) | 17 | (2.0) | 20 | (1.9) | 27 | (2.4) |
| Females | 119 | (13.7) | 138 | (17.9) | 120 | (18.0) | 124 | (17.5) | 147 | (17.2) | 197 | (19.2) | 259 | (22.8) |
| Homeless | 11 | (1.3) | 17 | (2.2) | 12 | (1.8) | 12 | (1.7) | 26 | (3.0) | 40 | (3.9) | 38 | (3.3) |
| Traveller | 19 | (2.2) | 17 | (2.2) | 11 | (1.7) | 16 | (2.3) | 16 | (1.9) | 21 | (2.0) | 30 | (2.6) |
| Education ceased before 16 yrs | 334 | (38.4) | 272 | (35.3) | 244 | (36.6) | 247 | (34.9) | 278 | (32.6) | 306 | (29.8) | 309 | (27.2) |
| Employed | 133 | (15.4) | 152 | (19.8) | 105 | (15.8) | 129 | (18.2) | 167 | (19.9) | 245 | (24.1) | 322 | (28.4) |
| Unemployed | 478 | (55.0) | 420 | (54.5) | 368 | (55.3) | 422 | (59.6) | 465 | (54.5) | 536 | (52.2) | 611 | (53.7) |
| Retired/unable to work including disability | 172 | (19.8) | 128 | (16.6) | 123 | (18.5) | 91 | (12.9) | 133 | (15.6) | 144 | (14.0) | 104 | (9.1) |
| New Cases | 496 | | 396 | | 297 | | 320 | | 425 | | 513 | | 568 | |
| Median age (range) | 26 | 18-40 | 27 | 19-41 | 26 | 19-42 | 28 | 18-43 | 28 | 18-44 | 28 | 18-43 | 27 | 18-43 |
| Under 18 | 14 | (2.8) | 6 | (1.5) | 6 | (2.0) | 8 | (2.5) | 16 | (3.8) | 16 | (3.1) | 20 | (3.5) |
| Female | 55 | (11.1) | 68 | (17.2) | 45 | (15.2) | 54 | (16.9) | 59 | (13.9) | 91 | (17.7) | 107 | (18.8) |
| Homeless | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | 5 | (1.7) | ~ | ~ | 11 | (2.6) | 11 | (2.1) | 17 | (3.0) |
| Traveller | 13 | (2.6) | 12 | (3.0) | 7 | (2.4) | 10 | (3.1) | 12 | (2.8) | 12 | (2.3) | 15 | (2.6) |
| Education ceased before 16 yrs | 170 | (34.3) | 123 | (31.1) | 99 | (33.3) | 103 | (32.2) | 135 | (31.8) | 135 | (26.3) | 124 | (21.8) |
| In paid employment | 91 | (18.3) | 93 | (23.5) | 51 | (17.2) | 64 | (20.0) | 103 | (24.2) | 155 | (30.2) | 190 | (33.5) |
| Unemployed | 254 | (51.2) | 196 | (49.5) | 160 | (53.9) | 187 | (58.4) | 218 | (51.3) | 240 | (46.8) | 273 | (48.1) |
| Retired/unable to work including disability | 113 | (22.8) | 73 | (18.4) | 54 | (18.2) | 46 | (14.4) | 64 | (15.1) | 63 | (12.3) | 46 | (8.1) |
| Previously Treated | 347 | | 356 | | 349 | | 352 | | 381 | | 487 | | 541 | |
| Median age (range) | 29 | 19-43 | 29 | 19-41 | 31 | 20-44 | 31 | 20-44 | 31 | 21-43 | 31 | 20-47 | 31 | 20-46 |
| Under 18 | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | ~ | 7 | (1.3) |
| Female | 61 | (17.6) | 68 | (19.1) | 73 | (20.9) | 64 | (18.2) | 77 | (20.2) | 102 | (20.9) | 144 | (26.6) |
| Homeless | 7 | (2.0) | 13 | (3.7) | 7 | (2.0) | 9 | (2.6) | 14 | (3.7) | 27 | (5.5) | 20 | (3.7) |
| Traveller | 5 | (1.4) | 5 | (1.4) | ~ | ~ | 6 | (1.7) | ~ | ~ | 9 | (1.8) | 15 | (2.8) |
| Education ceased before 16 yrs | 158 | (45.5) | 143 | (40.2) | 139 | (39.8) | 136 | (38.6) | 133 | (34.9) | 168 | (34.5) | 180 | (33.3) |
| In paid employment | 43 | (12.4) | 55 | (15.4) | 49 | (14.0) | 56 | (15.9) | 57 | (15.0) | 88 | (18.1) | 129 | (23.8) |
| Unemployed | 214 | (61.7) | 213 | (59.8) | 200 | (57.3) | 219 | (62.2) | 223 | (58.5) | 283 | (58.1) | 317 | (58.6) |
| Retired/unable to work including disability | 46 | (13.3) | 53 | (14.9) | 63 | (18.1) | 42 | (11.9) | 61 | (16.0) | 78 | (16.0) | 56 | (10.4) |
| Treatment status unknown | 26 | | 18 | | 20 | | 36 | | 47 | | 26 | | 29 | |

Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area of residence*

In 2016, the highest number of cases resided in CHO 9 (Table 9).

It should be noted that participation in the NDTRS is not uniform across the country so this does affect geographic analysis (see next page for reference to areas included in each CHO).

Table 9 Number of cases treated, by Community Healthcare Organisation area of residence, NDTRS 2010 to 2016

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| All cases | 8806 | 8361 | 8005 | 9006 | 9890 | 9892 | 9227 |
| CHO 1 | 272 | 242 | 305 | 265 | 297 | 284 | 367 |
| CHO 2 | 480 | 411 | 402 | 416 | 356 | 411 | 402 |
| CHO 3 | 552 | 437 | 392 | 571 | 809 | 748 | 779 |
| CHO 4 | 1380 | 1383 | 1178 | 1367 | 1390 | 1429 | 1206 |
| CHO 5 | 1340 | 1241 | 1349 | 1454 | 1366 | 1394 | 1261 |
| CHO 6 | 350 | 380 | 343 | 458 | 470 | 470 | 366 |
| CHO 7 | 1802 | 1707 | 1538 | 1646 | 1738 | 1750 | 1640 |
| CHO 8 | 753 | 801 | 890 | 807 | 1075 | 1020 | 921 |
| CHO 9 | 1519 | 1512 | 1379 | 1748 | 2068 | 2007 | 1845 |
| Other/unknown | 358 | 247 | 229 | 274 | 321 | 379 | 440 |
| New cases | 3741 | 3316 | 3272 | 3475 | 3776 | 3742 | 3526 |
| CHO 1 | 156 | 146 | 178 | 166 | 149 | 147 | 159 |
| CHO 2 | 227 | 190 | 173 | 160 | 126 | 162 | 185 |
| CHO 3 | 295 | 219 | 203 | 252 | 381 | 322 | 361 |
| CHO 4 | 731 | 626 | 526 | 595 | 589 | 575 | 513 |
| CHO 5 | 731 | 588 | 601 | 692 | 611 | 613 | 537 |
| CHO 6 | 124 | 123 | 143 | 168 | 200 | 199 | 149 |
| CHO 7 | 608 | 584 | 544 | 525 | 572 | 593 | 543 |
| CHO 8 | 357 | 417 | 452 | 348 | 479 | 471 | 434 |
| CHO 9 | 428 | 384 | 404 | 507 | 587 | 581 | 530 |
| Other/unknown | 84 | 39 | 48 | 62 | 82 | 79 | 115 |
| Previously Treated | 4842 | 4862 | 4518 | 5239 | 5643 | 5855 | 5335 |
| CHO 1 | 106 | 87 | 114 | 91 | 135 | 121 | 180 |
| CHO 2 | 246 | 221 | 227 | 246 | 227 | 247 | 212 |
| CHO 3 | 245 | 213 | 181 | 294 | 362 | 357 | 381 |
| CHO 4 | 622 | 745 | 636 | 730 | 773 | 841 | 667 |
| CHO 5 | 588 | 633 | 730 | 747 | 746 | 776 | 711 |
| CHO 6 | 207 | 244 | 180 | 264 | 247 | 259 | 200 |
| CHO 7 | 1142 | 1071 | 951 | 1055 | 1025 | 1095 | 997 |
| CHO 8 | 364 | 354 | 409 | 409 | 540 | 514 | 463 |
| CHO 9 | 1065 | 1090 | 923 | 1202 | 1376 | 1370 | 1224 |
| Other/unknown | 257 | 204 | 167 | 201 | 212 | 275 | 300 |
| Treatment status not known | 223 | 183 | 215 | 292 | 471 | 295 | 366 |

***Explanation of Community Healthcare Organisation areas**

CHO 1 – Donegal LHO, Sligo/Leitrim/West Clare LHO and Cavan/Monaghan LHO

CHO 2 – Galway LHO, Roscommon and Mayo LHO

CHO 3 – Clare LHO, Limerick LHO, North Tipperary/East Limerick LHO

CHO 4 – Kerry LHO, North Cork LHO, North Lee LHO, South Lee LHO and West Cork LHO

CHO 5 – South Tipperary LHO, Carlow/Kilkenny LHO, Waterford LHO and Wexford LHO

CHO 6 – Wicklow LHO, Dun Laoghaire LHO and Dublin South East LHO

CHO 7 – Kildare/West Wicklow LHO, Dublin West LHO, Dublin South City LHO and Dublin South West LHO

CHO 8 – Laois/Offaly LHO, Longford/Westmeath LHO, Louth LHO and Meath LHO

CHO 9 – Dublin North LHO, Dublin North Central LHO and Dublin North West LHO

References

This document may be cited as: Health Research Board (2018) Drug Treatment in Ireland NDTRS 2010 to 2016.

Available at: www.drugsandalcohol.ie/28986 and at www.hrb.ie/publications.

1. More detailed information on the NDTRS methodology can be found in previously published HRB Trends Series papers at <http://www.hrb.ie/publications/publications/2/>
2. The NDTRS interactive tables (2004 to 2016) will be updated to reflect the changes at <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/treatment-data/>.
3. The NDTRS make every attempt to ensure as complete coverage of services as possible, however, the number of services participating in the reporting system does vary year to year. This makes small fluctuations in the numbers of cases more difficult to interpret
4. Population data is taken from the Central Statistics Office at [http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Database/eirestat/Annual%20Population%20Estimates/Annual%20Population%20Estimates_statbank.asp?SP=Annual Population Estimates&Planguage=0](http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Database/eirestat/Annual%20Population%20Estimates/Annual%20Population%20Estimates_statbank.asp?SP=Annual%20Population%20Estimates&Planguage=0)
5. Data on ethnicity is taken from the 2016 Census from the CSO at <http://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/presspages/2017/census2016profile8-irishtravellersethnicityandreligion/>

Contact details for queries regarding
this bulletin or the NDTRS:

T: +353 1 2345 000

E: ndtrs@hrb.ie

Health Research Board

Grattan House

67-72 Lower Mount Street

Dublin 2

www.hrb.ie

