

# Drug Treatment in Ireland 2009 - 2015

## Introduction

The **National Drug Treatment Reporting System** (NDTRS) records cases of treated problem drug and alcohol use in Ireland between 2009 and 2015.

### Overview

In this seven-year period 61,439 cases were treated for **problem drug use** (excluding alcohol). The number of cases rose from 7,479 in 2009 to 9,892 in 2015.

- Proportion of new cases decreased from 45.9% in 2009 to 37.8% in 2015.
- Majority of cases were treated in outpatient facilities (64.4%) over the period, similar to previous years.
- Proportion of cases treated in prison decreased from 10.8% to 8.4% over the reporting period.
- In 2015 the proportion of cases treated in residential facilities increased for the first time in the period, to 18%.

### Main problem drug (excluding alcohol):

- **Opiates** (mainly heroin): most commonly reported drug. While the number of cases treated for problem opiate use remained stable over the period, the proportion of cases treated decreased from 60.6% in 2009 to 47.8% in 2015.
- **Cannabis**: 2<sup>nd</sup> most common drug among those treated. The number of cases increased by 72%, from 1,616 in 2009, to 2,786 in 2015.
- Cannabis is the most common drug reported by *new* cases.
- **Cocaine**: remains 3<sup>rd</sup> most common drug reported. In 2015, 10.4% of cases reported problem cocaine use, the highest proportion since 2010.
- Proportion of cases reporting **benzodiazepines** as a main problem drug increased by 185% from 306 cases (4.1%) in 2009 to 873 cases (8.8%) in 2015.
- Number of cases treated for **Z-drugs** has increased from 9 in 2009, to 154 in 2015.

- Reported problem use of **novel psychoactive substances** (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 represent 0.9% of all cases treated in 2015.

### Polydrug use

- Majority of cases reported problem polydrug use (63.5%) over the period.
- Proportion reporting polydrug use has decreased from 68.4% in 2009 to 60.9% in 2015.
- Up to 2013, alcohol was the most common additional drug reported. Since 2014 benzodiazepines have become the most common additional drugs reported.

### Socio-demographics

- **Median age** of cases has increased from 28 years in 2009, to 30 years in 2015.
- Majority of cases, 7 in every ten, reporting were **male**.
- Proportion who were **homeless** increased from 5.6% in 2009, to 9.2% in 2015.
- Proportion of **Travellers** treated increased marginally from 1.9% in 2009 to 2.9% in 2015.

### Injecting behaviour

- Proportion of all cases treated who reported **ever injecting** remained relatively stable over the reporting period at around one third of all cases.
- Proportion of **new cases reporting ever injecting** has decreased from 19.7% in 2009 to 14.5% in 2015.

## Revised data

This bulletin presents **revised drug treatment data** (excluding alcohol) from the NDTRS for the period 2009–2015. NDTRS data in this bulletin have been revised to include cases treated in all types of services: outpatient, inpatient, GPs, low threshold and for the first time, those treated in prison. In addition, the revised statistics now include those cases with no fixed abode, no known address or an address outside Ireland, in all tables. Therefore the data in this bulletin supersedes all previously published data from NDTRS trend papers and web updates.<sup>1</sup>

## Treated cases: EU and national data

The HRB report mandatory national drug treatment data (excluding alcohol), known as the **Treatment Demand Indicator (TDI)**, to the European Monitoring Committee for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) annually.<sup>2</sup>

For comparative purposes, the EMCDDA require all countries to provide data in a similar format. For the first time, national data includes prison treatment data and cases with unknown addresses.

This means that what is now reported nationally and what is reported to the EU are much more closely aligned. The national figures are **slightly higher** than the total reported to the EMCDDA. This is because the EMCDDA only ask for the first episode of treatment (in any centre) for the TDI in the specified calendar year. The HRB reports nationally on those cases who return for a second or subsequent treatment episode, in the same centre, in the same calendar year, in order to more accurately reflect treatment activity.

Table 1 illustrates the difference between the national figures and what is routinely reported to the EMCDDA.

In the seven-year period 2009 to 2015, **a total of 61,439 cases were treated for problem drug use** (excluding alcohol).<sup>3,4</sup> The number of cases treated increased by 32% over the period, from **7,479** in 2009 to **9,892** in 2015 (Table 2). The proportion of **new** cases treated has decreased from 45.9% in 2009 to 37.8% in 2015.

**Table 1 No. of treated cases treated for problem drug use (National data and EU data) NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Revised National total</b>	<b>7479</b>	<b>8806</b>	<b>8361</b>	<b>8005</b>	<b>9006</b>	<b>9890</b>	<b>9892</b>
EU [TDI] Total	7269	8510	8039	7703	8684	9523	9489
<b>New cases total</b>	<b>3431</b>	<b>3741</b>	<b>3316</b>	<b>3272</b>	<b>3475</b>	<b>3776</b>	<b>3742</b>
New cases [National & EU TDI]	3431	3741	3316	3272	3475	3776	3742
<b>Previously treated cases total</b>	<b>3891</b>	<b>4842</b>	<b>4862</b>	<b>4518</b>	<b>5239</b>	<b>5643</b>	<b>5855</b>
Previously treated cases (first treatment in the calendar year) [National & EU TDI]	3681	4546	4540	4216	4917	5276	5452
Treated two or more times in same calendar year [National only]	210	296	322	302	322	367	403
<b>Treatment status unknown total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>295</b>

**Table 2 No. of cases treated for problem drug use, by treatment status, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

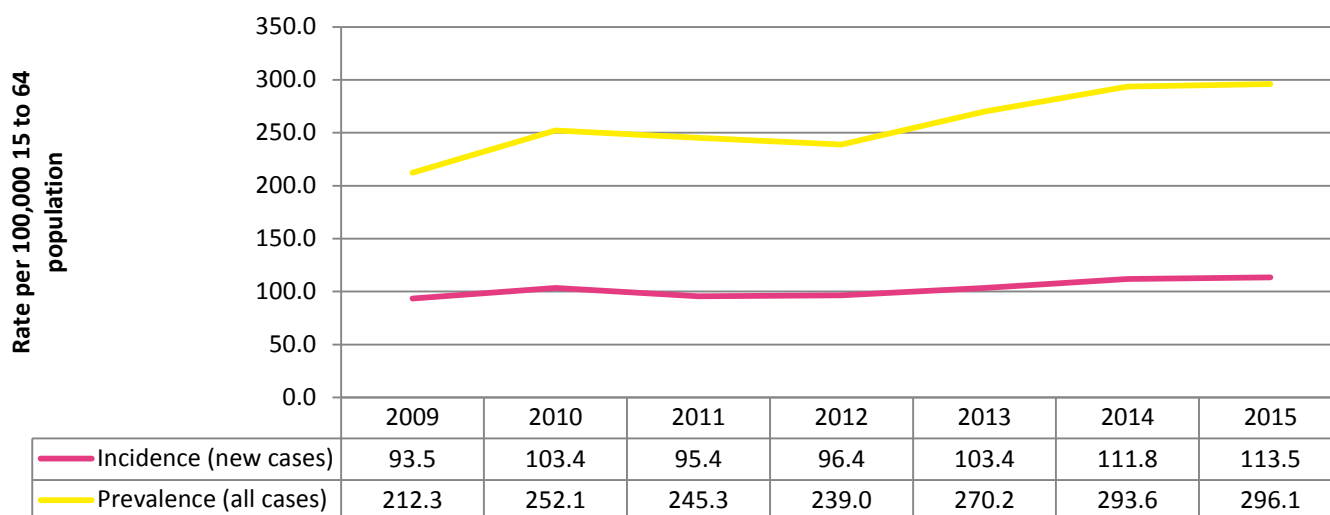
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Revised total</b>	<b>7479</b>	<b>8806</b>	<b>8361</b>	<b>8005</b>	<b>9006</b>	<b>9890</b>	<b>9892</b>
New cases	3431	3741	3316	3272	3475	3776	3742
Previously treated cases	3891	4842	4862	4518	5239	5643	5855
Treatment status unknown	157	223	183	215	292	471	295

## 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 CSO<sup>5</sup> (Figure 1). Incidence has increased from 93.5 per 100,000 in 2009, to 113.5 in 2015.

Prevalence, which includes new cases and those cases returning to treatment has also increased, from 212.3

per 100,000 to 296.1 per 100,000. This is an indicator of the chronic, relapsing nature of addiction. Please note that treatment data used to calculate prevalence has been changed from previous publications and no longer includes data from the Central Treatment List. accounts for difference in numbers compared to all previously published HRB figures but it does not affect overall trends.



**Figure 1 Incidence and prevalence of treated problem drug use, per 100,000 of the 15-64 year-old population, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

## Type of service provider

Over the period the majority of cases were treated in outpatient facilities (64.4%), dropping slightly from 66.9% in 2009, to 58.8% in 2015 (Table 3).

The NDTRS has been collecting information on treatment in prison since 2008, mainly from in-reach services (voluntary organisations providing counselling). However since 2014 Irish Prison Services addiction services in Mountjoy Prison have participated in the NDTRS, followed by the women's prison, Dochas, in 2015.

Over the period, 9.1% of cases were treated in prison, the proportion decreasing from 10.8% in 2009, to 8.4% in 2015.

Between 2009 and 2014, the proportion of cases treated in residential care remained stable, between 13% and 14%. However in 2015, the proportion of cases treated in residential facilities increased to 18%.

**Table 3 No. of cases treated for problem drug use, by type of service provider, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Total</b>	<b>7479</b>	<b>8806</b>	<b>8361</b>	<b>8005</b>	<b>9006</b>	<b>9890</b>	<b>9892</b>
Outpatient	5006	5563	5623	5299	5998	6251	5818
Inpatient*	1064	1232	1107	1124	1233	1348	1779
Low threshold	341	793	642	711	812	1190	1197
Prison	811	930	761	642	747	844	827
General practitioner	257	288	228	229	216	257	271

\* 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 reporting there has been a drop year-on-year from 60.6% in 2009, to 47.8% in 2015 (Table 4). **Cannabis** remains the second most common drug. The number of cases reporting problem cannabis use has increased by 72% in the seven year period.

**Cocaine** remains the third most common drug reported. The proportion of cases who reported problem **benzodiazepine** use has increased by 185%, from 306 in 2009 to 873 in 2015. As a proportion of all cases treated, problem benzodiazepine use increased from 4.1% in 2009 to 8.8% in 2015.

The number of cases with problem use of **Z-drugs** rose from nine cases in 2009 to 154 cases in 2015. The proportion of cases reporting 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 0.9% of all cases treated in 2015.

### New cases

In 2015, cannabis (45.2%) was the most common main problem drug reported by new cases, followed by opiates (25.9%). The proportion of new cases who reported benzodiazepines as a main problem drug rose from 4.9% in 2009 to 9.1% in 2015.

### Previously treated cases

In 2015, for previously treated cases, opiates (61.8%) were the most common problem drug, followed by cannabis (17.5%).

**Table 4 Main problem drug (excluding alcohol) reported in 30 days prior to treatment, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>7479</b>		<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>	
Opiates	4531	(60.6)	5115	(58.1)	4549	(54.4)	4164	(52.0)	4625	(51.4)	4948	(50.0)	4732	(47.8)
Cannabis	1616	(21.6)	2025	(23.0)	2161	(25.8)	2290	(28.6)	2583	(28.7)	2730	(27.6)	2786	(28.2)
Cocaine	851	(11.4)	869	(9.9)	770	(9.2)	666	(8.3)	708	(7.9)	853	(8.6)	1026	(10.4)
Benzodiazepines	306	(4.1)	365	(4.1)	572	(6.8)	636	(7.9)	810	(9.6)	953	(9.6)	873	(8.8)
Z Drugs*	9	(0.1)	13	(0.1)	31	(0.4)	43	(0.5)	73	(0.8)	155	(1.6)	154	(1.6)
NPS	18	(0.2)	221	(2.5)	95	(1.1)	34	(0.4)	46	(0.5)	71	(0.7)	85	(0.9)
Amphetamines	34	(0.5)	57	(0.6)	51	(0.6)	50	(0.6)	54	(0.6)	58	(0.6)	63	(0.6)
MDMA	71	(0.9)	54	(0.6)	51	(0.6)	47	(0.6)	44	(0.5)	56	(0.6)	51	(0.5)
Volatile Inhalants	23	(0.3)	33	(0.4)	26	(0.3)	21	(0.3)	13	(0.1)	15	(0.2)	15	(0.2)
Other	20	(0.3)	54	(0.6)	55	(0.7)	54	(0.7)	50	(0.6)	51	(0.5)	107	(1.1)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>3431</b>		<b>3741</b>		<b>3316</b>		<b>3272</b>		<b>3475</b>		<b>3776</b>		<b>3742</b>	
Opiates	1523	(44.4)	1456	(38.9)	1115	(33.6)	1059	(32.4)	1034	(29.8)	1036	(27.4)	971	(25.9)
Cannabis	1107	(32.3)	1338	(35.8)	1369	(41.3)	1499	(45.8)	1633	(47.0)	1696	(44.9)	1693	(45.2)
Cocaine	519	(15.1)	496	(13.3)	396	(11.9)	297	(9.1)	320	(9.2)	425	(11.3)	513	(13.7)
Benzodiazepines	167	(4.9)	175	(4.7)	269	(8.1)	279	(8.5)	345	(9.9)	419	(11.1)	340	(9.1)
Z Drugs	7	(0.2)	7	(0.2)	10	(0.3)	19	(0.6)	22	(0.6)	58	(1.5)	46	(1.2)
NPS	10	(0.3)	160	(4.3)	57	(1.7)	20	(0.6)	25	(0.7)	43	(1.1)	53	(1.4)
Amphetamines	22	(0.6)	34	(0.9)	31	(0.9)	27	(0.8)	32	(0.9)	30	(0.8)	33	(0.9)
MDMA	50	(1.5)	24	(0.6)	23	(0.7)	32	(1.0)	27	(0.8)	37	(1.0)	31	(0.8)
Volatile Inhalants	15	(0.4)	26	(0.7)	18	(0.5)	16	(0.5)	9	(0.3)	6	(0.2)	6	(0.2)
Other	11	(0.3)	25	(0.7)	28	(0.8)	24	(0.7)	28	(0.8)	26	(0.7)	56	(1.5)
<b>Previously treated</b>	<b>3891</b>		<b>4842</b>		<b>4862</b>		<b>4518</b>		<b>5239</b>		<b>5643</b>		<b>5855</b>	
Opiates	2911	(74.8)	3538	(73.1)	3347	(68.8)	3012	(66.7)	3463	(66.1)	3658	(64.8)	3619	(61.8)
Cannabis	476	(12.2)	632	(13.1)	736	(15.1)	723	(16.0)	859	(16.4)	932	(16.5)	1023	(17.5)
Cocaine	312	(8.0)	347	(7.2)	356	(7.3)	349	(7.7)	352	(6.7)	381	(6.8)	487	(8.3)
Benzodiazepines	134	(3.4)	181	(3.7)	291	(6.0)	337	(7.5)	437	(8.3)	487	(8.6)	504	(8.6)
Z Drugs	2	(0.1)	4	(0.1)	20	(0.4)	22	(0.5)	48	(0.9)	86	(1.5)	99	(1.7)
NPS	8	(0.2)	60	(1.2)	36	(0.7)	12	(0.3)	19	(0.4)	26	(0.5)	29	(0.5)
Amphetamines	12	(0.3)	20	(0.4)	18	(0.4)	23	(0.5)	20	(0.4)	27	(0.5)	28	(0.5)
MDMA	20	(0.5)	25	(0.5)	26	(0.5)	13	(0.3)	17	(0.3)	18	(0.3)	19	(0.3)
Volatile inhalants	8	(0.2)	6	(0.1)	7	(0.1)	3	(0.1)	4	(0.1)	9	(0.2)	9	(0.2)
Other	8	(0.2)	29	(0.6)	25	(0.5)	24	(0.5)	20	(0.4)	19	(0.3)	38	(0.6)
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>157</b>		<b>223</b>		<b>183</b>		<b>215</b>		<b>292</b>		<b>471</b>		<b>295</b>	

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

## Polydrug use

The majority of cases (63.5%) reported polydrug use (problem use of more than one drug) over the period 2009-2015. However, the proportion of polydrug users among all cases decreased from 68.4% in 2009 to 60.9% in 2015, a fall of 17.6% (Table 5).

Since 2014, benzodiazepines have replaced alcohol as the most common **additional** drug reported by polydrug users, followed by cannabis (Table 6).

More cases reported MDMA as an *additional* problem drug (519) (Table 6) than a *main* problem drug (51) in 2015 (Table 4).

However, the proportion of cases reporting MDMA as an additional drug dropped from 15.9% in 2009 to 8.6% in 2015.

Z-drugs have begun to feature more prominently as additional problem drugs. More cases reported a Z-drug as an additional problem drug (n = 436 in 2015) than a main problem drug (n = 154 in 2015). The proportion of cases reporting Z drugs as an additional problem drug increased from 1.5% in 2009 to 7.2% in 2015.

**Table 5 Polydrug use in cases treated for problem drug use, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>Total</b>	<b>7479</b>	<b>8806</b>	<b>8361</b>	<b>8005</b>	<b>9006</b>	<b>9890</b>	<b>9892</b>
Reported one drug only	2360	2935	2847	3083	3340	3993	3872
Reported two or more drugs	5119	5871	5514	4922	5666	5897	6020

**Table 6 Polydrug use - additional problem drugs: all cases and new cases, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>5119</b>		<b>5871</b>		<b>5514</b>		<b>4922</b>		<b>5666</b>		<b>5897</b>		<b>6020</b>	
Benzodiazepines	1451	(28.3)	1842	(31.4)	1852	(33.6)	1753	(35.6)	2030	(35.8)	2222	(37.7)	2258	(37.5)
Alcohol	2186	(42.7)	2331	(39.7)	2295	(41.6)	2080	(42.3)	2336	(41.2)	2078	(35.2)	2051	(34.1)
Cannabis	1899	(37.1)	2056	(35.2)	1703	(30.9)	1474	(29.9)	1795	(31.7)	1954	(33.1)	1929	(32.0)
Cocaine	1594	(31.1)	1599	(27.2)	1426	(25.9)	1127	(22.9)	1187	(20.9)	1156	(19.6)	1220	(20.3)
Opiates	733	(14.3)	859	(14.6)	928	(16.8)	889	(18.1)	1009	(17.8)	1023	(17.3)	1005	(16.7)
MDMA	815	(15.9)	711	(12.1)	625	(11.3)	500	(10.2)	481	(8.5)	431	(7.3)	519	(8.6)
Z Drugs	77	(1.5)	105	(1.8)	157	(2.8)	210	(4.3)	307	(5.4)	355	(6.0)	436	(7.2)
Other	142	(2.8)	139	(2.4)	159	(2.8)	191	(3.9)	163	(2.9)	157	(2.7)	220	(3.6)
Amphetamines	175	(3.4)	173	(2.9)	129	(2.3)	123	(2.5)	153	(2.7)	122	(2.1)	127	(2.1)
NPS	29	(0.6)	308	(5.2)	199	(3.6)	133	(2.7)	142	(2.5)	98	(1.7)	107	(1.8)
Volatile inhalants	29	(0.6)	30	(0.5)	20	(0.4)	14	(0.3)	12	(0.2)	18	(0.3)	14	(0.2)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>2332</b>		<b>2452</b>		<b>2077</b>		<b>1832</b>		<b>2062</b>		<b>2115</b>		<b>2077</b>	
Alcohol	1176	(50.4)	1154	(47.1)	1024	(49.3)	939	(51.3)	1030	(50.0)	925	(43.7)	910	(43.8)
Cannabis	872	(37.4)	908	(37.0)	632	(30.4)	520	(28.4)	611	(29.6)	642	(30.4)	627	(30.2)
Benzodiazepines	499	(21.4)	577	(23.5)	539	(26.0)	516	(28.2)	590	(28.6)	630	(29.8)	626	(30.1)
Cocaine	639	(27.4)	588	(24.0)	480	(23.1)	389	(21.2)	411	(19.9)	427	(20.2)	412	(19.8)
MDMA	482	(20.7)	374	(15.3)	291	(14.0)	232	(12.7)	260	(12.6)	237	(11.2)	253	(12.2)
Opiates	241	(10.3)	220	(9.0)	200	(9.6)	194	(10.6)	219	(10.6)	209	(9.9)	204	(9.8)
Z Drugs	33	(1.4)	24	(1.0)	41	(2.0)	59	(3.2)	96	(4.7)	78	(3.7)	102	(4.9)
Other	62	(2.7)	58	(2.3)	67	(3.2)	81	(4.4)	77	(3.7)	65	(3.1)	83	(4.0)
Amphetamines	100	(4.3)	85	(3.5)	65	(3.1)	67	(3.7)	73	(3.5)	52	(2.5)	53	(2.6)
NPS	15	(0.6)	204	(8.3)	116	(5.6)	56	(3.1)	47	(2.3)	36	(1.7)	41	(2.0)
Volatile inhalants	14	(0.6)	12	(0.5)	7	(0.3)	9	(0.5)	8	(0.4)	8	(0.4)	10	(0.5)

## Risk factors

Risk factors recorded on the NDTRS include injecting and sharing (any 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 7). 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 19.7% in 2009 to 14.5% in 2015.

The proportion of **previously treated cases who reported ever injecting** decreased from 50.2% in 2009 to 46.1%. However the actual number of previously

treated cases who reported ever injecting increased by 38.4% over the period from 1,952 cases in 2009 to 2,701 in 2015.

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.

Between 2009 and 2014, the proportion of all cases (including new and previously treated) who reported **ever sharing** remained relatively stable over the period. However in 2015, 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 seven year period.

**Table 7 Injecting history in cases treated for problem drug use, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>Ever injected</b>	<b>7479</b>		<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>	
All cases	2666	(35.6)	2915	(33.1)	3054	(36.5)	2882	(36.0)	3254	(36.1)	3528	(35.7)	3330	(33.7)
<b>Total new cases</b>	<b>3431</b>		<b>3741</b>		<b>3316</b>		<b>3272</b>		<b>3475</b>		<b>3776</b>		<b>3742</b>	
Ever injected	679	(19.8)	570	(15.2)	571	(17.2)	590	(18.0)	591	(17.0)	642	(17.0)	541	(14.5)
<b>Total previously treated</b>	<b>3891</b>		<b>4842</b>		<b>4862</b>		<b>4518</b>		<b>5239</b>		<b>5643</b>		<b>5855</b>	
Ever injected	1952	(50.2)	2289	(47.3)	2432	(50.0)	2232	(49.4)	2575	(49.2)	2730	(48.4)	2701	(46.1)
<b>Current risk</b>														
<b>All cases</b>	<b>2666</b>		<b>2915</b>		<b>3054</b>		<b>2882</b>		<b>3254</b>		<b>3528</b>		<b>3330</b>	
Currently injecting	987	(37.0)	991	(34.0)	971	(31.8)	1026	(35.6)	1182	(36.3)	1304	(37.0)	1223	(36.7)
Ever shared	1314	(49.3)	1465	(50.3)	1589	(52.0)	1422	(49.3)	1583	(48.6)	1744	(49.4)	1519	(45.6)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>679</b>		<b>570</b>		<b>571</b>		<b>590</b>		<b>591</b>		<b>642</b>		<b>541</b>	
Currently injecting	288	(42.4)	240	(42.1)	247	(43.3)	261	(44.2)	275	(46.5)	298	(46.4)	228	(42.1)
Ever shared	271	(39.9)	230	(40.4)	238	(41.7)	203	(34.4)	209	(35.4)	255	(39.7)	192	(35.5)
<b>Previously treated cases</b>	<b>1952</b>		<b>2289</b>		<b>2432</b>		<b>2232</b>		<b>2575</b>		<b>2730</b>		<b>2701</b>	
Currently injecting	691	(35.4)	732	(32.0)	706	(29.0)	745	(33.4)	873	(33.9)	920	(33.7)	937	(34.7)
Ever shared	1034	(53.0)	1215	(53.1)	1334	(54.9)	1191	(53.4)	1345	(52.2)	1431	(52.4)	1309	(48.5)

\*In the 30 days prior to treatment



## Socio-demographic characteristics

The median age of cases has increased over the seven year period, from 28 years in 2009 to 30 years in 2015 (Table 8). The proportion of cases aged under 18 years was highest for new cases. However this has decreased from a peak of 15.7% in 2012 to 13.4% in 2015. The majority of cases were male (73.7%) for this period. The proportion of cases who were homeless increased from 5.6% in 2009 to 9.2% in 2015.

For the first time, aggregated data on the numbers of cases from the Traveller Community are included. The proportion of cases who identified as Travellers

increased from 1.9% in 2009 to 2.9% in 2015. The proportion of Travellers in the general population is 0.7% (2016 Census).<sup>6</sup>

The actual number of cases who ceased education (for the first time) before the age of 16 years rose from 3,006 in 2009 to 3,511 in 2015. However, the proportion of these cases decreased from 40.2% to 35.5% in the period 2009-2015.<sup>7</sup>

A very high proportion of all cases were unemployed. Unemployment rates in this group did not drop below 60% for all the years reported. Unemployment rates were higher among previously treated cases.

**Table 8 Socio-demographic characteristics of cases treated for problem drug use, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<b>All cases</b>	<b>7479</b>		<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>	
Median age (range)	28	17-43	28	17-43	28	17-44	28	16-44	29	17-45	29	17-45	30	17-46
Under 18	605	(8.1)	747	(8.5)	618	(7.4)	678	(8.5)	673	(7.5)	747	(7.6)	691	(7.0)
Male	5705	(76.3)	6632	(75.3)	6222	(74.4)	5826	(72.8)	6554	(72.8)	7202	(72.8)	7146	(72.2)
Homeless	421	(5.6)	453	(5.1)	518	(6.2)	464	(5.8)	581	(6.5)	840	(8.5)	910	(9.2)
Traveller	143	(1.9)	245	(2.8)	217	(2.6)	227	(2.8)	231	(2.6)	313	(3.2)	282	(2.9)
Education ceased before 16 yrs*	3006	(40.2)	3354	(38.1)	3244	(38.8)	3047	(38.1)	3244	(36.0)	3486	(35.2)	3511	(35.5)
Employed	698	(9.3)	678	(7.7)	670	(8.0)	578	(7.2)	706	(7.8)	816	(8.3)	880	(8.9)
Unemployed	4610	(61.6)	5547	(63.0)	5411	(64.7)	5362	(67.0)	5910	(65.6)	6368	(64.4)	6368	(64.4)
Retired/unable to work including disability	1110	(14.8)	1208	(13.7)	998	(11.9)	854	(10.7)	1009	(11.2)	1135	(11.5)	1136	(11.5)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>3431</b>		<b>3741</b>		<b>3316</b>		<b>3272</b>		<b>3475</b>		<b>3776</b>		<b>3742</b>	
Median age (range)	25	16-42	24	16-42	24	15-42	25	15-42	25	15-43	25	15-44	25	16-45
Under 18	475	(13.8)	542	(14.5)	438	(13.2)	513	(15.7)	526	(15.1)	566	(15.0)	502	(13.4)
Male	2744	(80.0)	2937	(78.5)	2545	(76.7)	2456	(75.1)	2656	(76.4)	2842	(75.3)	2814	(75.2)
Homeless	116	(3.4)	105	(2.8)	127	(3.8)	128	(3.9)	152	(4.4)	248	(6.6)	212	(5.7)
Traveller	84	(2.4)	124	(3.3)	110	(3.3)	101	(3.1)	92	(2.6)	135	(3.6)	107	(2.9)
Education ceased before 16 yrs*	1221	(35.6)	1173	(31.4)	1049	(31.6)	1001	(30.6)	1004	(28.9)	1046	(27.7)	1011	(27.0)
In paid employment	391	(11.4)	361	(9.6)	343	(10.3)	297	(9.1)	356	(10.2)	424	(11.2)	507	(13.5)
Unemployed	1817	(53.0)	2053	(54.9)	1898	(57.2)	1916	(58.6)	1989	(57.2)	2091	(55.4)	2099	(56.1)
Retired/unable to work including disability	570	(16.6)	556	(14.9)	397	(12.0)	334	(10.2)	348	(10.0)	364	(9.6)	322	(8.6)
<b>Previously treated</b>	<b>3891</b>		<b>4842</b>		<b>4862</b>		<b>4518</b>		<b>5239</b>		<b>5643</b>		<b>5855</b>	
Median age (range)	30	18-44	30	18-44	30	18-45	30	19-44	31	19-45	31	19-45	32	19-46
Under 18	114	(2.9)	188	(3.9)	171	(3.5)	140	(3.1)	139	(2.7)	168	(3.0)	172	(2.9)
Male	2834	(72.8)	3516	(72.6)	3543	(72.9)	3204	(70.9)	3695	(70.5)	4041	(71.6)	4117	(70.3)
Homeless	292	(7.5)	336	(6.9)	385	(7.9)	327	(7.2)	417	(8.0)	526	(9.3)	660	(11.3)
Traveller	54	(1.4)	116	(2.4)	98	(2.0)	113	(2.5)	135	(2.6)	159	(2.8)	172	(2.9)
Education ceased before 16 yrs*	1740	(44.7)	2113	(43.6)	2134	(43.9)	1964	(43.5)	2180	(41.6)	2328	(41.3)	2440	(41.7)
In paid employment	296	(7.6)	298	(6.2)	313	(6.4)	263	(5.8)	326	(6.2)	375	(6.6)	354	(6.0)
Unemployed	2722	(70.0)	3378	(69.8)	3403	(70.0)	3348	(74.1)	3751	(71.6)	3955	(70.1)	4080	(69.7)
Retired/unable to work including disability	505	(13.0)	605	(12.5)	576	(11.8)	465	(10.3)	630	(12.0)	714	(12.7)	790	(13.5)
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>157</b>		<b>223</b>		<b>183</b>		<b>215</b>		<b>292</b>		<b>471</b>		<b>295</b>	

\*Updated definition to previous publications – now includes those who left school for the first time before the age of 16 years.<sup>6</sup>

## Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) area of residence

In 2015, the highest number of **cases resided** in CHO 9 (Table 9). All CHOs recorded an increase in cases over the seven year period, but numbers fluctuated CHO 4 had the biggest overall increase between 2009 and 2015, 60% compared to only 2% for CHO 7, which was the lowest increase observed.

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

**Table 9 No of cases treated for problem drug use, by CHO area of residence, NDTRS 2009 to 2015**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<b>All cases</b>	<b>7479</b>	<b>8806</b>	<b>8361</b>	<b>8005</b>	<b>9006</b>	<b>9890</b>	<b>9892</b>
CHO 1	256	272	242	305	265	297	284
CHO 2	386	480	411	402	416	356	411
CHO 3	511	552	437	392	571	809	748
CHO 4	895	1380	1383	1178	1367	1390	1429
CHO 5	1050	1340	1241	1349	1454	1366	1394
CHO 6	385	350	380	343	458	470	470
CHO 7	1722	1802	1707	1538	1646	1738	1750
CHO 8	683	753	801	890	807	1075	1020
CHO 9	1374	1519	1512	1379	1748	2068	2007
Other/unknown	217	358	247	229	274	321	379
<b>New cases</b>	<b>3431</b>	<b>3741</b>	<b>3316</b>	<b>3272</b>	<b>3475</b>	<b>3776</b>	<b>3742</b>
CHO 1	160	156	146	178	166	149	147
CHO 2	189	227	190	173	160	126	162
CHO 3	254	295	219	203	252	381	322
CHO 4	518	731	626	526	595	589	575
CHO 5	641	731	588	601	692	611	613
CHO 6	158	124	123	143	168	200	199
CHO 7	532	608	584	544	525	572	593
CHO 8	354	357	417	452	348	479	471
CHO 9	562	428	384	404	507	587	581
Other/unknown	63	84	39	48	62	82	79
<b>Previously Treated</b>	<b>3891</b>	<b>4842</b>	<b>4862</b>	<b>4518</b>	<b>5239</b>	<b>5643</b>	<b>5855</b>
CHO 1	92	106	87	114	91	135	121
CHO 2	192	246	221	227	246	227	247
CHO 3	250	245	213	181	294	362	357
CHO 4	365	622	745	636	730	773	841
CHO 5	398	588	633	730	747	746	776
CHO 6	220	207	244	180	264	247	259
CHO 7	1132	1142	1071	951	1055	1025	1095
CHO 8	309	364	354	409	409	540	514
CHO 9	784	1065	1090	923	1202	1376	1370
Other/unknown	149	257	204	167	201	212	275
<b>Treatment status not known</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>295</b>



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## 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

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## References

This document may be cited as: Health Research Board (2017) Drug Treatment in Ireland NDTRS 2009 to 2015 . Available at: [www.drugsandalcohol.ie/27023](http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/27023) and at [www.hrb.ie/publications](http://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/health-information-in-house-research/alcohol-drugs/ndtrs/ndtrs-publications/>
2. For more information on the EMCDDA and the Treatment Demand Indicator see <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/>
3. Revised historic trend data (1998 to 2015) is available at <http://www.hrb.ie/health-information-in-house-research/alcohol-drugs/publications/>. The NDTRS interactive tables (2004 to 2015) will be updated to reflect the changes at <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/key-info/>.
4. 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
5. Population data is taken from the Central Statistics Office at <http://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/>
6. Data on ethnicity is taken from the 2016 Census from the CSO at <http://cso.ie/en/media/csoie/newsevents/documents/pressreleases/2017/prCensussummarypart1.pdf>
7. See Department of Education at <http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/A-Guide-to-the-Irish-Education-System.pdf>

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