

# 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.<sup>1</sup>

In the seven-year period 2010 to 2016, **a total of 63,187 cases were treated for problem drug use** (excluding alcohol).<sup>2,3</sup> 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.

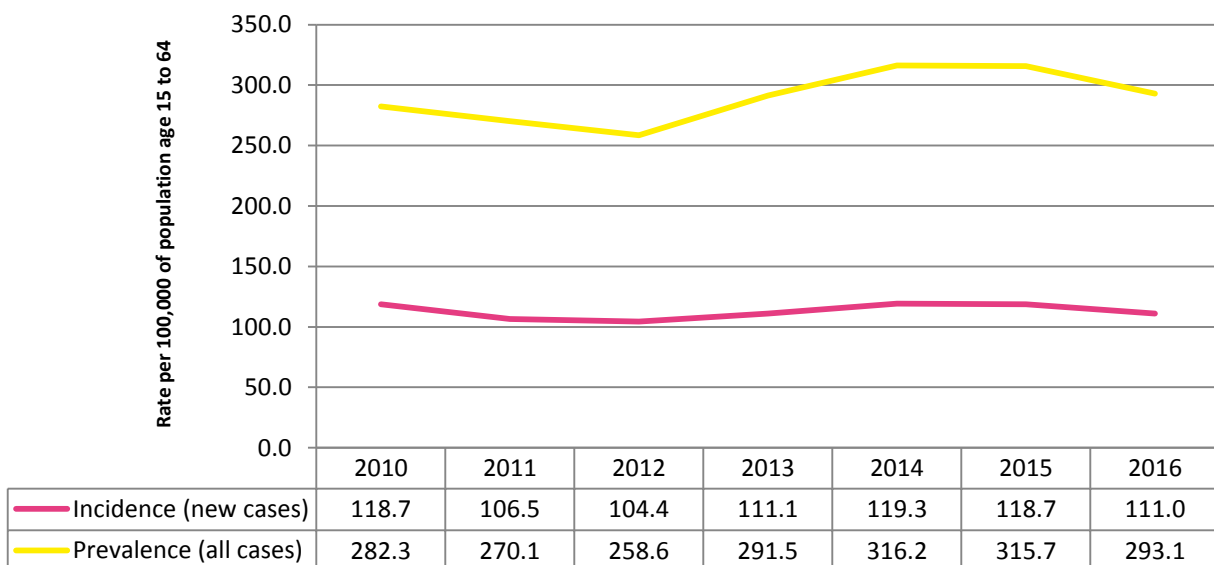
**Table 1 Number of cases treated for problem drug use, by treatment status, NDTRS 2010 to 2016**

	2010		2011		2012		2013		2014		2015		2016	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>Revised total</b>	<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>	
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 CSO<sup>4</sup> (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	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>	
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	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>	
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)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>3741</b>		<b>3316</b>		<b>3272</b>		<b>3475</b>		<b>3776</b>		<b>3742</b>		<b>3526</b>	
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)
<b>Previously treated</b>	<b>4842</b>		<b>4862</b>		<b>4518</b>		<b>5239</b>		<b>5643</b>		<b>5855</b>		<b>5335</b>	
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)
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>223</b>		<b>183</b>		<b>215</b>		<b>292</b>		<b>471</b>		<b>295</b>		<b>366</b>	

\* 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	(%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>	
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	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>5871</b>		<b>5514</b>		<b>4922</b>		<b>5666</b>		<b>5897</b>		<b>6020</b>		<b>5703</b>	
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)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>2452</b>		<b>2077</b>		<b>1832</b>		<b>2062</b>		<b>2115</b>		<b>2077</b>		<b>2016</b>	
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	(%)
<b>Ever injected</b>	<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>	
All cases	2915	(33.1)	3054	(36.5)	2882	(36.0)	3254	(36.1)	3528	(35.7)	3330	(33.7)	2960	(32.1)
<b>Total new cases</b>	<b>3741</b>		<b>3316</b>		<b>3272</b>		<b>3475</b>		<b>3776</b>		<b>3742</b>		<b>3526</b>	
Ever injected	570	(15.2)	571	(17.2)	590	(18.0)	591	(17.0)	642	(17.0)	541	(14.5)	476	(13.5)
<b>Total previously treated</b>	<b>4842</b>		<b>4862</b>		<b>4518</b>		<b>5239</b>		<b>5643</b>		<b>5855</b>		<b>5335</b>	
Ever injected	2289	(47.3)	2432	(50.0)	2232	(49.4)	2575	(49.2)	2730	(48.4)	2701	(46.1)	2379	(44.6)
<b>Current risk</b>														
<b>All cases</b>	<b>2915</b>		<b>3054</b>		<b>2882</b>		<b>3254</b>		<b>3528</b>		<b>3330</b>		<b>2960</b>	
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**	
<b>New cases</b>	<b>570</b>		<b>571</b>		<b>590</b>		<b>591</b>		<b>642</b>		<b>541</b>		<b>476</b>	
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**	
<b>Previously treated cases</b>	<b>2289</b>		<b>2432</b>		<b>2232</b>		<b>2575</b>		<b>2730</b>		<b>2701</b>		<b>2379</b>	
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).<sup>5</sup>

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	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>8806</b>		<b>8361</b>		<b>8005</b>		<b>9006</b>		<b>9890</b>		<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>	
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)
<b>New Cases</b>	<b>3741</b>		<b>3316</b>		<b>3272</b>		<b>3475</b>		<b>3776</b>		<b>3742</b>		<b>3526</b>	
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)
<b>Previously Treated</b>	<b>4842</b>		<b>4862</b>		<b>4518</b>		<b>5239</b>		<b>5643</b>		<b>5855</b>		<b>5335</b>	
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)
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>223</b>		<b>183</b>		<b>215</b>		<b>292</b>		<b>471</b>		<b>295</b>		<b>366</b>	

## 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	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>869</b>		<b>770</b>		<b>666</b>		<b>708</b>		<b>853</b>		<b>1026</b>		<b>1138</b>	
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)
<b>New Cases</b>	<b>496</b>		<b>396</b>		<b>297</b>		<b>320</b>		<b>425</b>		<b>513</b>		<b>568</b>	
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)
<b>Previously Treated</b>	<b>347</b>		<b>356</b>		<b>349</b>		<b>352</b>		<b>381</b>		<b>487</b>		<b>541</b>	
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)
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>18</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>36</b>		<b>47</b>		<b>26</b>		<b>29</b>	



## 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
<b>All cases</b>	<b>8806</b>	<b>8361</b>	<b>8005</b>	<b>9006</b>	<b>9890</b>	<b>9892</b>	<b>9227</b>
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
<b>New cases</b>	<b>3741</b>	<b>3316</b>	<b>3272</b>	<b>3475</b>	<b>3776</b>	<b>3742</b>	<b>3526</b>
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
<b>Previously Treated</b>	<b>4842</b>	<b>4862</b>	<b>4518</b>	<b>5239</b>	<b>5643</b>	<b>5855</b>	<b>5335</b>
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
<b>Treatment status not known</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>366</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 (2018) Drug Treatment in Ireland NDTRS 2010 to 2016.

Available at: [www.drugsandalcohol.ie/28986](http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/28986) 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/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/>

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