

**HRB Bulletin**  
National Drug Treatment  
Reporting System

**2015 – 2021**  
**Drug Treatment Data**

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## **HRB StatLink Series 8**

# National Drug Treatment Reporting System 2015 – 2021 Drug Treatment Data

Cathy Kelleher, Ita Condrón and Suzi Lyons

## Introduction

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In this bulletin, trends in **treated problem drug use** (excluding alcohol) are described for the seven-year period from 2015 to 2021. The data are drawn from the **National Drug Treatment Reporting System** (NDTRS), the national surveillance system that records and reports on cases of drug and alcohol treatment in Ireland.

### Overview

In the seven-year period, 69,450 cases were treated for problem drug use. The number of cases recorded increased from 9,892 in 2015 to 10,769 in 2021.

- The proportion of *new* cases was 37.8% in 2015 and 39.1% in 2021.
- In 2021, the majority of cases were treated in outpatient facilities (70.3%), as in previous years.
- Between 2015 and 2021, the proportion of cases treated in residential (inpatient) settings decreased from 18.0% to 12.9%.

### Main problem drug (excluding alcohol)

- **Opioids** (mainly heroin) were the most common main problem drug reported in 2021. The proportion of cases treated for opioids decreased from 47.8% in 2015 to 33.7% in 2021.
- **Heroin** accounted for 87.3% (3,168) of all opioid cases in 2021.
- **Cocaine** was the second most common drug reported in 2021, accounting for 30.2% (3,248) of all cases.
- In 2021, for the first time, the NDTRS recorded more cocaine than heroin cases among those treated for drugs as a main problem.
- There was a 216.6% increase in the number of cases treated for cocaine as a main problem, from 1,026 in 2015 to 3,248 in 2021.
- Cocaine was the most common main drug among new cases in 2021, as in 2020.
- **Cannabis** was the third most common main drug reported in 2021. The proportion of cases treated decreased from 28.2% in 2015 to 21.3% in 2021.
- **Benzodiazepines** were the main problem drug for 11.3% of cases in 2021, an increase from 8.8% of cases in 2015.

## Polydrug use

- Over the period, **polydrug use** was reported by over half of cases (57.8%).
- The proportion of cases with polydrug use decreased from 60.9% in 2015 to 53.4% in 2018 but increased to 58.2% in 2021.
- Cannabis (42.0%) was the most common **additional drug** in 2021, followed by cocaine (35.9%), benzodiazepines (35.8%), and alcohol (35.8%).

## Risk behaviour

- The proportion of cases that had **ever injected** decreased from 33.7% in 2015 to 21.0% in 2021.
- In 2021, among cases who had injected, 41.4% had **shared needles and syringes**.

## Socio-demographic characteristics

- The **median age** of cases increased from 30 years in 2015 to 32 years in 2021.
- Seven-in-ten (73.0%) cases reported over the period were **male**.
- The proportion of cases recorded as **homeless** increased from 9.2% in 2015 to 12.5% in 2021.
- The proportion of cases with an **Irish Traveller** ethnicity was 2.9% in 2015 and 3.4% in 2021.
- The proportion of cases recorded as **unemployed** decreased from 64.4% in 2015 to 58.8% in 2021.
- The proportion of cases **in paid employment** increased from 8.9% in 2015 to 20.5% in 2021.
- In 2021, 15.8% of cases treated for problem drug use were **residing with children** aged 17 years or younger.

## NDTRS cases 2015 to 2021

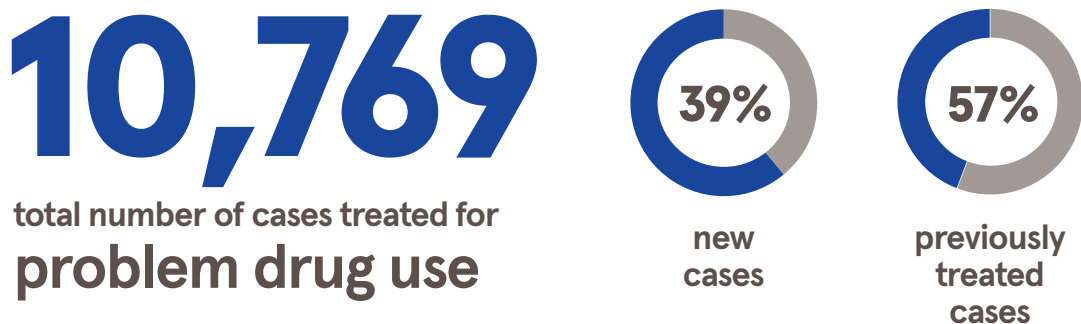
This bulletin presents NDTRS drug treatment data for the seven-year period from 2015 to 2021. Data in this bulletin supersede all data previously published by the NDTRS.<sup>1</sup>

The National Drug and Alcohol Strategy, *Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: A Health Led Response to Drug and Alcohol Use in Ireland 2017–2025*, requires all publicly funded drug and alcohol services to complete the NDTRS for all people who use services (Action 5.1.47).<sup>2</sup> Included in the NDTRS are cases treated in all types of services: outpatient, inpatient, low threshold, general practitioners, and those treated in prison.<sup>3, 4</sup>

Between 2015 and 2021, a total of 69,450 cases treated for problem drug use (excluding alcohol) were reported to the NDTRS.<sup>5</sup>

The number of treated cases recorded increased from 9,892 in 2015 to 10,769 in 2021 (**Table 1**). The decrease in cases in 2020 coincided with COVID-19 and related restrictions, which presented increased risks for people who use drugs and alcohol, and significant challenges for treatment providers, and should be interpreted in that context.<sup>6</sup>

New cases (never treated before) increased in proportion from 37.8% in 2015 to 39.1% in 2021. The proportion of previously treated cases decreased from 59.2% in 2015 to 56.6% in 2021.



Figures relate to 2021

## Type of service provider

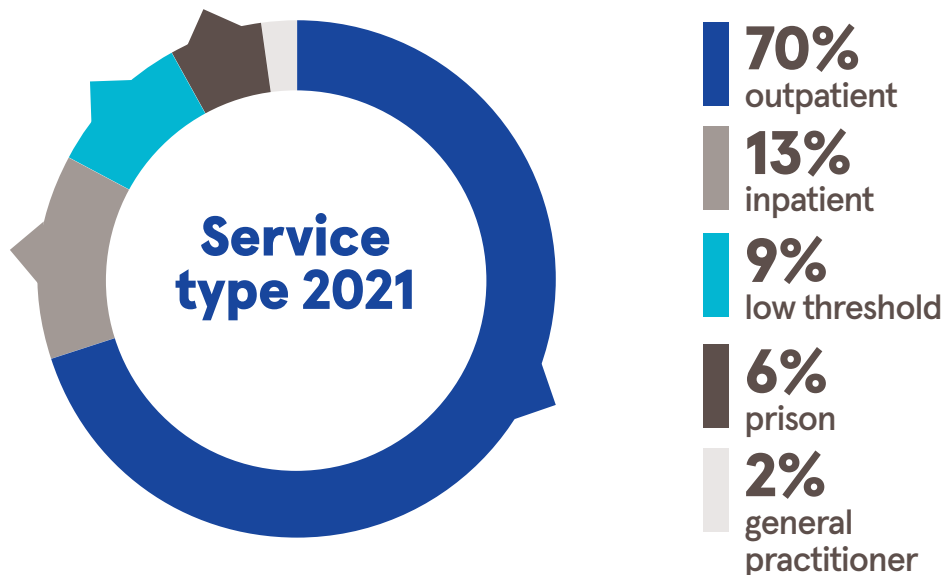
Over the period, most cases were treated in outpatient facilities (64.7%). In 2021, 70.3% of cases were treated in outpatient facilities, an increase from 58.8% in 2015 (**Table 2**).

The proportion of cases treated in residential (inpatient) settings declined over the period from 18.0% in 2015 to 12.9% in 2021, with 2020 having the lowest number and proportion of such cases (12.3%). The reduction in residential case numbers can in part be attributed to temporary closures and reduced capacity introduced in 2020 to comply with COVID-19 restrictions.

The proportion of cases treated in low threshold settings decreased from 12.1% in 2015 to 8.5% in 2021.

The proportion of cases treated in prison peaked at 10.5% in 2018 but decreased overall from 8.4% in 2015 to 6.1% in 2021.

General practitioners (GPs) accounted for the lowest proportion of cases in 2021 (2.2%), as in previous years. Returns from GPs peaked in 2019 with 351 cases, 3.3% of all treated cases in that year.



Figures relate to 2021

Table 1: Number of cases treated for drugs as a main problem, by treatment status, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>		<b>8922</b>		<b>10274</b>		<b>10664</b>		<b>9702</b>		<b>10769</b>	
New cases	3742	(37.8)	3526	(38.2)	3257	(36.5)	3962	(38.6)	3979	(37.3)	3796	(39.1)	4206	(39.1)
Previously treated cases	5855	(59.2)	5335	(57.8)	5242	(58.8)	5872	(57.2)	5927	(55.6)	5441	(56.1)	6090	(56.6)
Treatment status unknown	295	(3.0)	366	(4.0)	423	(4.7)	440	(4.3)	758	(7.1)	465	(4.8)	473	(4.4)

Table 2: Number of cases treated for drugs as a main problem, by type of service provider, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>		<b>8922</b>		<b>10274</b>		<b>10664</b>		<b>9702</b>		<b>10769</b>	
Outpatient	5818	(58.8)	5481	(59.4)	5610	(62.9)	6715	(65.4)	6946	(65.1)	6806	(70.2)	7568	(70.3)
Inpatient*	1779	(18.0)	1885	(20.4)	1757	(19.7)	1384	(13.5)	1571	(14.7)	1190	(12.3)	1394	(12.9)
Low threshold	1197	(12.1)	886	(9.6)	792	(8.9)	887	(8.6)	948	(8.9)	870	(9.0)	918	(8.5)
Prison	827	(8.4)	737	(8.0)	651	(7.3)	1082	(10.5)	848	(8.0)	754	(7.8)	652	(6.1)
General practitioner	271	(2.7)	238	(2.6)	112	(1.3)	206	(2.0)	351	(3.3)	82	(0.8)	237	(2.2)

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



## Participation in the NDTRS

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In 2021, 70% of all eligible services provided data to the NDTRS for the year, however, this rate varies by service type. While coverage for most service types ranges between 86% and 100%, the main reason for the shortfall is the poor participation of GPs who provide opioid substitution treatment (OST). In 2021, only 45% of eligible GPs participated in the NDTRS even though the NDTRS has a dedicated research nurse available to collect data on site. In addition, the NDTRS receives counselling data but no OST data from the Irish Prison Service. This is despite Action 5.1.47 of the national drugs strategy stating that all publicly funded drug and alcohol services are required to return data to the system.<sup>2</sup>

This means that the number of OST cases are underrepresented in the NDTRS, which is of particular concern as the NDTRS data is supplied to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as well as being widely used to measure progress and inform drug-related planning and policy nationally.<sup>7,8</sup>

## Main problem drug

### All cases

**Opioids** (mainly heroin) were the main problem drug reported over the period. Heroin accounted for 87.3% (3,168) of all opioid cases. As a proportion of all cases treated, opioids decreased year-on-year from 47.8% in 2015 to 33.7% in 2021 (**Table 3**).

**Cocaine** was the second most common main problem drug in 2021, accounting for 30.2% (3,248) of all cases. In 2021, for the first time, the NDTRS recorded more cocaine than heroin cases among those treated for drugs as a main problem.

The proportion of cases treated for cocaine as a main problem increased from 10.4% in 2015 to 30.2% in 2021, an increase of 216.6% in the number of cases.

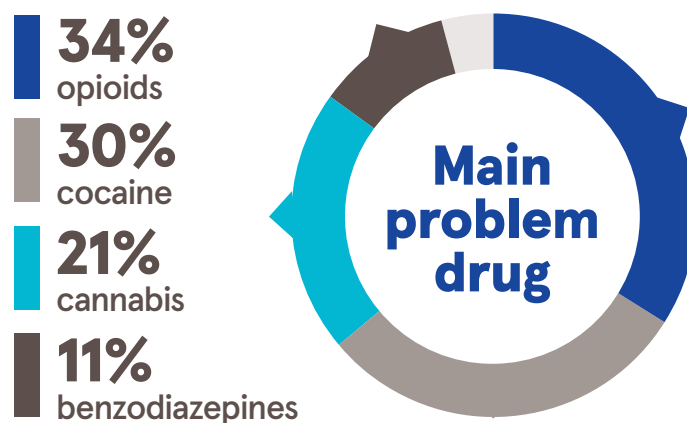
**Cannabis** was the third most common main problem drug reported in 2021. The proportion of cases treated for cannabis as a main problem decreased from 28.2% in 2015 to 21.3% in 2021.

**Benzodiazepines** were the main problem for 11.3% of cases in 2021, an increase from 8.8% in 2015.

**Z-drugs** as a main problem continued to account for 0.7% of cases in 2021, a decrease from 1.6% in 2015.

**MDMA** (ecstasy) and **amphetamines** each continued to account for a small proportion of all treated cases in 2021.

In 2021, 40 (0.4%) cases reported pregabalin (Lyrica) as a main problem, an increase from 22 cases in 2020. A further 71 cases reported pregabalin as a secondary problem in 2021, a decrease from 80 in 2020.



Figures relate to 2021

## New cases

In 2021, cocaine (38.4%) was the most common main problem drug among new cases (**Table 3**). As in 2020, cocaine was followed by cannabis (35.2%) and opioids (12.6%) as main problems for new cases.

Among new cases, cocaine as a main problem increased yearly from 13.7% in 2015 to 38.4% in 2021, a 214.8% increase in the number of cases.

The proportion of new cases reporting cannabis as a main problem decreased steadily from 45.2% in 2015 to 35.2% in 2020, and did not change in 2021.

The proportion of new cases reporting opioids as a main problem decreased from 25.9% in 2015 to 12.6% in 2021.

## Previously treated cases

In 2021, opioids (48.1%) were the most common main problem drug reported by previously treated cases, followed by cocaine (24.3%), cannabis (12.2%), and benzodiazepines (12.2%).

Among previously treated cases, the proportion reporting opioids decreased from 61.8% in 2015 to 48.1% in 2021.

The proportion of previously treated cases reporting cocaine as a main problem increased steadily from 8.3% in 2015 to 24.3% in 2021.

The proportion of previously treated cases reporting cannabis as a main problem decreased from 17.5% in 2015 to 12.2% in 2021.

Among previously treated cases, the proportion reporting benzodiazepines increased from 8.6% in 2015 to 12.2% in 2021.

Table 3: Main problem drug (excluding alcohol) reported in 30 days prior to treatment, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>		<b>8922</b>		<b>10274</b>		<b>10664</b>		<b>9702</b>		<b>10769</b>	
Opioids	4732	(47.8)	4341	(47.0)	4016	(45.0)	4349	(42.3)	4133	(38.8)	3559	(36.7)	3629	(33.7)
Cocaine	1026	(10.4)	1138	(12.3)	1500	(16.8)	2254	(21.9)	2560	(24.0)	2619	(27.0)	3248	(30.2)
Cannabis	2786	(28.2)	2439	(26.4)	2200	(24.7)	2358	(23.0)	2502	(23.5)	2120	(21.9)	2299	(21.3)
Benzodiazepines	873	(8.8)	897	(9.7)	868	(9.7)	999	(9.7)	1082	(10.1)	1097	(11.3)	1218	(11.3)
Z-Drugs*	154	(1.6)	103	(1.1)	82	(0.9)	48	(0.5)	72	(0.7)	72	(0.7)	80	(0.7)
Amphetamines	63	(0.6)	55	(0.6)	40	(0.4)	57	(0.6)	59	(0.6)	53	(0.5)	77	(0.7)
NPS	85	(0.9)	72	(0.8)	51	(0.6)	48	(0.5)	63	(0.6)	43	(0.4)	49	(0.5)
MDMA (ecstasy)	51	(0.5)	53	(0.6)	44	(0.5)	34	(0.3)	47	(0.4)	31	(0.3)	12	(0.1)
Volatile Inhalants	15	(0.2)	11	(0.1)	6	(0.1)	10	(0.1)	6	(0.1)	6	(0.1)	~	~
Other	107	(1.1)	118	(1.3)	115	(1.3)	117	(1.1)	140	(1.3)	102	(1.1)	152	(1.4)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>3742</b>		<b>3526</b>		<b>3257</b>		<b>3962</b>		<b>3979</b>		<b>3796</b>		<b>4206</b>	
Opioids	971	(25.9)	950	(26.9)	809	(24.8)	719	(18.1)	676	(17.0)	550	(14.5)	530	(12.6)
Cocaine	513	(13.7)	568	(16.1)	748	(23.0)	1232	(31.1)	1258	(31.6)	1359	(35.8)	1615	(38.4)
Cannabis	1693	(45.2)	1452	(41.2)	1272	(39.1)	1505	(38.0)	1506	(37.8)	1338	(35.2)	1479	(35.2)
Benzodiazepines	340	(9.1)	353	(10.0)	290	(8.9)	345	(8.7)	340	(8.5)	392	(10.3)	418	(9.9)
Z-Drugs*	46	(1.2)	41	(1.2)	22	(0.7)	17	(0.4)	24	(0.6)	27	(0.7)	26	(0.6)
Amphetamines	33	(0.9)	24	(0.7)	19	(0.6)	34	(0.9)	37	(0.9)	28	(0.7)	47	(1.1)
NPS	53	(1.4)	36	(1.0)	21	(0.6)	25	(0.6)	22	(0.6)	26	(0.7)	23	(0.5)
MDMA (ecstasy)	31	(0.8)	39	(1.1)	29	(0.9)	18	(0.5)	38	(1.0)	21	(0.6)	8	(0.2)
Volatile Inhalants	6	(0.2)	8	(0.2)	~	~	8	(0.2)	~	~	~	~	~	~
Other	56	(1.5)	55	(1.6)	42	(1.3)	59	(1.5)	73	(1.8)	52	(1.4)	55	(1.3)
<b>Previously treated cases</b>	<b>5855</b>		<b>5335</b>		<b>5242</b>		<b>5872</b>		<b>5927</b>		<b>5441</b>		<b>6090</b>	
Opioids	3619	(61.8)	3204	(60.1)	3037	(57.9)	3478	(59.2)	3244	(54.7)	2856	(52.5)	2930	(48.1)
Cocaine	487	(8.3)	541	(10.1)	692	(13.2)	944	(16.1)	1074	(18.1)	1126	(20.7)	1478	(24.3)
Cannabis	1023	(17.5)	908	(17.0)	807	(15.4)	717	(12.2)	784	(13.2)	691	(12.7)	740	(12.2)
Benzodiazepines	504	(8.6)	500	(9.4)	534	(10.2)	596	(10.1)	661	(11.2)	631	(11.6)	742	(12.2)
Z-Drugs*	99	(1.7)	58	(1.1)	56	(1.1)	31	(0.5)	43	(0.7)	42	(0.8)	54	(0.9)
Amphetamines	28	(0.5)	29	(0.5)	19	(0.4)	19	(0.3)	20	(0.3)	22	(0.4)	29	(0.5)
NPS	29	(0.5)	34	(0.6)	27	(0.5)	19	(0.3)	29	(0.5)	17	(0.3)	23	(0.4)
MDMA (ecstasy)	19	(0.3)	13	(0.2)	15	(0.3)	14	(0.2)	9	(0.2)	8	(0.1)	~	~
Volatile Inhalants	9	(0.2)	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0
Other	38	(0.6)	45	(0.8)	54	(1.1)	52	(0.9)	62	(1.0)	45	(0.8)	90	(1.5)
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>295</b>		<b>366</b>		<b>423</b>		<b>440</b>		<b>758</b>		<b>465</b>		<b>473</b>	

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

~ Cells with five cases or fewer

## Polydrug use

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Over the period 2015 to 2021, over half of all cases (57.8%) reported polydrug use (problem use of more than one substance).

The proportion of cases reporting polydrug use decreased from 60.9% in 2015 to 53.4% in 2018, then increased to 58.6% in 2020. There was little change in 2021, with 58.2% of cases reporting polydrug use (**Table 4**).

In 2021, cannabis (42.0%) was the most common additional substance reported by cases with polydrug use, followed by cocaine (35.9%), benzodiazepines (35.8%), and alcohol (35.8%), with all three at similar levels (**Table 5**).

As an additional drug, cannabis increased steadily over the period from 32.4% of cases in 2015 to 42.0% in 2021. For the second year running, in 2021, cannabis was more common than alcohol as a secondary drug among cases with polydrug use.

Cocaine as an additional problem increased substantially over the period from 22.6% of cases with polydrug use in 2015 to 35.9% in 2021.

Benzodiazepines decreased from 38.5% of polydrug cases in 2015 to 35.8% in 2021.

Alcohol decreased slightly from a high of 37.5% of polydrug cases in 2017 to 35.8% in 2021.

As in 2019, opioids were reported as an additional substance by 20.1% of cases with polydrug use in 2021. There have been small fluctuations in the proportion since 2015 (17.6%).

Among *new cases* with polydrug use, alcohol (50.0%) was the most common additional substance in 2021, followed by cannabis (40.4%), cocaine (29.3%), and benzodiazepines (24.7%) (**Table 5**).

The proportion of *new cases* reporting cannabis as an additional problem increased from 30.4% in 2015 to 40.4% in 2021.

The proportion of *new cases* reporting cocaine as an additional problem increased from 22.4% in 2015 to 29.3% in 2021.

Table 4: Polydrug use in cases treated for drugs as a main problem, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>		<b>8922</b>		<b>10274</b>		<b>10664</b>		<b>9702</b>		<b>10769</b>	
One drug only	3872	(39.1)	3524	(38.2)	3816	(42.8)	4787	(46.6)	4803	(45.0)	4019	(41.4)	4501	(41.8)
Two or more drugs	6020	(60.9)	5703	(61.8)	5106	(57.2)	5487	(53.4)	5861	(55.0)	5683	(58.6)	6268	(58.2)

Table 5: Polydrug use - additional problem drugs for all cases and new cases, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All polydrug</b>	<b>6020</b>		<b>5703</b>		<b>5106</b>		<b>5487</b>		<b>5861</b>		<b>5683</b>		<b>6268</b>	
Cannabis	1953	(32.4)	1878	(32.9)	1690	(33.1)	1937	(35.3)	2166	(37.0)	2246	(39.5)	2633	(42.0)
Cocaine	1360	(22.6)	1475	(25.9)	1435	(28.1)	1619	(29.5)	1928	(32.9)	2092	(36.8)	2252	(35.9)
Benzodiazepines	2316	(38.5)	2105	(36.9)	1846	(36.2)	1987	(36.2)	2088	(35.6)	2076	(36.5)	2246	(35.8)
Alcohol	2051	(34.1)	1943	(34.1)	1914	(37.5)	2053	(37.4)	2189	(37.3)	1986	(34.9)	2241	(35.8)
Opioids	1060	(17.6)	1222	(21.4)	1078	(21.1)	969	(17.7)	1180	(20.1)	1062	(18.7)	1257	(20.1)
MDMA (ecstasy)	519	(8.6)	465	(8.2)	384	(7.5)	432	(7.9)	493	(8.4)	424	(7.5)	385	(6.1)
Z-Drugs*	436	(7.2)	438	(7.7)	334	(6.5)	278	(5.1)	208	(3.5)	247	(4.3)	185	(3.0)
Amphetamines	138	(2.3)	128	(2.2)	129	(2.5)	128	(2.3)	145	(2.5)	145	(2.6)	159	(2.5)
NPS	108	(1.8)	115	(2.0)	52	(1.0)	52	(0.9)	76	(1.3)	78	(1.4)	89	(1.4)
Volatile inhalants	14	(0.2)	13	(0.2)	18	(0.4)	20	(0.4)	21	(0.4)	12	(0.2)	23	(0.4)
Other	222	(3.7)	224	(3.9)	261	(5.1)	268	(4.9)	338	(5.8)	316	(5.6)	290	(4.6)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>2077</b>		<b>2016</b>		<b>1693</b>		<b>1896</b>		<b>1974</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>2152</b>	
Cannabis	632	(30.4)	603	(29.9)	561	(33.1)	662	(34.9)	750	(38.0)	769	(38.2)	870	(40.4)
Cocaine	465	(22.4)	585	(29.0)	465	(27.5)	517	(27.3)	607	(30.7)	633	(31.4)	631	(29.3)
Benzodiazepines	644	(31.0)	636	(31.5)	464	(27.4)	480	(25.3)	535	(27.1)	555	(27.6)	532	(24.7)
Alcohol	910	(43.8)	861	(42.7)	805	(47.5)	929	(49.0)	1013	(51.3)	969	(48.1)	1075	(50.0)
Opioids	213	(10.3)	297	(14.7)	214	(12.6)	179	(9.4)	157	(8.0)	143	(7.1)	155	(7.2)
MDMA (ecstasy)	253	(12.2)	237	(11.8)	195	(11.5)	219	(11.6)	248	(12.6)	238	(11.8)	184	(8.6)
Z-Drugs*	102	(4.9)	111	(5.5)	79	(4.7)	51	(2.7)	26	(1.3)	34	(1.7)	32	(1.5)
Amphetamines	58	(2.8)	53	(2.6)	58	(3.4)	50	(2.6)	62	(3.1)	75	(3.7)	64	(3.0)
NPS	42	(2.0)	50	(2.5)	18	(1.1)	16	(0.8)	26	(1.3)	23	(1.1)	27	(1.3)
Volatile inhalants	10	(0.5)	~	~	6	(0.4)	6	(0.3)	7	(0.4)	~	~	11	(0.5)
Other	83	(4.0)	85	(4.2)	103	(6.1)	128	(6.8)	138	(7.0)	142	(7.1)	128	(5.9)

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

~ Cells with five cases or fewer

## Risk factors

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Risk factors of interest to the NDTRS include injecting behaviour, sharing of needles and syringes, and sharing of other drug paraphernalia (such as joints, straws, foil, pipes, spoons, filters, citric, water to mix drugs, and water or bleach to clean equipment).

### Injecting behaviour

The proportion of all cases that had ever injected decreased from 33.7% in 2015 to 21.0% in 2021 (**Table 6**).

Among new cases, the proportion that reported ever injecting decreased over the period from 14.5% in 2015 to 3.9% in 2021.

The proportion of previously treated cases that reported ever injecting decreased from 46.1% in 2015 to 32.8% in 2021.

Among cases that had ever injected, the proportion currently injecting (i.e., in the 30 days prior to treatment) decreased from 36.7% in 2015 to 29.7% in 2018, then increased slightly to 32.7% in 2021.

### Sharing of drug paraphernalia

Prior to 2016, information on sharing of any drug paraphernalia, including needles and syringes was collected in a single question. To comply with reporting requirements of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), this question was changed in 2016 so that sharing of 'needles and syringes' is now recorded separately from sharing of 'other drug paraphernalia'.

The transition to the new question resulted in an initial poor response whereby the data for 2016 to 2018 is not reported (**Table 6**). However, improved responses mean that from 2019, data can be reported. Data validation will continue to improve the quality of the responses, however, these data should still be interpreted with caution given the high number of unknown values.

In 2021, 41.4% of cases that had ever injected had ever shared needles and syringes, an increase on 37.8% in 2020.

Table 6: Injecting history in cases treated for drugs as a main problem, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>		<b>8922</b>		<b>10274</b>		<b>10664</b>		<b>9702</b>		<b>10769</b>	
Ever injected	3330	(33.7)	2960	(32.1)	2651	(29.7)	2740	(26.7)	2540	(23.8)	2260	(23.3)	2264	(21.0)
Ever shared <b>any</b> equipment including needles and syringes*	1519	(45.6)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ever shared needles and syringes only*	*	*	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	946	(37.2)	855	(37.8)	938	(41.4)
<b>Total new cases</b>	<b>3742</b>		<b>3526</b>		<b>3257</b>		<b>3962</b>		<b>3979</b>		<b>3796</b>		<b>4206</b>	
Ever injected	541	(14.5)	476	(13.5)	359	(11.0)	314	(7.9)	255	(6.4)	194	(5.1)	164	(3.9)
Ever shared <b>any</b> equipment including needles and syringes*	192	(35.5)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ever shared needles and syringes only*	*	*	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	74	(29.0)	50	(25.8)	45	(27.4)
<b>Total previously treated cases</b>	<b>5855</b>		<b>5335</b>		<b>5242</b>		<b>5872</b>		<b>5972</b>		<b>5441</b>		<b>6090</b>	
Ever injected	2701	(46.1)	2379	(44.6)	2165	(41.3)	2367	(40.3)	2213	(37.3)	1991	(36.6)	1996	(32.8)
Ever shared <b>any</b> equipment including needles and syringes*	1309	(48.5)	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ever shared needles and syringes only*	*	*	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	N/A‡	858	(38.8)	784	(39.4)	886	(43.4)
<b>Current risk</b>														
<b>All cases</b>	<b>3330</b>		<b>2960</b>		<b>2651</b>		<b>2740</b>		<b>2540</b>		<b>2260</b>		<b>2264</b>	
Currently injecting†	1223	(36.7)	984	(33.2)	862	(32.5)	815	(29.7)	759	(29.9)	702	(31.1)	741	(32.7)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>541</b>		<b>476</b>		<b>359</b>		<b>314</b>		<b>255</b>		<b>194</b>		<b>164</b>	
Currently injecting†	228	(42.1)	186	(39.1)	136	(37.9)	131	(41.7)	94	(36.9)	82	(42.3)	77	(47.0)
<b>Previously treated cases</b>	<b>2701</b>		<b>2379</b>		<b>2165</b>		<b>2367</b>		<b>2213</b>		<b>1991</b>		<b>1996</b>	
Currently injecting†	937	(34.7)	760	(31.9)	691	(31.9)	660	(27.9)	637	(28.8)	582	(29.2)	605	(30.3)

\* Ever shared any equipment including needles and syringes was collected up to 2015. From 2016 the question changed to comply with European reporting requirements

† In the 30 days prior to treatment

‡ N/A Not available, see description above

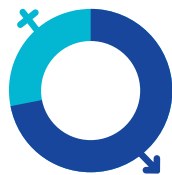


## Socio-demographic characteristics

- The median age of cases increased from 30 years in 2015 to 32 years in 2021 (**Table 7**). For new cases, the median age increased from 25 years in 2015 to 28 years in 2021.
- In 2021, 5.5% of all cases were aged 17 years or younger, a decrease from 6.9% in 2015, and the lowest proportion in the reporting period. The proportion of new cases aged 17 years or younger in 2021 was 11.1%.
- Over the period, seven-in-ten (73.0%) cases reported were males. In 2021, 72.0% of cases were males, and females accounted for 27.9% of cases. A small number of cases (five cases or fewer) identified their gender as non-binary,<sup>9</sup> an option added to the NDTRS at the end of the 2021 reporting period. Gender was unknown for 0.1% of cases.
- The proportion of cases recorded as homeless increased from 9.2% in 2015 to 12.5% in 2021.
- The proportion of cases with an Irish Traveller ethnicity was 2.9% in 2015 and 3.4% in 2021.<sup>10</sup>
- The proportion of cases recorded as having ceased education (for the first time) before the age of 16 years decreased from 35.5% in 2015 to 33.1% in 2021.
- The proportion of all cases that were in paid employment increased from 8.9% in 2015 to 20.5% in 2021.
- Over the reporting period, 61.1% of all cases were unemployed. The proportion of cases that were unemployed decreased between 2015 and 2021 from 64.4% to 58.8%.
- In each year, rates of homelessness, ceasing education before age 16, and unemployment were higher among previously treated cases than among new cases.
- In 2021, 15.8% (1,697) of cases treated for drugs were **residing with children** aged 17 years or younger. Males accounted for 52.9% (898), and females 47.0% (797) of these cases (gender was not known for five cases or fewer).<sup>11</sup>
- A quarter of cases (24.7%, 2,664) treated for drugs in 2021 had children aged 17 years or younger, but who were **not currently residing with them**. Three quarters of these cases (75.3%) were males, and a quarter were females (24.7%) (gender was non-binary or not known for five cases or fewer).<sup>12</sup>

### Gender

28%  
females  
72%  
males



32 yrs  
median age



13%  
homeless



21%  
employed

Figures relate to 2021

Table 7: Socio-demographic characteristics of cases treated for drugs as a main problem, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>9892</b>		<b>9227</b>		<b>8922</b>		<b>10274</b>		<b>10664</b>		<b>9702</b>		<b>10769</b>	
Median age (range <sup>13</sup> )	30	17-46	30	17-47	30	17-47	31	17-48	31	17-48	31	17-48	32	17-49
Under 18	685	(6.9)	629	(6.8)	591	(6.6)	732	(7.1)	822	(7.7)	674	(6.9)	595	(5.5)
Male	7146	(72.2)	6676	(72.4)	6449	(72.3)	7626	(74.2)	7859	(73.7)	7167	(73.9)	7754	(72.0)
Homeless	910	(9.2)	886	(9.6)	858	(9.6)	980	(9.5)	1173	(11.0)	1023	(10.5)	1349	(12.5)
Traveller	282	(2.9)	296	(3.2)	310	(3.5)	343	(3.3)	320	(3.0)	291	(3.0)	361	(3.4)
Education ceased before 16 years	3511	(35.5)	3236	(35.1)	3118	(34.9)	3551	(34.6)	3306	(31.0)	3154	(32.5)	3563	(33.1)
In paid employment	880	(8.9)	1028	(11.1)	1280	(14.3)	1735	(16.9)	1700	(15.9)	1574	(16.2)	2207	(20.5)
Unemployed	6368	(64.4)	6107	(66.2)	5702	(63.9)	6356	(61.9)	5852	(54.9)	5726	(59.0)	6333	(58.8)
Retired/unable to work including disability	1136	(11.5)	805	(8.7)	712	(8.0)	823	(8.0)	1251	(11.7)	1165	(12.0)	1049	(9.7)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>3742</b>		<b>3526</b>		<b>3257</b>		<b>3962</b>		<b>3979</b>		<b>3796</b>		<b>4206</b>	
Median age (range <sup>13</sup> )	25	16-45	25	16-46	26	16-46	26	16-45	26	15-45	27	15-46	28	16-46
Under 18	498	(13.3)	469	(13.3)	413	(12.7)	537	(13.6)	618	(15.5)	548	(14.4)	468	(11.1)
Male	2814	(75.2)	2628	(74.5)	2446	(75.1)	3000	(75.7)	3065	(77.0)	2886	(76.0)	3100	(73.7)
Homeless	212	(5.7)	223	(6.3)	199	(6.1)	248	(6.3)	263	(6.6)	229	(6.0)	287	(6.8)
Traveller	107	(2.9)	102	(2.9)	97	(3.0)	109	(2.8)	112	(2.8)	100	(2.6)	129	(3.1)
Education ceased before 16 years	1011	(27.0)	969	(27.5)	834	(25.6)	946	(23.9)	888	(22.3)	841	(22.2)	1031	(24.5)
In paid employment	507	(13.5)	537	(15.2)	652	(20.0)	943	(23.8)	901	(22.6)	903	(23.8)	1216	(28.9)
Unemployed	2099	(56.1)	1990	(56.4)	1757	(53.9)	2029	(51.2)	1765	(44.4)	1772	(46.7)	2054	(48.8)
Retired/unable to work including disability	322	(8.6)	242	(6.9)	183	(5.6)	222	(5.6)	364	(9.1)	308	(8.1)	299	(7.1)
<b>Previously treated cases</b>	<b>5855</b>		<b>5335</b>		<b>5242</b>		<b>5872</b>		<b>5927</b>		<b>5441</b>		<b>6090</b>	
Median age (range <sup>13</sup> )	32	19-46	32	19-47	33	19-47	34	19-49	34	19-50	33	20-49	35	20-50
Under 18	171	(2.9)	141	(2.6)	154	(2.9)	170	(2.9)	155	(2.6)	111	(2.0)	117	(1.9)
Male	4117	(70.3)	3782	(70.9)	3686	(70.3)	4328	(73.7)	4211	(71.0)	3948	(72.6)	4315	(70.9)
Homeless	660	(11.3)	617	(11.6)	620	(11.8)	679	(11.6)	810	(13.7)	735	(13.5)	911	(15.0)
Traveller	172	(2.9)	183	(3.4)	194	(3.7)	211	(3.6)	180	(3.0)	174	(3.2)	216	(3.5)
Education ceased before 16 years	2440	(41.7)	2162	(40.5)	2183	(41.6)	2460	(41.9)	2224	(37.5)	2165	(39.8)	2357	(38.7)
In paid employment	354	(6.0)	464	(8.7)	562	(10.7)	738	(12.6)	678	(11.4)	605	(11.1)	917	(15.1)
Unemployed	4080	(69.7)	3872	(72.6)	3717	(70.9)	4056	(69.1)	3714	(62.7)	3722	(68.4)	4001	(65.7)
Retired/unable to work including disability	790	(13.5)	533	(10.0)	495	(9.4)	563	(9.6)	782	(13.2)	745	(13.7)	709	(11.6)
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>295</b>		<b>366</b>		<b>423</b>		<b>440</b>		<b>758</b>		<b>465</b>		<b>473</b>	

## Cocaine

This section focuses on the socio-demographic characteristics of cases with cocaine as a main problem drug (**Table 8**). In 2021, 3,248 cases were recorded with cocaine as a main problem, an increase of 216.6% from 1,026 cases in 2015.

The median age when entering treatment for cocaine increased to 31 years in 2021, having been relatively stable at 30 years over the reporting period.

The proportion of cases aged 17 years or younger was 1.9% in 2015 and 0.9% in 2021.

From 2015 to 2020, females accounted for one in every five cases with cocaine as a main problem. In 2021, females accounted for one in four cases (25.2%). The proportion of cases that were females increased from 19.2% in 2015 to 25.2% in 2021.

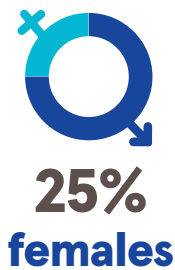
The proportion of cases in paid employment increased from 24.3% in 2015 to 34.2% in 2021, fluctuating in the years between.

The proportion of cases with polydrug use decreased from 70.9% in 2015 to 62.7% in 2021. In 2021, the most common additional drugs among cases with cocaine as a main problem were cannabis (53.3%), alcohol (52.1%), and benzodiazepines (30.5%).

In 2021, crack cocaine accounted for 16.9% of all cases treated for cocaine as a main problem, an increase on 15.8% in 2020. This is compared to 2015, when crack cocaine accounted for 9.2% of cocaine reported.

A breakdown of cocaine cases by county of residence is presented in Appendix A.

**3,248**  
**cocaine**  
**cases**



Figures relate to 2021

Table 8: Socio-demographic characteristics of cases treated for cocaine as a main problem, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cocaine</b>	<b>1026</b>		<b>1138</b>		<b>1500</b>		<b>2254</b>		<b>2560</b>		<b>2619</b>		<b>3248</b>	
Median age (range <sup>13</sup> )	30	19-44	29	18-44	30	19-45	30	19-44	30	19-46	30	19-45	31	20-47
Under 18	20	(1.9)	27	(2.4)	26	(1.7)	39	(1.7)	40	(1.6)	45	(1.7)	29	(0.9)
Female	197	(19.2)	259	(22.8)	284	(18.9)	453	(20.1)	516	(20.2)	546	(20.8)	819	(25.2)
Homeless	40	(3.9)	38	(3.3)	56	(3.7)	107	(4.7)	151	(5.9)	150	(5.7)	252	(7.8)
Traveller	21	(2.0)	30	(2.6)	42	(2.8)	41	(1.8)	63	(2.5)	57	(2.2)	100	(3.1)
Education ceased before 16 years	306	(29.8)	309	(27.2)	390	(26.0)	598	(26.5)	636	(24.8)	644	(24.6)	865	(26.6)
In paid employment	249	(24.3)	322	(28.3)	502	(33.5)	790	(35.0)	783	(30.6)	791	(30.2)	1111	(34.2)
Unemployed	536	(52.2)	611	(53.7)	773	(51.5)	1144	(50.8)	1267	(49.5)	1321	(50.4)	1739	(53.5)
Retired/unable to work including disability	144	(14.0)	104	(9.1)	90	(6.0)	136	(6.0)	240	(9.4)	253	(9.7)	231	(7.1)
<b>New cases</b>	<b>513</b>		<b>568</b>		<b>748</b>		<b>1232</b>		<b>1258</b>		<b>1359</b>		<b>1615</b>	
Median age (range <sup>13</sup> )	28	18-43	27	18-43	28	18-44	29	19-43	28	19-44	29	19-44	30	19-45
Under 18	16	(3.1)	20	(3.5)	15	(2.0)	28	(2.3)	30	(2.4)	34	(2.5)	20	(1.2)
Female	91	(17.7)	107	(18.8)	123	(16.4)	216	(17.5)	207	(16.5)	251	(18.5)	359	(22.2)
Homeless	11	(2.1)	17	(3.0)	27	(3.6)	50	(4.1)	67	(5.3)	53	(3.9)	85	(5.3)
Traveller	12	(2.3)	15	(2.6)	19	(2.5)	19	(1.5)	37	(2.9)	30	(2.2)	51	(3.2)
Education ceased before 16 years	135	(26.3)	124	(21.8)	161	(21.5)	284	(23.1)	269	(21.4)	271	(19.9)	378	(23.4)
In paid employment	155	(30.2)	190	(33.5)	286	(38.2)	497	(40.3)	466	(37.0)	507	(37.3)	649	(40.2)
Unemployed	240	(46.8)	273	(48.1)	357	(47.7)	570	(46.3)	560	(44.5)	583	(42.9)	777	(48.1)
Retired/unable to work including disability	63	(12.3)	46	(8.1)	37	(4.9)	65	(5.3)	104	(8.3)	114	(8.4)	102	(6.3)
<b>Previously treated cases</b>	<b>487</b>		<b>541</b>		<b>692</b>		<b>944</b>		<b>1074</b>		<b>1126</b>		<b>1478</b>	
Median age (range <sup>13</sup> )	31	20-47	31	20-46	32	19-46	32	19-46	32	19-48	31	20-47	33	20-48
Under 18	~	~	7	(1.3)	9	(1.3)	10	(1.1)	9	(0.8)	7	(0.6)	9	(0.6)
Female	102	(20.9)	144	(26.6)	151	(21.8)	216	(22.9)	265	(24.7)	264	(23.4)	420	(28.4)
Homeless	27	(5.5)	20	(3.7)	28	(4.0)	46	(4.9)	70	(6.5)	89	(7.9)	123	(8.3)
Traveller	9	(1.8)	15	(2.8)	20	(2.9)	20	(2.1)	24	(2.2)	22	(2.0)	43	(2.9)
Education ceased before 16 years	168	(34.9)	180	(33.3)	219	(31.6)	298	(31.6)	320	(29.8)	339	(30.1)	447	(30.2)
In paid employment	88	(18.1)	129	(23.8)	193	(27.9)	272	(28.8)	250	(23.3)	249	(22.1)	426	(28.8)
Unemployed	283	(58.1)	317	(58.6)	394	(56.9)	538	(57.0)	600	(55.9)	687	(61.0)	877	(59.3)
Retired/unable to work including disability	78	(16.0)	56	(10.4)	46	(6.6)	62	(6.6)	123	(11.5)	114	(10.1)	118	(8.0)
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>29</b>		<b>60</b>		<b>78</b>		<b>228</b>		<b>134</b>		<b>155</b>	

~ Cells with five cases or fewer

## Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area of residence

In 2021, the highest number of reported cases resided<sup>14</sup> in CHO 9 (**Table 9**) (see below for reference to areas included in each CHO). As participation in the NDTRS is not uniform across the country, conclusions based on geographic analyses are limited.

Table 9: Number of cases treated for drugs as a main problem by Community Healthcare Organisation area of residence, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>All cases</b>	<b>9892</b>	<b>9227</b>	<b>8922</b>	<b>10274</b>	<b>10664</b>	<b>9702</b>	<b>10769</b>
CHO 1	284	367	382	312	477	398	375
CHO 2	411	402	375	329	295	368	380
CHO 3	748	779	749	843	851	839	859
CHO 4	1429	1206	1055	1169	1216	1007	939
CHO 5	1394	1261	1170	1277	1260	1082	1134
CHO 6	470	366	401	448	468	471	508
CHO 7	1750	1640	1531	2043	2137	1848	2342
CHO 8	1020	921	926	1007	983	902	998
CHO 9	2007	1845	1876	2474	2531	2390	2889
Other/unknown	379	440	457	372	446	397	345

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>New cases</b>	<b>3742</b>	<b>3526</b>	<b>3257</b>	<b>3962</b>	<b>3979</b>	<b>3796</b>	<b>4206</b>
CHO 1	147	159	182	147	230	171	180
CHO 2	162	185	173	132	104	111	152
CHO 3	322	361	310	417	420	419	403
CHO 4	575	513	467	530	515	465	431
CHO 5	613	537	498	554	599	470	510
CHO 6	199	149	179	213	168	209	205
CHO 7	593	543	509	664	631	616	826
CHO 8	471	434	367	460	472	439	552
CHO 9	581	530	460	765	765	781	883
Other/unknown	79	115	112	80	75	115	64
<b>Previously treated</b>	<b>5855</b>	<b>5335</b>	<b>5242</b>	<b>5872</b>	<b>5927</b>	<b>5441</b>	<b>6090</b>
CHO 1	121	180	172	150	216	204	187
CHO 2	247	212	198	163	155	180	176
CHO 3	357	381	409	396	382	372	437
CHO 4	841	667	567	627	681	534	496
CHO 5	776	711	640	671	606	604	617
CHO 6	259	200	206	227	258	239	278
CHO 7	1095	997	933	1315	1335	1152	1399
CHO 8	514	463	457	493	443	440	431
CHO 9	1370	1224	1336	1568	1527	1459	1833
Other/unknown	275	300	324	262	324	257	236
<b>Treatment status unknown</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>473</b>

#### Local Health Office (LHO) areas in each Community Healthcare Organisation area

CHO 1 – Donegal LHO, Sligo/Leitrim/West Cavan 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

## Incidence and prevalence of treatment

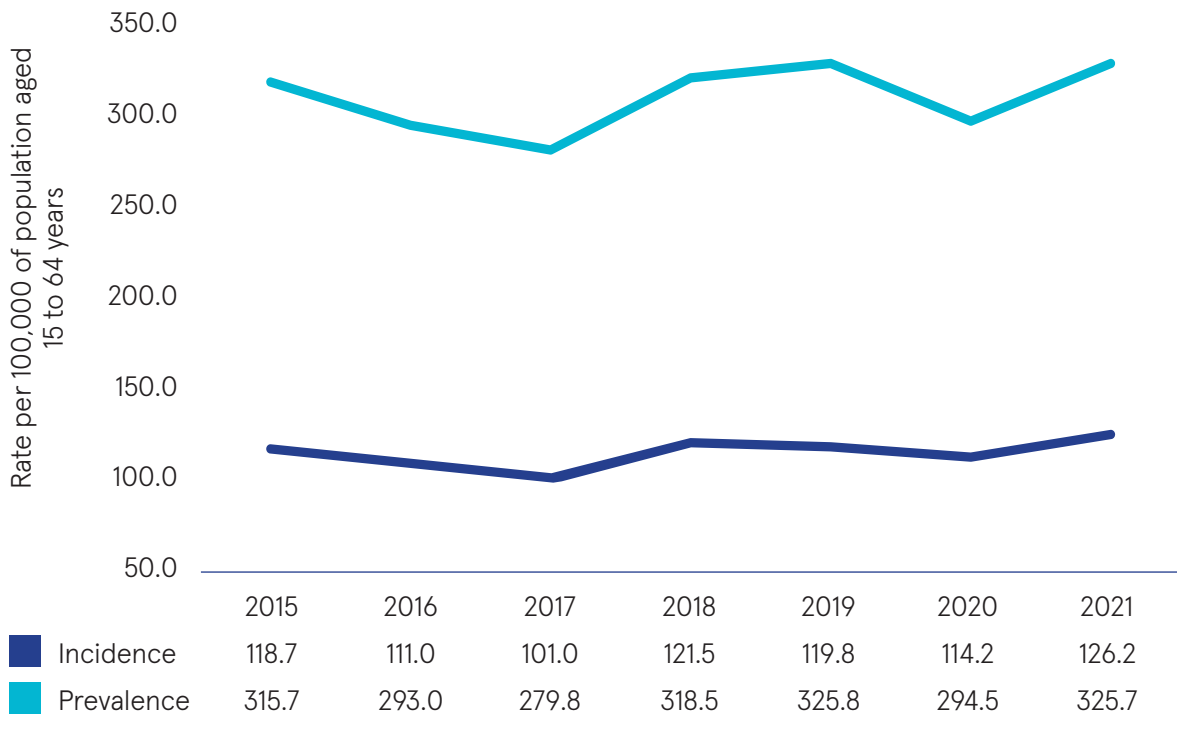
Annual rates for the incidence (new cases) and prevalence (all cases) of treated problem drug use were calculated per 100,000 of the population aged 15 to 64 years based on census figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) **(Figure 1)**.<sup>15</sup>

Incidence was 118.7 per 100,000 in 2015 and 126.2 per 100,000 in 2021.

Prevalence, which includes new cases and those cases returning to treatment, increased from 315.7 per 100,000 in 2015 to 325.7 per 100,000 in 2021.

Changes in incidence and prevalence should be interpreted with caution due to the proportion of cases where treatment status was unknown (4.4% in 2021) and the impact of COVID-19 on case numbers for 2020.

Figure 1: Incidence and prevalence of treated problem drug use per 100,000 of the 15 to 64 year-old population, NDTRS 2015 to 2021



## Acknowledgements



The NDTRS team would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the staff in the alcohol and drug treatment services throughout the country, without whom it would not be possible to maintain the NDTRS. Their participation and cooperation are very much appreciated and valued, and especially so during a period that has been extremely challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions.



## Notes

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1. This document may be cited as: Kelleher C, Condrón I, and Lyons S (2022) *Drug Treatment in Ireland 2015 to 2021*. HRB StatLink Series 8. Dublin: Health Research Board. Available at: <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/36071> and at [www.hrb.ie/publications](http://www.hrb.ie/publications).
2. Department of Health. (2017) *Reducing harm, supporting recovery. A health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017 - 2025*. Dublin: Department of Health. <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/27603/>
3. More detailed information on the NDTRS methodology can be found in previously published HRB Trends Series papers at: [www.hrb.ie/fileadmin/publications\\_files/HRB\\_Trend\\_Series\\_12\\_Trends\\_in\\_treated\\_problem\\_drug\\_use\\_in\\_Ireland\\_2005\\_to\\_2010\\_02.pdf](http://www.hrb.ie/fileadmin/publications_files/HRB_Trend_Series_12_Trends_in_treated_problem_drug_use_in_Ireland_2005_to_2010_02.pdf)
4. NDTRS data are case-based which means there is a possibility that individuals appear more than once in the database; for example, where a person receives treatment at more than one centre, or at the same centre more than once in a calendar year.
5. The NDTRS interactive tables will be updated to reflect the changes at: [www.drugsandalcohol.ie/tables/](http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/tables/)
6. The capacity and functionality of treatment services were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. In 2020, the NDTRS surveyed participating services to estimate the impact of the restrictions on treatment data for 2020 (the response rate was 80%). Around 40% of services surveyed expressed some impact on their ability to provide returns, while around 50% expected some impact on numbers (unpublished data).
7. The Central Treatment List (CTL) is the administrative database to regulate the dispensing of OST. It was established under Statutory Instrument No. 225 (Minister for Health and Children 1998) and is a complete register of all patients receiving OST in Ireland. However, the CTL does not collect all the information required for the EMCDDAs Treatment Demand Indicator. [https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/manuals/tdi-protocol-3.0\\_en](https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/manuals/tdi-protocol-3.0_en)
8. Bruton, L, Gibney, S, Hynes, T, Collins, D, Moran, P (2021). *Spending review 2021. Focused policy assessment of Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: an analysis of expenditure and performance in the area of drug and alcohol misuse*. Government of Ireland: Dublin. <https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/34729/>
9. Non-binary describes gender identities outside of the female/male gender binary. Individuals identifying as non-binary may feel neither exclusively male or female, both male and female, between or beyond genders.

10. Based on the 2016 Census, the proportion of Irish Travellers in the general population is 0.7% (Central Statistics Office, 2022) [www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp8iter/p8iter/p8e/](http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp8iter/p8iter/p8e/)
11. Service users currently residing with children refers to the 30 days prior to treatment. This includes children where the service user has a carer or guardianship role; non-related children such as foster children and stepchildren; and the children of a long-term cohabiting partner. Where the service user is a grandparent or other close relative and is the official guardian of a child with whom they are living, they are recorded as living with children.
12. Children who are not residing with the service user refers to children currently living with another parent; children in formal care or informal care; and children living elsewhere who are biological children/adopted children, or children who are under the official guardianship of the service user. It also refers to children who have left home, and children who are living with other family members or friends temporarily, but who are not considered by the service user to be living in care.
13. Age range presented is 5th percentile to 95th percentile (90% of cases are included within this range).
14. Area of residence relates to the service user's place of residence in the 30 days prior to commencing treatment, for all service types excluding prison. Where a service user is treated in prison and has been in prison for less than six months prior to starting treatment, area of residence is the place of residence prior to imprisonment. Otherwise, the prison location is recorded.
15. Population data are taken from the Central Statistics Office at: [www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2021/](http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2021/)

## Appendix A: Number of cases treated for cocaine as a main problem, by county of residence, NDTRS 2015 to 2021

	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>All cases</b>	<b>1026</b>		<b>1138</b>		<b>1500</b>		<b>2254</b>		<b>2560</b>		<b>2619</b>		<b>3248</b>	
Carlow	15	(1.5)	16	(1.4)	11	(0.7)	15	(0.7)	24	(0.9)	28	(1.1)	30	(0.9)
Cavan	~	~	~	~	11	(0.7)	~	~	21	(0.8)	14	(0.5)	22	(0.7)
Clare	10	(1.0)	27	(2.4)	30	(2.0)	42	(1.9)	57	(2.2)	51	(1.9)	51	(1.6)
Cork	72	(7.0)	80	(7.0)	124	(8.3)	185	(8.2)	220	(8.6)	234	(8.9)	193	(5.9)
Donegal	~	~	13	(1.1)	31	(2.1)	44	(2.0)	69	(2.7)	65	(2.5)	61	(1.9)
Dublin	558	(54.4)	573	(50.4)	772	(51.5)	1195	(53.0)	1316	(51.4)	1323	(50.5)	1751	(53.9)
Galway	9	(0.9)	15	(1.3)	20	(1.3)	15	(0.7)	33	(1.3)	33	(1.3)	40	(1.2)
Kerry	23	(2.2)	21	(1.8)	26	(1.7)	49	(2.2)	65	(2.5)	50	(1.9)	66	(2.0)
Kildare	23	(2.2)	22	(1.9)	28	(1.9)	44	(2.0)	47	(1.8)	61	(2.3)	99	(3.0)
Kilkenny	12	(1.2)	16	(1.4)	11	(0.7)	31	(1.4)	31	(1.2)	21	(0.8)	32	(1.0)
Laois	11	(1.1)	19	(1.7)	13	(0.9)	32	(1.4)	31	(1.2)	36	(1.4)	35	(1.1)
Leitrim	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Limerick	43	(4.2)	72	(6.3)	72	(4.8)	137	(6.1)	147	(5.7)	134	(5.1)	167	(5.1)
Longford	11	(1.1)	~	~	~	~	~	~	11	(0.4)	16	(0.6)	15	(0.5)
Louth	29	(2.8)	28	(2.5)	43	(2.9)	54	(2.4)	61	(2.4)	52	(2.0)	88	(2.7)
Mayo	8	(0.8)	6	(0.5)	12	(0.8)	16	(0.7)	13	(0.5)	38	(1.5)	28	(0.9)
Meath	10	(1.0)	21	(1.8)	39	(2.6)	48	(2.1)	33	(1.3)	45	(1.7)	91	(2.8)
Monaghan	0	(0.0)	0	(0.0)	~	~	0	(0.0)	~	~	8	(0.3)	10	(0.3)
Offaly	23	(2.2)	~	~	6	(0.4)	21	(0.9)	20	(0.8)	13	(0.5)	30	(0.9)
Roscommon	10	(1.0)	17	(1.5)	14	(0.9)	14	(0.6)	17	(0.7)	35	(1.3)	28	(0.9)
Sligo	10	(1.0)	6	(0.5)	14	(0.9)	14	(0.6)	17	(0.7)	20	(0.8)	15	(0.5)
Tipperary	25	(2.4)	45	(4.0)	55	(3.7)	69	(3.1)	85	(3.3)	85	(3.2)	114	(3.5)
Waterford	30	(2.9)	40	(3.5)	54	(3.6)	68	(3.0)	61	(2.4)	66	(2.5)	68	(2.1)
Westmeath	13	(1.3)	12	(1.1)	8	(0.5)	15	(0.7)	24	(0.9)	14	(0.5)	12	(0.4)
Wexford	31	(3.0)	35	(3.1)	39	(2.6)	50	(2.2)	60	(2.3)	56	(2.1)	85	(2.6)
Wicklow	34	(3.3)	24	(2.1)	49	(3.3)	81	(3.6)	87	(3.4)	102	(3.9)	94	(2.9)
Outside Ireland	~	~	~	~	7	(0.5)	~	~	~	~	11	(0.4)	18	(0.6)
Ireland Unknown	6	(0.6)	15	(1.3)	7	(0.5)	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	(0.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1026</b>		<b>1138</b>		<b>1500</b>		<b>2254</b>		<b>2560</b>		<b>2619</b>		<b>3248</b>	

~ Cells with five cases or fewer



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