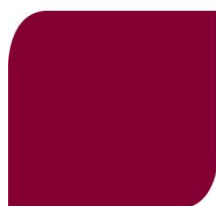


Treated problem alcohol use in Ireland

2013 figures from the National Drug Treatment Reporting System



National Health Information Systems,
Health Research Board, June 2015

Summary

This update presents figures from the National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) on treated problem alcohol use in Ireland, for the period 2009 to 2013.

Total number of cases

- The total number of cases treated for problem alcohol use in Ireland increased from 7,816 in 2009 to a peak of 8,604 in 2011, an increase of 10.1%. In 2013 the number of cases decreased to 7,549, a drop of 12.3% since 2011 (Table 1).
- The number of **new cases** treated for problem alcohol use rose by 7.1%, from 4,220 in 2009 to a peak of 4,520 in 2011. The number of new cases reported decreased in 2012 and again in 2013 to 3,578, a drop of 20.8% between 2011 and 2013 (Table 2).
- The number of cases who **returned for treatment** increased by 19.5%, from 3,524 cases in 2009 to a peak of 4,212 in 2012. The number of returning cases decreased by 9.8% to 3,801 in 2013 (Table 2).

Incidence and prevalence

- The incidence of treated problem alcohol use among 15–64-year-olds living in Ireland, expressed per 100,000 of the population, increased from 131.0 in 2009 to 141.2 in 2011 and subsequently decreased to 112.0 in 2013 (Figure 1).
- The prevalence of treated problem alcohol use among 15–64-year-olds living in Ireland, expressed per 100,000 of the population, increased from 243.0 in 2009 to 269.8 in 2011 and subsequently decreased to 237.1 in 2013 (Figure 1).

Geographic distribution

- The incidence of treatment for problem alcohol use by county for the period 2009 to 2013 was highest in Waterford, Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Carlow (with each of these counties reporting more than 240 cases per 100,000 of the 15–64-year-old population) (Figure 2).
- The incidence rates were lowest in Roscommon, Clare, Mayo, Meath and Limerick (with each of these counties reporting less than 75 cases per 100,000) (Figure 2).
- Local Health Offices (LHO), Cork/North Lee (6.6%), Waterford (6.4%) and Donegal (5.9%) reported the highest proportions of cases in 2013 (Table 3).
- Twenty two LHOs out of 32 recorded a decrease in the number of cases reported between 2012 and 2013 but no specific geographic pattern or trend was observed (Table 3).

Poly drug use

- Nearly one fifth (18.8%) of those treated for problem alcohol use in 2013 also reported using at least one other drug, a similar proportion to that observed in previous years (Tables 6 & 8).
- In 2013, the most common drugs used by treated alcohol cases in conjunction with alcohol were cannabis, followed by cocaine, benzodiazepines and ecstasy. Use of more than one drug increases the complexity of cases and can lead to poorer outcomes for the patient. (Tables 6 and 8).

Socio-demographic characteristics

- In 2013, half of those in treatment for problem alcohol use started drinking alcohol at 15 years of age or younger, with little change seen over the past five years (Table 9).
- The median age for cases was 40 years, similar to previous years (Table 10).
- While the proportion of cases under the age of 18 remained small (3.0%) in 2013, the number of new cases in that age group has fallen, from 6.4% in 2010 to 5.0% in 2013 (Table 10).
- The majority of cases, both new (62.6%) and previously treated (64.0%) were male.
- The proportion of cases in employment decreased from 26.0% in 2008 to 19.7% in 2012 and subsequently increased to 21.5% in 2013 (Table 10).
- The proportion of all cases who were homeless in 2013 at 5.7%. Previously treated cases were more likely to be homeless (7.4%) compared to new cases (3.8%) (Table 10).

- Those who used other drugs along with alcohol were more likely to be unemployed and to live in unstable accommodation (Table 10; Figures 6 and 7).

Notwithstanding the increase in the number of centres reporting to the NDTRS within the time period, there was a decrease in the number of cases treated between 2012 and 2013. This may reflect a true decrease in the number of cases presenting for treatment for problem alcohol use but may also reflect reduced levels of participation, or under reporting to the NDTRS, or a combination of both.

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Glossary of terms

The median is the value at the mid-point in a sequence of numerical values ranged in ascending or descending order. It is defined as the value above or below which half of the values lie. Unlike the mean (average), the median is not influenced by extreme values (or outliers). For example, in the case of five drug users aged 22, 23, 24, 24 and 46 years respectively, the median (middle value) is 24 years, whereas the mean is 27.8 years. While both the median and the mean describe the central value of the data, in this example, the median is more useful since the mean is influenced by the one older person in this example.

Incidence is a term used to describe the number of new cases of disease or events that develop among a population during a specified time interval. For example, in 2007, 10 opiate users living in a specific county sought treatment for the first time. The incidence is the number of new opiate cases treated divided by the population living in the county (say 31,182 persons in this example) expressed per given number of the population, i.e., per 100, per 1,000, per 10,000, per 100,000 etc. The calculation in this case is as follows: $(10/31,182) \times 100,000$, which gives an incidence rate of 32 per 100,000 of the specific county population in 2007.

Prevalence is a term used to describe the proportion of people in a population who have a disease or condition at a specific point or period in time. For example, in 2007, 10 opiate users living in a specific county sought treatment for the first time, 20 opiate users returned to treatment in the year and five opiate users continued in treatment from the previous year; in total there are 35 people treated for problem opiate use in 2007. The prevalence is the total number of cases (35) divided by the population living in the county (31,182 persons) expressed per given number of the population, i.e., per 100, per 1,000, per 10,000, per 100,000 etc. The calculation in this case is as follows: $(35/31,182) \times 100,000$, which gives a prevalence rate of 112 per 100,000 of the specific county population in 2007.

All cases treated describes all of the individuals who receive treatment for problem alcohol use (as a main problem drug) at each treatment centre in a calendar year. All cases treated include:

- **New cases treated** describes individuals who have never been treated for problem alcohol use (as a main problem drug); and
- **Previously treated cases** describes individuals who were treated previously for problem alcohol use (as a main problem drug) at any treatment centre and have returned to treatment in the reporting year; and
- **Status unknown** describes individuals whose status with respect to previous treatment for problem alcohol use (as a main problem drug) is not known.

Regional Drug Task Forces	Area included
East Coast Region	South-east Dublin city and county and East Wicklow
Midland Region	Counties Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath
Mid West Region	Counties Clare and Limerick, and North Tipperary
North Dublin City and County Region	North Dublin city and county
North Eastern Region	Counties Cavan, Louth, Meath and Monaghan
North West Region	Counties Donegal, Leitrim and Sligo, and north-west Cavan
South East Region	Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford, and South Tipperary,
Southern Region	Counties Cork and Kerry
South Western Region	South-west Dublin, west Wicklow and County Kildare
Western Region	Counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, alcohol is the third leading risk factor contributing to the global burden of disease. The impact of alcohol consumption on disease and injury is largely determined by the total volume of alcohol consumed and the pattern of drinking.¹ Ireland has one of the highest levels of alcohol consumption per capita in Europe. In 2013, 10.6 litres of pure alcohol were consumed in this country for every adult aged 15 years or over, according to provisional figures from the Revenue Commissioners and the CSO. Alcohol is associated with a range of chronic and acute medical conditions, including liver cirrhosis, various cancers, road traffic collisions and suicide. Problem alcohol use is pervasive in Irish society, with men and women, the old and the young, experiencing its negative effects.^{2, 3}

The National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) is an epidemiological database on treated problem drug and alcohol use in Ireland. It is co-ordinated by the National Health Information Systems staff of the Health Research Board (HRB) on behalf of the Department of Health.

Alcohol and other drug treatment data are viewed as an indirect indicator of problem drug and alcohol use, as well as a direct indicator of demand for treatment services. NDTRS data are used at national level (alcohol and drug data) and at European level (drug data) to provide information on the characteristics of clients entering treatment and on patterns of problem drug use, such as types of drug used and consumption behaviours. Drug data are 'valuable from a public health perspective to assess needs, ... and to plan and evaluate services'.⁴

Background and Methods

The NDTRS was established in 1990 in the Greater Dublin Area and was extended in 1995 to cover all areas of the country. It was developed in line with the Pompidou Group's Definitive Protocol⁵ and subsequently refined in accordance with the Treatment Demand Indicator Protocol.⁶ Originally designed to record problem drug use, the NDTRS recorded problematic use of alcohol only in cases where it was an additional problem drug, that is, where the client's main reason for entering treatment was problem drug use but he/she also reported problematic use of alcohol. In 2004, the remit of the NDTRS was extended to include cases where alcohol was recorded as the main or only reason for seeking treatment.

The monitoring role of the NDTRS was recognised by the government in its document *Building on experience: National Drugs Strategy 2001–2008*.⁷ The collection and reporting of data to the NDTRS was one of the actions identified and agreed by government for implementation. The *National Drugs Strategy (interim) 2009–2016*⁸ (NDS) recognised the positive impact of the NDTRS on the development of key indicators, stating that '...the information provided through the NDTRS provide[s] significant insights into the patterns of problem drug use', and that 'drug treatment data have also improved substantially through the NDTRS...' (p. 69). The NDS also recommends the continuation and further development of data-collection systems, including the NDTRS (Action 49).

The HRB supplies service providers and policy makers with relevant data from the NDTRS to inform local and national drug misuse policy and planning. In recent years this information has been central to drug strategy and policy decisions:

- In 1996 NDTRS data were used to identify a number of local areas with problematic heroin use.⁹ These areas were later designated as local drugs task force (LDTF) areas, and task force teams have continued to provide strategic responses to problem drug use in their communities.
- In 2004 NDTRS data were used to describe treatment-seeking characteristics and behaviours of those aged under 18 years and to inform the deliberations of the Working Group on treatment of under-18-year-olds.¹⁰

- In 2007 NDTRS data were used to inform some of the recommendations of the Working Group on drugs rehabilitation, and to assist the Working Group on residential services in estimating the number of residential places required to address severe alcohol and drug problems in Ireland.¹¹
- In 2009 the Comptroller and Auditor General used data from the NDTRS in a special report on treatment and rehabilitation services provided for people with drug addictions.¹²
- In 2009 the NDS steering group used NDTRS data extensively to assess progress under the previous strategy.⁸

Compliance with the NDTRS requires that one form be completed for each new client coming for his/her first treatment and for each previously treated client returning to treatment for problem drug use (including alcohol). Service providers at treatment centres throughout Ireland collect data on episodes of treatment, rather than on the individual person treated each year. HRB staff compile anonymous, aggregated data, which are analysed and reported at national and EU levels.

The main elements of the reporting system in the context of this paper are defined as follows:

All cases treated – individuals who receive treatment for alcohol as a **main problem drug** at each treatment centre in a calendar year, including:

New cases treated – individuals who have never been treated for problem alcohol use;

Previously treated cases – individuals who were previously treated for problem alcohol use at any treatment centre at any time in the past and have returned to treatment in the reporting year; and

Status unknown – individuals whose status with respect to previous treatment for problem alcohol use is not known.

For the purpose of the NDTRS, treatment is broadly defined as any activity which aims to ameliorate the psychological, medical or social state of individuals who seek help for their problem alcohol and other drug use problems. Clients who attend needle-exchange services are not included in this reporting system. Treatment options for problem alcohol use include one or more of the following: medication, psychiatric treatment, brief intervention, counselling (including cognitive behavioural therapy), medication-free therapy, family therapy, complementary therapy, and/or life-skills training.

Treatment for problem use of alcohol in Ireland is provided by statutory and non-statutory services, including general hospitals, psychiatric hospitals, community-based services and residential centres. Most treatment of problem alcohol use takes place in outpatient facilities; more complex treatments are carried out in residential settings.² The 242 treatment services that returned alcohol treatment data to the HRB in 2013 included 147 non-residential centres and 37 residential centres and 58 low threshold services.

Interpretation of data

Three factors must be taken into consideration when interpreting the figures in this paper.

1. Despite an increase from 206 in 2009 to 242 in 2013 in the number of alcohol treatment services reporting to the NDTRS, not all services participate in the system. In particular, the coverage for cases reporting alcohol as their main problem drug is incomplete in the west (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon). Up to 2007, the alcohol services managed by the mental health services had never been invited to take part in the reporting system. The process of recruiting services that have not participated in the NDTRS to date is ongoing.
2. Each record in the NDTRS database relates to a treatment episode (a case), and not to a person. This means that the same person could be counted more than once in the reporting year if they had more than one treatment episode in that year.
3. The place of residence of almost two per cent of cases for the years 2009–2013 was not recorded, and an additional small number of cases lived outside Ireland. These cases could

not be assigned to a specified HSE region or county. The data presented in Tables 1–3 and Figures 1-2 in this paper are based on the total of 40,171 treated cases. The remainder of the tables and figures are based on the 39,420 treated cases who lived at a known address in Ireland.

Outline of document

The tables presented show:

- Service provision
- Number of cases treated
- Incidence and prevalence of treated alcohol use
- Area of residence
- Additional problem drugs
- Treatment provision
- Age at which alcohol and other drug use started
- Socio-demographic characteristics of treated cases.

Service provision

Table 1 Number and type of services providing treatment for problem alcohol use and number of cases treated (in brackets) (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Services	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All services (cases treated)	206 (7816)	228 (7866)	233 (8604)	233 (8336)	242 (7549)
Outpatient (cases treated)	140 (4446)	146 (4179)	145 (4635)	141 (4508)	147 (4219)
Residential (cases treated)	46 (3179)	36 (3227)	34 (3378)	37 (3309)	37 (2809)
Low-threshold* (cases treated)	20 (191)	46 (460)	54 (591)	55 (519)	58 (521)

*Low-threshold services provide low-dose methadone or drop-in facilities only.

Number of cases treated

Table 2 Number (%) of cases treated, by treatment status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Treatment status	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	Number (%)				
All cases	7816	7866	8604	8336	7549
New cases	4220 (54.0)	4178 (53.1)	4520 (52.5)	4028 (48.3)	3578 (47.4)
Previously treated cases	3524 (45.1)	3583 (45.6)	3971 (46.2)	4212 (50.5)	3801 (50.4)
Treatment status unknown	72 (0.9)	105 (1.3)	113 (1.3)	96 (1.2)	170 (2.3)

Incidence and prevalence of treated alcohol use

To adjust for variation in population size in each county, the actual incidence of treated alcohol use in each area was calculated using the average number of new cases over the five-year period living in each of the 26 counties; this average was divided by the population aged 15 to 64 years living in the respective counties, using the Census of Population figures for 2012¹³ and population estimates published by the CSO (2014).¹⁴

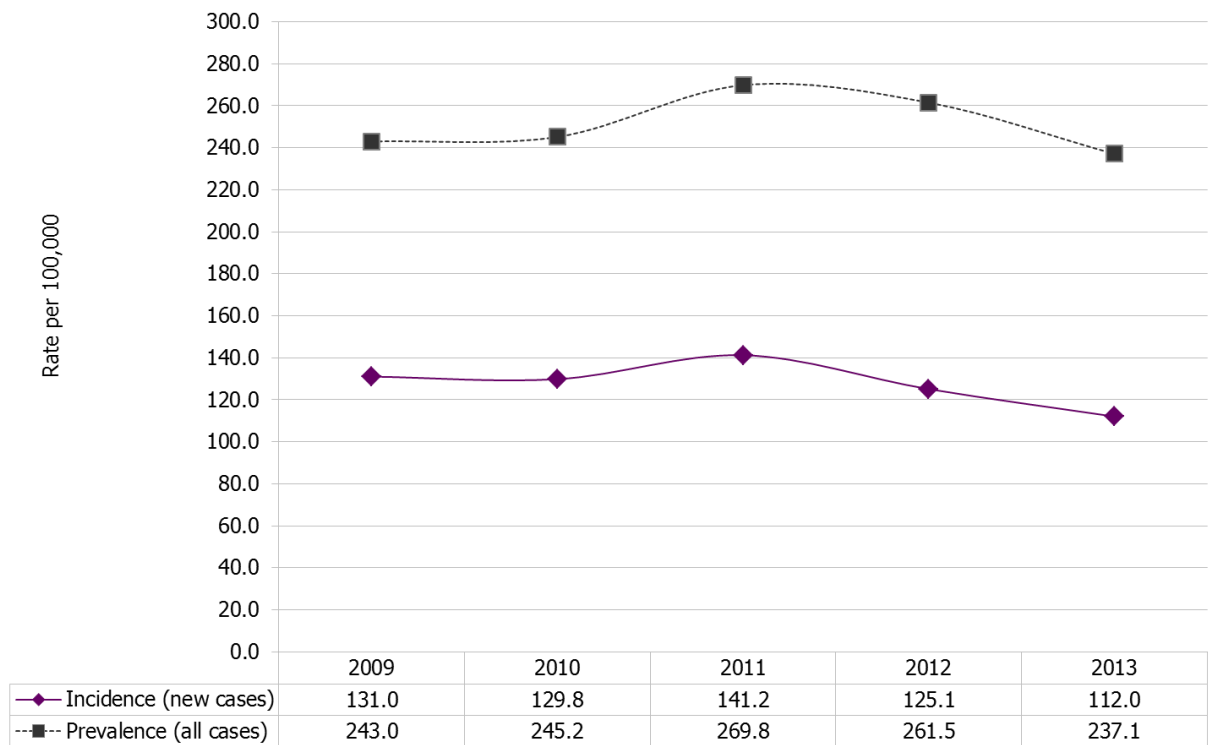


Figure 1 Incidence and prevalence of treated problem alcohol use, per 100,000 of the 15–64-year-old population (NDTRS 2009–2013; CSO 2012, 2014)

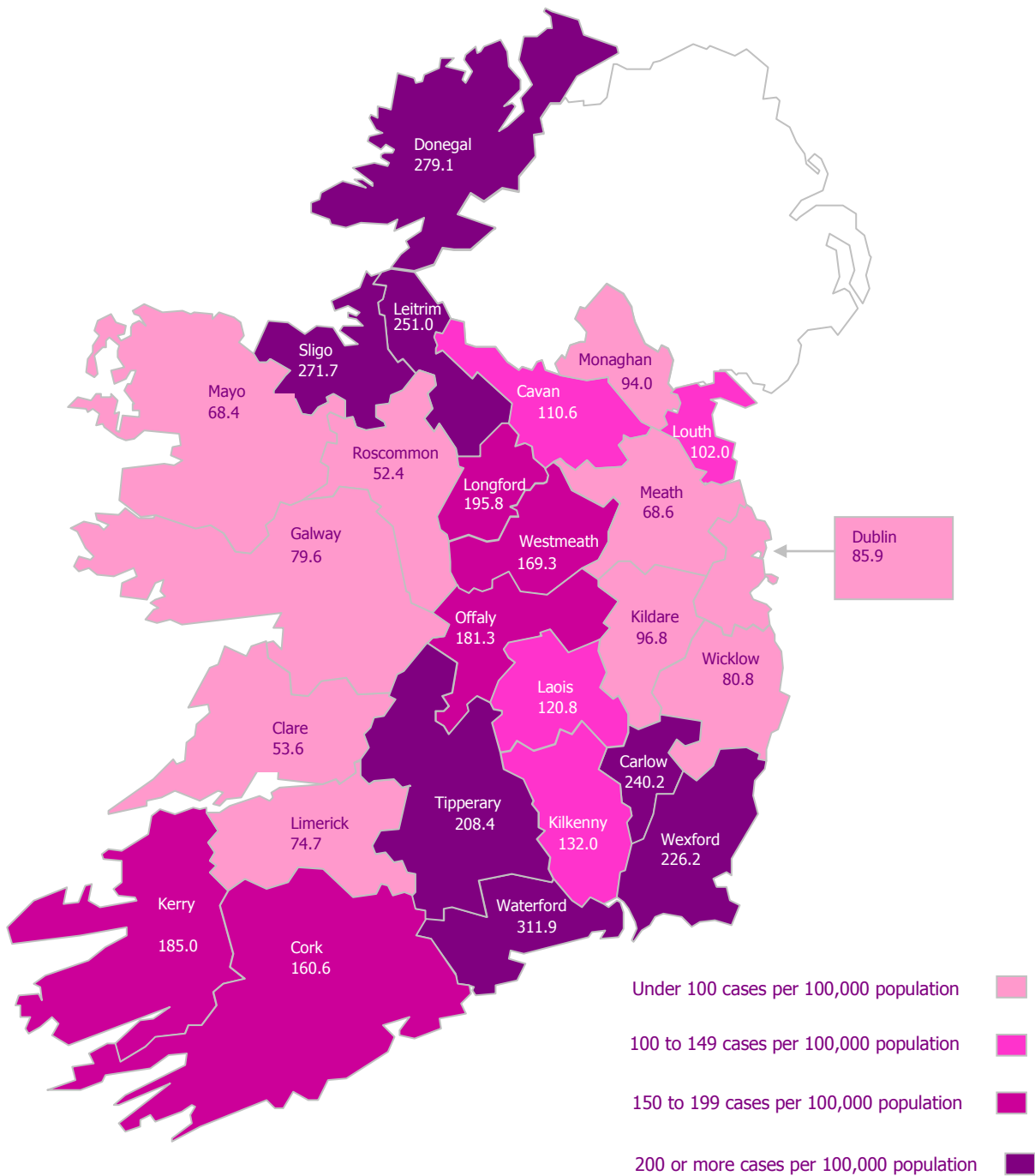


Figure 2 Average annual incidence of treated problem alcohol use, by county of residence, per 100,000 of the 15–64-year-old population (NDTRS 2009–2013; CSO 2012, 2014)

Table 3 Number (%) of cases treated, by Local Health Office (LHO) where case resides and by treatment status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Local Health Office	2009		2010		2011		2012		2013	
	Number (%)									
All cases	7816		7866		8604		8336		7549	
Clare	87	(1.1)	109	(1.4)	87	(1.0)	77	(0.9)	92	(1.2)
Carlow/ Kilkenny	321	(4.1)	333	(4.2)	405	(4.7)	369	(4.4)	295	(3.9)
Cavan/ Monaghan	160	(2.0)	160	(2.0)	183	(2.1)	340	(4.1)	121	(1.6)
Cork - North Lee	255	(3.3)	477	(6.1)	540	(6.3)	462	(5.5)	499	(6.6)
Cork - South Lee	268	(3.4)	368	(4.7)	411	(4.8)	359	(4.3)	347	(4.6)
Donegal	629	(8.0)	736	(9.4)	640	(7.4)	628	(7.5)	449	(5.9)
Dublin North Central	172	(2.2)	201	(2.6)	207	(2.4)	139	(1.7)	206	(2.7)
Dublin South	99	(1.3)	89	(1.1)	85	(1.0)	89	(1.1)	103	(1.4)
Dublin South City	213	(2.7)	189	(2.4)	212	(2.5)	226	(2.7)	213	(2.8)
Dublin South East	101	(1.3)	62	(0.8)	70	(0.8)	78	(0.9)	78	(1.0)
Dublin South West	282	(3.6)	278	(3.5)	302	(3.5)	305	(3.7)	300	(4.0)
Dublin West	203	(2.6)	238	(3.0)	207	(2.4)	253	(3.0)	212	(2.8)
Galway	284	(3.6)	294	(3.7)	292	(3.4)	281	(3.4)	267	(3.5)
Kildare/ West Wicklow	295	(3.8)	285	(3.6)	276	(3.2)	285	(3.4)	284	(3.8)
Kerry	265	(3.4)	379	(4.8)	461	(5.4)	458	(5.5)	408	(5.4)
Louth	229	(2.9)	101	(1.3)	139	(1.6)	179	(2.1)	138	(1.8)
Limerick	222	(2.8)	280	(3.6)	245	(2.8)	191	(2.3)	222	(2.9)
Laois/ Offaly	136	(1.7)	171	(2.2)	293	(3.4)	283	(3.4)	275	(3.6)
Longford/ Westmeath	306	(3.9)	255	(3.2)	354	(4.1)	336	(4.0)	293	(3.9)
Meath	243	(3.1)	97	(1.2)	129	(1.5)	131	(1.6)	111	(1.5)
Mayo	154	(2.0)	100	(1.3)	128	(1.5)	105	(1.3)	93	(1.2)
North Cork	226	(2.9)	203	(2.6)	192	(2.2)	193	(2.3)	187	(2.5)
North Dublin	209	(2.7)	211	(2.7)	216	(2.5)	191	(2.3)	187	(2.5)
North Tipperary/ East Limerick	132	(1.7)	116	(1.5)	131	(1.5)	108	(1.3)	116	(1.5)
North West Dublin	221	(2.8)	250	(3.2)	290	(3.4)	226	(2.7)	270	(3.6)
Roscommon	71	(0.9)	44	(0.6)	36	(0.4)	41	(0.5)	37	(0.5)
Sligo/ Leitrim	316	(4.0)	302	(3.8)	282	(3.3)	296	(3.6)	265	(3.5)
South Tipperary	264	(3.4)	283	(3.6)	339	(3.9)	296	(3.6)	248	(3.3)
West Cork	162	(2.1)	91	(1.2)	114	(1.3)	138	(1.7)	106	(1.4)
Waterford	587	(7.5)	505	(6.4)	572	(6.6)	561	(6.7)	482	(6.4)
Wicklow	105	(1.3)	115	(1.5)	124	(1.4)	84	(1.0)	125	(1.7)
Wexford	444	(5.7)	395	(5.0)	470	(5.5)	411	(4.9)	363	(4.8)
Outside Ireland	142	(1.8)	119	(1.5)	49	(0.6)	69	(0.8)	42	(0.6)
Ireland Unknown	13	(0.2)	30	(0.4)	123	(1.4)	148	(1.8)	115	(1.5)
New cases	4220		4178		4520		4028		3578	
Clare	41	(1.0)	61	(1.5)	40	(0.9)	34	(0.8)	40	(1.1)
Carlow/ Kilkenny	155	(3.7)	175	(4.2)	225	(5.0)	203	(5.0)	148	(4.1)
Cavan/ Monaghan	74	(1.8)	77	(1.8)	92	(2.0)	145	(3.6)	57	(1.6)
Cork - North Lee	123	(2.9)	253	(6.1)	295	(6.5)	254	(6.3)	245	(6.8)
Cork - South Lee	136	(3.2)	192	(4.6)	213	(4.7)	201	(5.0)	181	(5.1)
Donegal	305	(7.2)	351	(8.4)	312	(6.9)	284	(7.1)	225	(6.3)
Dublin North Central	82	(1.9)	103	(2.5)	95	(2.1)	65	(1.6)	75	(2.1)
Dublin South	49	(1.2)	43	(1.0)	38	(0.8)	28	(0.7)	37	(1.0)

Dublin South City	100	(2.4)	79	(1.9)	111	(2.5)	95	(2.4)	82	(2.3)
Dublin South East	56	(1.3)	38	(0.9)	38	(0.8)	36	(0.9)	39	(1.1)
Dublin South West	173	(4.1)	166	(4.0)	193	(4.3)	156	(3.9)	149	(4.2)
Dublin West	116	(2.7)	154	(3.7)	118	(2.6)	114	(2.8)	109	(3.0)
Galway	137	(3.2)	164	(3.9)	149	(3.3)	129	(3.2)	120	(3.4)
Kildare/ West Wicklow	147	(3.5)	144	(3.4)	157	(3.5)	136	(3.4)	138	(3.9)
Kerry	156	(3.7)	190	(4.5)	211	(4.7)	199	(4.9)	187	(5.2)
Louth	135	(3.2)	56	(1.3)	80	(1.8)	76	(1.9)	62	(1.7)
Limerick	119	(2.8)	134	(3.2)	111	(2.5)	83	(2.1)	81	(2.3)
Laois/ Offaly	87	(2.1)	117	(2.8)	212	(4.7)	171	(4.2)	169	(4.7)
Longford/ Westmeath	154	(3.6)	122	(2.9)	163	(3.6)	155	(3.8)	135	(3.8)
Meath	174	(4.1)	54	(1.3)	74	(1.6)	57	(1.4)	54	(1.5)
Mayo	95	(2.3)	51	(1.2)	57	(1.3)	45	(1.1)	49	(1.4)
North Cork	103	(2.4)	106	(2.5)	105	(2.3)	110	(2.7)	78	(2.2)
North Dublin	117	(2.8)	128	(3.1)	122	(2.7)	88	(2.2)	76	(2.1)
North Tipperary/ East Limerick	86	(2.0)	61	(1.5)	65	(1.4)	48	(1.2)	55	(1.5)
North West Dublin	115	(2.7)	148	(3.5)	135	(3.0)	107	(2.7)	123	(3.4)
Roscommon	40	(0.9)	15	(0.4)	21	(0.5)	18	(0.4)	17	(0.5)
Sligo/ Leitrim	185	(4.4)	187	(4.5)	178	(3.9)	177	(4.4)	161	(4.5)
South Tipperary	163	(3.9)	175	(4.2)	179	(4.0)	173	(4.3)	130	(3.6)
West Cork	102	(2.4)	43	(1.0)	50	(1.1)	79	(2.0)	50	(1.4)
Waterford	345	(8.2)	249	(6.0)	303	(6.7)	261	(6.5)	193	(5.4)
Wicklow	68	(1.6)	65	(1.6)	66	(1.5)	42	(1.0)	68	(1.9)
Wexford	240	(5.7)	226	(5.4)	245	(5.4)	196	(4.9)	191	(5.3)
Outside Ireland	33	(0.8)	36	(0.9)	34	(0.8)	26	(0.6)	23	(0.6)
Ireland Unknown	9	(0.2)	15	(0.4)	33	(0.7)	37	(0.9)	31	(0.9)
Previously treated cases	3524		3583		3971		4212		3801	
Clare	45	(1.3)	46	(1.3)	46	(1.2)	43	(1.0)	49	(1.3)
Carlow/ Kilkenny	164	(4.7)	153	(4.3)	173	(4.4)	158	(3.8)	145	(3.8)
Cavan/ Monaghan	84	(2.4)	79	(2.2)	91	(2.3)	192	(4.6)	63	(1.7)
Cork - North Lee	129	(3.7)	218	(6.1)	240	(6.0)	205	(4.9)	241	(6.3)
Cork - South Lee	131	(3.7)	175	(4.9)	196	(4.9)	158	(3.8)	163	(4.3)
Donegal	323	(9.2)	384	(10.7)	327	(8.2)	341	(8.1)	224	(5.9)
Dublin North Central	78	(2.2)	94	(2.6)	110	(2.8)	72	(1.7)	119	(3.1)
Dublin South	49	(1.4)	44	(1.2)	44	(1.1)	58	(1.4)	59	(1.6)
Dublin South City	111	(3.1)	103	(2.9)	96	(2.4)	125	(3.0)	123	(3.2)
Dublin South East	45	(1.3)	19	(0.5)	29	(0.7)	41	(1.0)	36	(0.9)
Dublin South West	104	(3.0)	103	(2.9)	108	(2.7)	147	(3.5)	148	(3.9)
Dublin West	87	(2.5)	79	(2.2)	86	(2.2)	132	(3.1)	99	(2.6)
Galway	146	(4.1)	127	(3.5)	140	(3.5)	151	(3.6)	144	(3.8)
Kildare/ West Wicklow	143	(4.1)	137	(3.8)	112	(2.8)	143	(3.4)	142	(3.7)
Kerry	109	(3.1)	189	(5.3)	249	(6.3)	257	(6.1)	214	(5.6)
Louth	90	(2.6)	42	(1.2)	55	(1.4)	93	(2.2)	74	(1.9)
Limerick	100	(2.8)	144	(4.0)	129	(3.2)	107	(2.5)	117	(3.1)
Laois/ Offaly	47	(1.3)	54	(1.5)	79	(2.0)	111	(2.6)	92	(2.4)
Longford/ Westmeath	152	(4.3)	131	(3.7)	188	(4.7)	180	(4.3)	144	(3.8)
Meath	67	(1.9)	41	(1.1)	51	(1.3)	70	(1.7)	56	(1.5)
Mayo	57	(1.6)	48	(1.3)	71	(1.8)	60	(1.4)	44	(1.2)
North Cork	121	(3.4)	96	(2.7)	87	(2.2)	81	(1.9)	103	(2.7)

North Dublin	90 (2.6)	77 (2.1)	91 (2.3)	101 (2.4)	103 (2.7)
North Tipperary/ East Limerick	45 (1.3)	54 (1.5)	65 (1.6)	58 (1.4)	58 (1.5)
North West Dublin	100 (2.8)	97 (2.7)	150 (3.8)	110 (2.6)	139 (3.7)
Roscommon	31 (0.9)	28 (0.8)	15 (0.4)	23 (0.5)	20 (0.5)
Sligo/ Leitrim	129 (3.7)	115 (3.2)	102 (2.6)	114 (2.7)	103 (2.7)
South Tipperary	101 (2.9)	108 (3.0)	158 (4.0)	123 (2.9)	115 (3.0)
West Cork	59 (1.7)	48 (1.3)	63 (1.6)	59 (1.4)	55 (1.4)
Waterford	241 (6.8)	256 (7.1)	265 (6.7)	299 (7.1)	287 (7.6)
Wicklow	34 (1.0)	43 (1.2)	48 (1.2)	36 (0.9)	54 (1.4)
Wexford	202 (5.7)	166 (4.6)	219 (5.5)	213 (5.1)	170 (4.5)
Outside Ireland	107 (3.0)	70 (2.0)	14 (0.4)	42 (1.0)	18 (0.5)
Ireland Unknown	3 (0.1)	15 (0.4)	74 (1.9)	109 (2.6)	80 (2.1)
Treatment status unknown	72	105	113	96	170

Table 4 Number (%) of cases treated, by place of residence (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Place of residence	2009	2010	2011			2012	2013
			Number (%)				
All cases	7816	7866	8604			8336	7549
Specified HSE area	7671 (98.1)	7748 (98.5)	8452 (98.2)			8150 (97.8)	7394 (97.9)
Ireland, address not recorded	114 (1.5)	83 (1.1)	103 (1.2)			117 (1.4)	113 (1.5)
Outside Ireland	31 (0.4)	35 (0.4)	49 (0.6)			69 (0.8)	42 (0.6)

The tables and figures presented from this point on exclude cases whose HSE area of residence is not known, and cases that are not normally resident in Ireland.

Table 5 Number (%) of cases treated, by Drug Task Force area of residence and by treatment status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Task Force area of residence	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	Number (%)				
All cases	7671	7748	8452	8150	7399
Ballyfermot	50 (0.7)	65 (0.8)	48 (0.6)	49 (0.6)	52 (0.7)
Ballymun	36 (0.5)	38 (0.5)	39 (0.5)	33 (0.4)	34 (0.5)
Blanchardstown	50 (0.7)	64 (0.8)	68 (0.8)	54 (0.7)	62 (0.8)
Bray	43 (0.6)	47 (0.6)	51 (0.6)	35 (0.4)	43 (0.6)
Canal Communities	19 (0.2)	25 (0.3)	21 (0.2)	42 (0.5)	35 (0.5)
Clondalkin	110 (1.4)	114 (1.5)	111 (1.3)	139 (1.7)	103 (1.4)
Cork	314 (4.1)	440 (5.7)	538 (6.4)	424 (5.2)	486 (6.6)
Dublin North East	99 (1.3)	96 (1.2)	97 (1.1)	86 (1.1)	89 (1.2)
Dublin South Inner City	133 (1.7)	131 (1.7)	138 (1.6)	140 (1.7)	150 (2.0)
Dublin 12	88 (1.1)	95 (1.2)	108 (1.3)	129 (1.6)	133 (1.8)
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	157 (2.0)	128 (1.7)	131 (1.5)	144 (1.8)	163 (2.2)
Finglas-Cabra	68 (0.9)	90 (1.2)	109 (1.3)	78 (1.0)	100 (1.4)
North Inner City	130 (1.7)	134 (1.7)	175 (2.1)	123 (1.5)	171 (2.3)
Tallaght	186 (2.4)	172 (2.2)	185 (2.2)	164 (2.0)	157 (2.1)
East Coast	105 (1.4)	91 (1.2)	97 (1.1)	72 (0.9)	100 (1.4)
Midland	442 (5.8)	426 (5.5)	648 (7.7)	619 (7.6)	568 (7.7)
Mid West	441 (5.8)	505 (6.5)	463 (5.5)	376 (4.6)	430 (5.8)
North Dublin City and County	219 (2.9)	240 (3.1)	225 (2.7)	182 (2.2)	207 (2.8)
North Eastern	632 (8.2)	358 (4.6)	451 (5.3)	650 (8.0)	370 (5.0)
North West	945 (12.3)	1038 (13.4)	922 (10.9)	924 (11.3)	714 (9.6)
Southern	861 (11.2)	1078 (13.9)	1180 (14.0)	1186 (14.6)	1061 (14.3)
South East	1616 (21.1)	1519 (19.6)	1789 (21.2)	1640 (20.1)	1389 (18.8)
South Western	407 (5.3)	388 (5.0)	386 (4.6)	405 (5.0)	379 (5.1)
Western	509 (6.6)	439 (5.7)	456 (5.4)	427 (5.2)	397 (5.4)
Not known	11 (0.1)	27 (0.3)	16 (0.2)	29 (0.3)	6 (0.1)
New cases	4184	4143	4466	3978	3525
Ballyfermot	30 (0.7)	42 (1.0)	25 (0.6)	25 (0.6)	22 (0.6)
Ballymun	18 (0.4)	23 (0.6)	17 (0.4)	17 (0.4)	15 (0.4)
Blanchardstown	33 (0.8)	41 (1.0)	30 (0.7)	30 (0.8)	31 (0.9)
Bray	31 (0.7)	28 (0.7)	23 (0.5)	19 (0.5)	17 (0.5)
Canal Communities	6 (0.1)	15 (0.4)	10 (0.2)	17 (0.4)	12 (0.3)
Clondalkin	60 (1.4)	78 (1.9)	67 (1.5)	62 (1.6)	57 (1.6)
Cork	151 (3.6)	241 (5.8)	295 (6.6)	237 (6.0)	240 (6.8)
Dublin North East	50 (1.2)	54 (1.3)	61 (1.4)	42 (1.1)	43 (1.2)
Dublin South Inner City	60 (1.4)	48 (1.2)	60 (1.3)	50 (1.3)	52 (1.5)
Dublin 12	47 (1.1)	65 (1.6)	69 (1.5)	58 (1.5)	59 (1.7)
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	81 (1.9)	68 (1.6)	67 (1.5)	49 (1.2)	65 (1.8)
Finglas-Cabra	30 (0.7)	57 (1.4)	53 (1.2)	36 (0.9)	45 (1.3)
North Inner City	64 (1.5)	62 (1.5)	78 (1.7)	57 (1.4)	59 (1.7)
Tallaght	123 (2.9)	95 (2.3)	119 (2.7)	91 (2.3)	82 (2.3)
East Coast	61 (1.5)	50 (1.2)	52 (1.2)	38 (1.0)	62 (1.8)
Midland	241 (5.8)	239 (5.8)	376 (8.4)	326 (8.2)	304 (8.6)
Mid West	246 (5.9)	256 (6.2)	216 (4.8)	165 (4.1)	176 (5.0)

Task Force Area of residence	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
			Number (%)		
North Dublin City and County	119 (2.8)	142 (3.4)	113 (2.5)	78 (2.0)	81 (2.3)
North Eastern	383 (9.2)	187 (4.5)	246 (5.5)	278 (7.0)	173 (4.9)
North West	469 (11.2)	543 (13.1)	579 (13.0)	606 (15.2)	386 (11.0)
Southern	469 (11.2)	543 (13.1)	579 (13.0)	606 (15.2)	501 (14.2)
South East	903 (21.6)	827 (20.0)	953 (21.3)	834 (21.0)	662 (18.8)
South Western	210 (5.0)	200 (4.8)	229 (5.1)	198 (5.0)	194 (5.5)
Western	272 (6.5)	231 (5.6)	227 (5.1)	192 (4.8)	186 (5.3)
Not known	6 (0.1)	13 (0.3)	11 (0.2)	12 (0.3)	1 (0.0)
Previously treated cases	3418	3513	3888	4079	3709
Ballyfermot	20 (0.6)	22 (0.6)	21 (0.5)	23 (0.6)	28 (0.8)
Ballymun	12 (0.4)	15 (0.4)	21 (0.5)	15 (0.4)	18 (0.5)
Blanchardstown	17 (0.5)	22 (0.6)	36 (0.9)	23 (0.6)	30 (0.8)
Bray	10 (0.3)	15 (0.4)	23 (0.6)	16 (0.4)	26 (0.7)
Canal Communities	13 (0.4)	9 (0.3)	11 (0.3)	23 (0.6)	22 (0.6)
Clondalkin	50 (1.5)	32 (0.9)	43 (1.1)	74 (1.8)	45 (1.2)
Cork	160 (4.7)	196 (5.6)	240 (6.2)	184 (4.5)	239 (6.4)
Dublin North East	47 (1.4)	38 (1.1)	35 (0.9)	43 (1.1)	39 (1.1)
Dublin South Inner City	72 (2.1)	78 (2.2)	74 (1.9)	86 (2.1)	93 (2.5)
Dublin 12	38 (1.1)	28 (0.8)	38 (1.0)	70 (1.7)	72 (1.9)
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	75 (2.2)	55 (1.6)	59 (1.5)	91 (2.2)	89 (2.4)
Finglas-Cabra	37 (1.1)	30 (0.9)	56 (1.4)	41 (1.0)	52 (1.4)
North Inner City	59 (1.7)	68 (1.9)	96 (2.5)	59 (1.4)	104 (2.8)
Tallaght	61 (1.8)	72 (2.1)	66 (1.7)	72 (1.8)	74 (2.0)
East Coast	43 (1.3)	36 (1.0)	39 (1.0)	28 (0.7)	34 (0.9)
Midland	199 (5.8)	185 (5.3)	267 (6.9)	291 (7.1)	236 (6.4)
Mid West	190 (5.6)	244 (6.9)	240 (6.2)	208 (5.1)	224 (6.0)
North Dublin City and County	96 (2.8)	95 (2.7)	107 (2.8)	102 (2.5)	118 (3.2)
North Eastern	241 (7.1)	162 (4.6)	197 (5.1)	355 (8.7)	193 (5.2)
North West	452 (13.2)	499 (14.2)	429 (11.0)	455 (11.2)	327 (8.8)
Southern	388 (11.4)	530 (15.1)	595 (15.3)	576 (14.1)	537 (14.5)
South East	708 (20.7)	684 (19.5)	817 (21.0)	795 (19.5)	718 (19.4)
South Western	191 (5.6)	181 (5.2)	149 (3.8)	198 (4.9)	178 (4.8)
Western	234 (6.9)	203 (5.8)	226 (5.8)	234 (5.7)	208 (5.6)
Not known	5 (0.1)	14 (0.3)	3 (0.1)	17 (0.4)	5 (0.1)
Treatment status unknown	69	92	98	93	165

Additional problem drugs

Table 6 Number (%) of treated cases who used alcohol along with other drug(s), by treatment status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Cases using more than one drug	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	Number (%)				
All cases	7671	7748	8452	8150	7399
All cases using more than one drug	1336 (17.4)	1365 (17.6)	1521 (18.0)	1429 (17.5)	1392 (18.8)
New cases	4184	4143	4466	3978	3525
New cases using more than one drug	743 (17.8)	732 (17.7)	743 (16.6)	668 (16.8)	634 (18.0)
Previously treated cases	3418	3513	3888	4079	3709
Previously treated cases using more than one drug	576 (16.9)	611 (17.4)	752 (19.3)	733 (18.0)	722 (19.5)
Treatment status unknown	69	92	98	93	165

Table 7 Number (%) of problem drugs used, by treatment status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Number of problem drugs used	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	Number (%)				
All cases	7671	7748	8452	8150	7399
Alcohol only	6330 (82.6)	6381 (82.4)	6931 (82.0)	6721 (82.5)	6007 (81.2)
Alcohol and one other drug	746 (9.7)	775 (10.0)	887 (10.5)	829 (10.2)	823 (11.1)
Alcohol and two other drugs	339 (4.4)	333 (4.3)	360 (4.3)	329 (4.0)	321 (4.3)
Alcohol and three other drugs	251 (3.3)	256 (3.3)	274 (3.2)	271 (3.3)	248 (3.4)
New cases	4184	4143	4466	3978	3525
Alcohol only	3441 (82.2)	3411 (82.3)	3723 (83.4)	3310 (83.2)	2891 (82.0)
Alcohol and one other drug	427 (10.2)	420 (10.1)	447 (10.0)	409 (10.3)	414 (11.7)
Alcohol and two other drugs	187 (4.5)	192 (4.6)	179 (4.0)	152 (3.8)	124 (3.5)
Alcohol and three other drugs	129 (3.1)	120 (2.9)	117 (2.6)	107 (2.7)	96 (2.7)
Previously treated cases	3418	3513	3888	4079	3709
Alcohol only	2842 (83.1)	2902 (82.6)	3136 (80.7)	3346 (82.0)	2987 (80.5)
Alcohol and one other drug	306 (9.0)	343 (9.7)	423 (10.9)	400 (9.8)	387 (10.4)
Alcohol and two other drugs	148 (4.3)	134 (3.8)	175 (4.5)	172 (4.2)	191 (5.1)
Alcohol and three other drugs	122 (3.6)	134 (3.8)	154 (4.0)	161 (3.9)	144 (3.9)
Treatment status unknown	69	92	98	93	165

Table 8 Additional problem drug(s) used, by treatment status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Additional problem drug(s) used*	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	Number (%)				
All cases	7671	7748	8452	8150	7399
Cannabis	961 (12.5)	936 (12.1)	1050 (12.4)	949 (11.6)	906 (12.2)
Ecstasy	261 (3.4)	229 (3.0)	217 (2.6)	208 (2.6)	166 (2.2)
Cocaine	476 (6.2)	426 (5.5)	436 (5.2)	390 (4.8)	397 (5.4)
Amphetamines	60 (0.8)	73 (0.9)	67 (0.8)	61 (0.7)	78 (1.1)
Opiates	140 (1.8)	145 (1.9)	193 (2.3)	205 (2.5)	202 (2.7)
Benzodiazepines	193 (2.5)	231 (3.0)	320 (3.8)	358 (4.4)	360 (4.9)
Volatile inhalants	13 (0.2)	13 (0.2)	10 (0.1)	10 (0.1)	8 (0.1)
Other drugs	73 (1.0)	156 (2.0)	136 (1.6)	119 (1.5)	92 (1.2)
New cases	4184	4143	4466	3978	3525
Cannabis	555 (12.6)	521 (12.6)	545 (12.2)	463 (11.6)	439 (12.5)
Ecstasy	160 (3.8)	117 (2.8)	110 (2.5)	94 (2.4)	82 (2.3)
Cocaine	263 (6.3)	231 (5.6)	219 (4.9)	189 (4.8)	179 (5.1)
Amphetamines	30 (0.7)	33 (0.8)	24 (0.5)	28 (0.7)	36 (1.0)
Opiates	56 (1.3)	56 (1.4)	76 (1.7)	74 (1.9)	55 (1.6)
Benzodiazepines	87 (2.1)	113 (2.7)	120 (2.7)	133 (3.3)	116 (3.3)
Volatile inhalants	12 (0.3)	6 (0.1)	5 (0.1)	7 (0.2)	4 (0.1)
Other drugs	25 (0.6)	87 (2.1)	57 (1.3)	46 (1.2)	39 (1.1)
Previously treated cases	3418	3513	3888	4079	3709
Cannabis	396 (11.6)	401 (11.4)	491 (12.6)	467 (11.4)	445 (12.0)
Ecstasy	101 (3.0)	108 (3.1)	104 (2.7)	112 (2.7)	81 (2.2)
Cocaine	209 (6.1)	190 (5.4)	208 (5.3)	197 (4.8)	213 (5.7)
Opiates	81 (2.4)	85 (2.4)	111 (2.9)	123 (3.0)	134 (3.6)
Benzodiazepines	104 (3.0)	114 (3.2)	197 (5.1)	222 (5.4)	233 (6.3)
Amphetamines	30 (0.9)	40 (1.1)	42 (1.1)	33 (0.8)	41 (1.1)
Volatile inhalants	1 (0.0)	7 (0.2)	5 (0.1)	3 (0.1)	4 (0.1)
Other drugs	46 (1.3)	68 (1.9)	77 (2.1)	70 (1.7)	50 (1.3)

* By cases reporting use of one, two or three additional drugs.

† The percentages shown are the proportions of all problem alcohol users who used each additional problem drug.

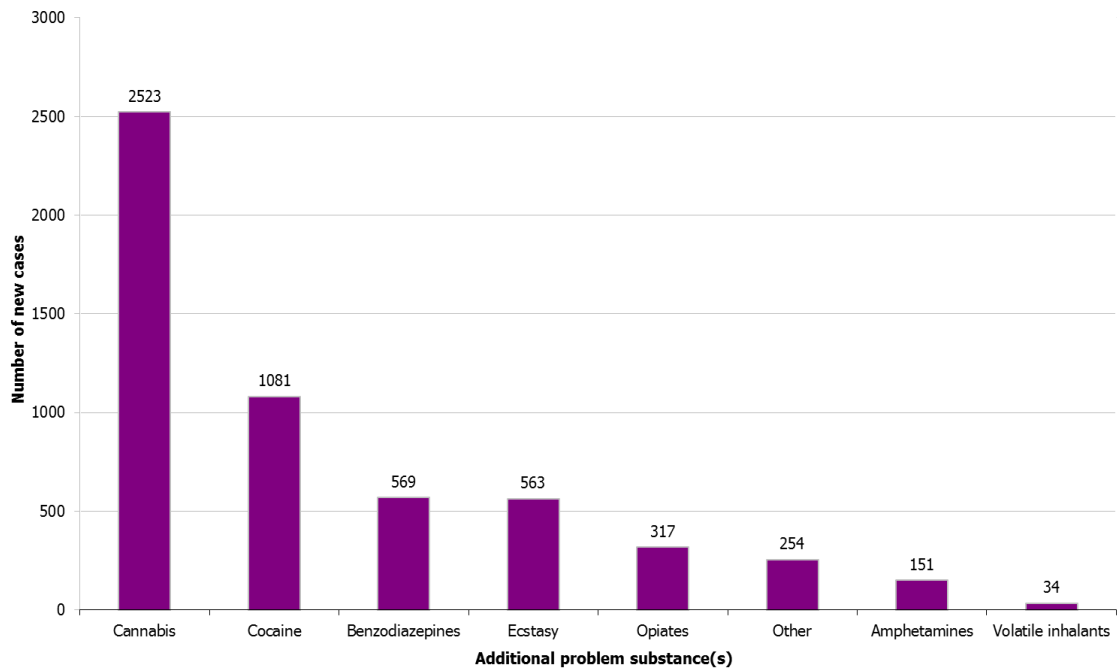


Figure 3 Additional problem drugs associated with alcohol as a main problem drug among new cases (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Treatment provision

It is well recognised that there is no single treatment method to address alcohol problems. In practice, there are a number of effective treatments that may be provided in various treatment settings and which meet the needs of different types of problem alcohol user. Those whose problems are more complex due to severe dependence, psychological morbidity or social disorganisation are likely to need more intensive treatments.¹⁵ A broad range of services covering treatment and rehabilitation is provided throughout the country. The NDTRS records the treatment intervention(s) provided when the client is first admitted to a treatment service.

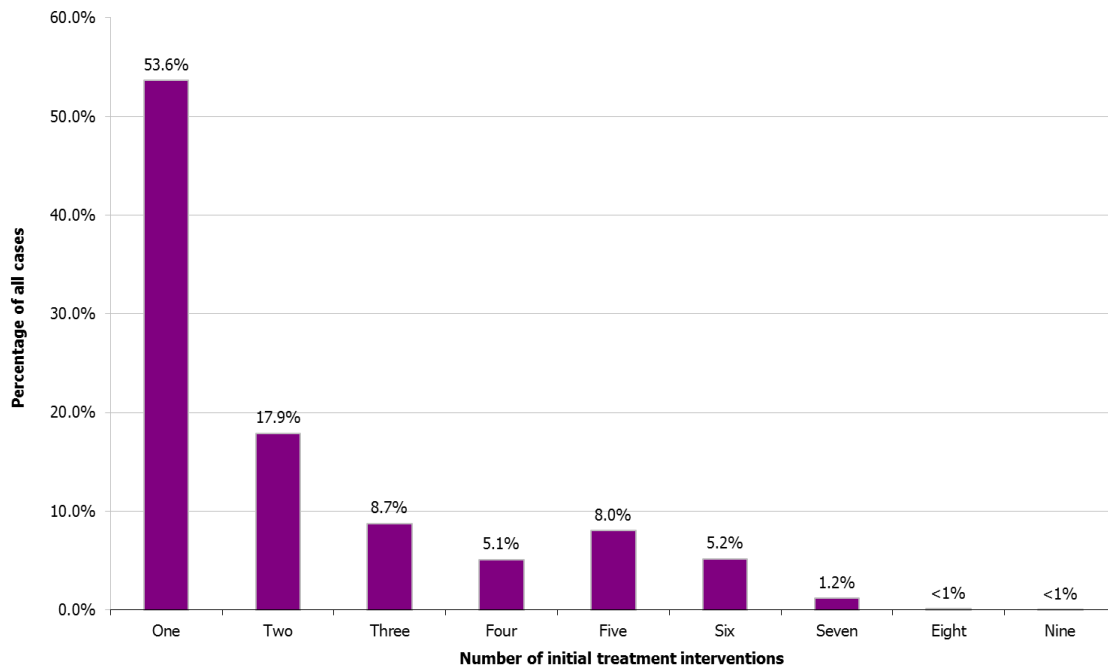


Figure 4 Percentage of cases, by the number of initial treatment interventions availed of (NDTRS 2013)

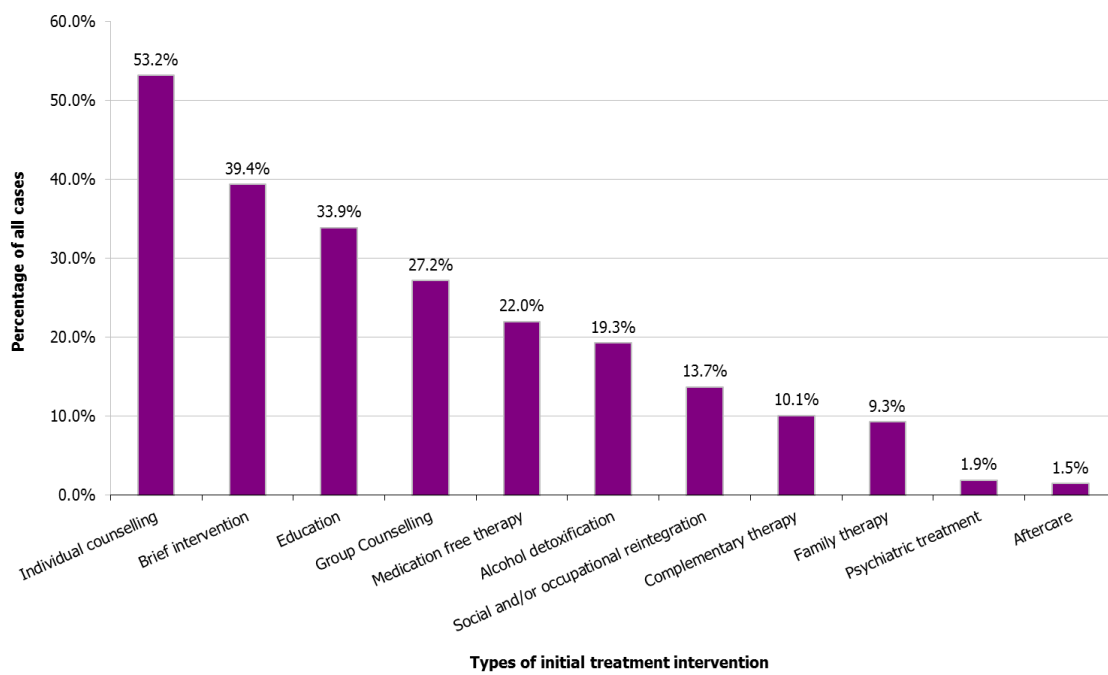


Figure 5 Percentage of cases, by type of initial treatment provided (NDTRS 2013)

Age at which alcohol and other drug use started

Table 9 Age and age range (in brackets) at which alcohol and other drug use started, by treatment status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All cases					
Number of responses for age first used any drug (excluding alcohol)	2025	2237	2678	2476	2417
Median age (range*) started use of any drug (excluding alcohol), in years	16 (12–28)	16 (12–29)	16 (12–28)	16 (12–30)	16 (12–28)
Number of responses for age first used alcohol					
Number of responses for age first used alcohol	6211	6099	6875	7262	6538
Median age (range*) started use of alcohol, in years	16 (11–23)	16 (12–22)	15 (12–22)	16 (12–22)	15 (12–22)
New cases					
Number of responses for age first used any drug (excluding alcohol)	1125	1209	1350	1172	1130
Median age (range*) started use of any drug (excluding alcohol), in years	16 (12–27)	16 (12–28)	16 (12–26)	16 (12–28)	16 (12–28)
Number of responses for age first used alcohol					
Number of responses for age first used alcohol	3444	3218	3562	3579	3128
Median age (range*) started use of alcohol, in years	16 (11–22)	16 (12–22)	16 (12–22)	16 (12–22)	16 (12–21)
Previously treated cases					
Number of responses for age first used any drug (excluding alcohol)	883	1013	1290	1272	1254
Median age (range*) started use of any drug (excluding alcohol), in years	16 (12–28)	16 (12–30)	16 (12–30)	16 (12–30)	15 (12–28)
Number of responses for age first used alcohol					
Number of responses for age first used alcohol	2741	2848	3258	3640	3309
Median age (range*) started use of alcohol, in years	16 (11–25)	15 (11–22)	15 (11–21)	15 (11–22)	15 (11–23)

* Age range presented is the 5th to 95th percentile (90% of cases are included within this range).

Socio-demographic characteristics of treated cases

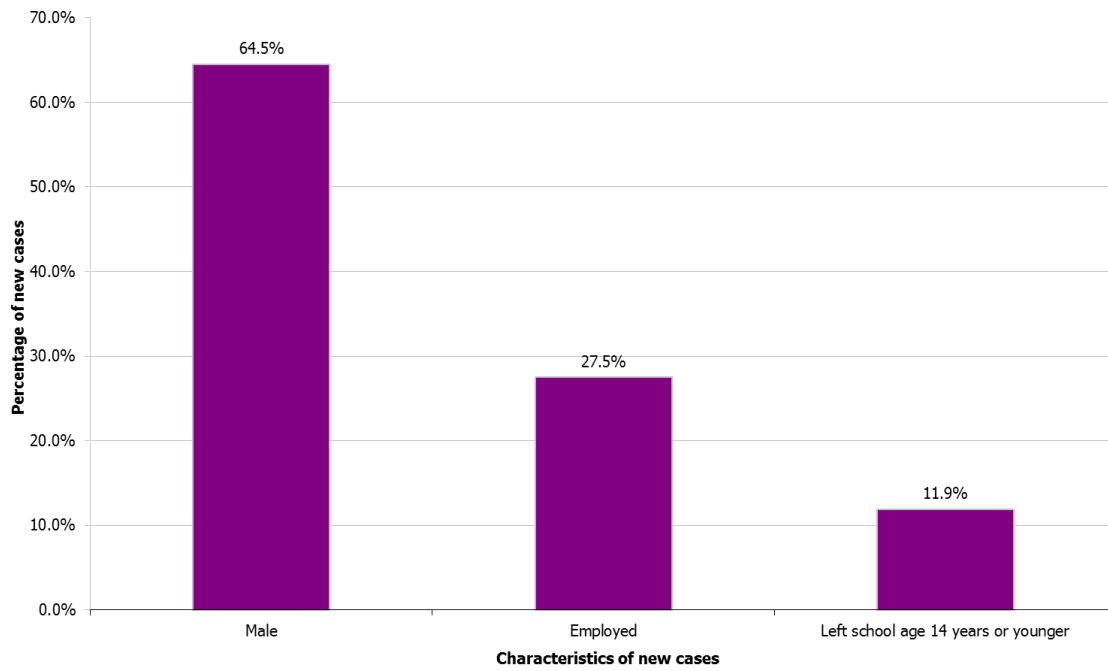
Table 10 Socio-demographic characteristics, by treatment status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

Characteristics	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All cases*	7671	7748	8452	8150	7399
Median age (range†) in years	39 (19–61)	39 (18–62)	39 (18–62)	40 (19–63)	40 (19–64)
Number (%) aged under 18	253 (3.3)	334 (4.3)	328 (3.9)	276 (3.4)	221 (3.0)
Number (%) of males	5071 (66.1)	5018 (64.8)	5566 (65.9)	5273 (64.7)	4702 (63.5)
Number (%) living with parents/family	2304 (30.0)	2150 (27.7)	2379 (28.1)	2205 (27.1)	2014 (27.2)
Number (%) homeless	238 (3.1)	327 (4.2)	471 (5.6)	383 (4.7)	420 (5.7)
Number (%) Irish	7229 (94.2)	7211 (93.1)	7848 (92.9)	7556 (92.7)	6859 (92.7)
Number (%) left school early (aged 14 years or under)	939 (12.2)	1018 (13.1)	1129 (13.4)	1181 (14.5)	1000 (13.5)
Number (%) employed (aged 16–64 years)	1991 (26.9)	1747 (23.6)	1732 (21.4)	1609 (20.7)	1506 (21.5)
New cases*	4184	4143	4466	3978	3525
Median age (range†) in years	36 (17–60)	36 (17–62)	36 (17–61)	38 (17–64)	38 (17–64)
Number (%) aged under 18	220 (5.3)	267 (6.4)	253 (5.7)	213 (5.4)	178 (5.0)
Number (%) of males	2756 (65.9)	2700 (65.2)	2920 (65.4)	2517 (63.3)	2205 (62.6)
Number (%) living with parents/family	1471 (35.2)	1338 (32.3)	1459 (32.7)	1195 (30.0)	1110 (31.5)
Number (%) homeless	61 (1.5)	96 (2.3)	164 (3.7)	109 (2.7)	135 (3.8)
Number (%) Irish	3933 (94.0)	3841 (92.7)	4095 (91.7)	3621 (91.0)	3253 (92.3)
Number (%) left school early (aged 14 years or under)	446 (10.7)	484 (11.7)	546 (12.2)	512 (12.9)	433 (12.3)
Number (%) employed (aged 16–64 years)	1239 (29.6)	1104 (26.7)	1051 (23.5)	966 (24.3)	923 (27.9)
Previously treated cases*	3418	3513	3888	4079	3709
Median age (range†) in years	41 (22–62)	41 (20–62)	41 (20–62)	42 (21–63)	42 (22–64)
Number (%) aged under 18	23 (0.7)	60 (1.7)	73 (1.9)	61 (1.5)	41 (1.1)
Number (%) of males	2270 (66.4)	2259 (64.3)	2581 (66.4)	2690 (65.9)	2375 (64.0)
Number (%) living with parents/family	812 (23.8)	787 (22.4)	894 (23.0)	987 (24.2)	862 (23.2)
Number (%) homeless	170 (5.0)	228 (6.5)	296 (7.6)	271 (6.6)	276 (7.4)
Number (%) Irish	3231 (94.6)	3290 (93.6)	3671 (94.4)	3849 (94.4)	3456 (93.2)
Number (%) left school early (aged 14 years or under)	486 (14.2)	525 (15.0)	573 (14.7)	654 (16.0)	556 (15.0)
Number (%) employed (aged 16–64 years)	737 (21.6)	617 (17.6)	657 (16.9)	625 (15.3)	557 (15.7)
Treatment status unknown	69	92	98	93	165

* It is not possible to ascertain the percentage with each characteristic of interest from the total number because complete data were not reported in all cases.

† Age range presented is the 5th to 95th percentile (90% of cases are included within this range).

Figure 6 Characteristics of new cases (NDTRS 2009–2013)



Relationship between alcohol and selected characteristics

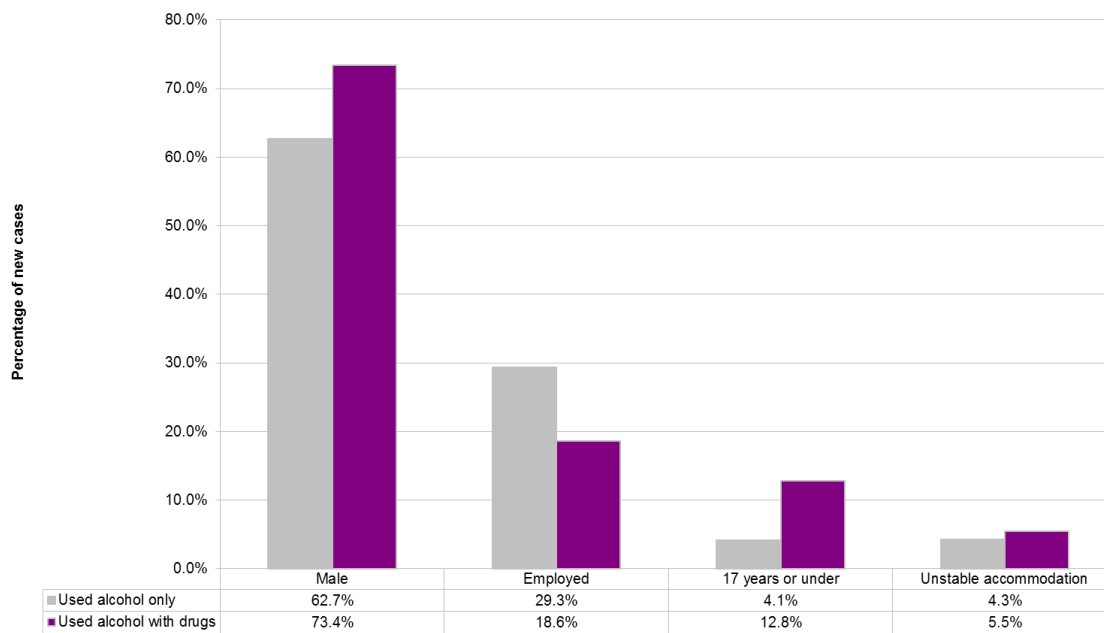


Figure 7 Characteristics of new cases, by alcohol and other drug use status (NDTRS 2009–2013)

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