

## In this issue

### Trends in Irish attitudes to recreational cannabis

See page 24

37 Reports on Irish prisons

48 Youth Diversion Projects evaluation

*Drugnet Ireland* is produced in collaboration with the HRB National Drugs Library. To have *Drugnet Ireland* delivered to your desktop, sign up at [www.drugsandalcohol.ie](http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie)

## Deaths among people who were homeless at time of death in Ireland, 2019

The retrospective review by Lynn *et al.*<sup>1</sup> sought to investigate mortality in homeless individuals in Ireland during 2019. This was a feasibility study aimed at developing a greater understanding of premature mortality among the homeless using the National Drug-Related Death Index (NDRDI), an epidemiological database. The study was commissioned by the Department of Health and sought to provide more complete and accurate data to help inform policy. It is the first Irish study to examine the number and causes of homeless deaths nationally.

### Background

Homelessness is a burgeoning social issue in Ireland. Since 2012, the numbers of those in emergency accommodation or sleeping rough have nearly tripled, with as many as 10,975 individuals accessing emergency accommodation in September 2022.<sup>2</sup> Homeless people in Ireland tend to be concentrated around the major cities; the 2016 Census revealed that 72.5% of homeless people were recorded in Dublin.<sup>3</sup> Young people are also disproportionately represented among the homeless population, with those aged 18–24 years accounting for 16.7% of adults accessing emergency accommodation.<sup>4</sup> Other vulnerable groups include people with disabilities, young parents, the elderly, members of the Travelling community, and members of the LGBTQI+ community. Homeless people also experience poorer health and higher rates of mortality when compared with the general population, with global estimates of a three-to-four-time higher risk among this cohort.<sup>5</sup> This increased risk of death can be attributed to several factors, including high prevalence of substance use; high rates of mental illness; increased risk of chronic diseases; disproportionate experience of physical assault; and exposure.<sup>6</sup>

(continued on page 4)

Research. Evidence. Action.