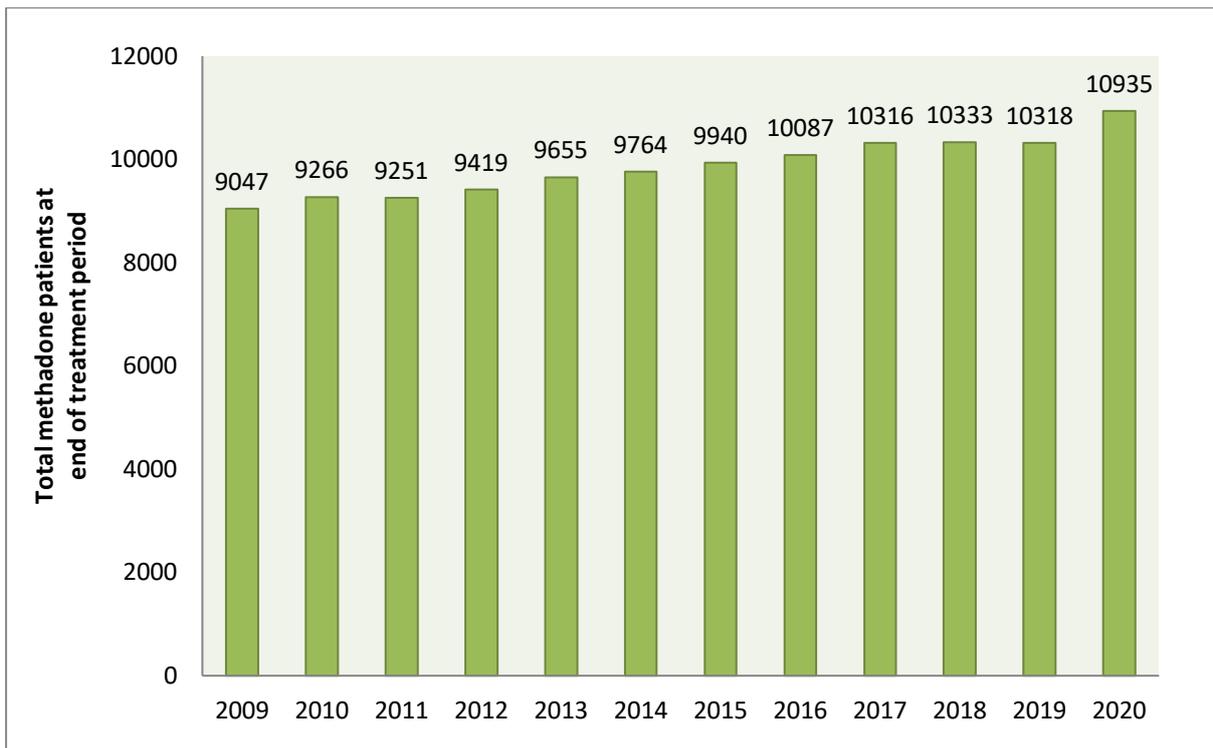


Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST) patterns 2009-2020

(Prepared by the HSE National Social Inclusion Office)

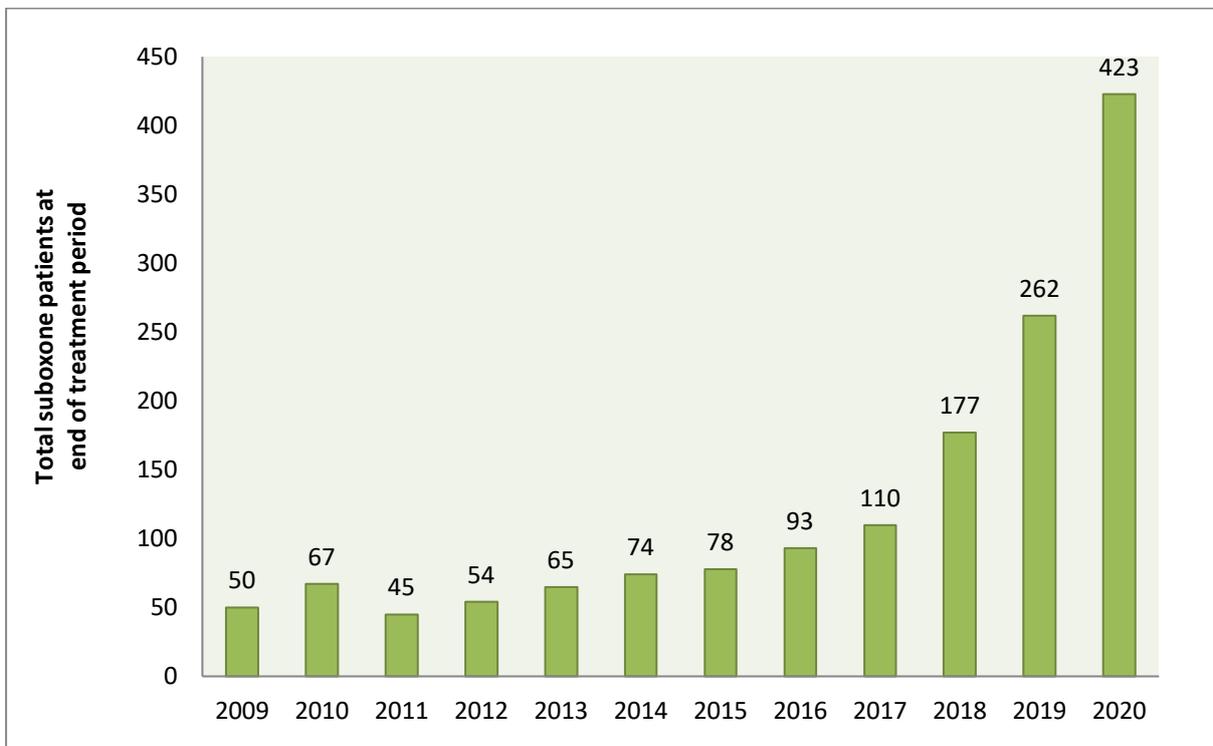
The Central Treatment List is a HSE register of people that receive treatment for problem opiate use. Methadone is the main form of OST treatment received, although buprenorphine (suboxone or subutex) treatment is also provided. During 2020, the HSE's Drug and Alcohol services inducted a total of 721 new patients onto OST and 161 of those commenced on treatment during the year were registered as Homeless. Figures 1 and 2 show the number of people receiving methadone and buprenorphine treatment since 2009 respectively. It can be seen that methadone treatment has increased by 21% since 2009 and by 6% since 2019, while buprenorphine treatment has increased by 254% since 2018, and 61% since 2019. Overall OST has increased by 25% since 2009 and 7% since 2019 (figure 3). The Misuse of Drugs Regulations were amended in 2017 to allow for the use of buprenorphine containing products licensed for opioid substitution treatment to be made available as part of OST (Irish Statute Book, 2017). These regulations have made buprenorphine more accessible for treatment. In addition, at the start of the Covid 19 pandemic the National Social Inclusion Office released clinical guidance on OST prescribing which encouraged the use of buprenorphine due to its easier induction process (National Social Inclusion Office, 2020). This may help explain the steep rise in its use during 2020.

Figure 1: Number treated with methadone for problem opiate use



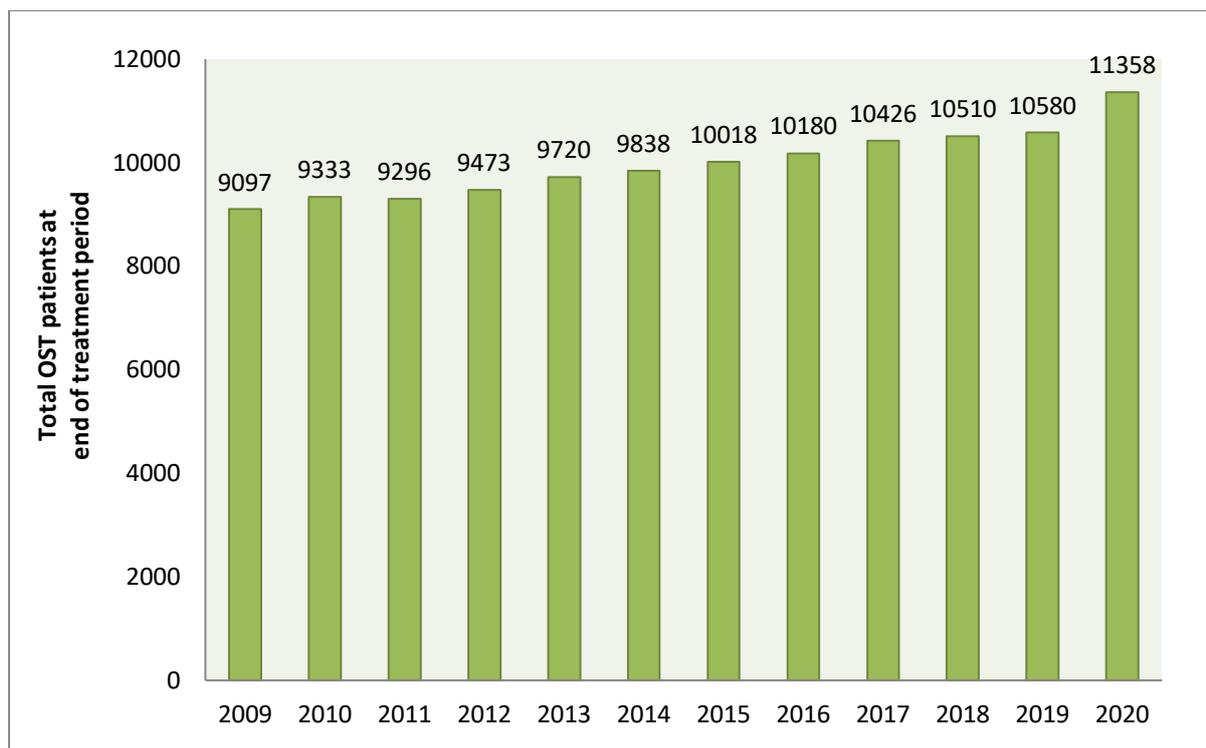
Source: Central Treatment List

Figure 2: Number treated with buprenorphine for problem opiate use



Source: Central Treatment List

Figure 3: Number treated with OST (methadone or buprenorphine) for problem opiate use



Source: Central Treatment List

References

National Social Inclusion Office (2020) Guidance on Contingency Planning for People who use Drugs and COVID-19, Health Service Executive, 10/04/2020. https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/31804/8/HSE_contingency-planning-for-people-who-use-drugs.pdf

Irish Statute Book (2017) S.I. No. 522/2017 - Misuse of Drugs (Supervision of Prescription and Supply of Methadone and Medicinal Products containing Buprenorphine authorised for Opioid Substitution Treatment) Regulations 2017. <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2017/si/522/made/en/print>