Summary Methodology for National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS)

General Information

The National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) is a national database that records detailed information about publicly funded addiction treatment services in Ireland.

NDTRS data is used to inform decision-making in the planning of addiction treatment services. An accurate and complete treatment database allows us to:

- identify patterns of drug and alcohol use and risk behaviours;
- explore patterns of service utilisation;
- provide information for evidence-based service planning, including obtaining and justifying funding and personnel; and
- analyse trends in treated problem alcohol and drug use over time.

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 [certain] services (action item 5.1.47).

Data is collected through an on-line web-based portal called LINK. Data is collated annually by the HRB to produce national level annual publications covering drug treatment, alcohol treatment and these data are published online as interactive tables.
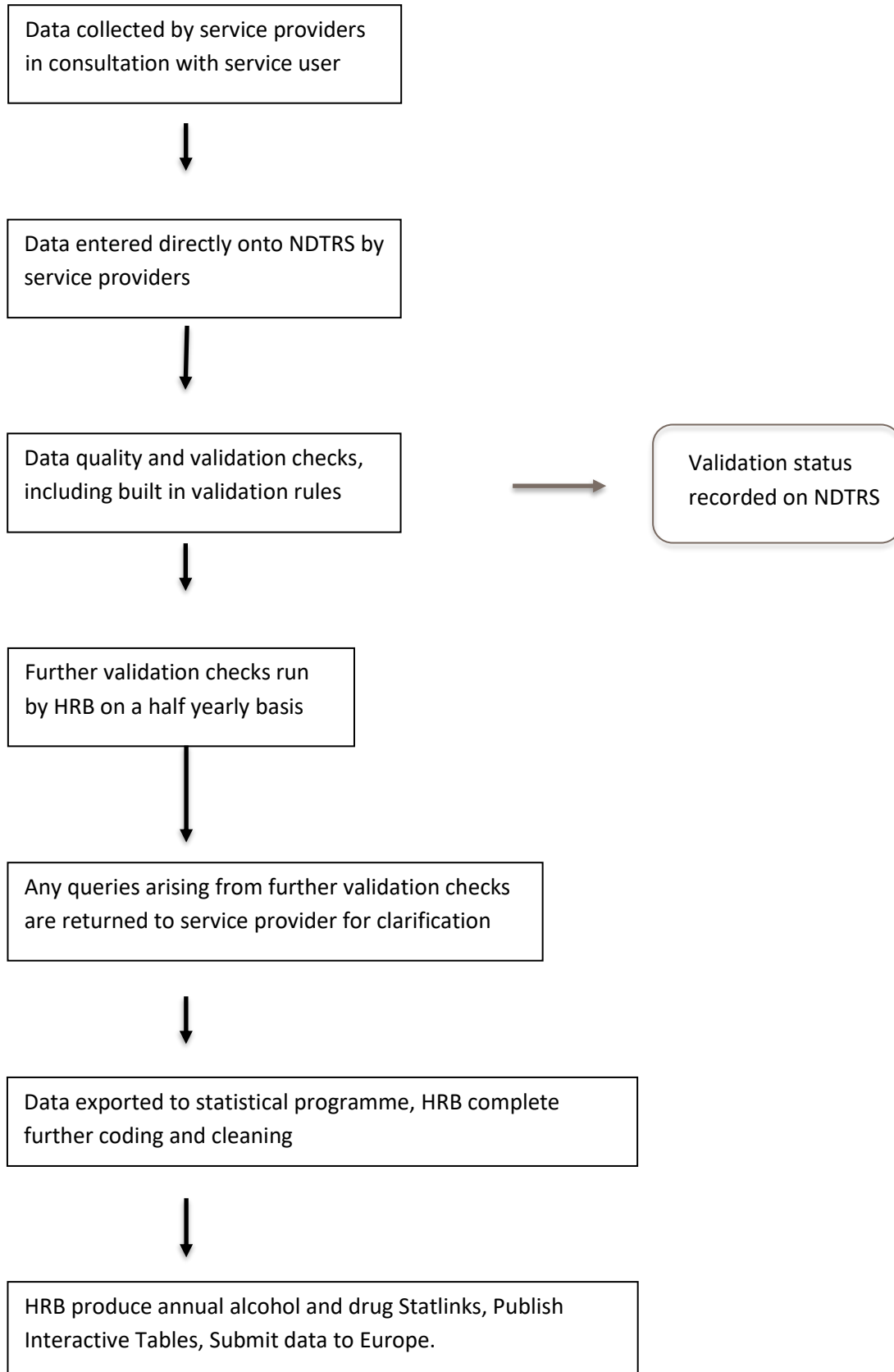
Processing and Analysis

For new treatment cases, data are collected by the service providers and entered directly on to the NDTRS database online. Two subsets of data are collected called the Entry data and Exit data and for new service users the Entry data is recorded at the time of entry. Exit data is recorded later when treatment is completed.

For existing service users on the NDTRS, each record is reviewed on an annual basis. Confirmation of review undertaken is logged on the system. In the case of a treatment ending the Exit data is completed.

Validations on the NDTRS can flag errors in Entry data or Exit data as part of the single validation process once the record is created.

Information data flow chart

The following map outlines the flow of data from the point of data collection by the service provider to the outputs such as Statlinks and tables.

Data collected by service providers in consultation with service user

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Data entered directly onto NDTRS by service providers

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Data quality and validation checks, including built in validation rules → Validation status recorded on NDTRS

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Further validation checks run by HRB on a half yearly basis

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Any queries arising from further validation checks are returned to service provider for clarification

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Data exported to statistical programme, HRB complete further coding and cleaning

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HRB produce annual alcohol and drug Statlinks, Publish Interactive Tables, Submit data to Europe.

Dissemination

Statlinks are published annually on the HRB website in the form of PDF files, and the Interactive Tables are made available on the HRB National Drugs Library website at (https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/tables/). In line with Government policy the NDTRS is committed to publishing open data so that its outputs are accessible to and reusable by the widest possible audience. If the data required is not available through the online publications, including tables, data can be requested by completing the National Health Information Systems (NHIS) data request form and accept the terms and conditions for use of NDTRS data. The form is in editable PDF format and can be returned to: NDTRS@hrb.ie

Service providers can analyse their own data through an inbuilt reporting tool on NDTRS. Training is provided on how to use this reporting tool. More details analysis, is provided, on request, to service providers that participate on the NDTRS by contacting NDTRS@hrb.ie