



19<sup>th</sup> December, 2019

Deputy Louise O'Reilly, TD  
Dáil Eireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2.

**PQ: 51932/19**

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons treated for gambling addiction to date in 2019

**PQ: 51964/19**

To ask the Minister for Health the funding allocated to help treat persons with gambling addiction in 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your above Parliamentary Questions which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

The National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) started collecting specific information on cases treated for problem gambling use in 2010. See attached Appendix on the NDTRS. The figures for gambling relate to the number of cases reported to the NDTRS who recorded gambling as their main problem substance. Please note that the NDTRS data is case based, which means that 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 per year. The figures reflect assessments and entries into treatment (new cases and previously treated cases returning to treatment) and do not include the number of cases continuing in treatment from preceding years. Reporting treatment for gambling to the NDTRS **is optional**. This option is facilitated by the NDTRS for individual services who wish to use the data for their own purposes. Therefore these data **cannot** be considered complete or representative of treatment for gambling in a national context.

For the Deputy's information the number of cases assessed only and treated for gambling as a main problem and reported to the NDTRS in the years 2010 to 2018 are listed in the table below.



Main Problem Gambling	Year entered assessed or treatment								
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Assessed only (not treated)</b>	0	0	35	27	37	27	33	54	37
<b>Treated</b>	159	181	221	197	184	208	195	219	217

As of the 18th of December 2019, with approximately 50% of 2019 data available on LINK, there are 175 cases assessed or treated for gambling as a main problem in 2019.

The apportionment of funding dedicated solely to gambling addiction cannot be extracted from overall funding however for the Deputy's information, the HSE expenditure for Addiction Services in 2018 was €122.5m with an allocation of €120.8m for 2019. In addition, other areas of the HSE provide services to clients with addiction problems including Health and Wellbeing, Mental Health, Acute Hospitals Services and Emergency Departments and Primary Care that are attributable to drugs programmes.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,




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Joseph Doyle  
National Planning Specialist

## Appendix

### NDTRS Terms & Conditions

Any of the data published here may be freely used, but remains the property of the NDTRS. To safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of the data, all users must agree to the following conditions:

1. NDTRS data are not to be presented in either written or oral form that could directly or indirectly identify an individual patient.
2. Tables containing NDTRS data should not be published where any individual cells contain less than 5 cases.
3. The responsibility for interpretation of the data lies fully with the data user. Please contact the NDTRS should you have any queries on data interpretation.
4. The data provided below supersedes any previous analysis done as figures may change due to data validation processes.
5. The NDTRS should be clearly acknowledged as the source of the data in any publication or presentation in which the data are used.
6. The NDTRS must be provided with a copy of all documents in which NDTRS data are used.
7. The HRB National Drugs Library should be provided with a copy of any published paper in which NDTRS data are used.

### National Drug Treatment Reporting System

Treatment for problem alcohol and drug use in Ireland is provided by statutory and non-statutory services, including residential centres, community-based addiction services, general practices and prison services.

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 substance misuse problems'. Clients who attend needle-exchange services are not included in this reporting system. From 2004 onwards, clients who report alcohol as their main problem drug have been recorded by the system. These data have been presented in an earlier paper in the HRB Trends Series (Fanagan *et al.* 2008). Drug treatment options include one or more of the following: medication (detoxification, methadone reduction, substitution programmes and psychiatric treatment), brief intervention, counselling, group therapy, family therapy, psychotherapy, complementary therapy, and/or life-skills training.

Compliance with the NDTRS requires that data be collected for each new client coming for first treatment and for each previously treated client returning to treatment for problem drug use in a calendar year.

Staff at the NHIS unit in the HRB process the anonymous, aggregated data, which are analysed and reported at national and EU levels. The main elements of the reporting system are defined as follows:

*All cases treated* – describes cases who receive treatment for problem drug and/or alcohol use at each treatment centre in a calendar year, and includes:

*Cases assessed only* - describes cases who were assessed but who did not progress to treatment

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

Each case refers to an episode of treatment. Therefore ‘previously treated cases’ could appear more than once in the data, in a calendar year, if for example they receive treatment at more than one centre or at the same centre more than once per year.

NDTRS does not publish figures less than five to ensure that an individual cannot be inadvertently identified.