



20th December 2019

Deputy John Curran, TD
Dáil Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2.

PQ: 52328/19

To ask the Minister for Health the number of drug treatment episodes provided to date in 2019 across services (details supplied); and the equivalent figures for 2017 and 2018, in tabular form.

Dear Deputy Curran,

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

Table 1 below outlines the number of cases, by setting type, who commenced drug treatment (excluding alcohol) in 2017 and 2018 as recorded by the National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) (see attached Appendix on the NDTRS). It is not possible to provide information on 2019 data yet as currently approximately 50% of the data is available for reporting.

Table 1 Number of cases commencing drug treatment by treatment setting, NDTRS 2017-2018

Setting type	Number of cases commencing drug treatment in 2017	Number of cases commencing drug treatment in 2018
Outpatient	5610	6715
Low threshold	792	887
General practitioner	112	206
Prison	651	1082
Inpatient	1757	1384*
(of which, inpatient detoxifications)	(702)	(554)
Total drug treatments	8922	10274

*The decrease is related to the reduced participation of one inpatient (residential) treatment centre in 2018.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Doyle', written in a cursive style.

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 Tables containing NDTRS data should not be published where any individual cells contain less than 5 cases.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.