



Limistéar Sláinte Comhtháite Bhaile Átha Cliath Chathair Theas & Thiar,  
Bhaile Átha Cliath Thiar Theas, Cill Dara & Iarthar Chill Mhantáin  
Teach Darach, Páirc na Mílaoise, An Nás, Co. Chill Dara, W91 KDC2

Head of Primary Care  
Dublin South City & West, Dublin South West,  
Kildare & West Wicklow Integrated Healthcare Areas,  
Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 KDC2

Email: cho7.pqreps@hse.ie Tel: (045) 882 597

14/08/2025.

Deputy John Brady  
Dáil Éireann,  
Dublin 2.

**PQ ref 42189/25** - To ask the Minister for Health the measures her department is taking to address the increase in crack cocaine addiction in Wicklow; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

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Dear Deputy Brady,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in regard to your parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for a response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The Health Service Executive can confirm the Health Research Board (HRB) does not disaggregate crack cocaine treatment data by individual county, national figures indicate that crack cocaine accounted for approximately 22% of cocaine-related treatment cases in 2022, with 898 cases reported across the country. Of these, over 88% were based in Dublin, while 1.8% were recorded as residents of County Wicklow—representing a small but growing proportion of cases.

However, community-level insights suggest a more complex picture. Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI), which operates the local CRIS (Community Recovery and Integration Support) service in Wicklow Town, Arklow, and Greystones, has reported a noticeable increase in cocaine use particularly among younger adults. Cocaine is now identified as the second most common substance of concern among their service users, following alcohol.

While overall treatment rates in Wicklow remain relatively low, these emerging trends especially among younger populations—are a cause for concern and highlight the need for continued targeted responses.

The HSE Addiction Services only provides Opioid Antagonist Treatment (OAT) and promotes Harm Reduction Programmes in the HSE Dublin and South East region. However the HSE Addiction Services provides Section 39 funding to assist in community based supports across the County of Wicklow, these include Bray Community Drug Team, Bray Drug and Alcohol Task Force, and East Coast Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force, as well as mobile outreach services provided in partnership with MQI's CRIS programme. Interventions focus on one-to-one support, family engagement, harm reduction, and structured stabilisation programmes.

The CRIS Community Outreach Service delivers direct, locally based engagement through education, outreach, and recovery integration supports—specifically responding to increasing demand for cocaine and crack cocaine services among young people.

At a national level, the Department of Health and the HSE are continuing to expand harm reduction and psychosocial support interventions in line with the national drugs strategy *Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017–2025*. These include contingency management initiatives, needle exchange provision (where appropriate), and enhanced supports for individuals with dual diagnosis (mental health and addiction). Work is ongoing to establish integrated, community-based dual diagnosis teams—with psychiatric input—as a key strategic priority in addressing crack cocaine use.

In addition, the East Coast Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force plays a central role in coordinating a localised response across Wicklow and surrounding areas. The Task Force receives quarterly data from An Garda Síochána (via Wicklow County Joint Policing Committee) to inform service planning and resource targeting. It works closely with local service providers, Garda stations, housing services, and community organisations to identify emerging hotspots and deliver appropriate interventions.

Finally, both national and regional-level funding streams for cocaine and crack cocaine responses are made available to services in Wicklow through initiatives such as the Community Services Enhancement Fund (CSEF).

I trust this information is of assistance to you but if you have any queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Brian Kearney**  
**Head of Primary Care**  
**Dublin South City & West, Dublin South West, Kildare & West Wicklow Integrated Healthcare Areas, HSE**  
**Dublin & Midlands**