

# Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2017 - Drug markets and crime

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Health Research Board. Irish Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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- (2018) *Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2017 – drug policy*.
- (2018) *Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2017 – treatment*.
- (2018) *Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2017 – drug markets and crime*.
- (2018) *Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2017 – prevention*.
- (2018) *Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2017 – prison*.
- (2018) *Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2017 – harms and harms reduction*.
- (2018) *Focal Point Ireland: national report for 2017 – drugs*.

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## 0. Summary

### 0.1 National profile

- Domestic drug market

Cannabis is the main drug that is produced in Ireland due to the availability of advanced cultivation techniques and low start-up costs. Synthetic drugs are not normally produced in Ireland. However, the market is constantly changing; pre-precursors such as alphaphenylacetone (APAAN), Benzylcyanide and precursors, such as PMK and BMK, have been detected in Ireland in the past number of years. Similarly, tableting does not really happen in Ireland, but when it does, it involves binding tablet powder with pressing agents. Tableting machines that have been detected in Irish grow houses are archaic and slow and not of the same standard as those in countries where tableting is more advanced, for example, the Netherlands.

Ireland is primarily a transit country. It is considered vulnerable to trafficking due to its long coastline, which acts as a route for drugs to be brought into the UK and Europe. Drugs originate in various countries, for example, Morocco (cannabis resin), the Netherlands (synthetic and semi-synthetic drugs), Afghanistan (heroin), China (new psychoactive substances, NPS), India and Pakistan (counterfeit medicines). Numerous operations on the island of Ireland by law enforcement agencies also shed light on where drugs have travelled from. Table 1.1.2.1 shows that in 2016 drugs brought into Ireland originated in Europe (the Netherlands, Spain), Africa (south east, west), North America, and Canada. In addition, drug traffickers travelled from Europe (Spain, France), South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates. The main mode of transport was by freight via Rosslare Europort, or by plane via Dublin Airport. The majority of products that arrived by plane were concealed in luggage. Another method that was also used was the postal system. A number of products were intercepted by post in controlled deliveries. Due to a common travel area between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, organised crime groups (OCGs) have been known to transport heroin, cocaine, and cannabis from Northern Ireland to the Republic of Ireland and vice versa.

- National drug law offences

Information regarding Ireland's drug law offences comes from reports provided by the Courts Service, the Irish Prison Service (IPS) annual reports and data from An Garda Síochána (AGS) via the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Data provided by Courts Service and the IPS refer to the total number of drug offences and are not differentiated by drug type. However, AGS does differentiate by drug type, and its data indicate that the total number of drug offences detected increased by 7% between 2015 and 2016. A further examination by type of drug offence indicates that, for supply offences, importation of drugs, and cultivation or manufacture of drugs, the number of incidents increased between 2015 and 2016 to 40% and 10%, respectively. For possession offences, between 2015 and 2016 there was an increase in possession of drugs for sale or supply (9%) and possession of drugs for personal use (5%). Of drug offences that were detected by AGS, court proceedings are only available up to 2014. This is due to the length of time it takes to carry out an investigation to completion. These figures indicate that overall court proceedings increased by 6% between 2013 and 2014. An examination of drug supply offences by category demonstrates that the number of convictions implemented for importation of drugs was higher than the number of convictions implemented for cultivation or manufacture of drugs. For possession offences, convictions decreased between 2013 and 2014. However, this decrease was only evident in possession of drugs for personal use. In contrast, possession of drugs for sale or supply increased by 2%.

- Key drug supply-reduction activities

Ireland is very committed to reducing drug supply. The response by law enforcement is a key element in the recent national drugs strategy Reducing harm, supporting recovery: a health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017–2025 (Department of Health 2017b), An Garda Síochána Annual Policing Plan 2017 (An Garda Síochána 2017a), and An Garda Síochána Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy (An Garda Síochána 2017b). Both the national drugs strategy and the Policing Plan identify key actions for supply reduction.

A range of operations in the areas of drug interdiction, organised crime, policing communities, and reducing reoffending are being carried out in Ireland. Drug interdiction is carried out by Revenue

Commissioners Operational Intelligence Units and Maritime Units, both on a national and international level. A community-wide approach is used to tackle organised crime groups (OCGs), which include law enforcement, customs, business interests, and Government policy. Tackling drugs and organised crime, which is a central feature of AGS operations, resulted in the establishment of the Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau (GNDOCB) in 2015. The GNDOCB works alongside Divisional Drug Units (DDUs), community policing and the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) to target drugs. They also collaborate with the Revenue Commissioners Customs Service; the Health Products Regulatory Authority; the Irish Naval Service nationally and internationally, as well as with Europol and the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre. In addition, AGS works alongside the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to reduce cross-border criminal activity.

To address gangland crime, AGS have been implemented a range of operations. For example, under Operation Hybrid, numerous arrests have been made, firearms have been seized, lines of enquiry have been conducted, and visibility checkpoints have been carried out. Undercover test purchase operations have also been carried out to identify mid-range and low-level drug dealers. Drug-related intimidation has emerged as a key issue in Irish society and has resulted in the establishment of the National Drug Related Intimidation Reporting programme.

A number of agencies aim to address reoffending: for example, as part of the Irish Youth Justice Action Plan, interventions are being reviewed and strengthened. On the island of Ireland, there are Garda Youth Diversion Projects for juveniles and youth, as well as child detention schools that have youth advocacy programmes. The probation service prioritises positive behaviour and restorative practice.

## **1. National profile**

### **1.1 Drug market**

#### Cannabis

The domestic cultivation of cannabis herb emerged in Ireland in 2007 and, despite substantial interventions by law enforcement; it continues to be cultivated (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016). There are a number of reasons for this: first, sophisticated growing techniques are utilised, which result in the flowering tops of the female plant being highly potent (20% THC), making it more profitable. Another contributory factor is that start-up and running costs are low (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2015).

#### Synthetic drugs

In the main, synthetic drugs are not produced in Ireland (Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau (GNDOCB), personal communication). However, the synthetic drug market is continually changing; as highlighted in previous workbooks, pre-precursor (alphaphenylacetoacetonitrile [APAAN], Benzylcyanide) and precursors (PMK and BMK which are used in the manufacture of 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine [MDMA] and amphetamine) were detected in Ireland in 2013 (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016). More recently, four separate 'box labs' were detected in Youghal, Co Cork; Tralee, Co Kerry; Lusk, north Co Dublin and in Dublin 8, suggesting that methamphetamine was being produced albeit on a small scale (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016).

#### Tableting operations

Tableting of general illicit drugs does not really happen in Ireland (GNDOCB, 2017, personal communication). However, as reported in the 2016 National Report, there has been some evidence that Irish OCGs have participated in tableting pharmaceutical drugs; for example, drugs such as zopiclone, zolpidem or benzodiazepines have been obtained in powder form, and then used to produce tablets using specialised equipment (GNDOCB, 2016, personal communication). Tableting

machines, which have been mainly found in Irish grow houses, tend to be archaic and slow, when compared with those that are found elsewhere, for example, in the Netherlands. Irish law enforcement agencies do not view the process as chemical drug synthesis because all that occurs is that tablets and binding agents are pressed together (GNDOCB, personal communication, 2017).

### 1.1.2 Routes of trafficking

Although Ireland's long coastline is considered vulnerable to traffickers seeking less guarded routes to bring drugs to the United Kingdom and Europe (McDonald and Townsend 2007, 8 July), Ireland is mainly viewed as an end source and not as a transit country; therefore, it can be difficult to determine the origin of drugs (GNDOCB, 2017, personal communication). Nonetheless, the most recent crime and threat assessment report carried out by the PSNI and AGS in Ireland sheds some light on new developments in where drugs originate from, for example:

- Cannabis resin is mainly sourced from Morocco.
- Synthetic and semi-synthetics drugs are manufactured in the Netherlands.
- Heroin originates in Afghanistan and travels to Ireland via the Balkan routes.
- New psychoactive substances (NPS) are mainly sourced in China.
- Counterfeit medicines originate in India and Pakistan (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016)

Additionally, interdictions carried out by Irish law enforcement agencies such as the Revenue Customs Drug Law Enforcement Unit (CDLE), Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau (GNDOCB) of AGS, Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) and the Naval Service at a national and international level can provide useful information on the origin, and sometimes intended final destination within Ireland, of drugs being brought into the country (Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2017, personal communication). Operations can occur independently, but more often than not involve joint collaboration between agencies.

At a national level, in 2016, joint operations by Revenue's Customs Service, AGS, and/or the Health Products Regulatory Authority evaluated 223 joint controlled delivery operations, compared with 150 joint controlled deliveries evaluated in 2015. Arising from these evaluations, Revenue participated in 80 joint controlled deliveries in 2016, compared with 70 in 2015 (Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2017, personal communication).

In 2016, Revenue also continued its engagement at an international level with the EU Customs Cooperative Working Party (CCWP), the World Customs Organisation (WCO), Europol, and the European Multi-disciplined Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) and Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre-Narcotics (MAOC-N) in ongoing actions aimed at intercepting and preventing the trafficking of drugs, illicit medicines, new psychoactive substances and drug precursors (Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2017, personal communication).

During 2016, the Revenue Commissioners customs division participated in several significant national and international operations, including:

- Operation PANGAEA IX, which was an international World Customs Organisation (WCO)/Interpol operation targeting trade in illicit/counterfeit medicines and Internet pharmacies
- Three multiple joint EU regional maritime Customs operations focused on cocaine trafficking
- Operation Kiwi with New Zealand, focusing on drug precursors (ephedrine) trafficked from Ireland to New Zealand
- Operation Costalot II, a Europol and EMPACT-led operation focusing on cocaine smuggling from Central and South America
- Operation Mayflower – an operation with the UK, focused on cocaine transiting UK airports to Ireland from South America or Dubai
- Operation Postman, a UN - International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) operation on new psychoactive substances (NPS). This initiative supports national authorities' efforts to prevent non-scheduled NPS from reaching consumer markets.
- Operation WESTERLIES 4, a global (World Customs Operation (WCO) Joint Enforcement Operation against illicit trafficking in methamphetamine and narcotic drugs by air passengers.

Additional information can be gleaned from Revenue Commissioners press releases. Table 1.1.2.1 shows that drugs that were brought into Ireland originated in Europe (the Netherlands, Spain), Africa (south east, west), North America, and Canada, (Commissioners 2016). For the most part, drug traffickers travelled from Europe (Spain, France), South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates. The main mode of transport was by freight via Rosslare Europort or by plane via Dublin Airport. The bulk of products that arrived by plane were concealed in luggage. Another method that was also used was the postal system. A number of products were intercepted by post in controlled deliveries (see Table 1.1.2.1).

Table 1.1.2.2 is based on press releases by AGS and provides a summary of operations carried out independently and jointly by various Garda Síochána units, for example, GNDOCB, Special Crime Task Force, detective units, traffic divisions, dog units, uniformed community Gardaí, and drug divisional units (DDUs). Although operations were carried out across the island of Ireland, more than 50% of press releases reported that drugs were seized in the Dublin area. The estimated value of products ranged from €100 to €4 million. Products that were seized in offences related to the sale and supply of drugs by AGS are sent to Forensic Science Ireland (FSI) for analysis, and thus the estimated weight of products was only provided for a number of operations. Cocaine, heroin, and cannabis herb were the main drugs seized and were located mainly via house and premises search (see Table 1.2.2).

**Table 1.1.2.1 Origins, estimated value, estimated weight, concealment details of drugs that were brought into Ireland in 2016 seized in Joint operations with Inland Revenue**

Product type	Date	Estimated Weight/ No of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Nationality	Age	Seized at	Transit <sup>a</sup>	
									Consigned from <sup>b</sup>	Concealed or found in
									Manufactured <sup>c</sup>	
									Originated <sup>d</sup>	
									Departed from <sup>e</sup>	
Cocaine	11/01/16	2 kg	€140,000	Revenue Customs	Male	Brazilian	25	Dublin Airport	Barcelona <sup>a</sup>	Three cosmetic bottles in checked-in luggage
Cannabis herb	18/01/16	1.6 kg	€32,000	Revenue Customs Garda Síochána	Two males		32 46	Newcastle West, Limerick	Netherlands by freight <sup>a</sup>	
Cocaine	26/01/16	1.7 kg	€120,000	Revenue Customs Garda Síochána	Female	Guyana	44	Dublin Airport		Ingested 100 pellets
Benzodiazepine	01/02/16	10,500 tablets	€21,000	Revenue Customs HPRA	Male		59	Kileely, Limerick	Austria <sup>a</sup>	
Cannabis herb	17/02/16	4 kg	€80,000	Revenue Customs				Portlaoise Mail Centre for Dublin address	Southeast Africa <sup>b</sup>	Found by Detector dog Stella
Alprazolam	19/02/16	10,000 tablets	€20,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB	Male			Cork		
Cocaine	07/03/16	500 g	€35,000	Revenue Customs Garda Síochána	Female		38	Portlaoise, Co Laois		
Cocaine	10/03/16		€35,000	Revenue Officers GNDOCB	Male		32	Galway city		
Ecstasy tablets										

Product type	Date	Estimated Weight/ No of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Nationality	Age	Seized at	Transit <sup>a</sup>		
									Consigned from <sup>b</sup>	Concealed or found in	
								Manufactured <sup>c</sup>	Originated <sup>d</sup>	Departed from <sup>e</sup>	
MDMA powder											
Cannabis herb											
Cannabis resin	24/03/16		€14,000	Revenue Customs	Male	Spanish	50s	Dublin Airport		Seville <sup>a</sup>	Pellets ingested
					Female	Spanish	50s				
Cannabis herb	29/03/16	800 g	€12,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB Galway Drugs Unit	Male	Slovakian	40s	Galway city			House search
Cannabis herb	08/04/16	12 kg	€240,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB Roscrea Divisional Drugs Unit	Three males	Lithuanian	19 to 24	Roscrea, Co Tipperary		Spain <sup>d</sup>	Package intercepted at address in Roscrea
Cocaine	10/04/16	3.8kg	€250,000	Revenue Customs	Female	Portuguese	39	Dublin Airport		Dubai <sup>e</sup>	Carrying cocaine in three confectionery tins
Steroids	21/04/16	26,000 tablets  4,000 steroid ampules	€30,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB Divisional Drugs Unit HPRA	Two males	Irish  Irish	30s  40s	Dublin South Inner City			Premises searched

Product type	Date	Estimated Weight/ No of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Nationality	Age	Seized at	Transit <sup>a</sup>	Concealed or found in
									Consigned from <sup>b</sup>	
Cannabis resin	25/04/16	62 kg	€380,000	Revenue Customs	Male	Lithuanian	40	Rosslare Europort	France	Floor and boot of car – detector dog Ralph
Xanax	28/04/16	10,000 tablets	€20,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB						in a search
Cannabis herb	16/05/16	300 g	€6,000	Revenue Customs GDOCB DDU Galway	Two males	Irish	44 21	Galway	North America and Canada <sup>d</sup>	
Cannabis herb	26/05/16		€63,000	Revenue Customs Garda Síochána				Dundalk		Two houses searched
Cannabis resin										
Amphetamine	01/06/16	2 kg	€30,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB Gardaí at Blanchardstown	Two males		35 51	North Dublin	Poland <sup>d</sup>	Premises North Dublin
Cannabis herb	03/06/16	4.7 kg	€94,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB DDU Galway	Female	Irish	36	Galway	Cotonou, Benin in West Africa <sup>d</sup>	Concealed in dried fish

Product type	Date	Estimated Weight/ No of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Nationality	Age	Seized at	Transit <sup>a</sup>	
									Manufactured <sup>c</sup>	Originated <sup>d</sup>
Cannabis herb	25/06/16	215 kg	€4.3m	Revenue Customs				Rosslare Europort	France <sup>e</sup>	Consignment of frozen meat in unaccompanied container
Cocaine	27/06/16	11 kg	€750,000	Revenue Customs	Male	Irish	25	Dublin Airport		Sewn into back panel of four rucksacks in suitcase
Khat	04/07/16	42 kg	€21,000	Revenue Customs	Male	Dutch	45	Dublin Airport	Abu Dhabi <sup>e</sup>	Checked-in luggage
Khat	09/07/16	37 kg	€18,500	Revenue Customs	Female	Norwegian	23	Dublin Airport	Abu Dhabi <sup>e</sup>	Checked-in luggage
Diazepam	11/07/16	5,000 tablets	€10,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB	Male		29	Waterford		House search
Alprazolam		50 g		DDU Waterford	Female		28			
Cannabis resin				HPRA						
Cannabis herb	14/07/16	18 kg	€360,000	Revenue Customs				Portlaoise Mail Centre	South Africa and Nigeria <sup>b</sup>	Three parcels sent to addresses in Dublin - Detector dog
Diazepam	13/07/16	3,000 tablets	€6,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB	Male		20	Co Donegal		House search
Ecstasy	14/07/16	10,000 tablets	€140,000	Revenue Customs GDOCB	Male		36	Cahir, Co Tipperary		House search

Product type	Date	Estimated Weight/ No of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Nationality	Age	Seized at	Transit <sup>a</sup>	
									Consigned from <sup>b</sup>	Concealed or found in
									Manufactured <sup>c</sup>	Originated <sup>d</sup>
									Departed from <sup>e</sup>	
Ecstasy	14/07/16	10,000 tablets	€140,000	Revenue Customs GCOCB	Female		19	Co Cork		House search
Cocaine	25/07/16	17 kg	€1.2m	Revenue Customs	Male	Irish	50s	Rosslare Europort		Side panel of Irish-registered truck Detector dog Ralph
Cannabis herb	05/08/16	250 g	€5,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB DDU Galway	Two males		23 23	Galway		House search
Cannabis herb	02/10/16	7.2 kg	€144,000	Revenue Customs	Male	Bulgarian	31	Dublin Airport	Alicante <sup>e</sup>	Checked-in luggage
Amphetamine (Liquid)	07/10/16	3.75 kg	€200,000	Revenue Customs	Two males		51 43	Dublin		House search
Cocaine		2 kg					46			
Cannabis herb	07/10/16	20.8 kg	€416,000	Revenue Customs	Male	Irish	33	Rosslare Europort	Cherbourg, France <sup>e</sup>	Cattle truck search – detector dog Ralph
Cannabis herb	13/10/16	10 kg	€206,000	Revenue Officers GNIB	Male	Malaysian	50	Dublin Airport	Madrid, Spain <sup>e</sup>	Checked-in luggage

Product type	Date	Estimated Weight/ No of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Nationality	Age	Seized at	Transit <sup>a</sup>	
									Consigned from <sup>b</sup>	Manufactured <sup>c</sup> Originated <sup>d</sup> Departed from <sup>e</sup>
		4 kg		Revenue Customs				North Dublin		
				GDOCB						
Cannabis herb	14/10/16	6 kg	€200,000	Revenue Customs	Male		37	Co Limerick		House search
Cocaine		1.2 kg		GDOCB						
				DDU Limerick and Detective Units						
Cannabis herb	16/10/16	60 kg	€4m	Revenue National Profiling Centre and Revenue Customs in Border Midlands and West region				Border Midlands West Region		Vehicle importing plant machinery
Cocaine										
MDMA		33 kg								
Ecstasy		2.2 kg								
		72,000 tablets								
Cocaine	24/10/16	75 kg	€5m	Revenue Customs and assistance from general public via "Customs Drugs Watch Programme"				Co Clare	Not known	Torpedo-type device which may have been attached below waterline of a cargo ship/maritime vessel
Cannabis herb	27/10/16		€1m	Revenue Customs				South County Dublin		Warehouse search Detector dog Meg

Product type	Date	Estimated Weight/ No of tablets	Estimated value: in excess of	Investigators	Suspects	Nationality	Age	Seized at	Transit <sup>a</sup>	
									Consigned from <sup>b</sup>	Concealed or found in
									Manufactured <sup>c</sup>	Originated <sup>d</sup>
									Departed from <sup>e</sup>	
Cannabis resin	01/11/16	150 kg	€900,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB				South County Dublin		Detector dog Meg Warehouse search
Cannabis herb	09/12/16	12 kg	€240,000	Revenue Customs GNDOCB	Male		60	Co Dublin		
Cannabis herb	16/12/16	143 kg	€2.8m	GNDOCB	Male		36	County Cavan		
					Female		50			
					Male		46			

### 1.1.3 Contextual information on trafficking

#### *Range and relative importance of different products*

The nature, structure, and organisation of the illicit drug markets in Ireland was examined over a three-year period (2008–2010) by Connolly and Donovan (Connolly J and Donovan A M 2014). Four local drug markets were included: two urban, one suburban and one rural drug market (anonymised as A–D). Although cannabis was shown to be the main drug supplied, heroin, crack cocaine and prescription drugs could also be obtained at different levels across all locations surveyed. Further information on this study can be found in the Drugs and Crime workbook 2015 (Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2016). To date, no other study provides contextual information on trafficking in Ireland. However, figures from the FSI in 2015 (Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2016) indicate that the most prominent drugs seized in Ireland were cannabis herb, heroin, cocaine, followed by MDMA, cannabis resin and plants; diazepam, and alprazolam (Forensic Science Ireland [FSI], 2016, personal communication).

#### *Size of transactions*

As shown in Table 1.1.2.1 and 1.1.2.2, it is estimated that the size of transactions ranged from a minimum of 500 g to 215 kg for powders, whereas the number of tablets transactions ranged from 3,000 to 26,000.

#### *Smuggling methods*

As shown in Table in 1.1.2.1 and 1.1.2.2, drugs were smuggled into Ireland via:

- Airports – products were transported in two ways, either concealed in luggage in the lining or in items stored in luggage, such as dried fish, confectionary tins or cosmetic bottles, or ingested as pellets by the offender.
- Ports – drugs were concealed in the floor or boot of a car, unaccompanied container of frozen meat, cattle truck, and a vehicle importing plant machinery.
- Via the postal network – drugs were concealed in packages.

In addition to the main ports, Ireland has an extensive coastline which is frequently used to bring drugs into the country. In October 2016, drugs were found on the Clare Coastline in a torpedo-type device that may have been attached below the waterline of a cargo ship or other maritime vessel. The common travel area between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland is also vulnerable to criminality via hauliers who, knowingly and sometimes unknowingly, transport drugs between both locations (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016).

#### *Organisation*

The Irish drug market is widely dispersed around the island of Ireland and impacts on urban, suburban, and rural communities (Connolly and Buckley 2016). The main players that profit the most are OCGs of various nationalities; for example, Irish, Chinese, Vietnamese and eastern OCGs profit the most (GNDOCB, 2017, personal communication). However, there is also evidence to suggest that individual entrepreneur networks which started small are prospering GNDOCB, 2017, personal communication. Criminal networks have also been shown to exist in suburban areas: for example, a recent Irish study, *Lifting the lid on Greentown* by Dr Sean Redmond at the University of Limerick, found that a hierarchical criminal network consisting of one individual (A2) and his family had a negative impact on associates, clients and residents in a suburban estate (Further details on this study can be found in section 4.1).

### 1.1.4 Wholesale drug and precursor market

Table 1.1.4.1 shows drug prices based on the current market value of controlled drugs in October 2016 for the wholesale drug market. No change occurred between 2015 and 2016. Prices are determined using a number of sources (GNDOCB, 2017, personal communication). The most credible approach is via test purchase operations, where Gardaí buy drugs in undercover work. The second approach is via intelligence which is drawn from covert intelligence sources. The third is to

evaluate and compare the experiences of drug units' nationwide using self-report surveys. Based on all three sources, plus the experience of officers in drug policing, prices are calculated systematically (GNDOCB, 2017, personal communication). This method has illustrated that prices vary at different times, for example, a gram of cannabis in Ennis, Co Clare would be different to that purchased in Ballyfermot, Dublin.

**Table 1.1.4.1 Drug prices based on current market value of controlled drugs for the wholesale market, October 2016**

Drug	Category	Per kilo
Alprazolam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Amphetamine	Phenethylamine	€15,000
AM2201	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000
AMT	Tryptamine	€200,000
Benzylpiperazine	Piperazine	€50,000
Butylone	Cathinone	€50,000
BKMBDB	Cathinone	€50,000
Bromazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Cannabis resin	Cannabis	€6,000
Cannabis herb	Cannabis	€20,000
Cannabis plants*	Cannabis	N/A
Cocaine	Cocaine	€70,000
Chlordiazepoxide	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Clobazam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Clonazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
CPP	Piperazine	€50,000
Diamorphine	Heroin	€140,000
Dimethylone	Cathinone	€50,000
Diazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
DMT	Tryptamine	€200,000
DMAA	Phenethylamine	€60,000
Ethcathinone	Cathinone	€50,000
Ethylone	Cathinone	€50,000
Flephedrone	Cathinone	€50,000
Fluorotropacocaine	NPS	€50,000
Fluroamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€15,000
Flunitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Flurazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
GHB	Solvent	€1,000 litre
GBL	Solvent	€1,000 litre
JWH 018	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000
JWH 073	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000
JWH 250	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000
Ketamine	Hallucinogen	€60,000
Khat	Hallucinogen	€500
LSD	Acid/Hallucinogen	N/A
Lysergamide	Hallucinogen	€20,000
Lorazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Lormetazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
MAM 2201	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000
MBZP	Piperazine	€50,000
MCPP	Piperazine	€50,000
MDMA	Phenethylamine	€60,000
MDEA	Phenethylamine	€60,000
MDA	Phenethylamine	€60,000
MDPBP	Cathinone	€50,000
MDPV	Cathinone	€50,000
MEC	Cathinone	€50,000
Methadone	Opiate	N/A
Mephedrone	Cathinone	€50,000
Methylone	Cathinone	€50,000
Methedrone	Cathinone	€50,000
Methylamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€60,000
Methoxyamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€60,000
Methoxetamine	Hallucinogen	€60,000

Drug	Category	Per kilo
Methylphenidate	Phenethylamine	€60,000
Mirtazapine	Benzodiazepine	N/A
MMC	Cathinone	€50,000
Naphyrone	Cathinone	€50,000
Nitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Pentedrone	Cathinone	€50,000
Phentermine	Phenethylamine	€60,000
Phenazepam (not controlled)	Benzodiazepine	N/A
PMA	Phenethylamine	€60,000
PMMA	Phenethylamine	€60,000
Prazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Psilocin	Hallucinogen	€10,000
Psilocybin	Hallucinogen	€10,000
PVP	Cathinone	€50,000
RCS4	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000
Salvinorin A	Hallucinogen	€20,000
STS 135	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000
Temazepam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
Triazolam	Benzodiazepine	N/A
UR144	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000
Zolpidem	Sleeping agent	N/A
Zopiclone (not controlled)	Sleeping agent	N/A
2CB	Phenethylamine	€60,000
2CE	Phenethylamine	€60,000
2CI	Phenethylamine	€60,000
25INBOME	Hallucinogen	N/A
5AKB48 (not controlled)	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20,000

Source: (Garda Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau, 2017, personal communication)

\*Cannabis plants are valued based on the potential yield of the plant. An actual market value can only be applied when plants are fully mature and ready for sale. Charges contrary to Section 15A of the Misuse of Drugs Act (as amended) are not applied for in relation to nursery plants or plants that are not fully mature.

## Adulterants

The FSI laboratory analyses drugs seized by the Gardaí. Due to problems with reliability of equipment used to calculate “quants” for diamorphine, cocaine, and amphetamines, the FSI is currently unable to provide figures for 2016. Further information on data from 4 April, 2013 to 15 December, 2015, can be found in Section T1.1.4, Drugs and Crime workbook in the 2016 National Report (Health Research Board. Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2017)

## Nature and organisation of buyers, sellers and intermediaries

The main organisations running drug markets in Ireland are OCGs. The most recent available data available from cross-border reports indicated that 28 Irish OCGs have recently taken part in drug-related criminal behaviour, such as, buying and importing drugs in Northern Ireland, for example, heroin, cocaine, and cannabis (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016). These OCGs are known to be operating internationally in countries such as Spain, Holland, and the UK. In relation to cannabis, foreign OCGs, such as Chinese and Eastern European criminal groups, have been unable to maintain the monopoly on the cultivation market, including drugs, human trafficking and counterfeiting (An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland 2016). Notably, due to the high demand for drugs in Ireland, drug trafficking is deemed the most profitable (GNDOCB, 2016, personal communication).

### 1.1.5 Retail drug market

#### Range and relative importance of different products

Seizure records for illicit drugs in Ireland provide the best source of the range and relative importance of different drugs on the Irish retail market. The FSI laboratory analyses all drugs seized for supply offences by Gardaí. Based on FSI records, Table 1.1.5.1 lists in descending order by value the illicit drugs associated with cases being investigated by AGS. Clearly, the drug with the highest importance is cannabis herb, followed by cocaine, cannabis plants and diamorphine (An

Garda Siochana 2017c). When interpreting this table, it is important to note that a number of drug cases for 2016 have not yet been analysed by FSI; therefore, the figures provided here are provisional, operational, and subject to change as of April 21, 2017.

**Table 1.1.5.1 Quantities of illicit drugs analysed by FSI, and associated Garda cases, 2016**

Category	Grams/Mls/Plant	Tbls/Sqr/Caps	Value €
Cannabis herb	479,695	–	9,593,907
Cocaine	91,016	–	6,371,150
Cannabis plants*	7,273	–	5,818,247
Diamorphine	38,386	–	5,374,033
Phenethylamines**	24,051	30,257	1,556,257
Cannabis resin	59,089	–	354,533
Hallucinogen	3,990	1,128	238,335
Cathinones	3,619	–	180,940
Benzodiazepine	1,364	74,122	135,686
Mixing agents	83218	340	41,609
Sleeping tablet	–	16,070	32,140
Piperazine	97	30	4,993
Solvents	2,961	–	2,961
Opioids other	3,087	192	617
Other	117	3,521	347
Synthetic cannabinoids	15	–	303
Anabolic steroids	63	371	223
		Total value	29,706,281

Source: Adapted from the AGS Annual Report 2016 (AGS 2017, p.56) \* Cannabis plant figures were extracted from PULSE as not all plants are sent to FSI for analysis; \*\* Phenethylamines include ecstasy (MDMA) and other related drugs.

### Drug prices

Table 1.1.5.2 shows drug prices based on the current retail market value of controlled drugs in October 2016 for the retail drug market. No change occurred between 2015 and 2016. The method used to describe how prices were calculated is set out in Table 1.1.4.

**Table 1.1.5.2 Drug prices based on current retail market value of controlled drugs, October 2016**

Drug	Category	Per gram/tablet
Alprazolam	Benzodiazepine	€2 per tablet
Amphetamine	Phenethylamine	€15 per gram
AM2201	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
AMT	Tryptamine	€200 per gram
Benzylpiperazine	Piperazine	€5 tablet/€50 gram
Butylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
BKMBDB	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Bromazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Cannabis resin	Cannabis	€6 per gram
Cannabis herb	Cannabis	€20 per gram
Cannabis plants*	Cannabis	€800
Cocaine	Cocaine	€70 per gram
Chlordiazepoxide	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Clobazam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Clonazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
CPP	Piperazine	€5 per tablet/€50 gram
Diamorphine	Heroin	€140 per gram
Dimethylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Diazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
DMT	Tryptamine	€200 per gram
DMAA	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram
Ethcathinone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Ethylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Flephedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Fluorotropacocaine	NPS	€50 per gram
Fluroamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€15 per gram
Flunitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Flurazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
GHB	Solvent	€1 per millilitre
GBL	Solvent	€1 per millilitre
JWH 018	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
JWH 073	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram

Drug	Category	Per gram/tablet
JWH 250	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
Ketamine	Hallucinogen	€60 per gram
Khat	Hallucinogen	€0.50 per gram
LSD	Acid/Hallucinogen	€10 per tablet
Lysergamide	Hallucinogen	€20 per gram
Lorazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Lormetazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
MAM 2201	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
MBZP	Piperazine	€5 tablet/€50 gram
MCPP	Piperazine	€5 tablet/€50 gram
MDMA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
MDEA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
MDA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
MDPBP	Cathinone	€50 gram
MDPV	Cathinone	€50 gram
MEC	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Methadone	Opiate	€20 per 100 ml
Mephedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Methylone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Methedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Methylamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram
Methoxyamphetamine	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram
Methoxetamine	Hallucinogen	€60 per gram
Methylphenidate	Phenethylamine	€60 per gram
Mirtazapine	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
MMC	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Naphyrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Nitrazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Pentedrone	Cathinone	€50 per gram
Phentermine	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
Phenazepam (not controlled)	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
PMA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
PMMA	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
Prazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Psilocin	Hallucinogen	€10 per gram
Psilocybin	Hallucinogen	€10 per gram
PVP	Cathinone	€50 per gram
RCS4	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
Salvinorin A	Hallucinogen	€20 per gram
STS 135	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
Temazepam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
Triazolam	Benzodiazepine	€1 per tablet
UR144	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram
Zolpidem	Sleeping agent	€2 per tablet
Zopiclone (not controlled)	Sleeping agent	€2 per tablet
2CB	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
2CE	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
2CI	Phenethylamine	€10 tablet/€60 gram
25INBOME	Hallucinogen	€10 per tablet
5AKB48 (not controlled)	Synthetic cannabinoid	€20 per gram

Source: (Garda Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau, 2016, personal communication)

\*Cannabis plants are valued based on the potential yield of the plant. An actual market value can only be applied when plants are fully mature and ready for sale. Charges contrary to Section 15A of the Misuse of Drugs Act (as amended) are not applied for in relation to nursery plants or plants that are not fully mature.

## Purity of drugs seized and pack sizes

Data for pack sizes and purity of drugs seized are obtained from FSI. The FSI are currently having operational issues, hence no new data is available. See Section 1.1.5, Drugs and Crime workbook, 2016 National Report for the most recent information for diamorphine and cocaine (Health Research Board. Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2017).

## 1.2 Drug related crime

### 1.2.1 Court outcomes for drug offences

Data regarding drug law offences are provided by Court Service and the Irish Prison Service via their annual reports.

## Court outcomes for drug offences

The Courts Service Annual Report 2016 presented statistics for prosecutions for drug offences between January and December 2016 (Courts Service 2017). Notably, data provided are for overall drug law offences. The Courts Service does not distinguish between the different supply offences or possession/use offences (Courts Service, 2017, personal communication).

### District Court

In most cases, prosecutions for drug offences are carried out in the District Court, which is the lowest court in the Irish legal system. Overall, 13,127 orders were made in relation to drug offences, which represented a 6% increase since 2015 (12,310) and involved 13,033 defendants (see Table 1.2.1.1).

**Table 1.2.1.1 Sentences for drug offences in the District Court, 2016**

Incoming		Resolved: offences		
Offences	Defendants*	a) Summary	b) Indictable dealt with summarily	Sent forward for trial
20746	13033	505	12622	1576

Source: (Courts Service 2016)

\*There may be more than one offence brought against a defendant.

**Table 1.2.1.2 Summary and indictable offences: outcomes in District Court, 2016**

	Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp/Det	Susp	Other	Total
Summary offences: outcomes	30	129	93	67	10	1	16	59	32	19	52	508
Indictable offences dealt with summarily: outcomes	324	3076	1382	2234	53	7	288	1731	323	485	1899	11802

Note. Dis = Dismiss; S/O = strike out; TIC = taken into consideration; Disq = disqualified; C/S = community service; Prob. = probation; Imp/Det = imprisonment or detention; Susp = suspended sentence

### Juvenile crime

The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years (Section 52 Children Act 2001, as amended by Section 129 Criminal Justice Act 2006). Generally, children are aged between 15 and 17 years when they come before the courts. The total number of orders that were made in respect of drug offences in the Children's Court was 194 (Courts Service 2017), which represented a 0.5% decrease since 2015 (n = 195), (Courts Service 2017).

**Table 1.2.1.3 Juvenile crime outcomes in 2017**

Dis	S/O	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Imp/Det	Susp	Other	Total
8	48	56	14	2			39	4	1	22	194

Note. Dis = Dismiss; S/O = strike out; TIC = taken into consideration; Disq = disqualified; C/S = community service; Prob. = probation; Imp/Det = imprisonment or detention; Susp = suspended sentence

Source: (Courts Service 2017).

### Circuit Court

The Circuit Court heard cases for 434 defendants that involved 1,576 drug offences. Out of 951 guilty pleas, which represented a 31% decrease from 2015 (1,307), there were 31 convictions and 19 acquittals (see Table 1.2.1.4). Trials resulted in 191 imprisonments and 197 suspended sentences (see Table 1.2.15) (Courts Service 2017).

**Table 1.2.1.4 Sentences for drug offences in the Circuit Court in 2016**

Incoming		Resolved: offences						
Offences	Defendants*	Guilty	Trials		NP	TIC	Quash	Dec
			Convicted	Acquitted				
1576	473	951	31	19	567	48	0	11

Note. Guilty = guilty pleas; NP = Nolle prosequi; TIC = taken into consideration non-conviction; Quash – quash return for trial; Dec = accused deceased

\*There may be more than one offence brought against a defendant

Source: (Courts Service 2017).

**Table 1.2.1.5 Offence outcomes following conviction in the Circuit Court in 2016**

Offence outcomes following conviction	Imp/									
	TIC	Fine	Bond	Disq	C/S	Prob	Det	Susp	Other	Total
	94	7	242	0	12	33	191	197	239	1015

Note. TIC = taken into consideration; Disq = disqualified; C/S = community service; Prob. = probation; Imp/Det = imprisonment or detention; Susp = suspended sentence

Source: (Courts Service 2017)

### Appeals (from District Court)

In 2016, 267 appeals, representing 492 offences from the District Court, were dealt with in the Circuit Court (Courts Service 2017). This represented an increase of 12% since 2015 (appeals = 451; defendants = 239). Table 1.2.1.6 shows a breakdown of resolved offences.

**Table 1.2.1.6 Appeals from District Court, 2016**

Incoming		Resolved: offences				
Off	Def	Aff	Varied	Rev	S/O	S/O N/A
492	267	93	240	40	81	52

Note. Off = offences; Def = defendants; Aff = affirmed; rev = reversed; S/O = struck out; S/O N/A = struck out no appearance

Source: (Courts Service 2017).

### Court of Appeal

Overall, the number of appeals that were lodged for drug/misuse of drugs offences decreased between 2015 (66) and 2016 (49) and 78 appeals were resolved, which was lower than the number resolved in 2015 (88) (Courts Service 2017).

### Prison committals for drug offences

The IPS annual report for 2016 provided statistics on the number of persons in custody under sentence (i.e. not on remand) on a given day in the year (30 November) and also on the number of committals under sentence, by sentence length (Irish Prison Service 2017). On 30 November 2016, the number of those in custody for controlled drug offences comprised 11.37% (350/3,077) of the total prison population. This figure represented a less than 1% decrease since 2015 (378/3,150). Of those in custody for drug offences, 171 were under sentence of five years or more; of these, 57 were under sentence of 10 years or longer. 32 prisoners were under sentence of 12 months or less (Irish Prison Service 2017).

Between 2015 and 2016, the number of committals for drug offences decreased by 17% (136), from 807 (2015) to 671 (2016). Of the 671 committals to prison during 2016, 373 were for sentences of three months or less (Irish Prison Service 2017).

A possible explanation for disparities in the proportion of short sentences between those committed to prison and those under sentence at the end of November 2016 is that the same offender may have been committed to prison a number of times during the year.

### 1.3 Drug supply reduction activities

#### 1.3.1 Drug supply reduction

The law enforcement response to drug trafficking is an important component of the new national drugs strategy 'Reducing harm, supporting recovery: a health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017–2025' (Department of Health 2017b) and the Garda Síochána Annual Plan 2017 (An Garda Síochána 2017a).

##### Reducing harm, supporting recovery 2017–2025

The new strategy (Department of Health 2017b), which aims to provide an integrated public health approach to drug and alcohol use, focused on promoting healthier lifestyles within society, was launched on 17 July 2017. It consists of five Goals and aims to target a 50-point Action Plan from 2017 to 2020. Key actions for supply reduction have been set out in Goal 3 and include:

- Provide a comprehensive and responsive misuse of drugs control framework which ensures the proper control, management and regulation of the supply of drugs
- Implement effective law enforcement and supply-reduction strategies and actions to prevent, disrupt or otherwise reduce the availability of illicit drugs
- Develop effective monitoring and responses to evolving trends, public health threats and the emergence of new drug markets.

The new initiative proposed by the Minister for Health and the Minister of State for Health Promotion and the a national drugs strategy were welcomed by the Taoiseach, who pledged that the Government would work to build a 'Republic of Opportunity' that means something in people's lives as it applies to all, in particular for those that have not had opportunities in the past (Department of Health 2017a). Further information on the new strategy can be found in section 4.2 of the Policy workbook.

##### *An Garda Síochána Annual Policing Plan 2017*

The 2017 Garda Síochána annual policing plan sets out the strategic priorities for AGS as determined by the Minister for Justice and Equality under Section 20 of the Garda Síochána Act 2005 (An Garda Síochána 2017a). An important aspect of this plan is that priorities and performance targets were set in consultation with the Policing Authority, which will monitor how targets are delivered. The plan centres on five areas:

- National and International Security, which includes enhancing intelligence systems to inform decision-making, and building relationships with national and international security and law enforcement partners
- Confronting crime, by targeting OCGs and individuals involved in criminality via intelligence-led operations – for example, carrying out more targeted operations against OCGs
- Roads policing, with the aim of making roads safer via high visibility, working with other agencies to reduce road deaths and injuries, and the use by criminals of the road network
- Community engagement and public safety, with the aim of reducing fear of crime and increasing satisfaction with service provided.
- Organisational development and capacity improvement, the TRUST modernisation and renewal programme 2016–2021, was launched in 2016 and sets out the mission, direction, plans and challenges and aims to reform AGS and create a modern, professional and accountable service (An Garda Síochána 2015).

Although drugs are only mentioned by name in the confronting crime section, it is implied in all areas (An Garda Síochána 2017a).

##### An Garda Síochána crime prevention and reduction strategy

The Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2017 (An Garda Síochána 2017b) draws on UN guidelines (United Nations Economic and Social Council 2002) and complements the policing and security sections of the Modernisation and Renewal Programme 2016–2021 (An Garda Síochána 2015). The strategy is underpinned by a problem-solving approach that is based on a strong evidence base. The National Crime Prevention Unit and Divisional Crime Prevention Officers are critical to its successful implementation in Ireland. The strategy is centred on four pillars:

- Building strategic crime prevention capacity
- Operating a professional crime prevention service via partnership and collaboration with communities
- Implementing customised crime prevention approaches with communities
- Communicating crime prevention messages to the public

#### **a) Areas of activity of supply reduction**

The following account describes the range of operations in the areas of drug interdiction, organised crime, policing communities, and reducing reoffending. The account is drawn from information published in the reporting period (August 2014–August 2017) on the websites and in the annual reports of the key agencies involved in supply-reduction activities, and in responses to Parliamentary Questions.

#### ***Drug interdiction***

The Revenue Commissioners *Operational Intelligence Unit*<sup>1</sup> gathers data with a view to identifying possible drug smuggling routes into Ireland via passenger and cargo traffic, analysing the movement of persons and goods on those routes, and profiling, targeting and routine surveillance of suspect persons or consignments. Many drug seizures result from profiling techniques based on risk analysis. The Operational Intelligence Unit transmits intelligence and details of suspect traffic to the local *operational units*, whose functions include the examination of suspect passengers' baggage and freight consignments, the search of suspect persons, vehicles, vessels, pleasure craft, aircraft, etc. and the transmission of information to the Operational Intelligence Unit for further action.

The Revenue Commissioners *Maritime Unit*, based in Cork, is equipped with rigid inflatable boats and two Revenue Commissioners Customs cutters tasked with the prevention, detection, interception and seizure of controlled drugs, fiscal goods, arms/ammunition/explosives, prohibited and restricted goods, smuggled or illegally imported into, or intended to be exported out of, Ireland/the EU. When not engaged in operational duties, Maritime Unit personnel are involved in coastal intelligence work.

*Drug detector dog units* are deployed by the Revenue Commissioners Customs Service at strategic locations throughout the country, including ports and airports. The Customs Drugs Watch Programme, launched in 1994, encourages those living in coastal communities, maritime personnel and people living near airfields to report unusual occurrences to the Customs Service.

Drug-related cash seizures are undertaken by the Customs Service under Section 38 of the Criminal Justice Act, 1994,<sup>2</sup> as amended by Section 20 of the Proceeds of Crime (Amendment) Act 2005 (see Section T1.1.4 Legal workbook).<sup>3</sup> The majority of drug-related cash seizures are carried out when attempts are made to export from the State, but increasingly, seizures are also being made at the point of import and inland. These seizures continue to have a major impact on the activities of both national and international drug traffickers. Investigations are carried out throughout the EU and worldwide following a drug-related cash seizure. Cash forfeited under this Act is transferred for the benefit of the Exchequer.

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<sup>1</sup> Downloaded from: (<http://www.revenue.ie/en/customs/customs-drugs-watch-law-enforcement.html>)

<sup>2</sup> Section 38 of Criminal Justice Act 1994 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1994/act/15/enacted/en/html?q=Criminal+Justice+Act>

<sup>3</sup> Section 20 Proceeds of Crime Amendment Act 2005, available at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/1/section/20/enacted/en/html>

In addition, the Revenue Commissioners Customs Service also participated in a range of fora related to organised crime and drug smuggling that aim to reduce supply and demand including:

- The Europol-led EMPACT programme against organised crime is Europol's platform for tackling heroin and cocaine along with other crimes, such as excise fraud, MTIC (missing trader intra-community) or carousel fraud, and IPR (intellectual property rights) fraud. Working alongside AGS, Revenue Customs managed its EMPACT commitments with regard to cocaine, heroin and synthetic drugs, and participated in two operational annual plans dealing with cocaine and synthetic substances; it also co-led an action on cocaine – see Operation Costalot II at section T1.1.2
- The Pompidou Group's core mission is to contribute to the development of multidisciplinary, innovative, effective and evidence-based drug policies in EU member states. In addition, the Pompidou Group undertakes a bridging role both between EU member states, non-EU European countries and neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean region.
- The World Customs Organisation led joint Customs operations on medicines, munitions, dual-use goods and narcotics.
- A cross-border seminar on organised crime with AGS, the PSNI, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and the UK National Crime Agency (Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2017, personal communication).

Revenue also participated in various subgroups, including the National Coordinating Committee (for the drugs and alcohol regional task forces) and the International Drug Issue Group (IDIG), which was established during Ireland's EU Presidency. The IDIG collates the overall picture of the international drugs issues relevant to Ireland in advance of the Department of Health's and the Department of Justice's attendance at the United Nation's Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) (Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2017, personal communication).

### ***Organised crime***

Europol has identified the need for a community-wide approach to tackling organised crime groups (OCGs), including law enforcement, Customs, business interests and Government policy (Fitzgerald F 2015). A core focus of the work carried out by AGS is aimed at tackling drugs and organised crime (Fitzgerald F 2016, 20 July). In order to do this effectively, the GNCOCB, was established in 2015 (see section entitled An Garda Síochána), and continues to lead the way in tackling the demand and supply reduction of drugs, working with Divisional Drug Units and the CAB (Fitzgerald 2017, 30 March). A multidisciplinary approach is viewed as essential in order to target OCGs effectively via legislation such as Proceeds of Crime (see Section 2.1, Legal workbook) and the powers of the CAB (Fitzgerald 2017, 30 March). Moreover, numerous strategic partnerships are in place both nationally and internationally, and include the Revenue Commissioners Customs Service, Health Products Regulatory Authority, the Irish Naval Service, Europol, Interpol and the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics in Lisbon (Fitzgerald F 2016, 20 July).

Cross-border cooperation between AGS and the PSNI has been excellent over the years (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2016). The most recent strategy has updated a range of policing areas: operations, rural policing, community relations, intelligence sharing, ICT, service improvement, and emergency planning; this will allow drugs, organised crime and a range of other crimes to be tackled (Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Síochána 2016).

### ***Policing communities***

Drug-related crime in the form of gangland violence became a serious problem in Dublin as a result of the ongoing feud between two criminal gangs ((Health Research Board. Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2017)). To date, the response is

ongoing (Flanagan 2017, 12 July). The response in Dublin is coordinated under Operation Hybrid. As of 18 May 2017, there have been:

- 56 arrests in relation to gang-related killings
- Five persons charged in connection with those murders and a further three persons charged with related offences
- 26 firearms have been seized
- Over 11,900 lines of enquiry conducted
- More than 31,550 high-visibility checkpoints have been implemented, with significant support from Armed Support Units and a significant amount of CCTV footage, mobile phone traffic, and forensic evidence is also being examined.

Operation Hybrid is reviewed on a weekly basis in order to maintain optimal impact. Collaboration between law enforcement in Ireland and Spain and the Netherlands resulted in arrest and seizures (Flanagan 2017, 12 July).

Test purchase operations by gardaí target mid-range and low-level drug dealers nationwide. The most recent available data are from 2014; using this tactical measure, 55 dealers were arrested in respect of 251 criminal offences (An Garda Síochána 2015).

Drug-related intimidation and violence: Drug-related intimidation and violence is an area of major concern for Irish communities and it has been shown to affect the physical, mental and emotional well-being of victims (Connolly and Buckley 2016). Further details on this study can be found in Section T1.3.1, Drugs and Crime workbook, 2016 National Report (Health Research Board. Irish National Focal Point to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction 2017).

The *National Drug Related Intimidation Reporting Programme* was developed by AGS with the aim of addressing the needs of drug users and family members who are subjected to drug-related intimidation. This programme fulfils criteria put forward the most recent national drugs strategy 2017-2025 - Goal 4, Objective 4.1. "Strengthen the resilience of communities and build their capacity to respond" (Department of Health 2017b) (see Policy workbook for further information).

Primarily, responsibility for responding to the issue of drug-related intimidation has been given to one Inspector in every Garda Division. Inspectors are at management level and are chosen by the Garda Commissioner for their expertise, knowledge and extensive experience. They liaise directly with their local Superintendent in relation to each individual case. Anyone requiring help from an Inspector in their area can make contact to arrange a formal or informal meeting. AGS is the lead agency working alongside the National Family Support Network (NFSN). Additional details of the operation of this programme are provided on the websites of both AGS and the National Family Support Network at [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie) and [www.fsn.ie](http://www.fsn.ie).

### ***Reducing reoffending***

Reducing reoffending is addressed via a number of agencies, for example, the Irish Youth Justice Service, the IPS, AGS, and the Probation office.

As part of the *Youth Justice Action Plan 2014–2018*, Goal 3 aimed to review and strengthen targeted interventions to reduce offending. In addition, as part of Goal 2, Objective 9 aimed to 'profile substance misuse among young people subject to community sanctions/probation service supervision' (Irish Youth Justice Service 2014). At the launch of the progress report, Minister Stanton stated that 'significant progress was made by the various criminal justice agencies and Tusla in 2014 and 2015 in implementing actions set out in the plan' independently and via interagency work (Department of Children Youth Affairs 2016). For example:

- AGS established 10 Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs) in locations that were identified as higher risk. For a description of the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme (GJDP) and the Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDPs), see section T2.2 in the Legal Framework workbook. TAG (Teenagers and Gardaí) was rolled out in 2015 in Dublin and the Garda Schools Programme and mentoring initiatives were delivered to primary and secondary schools nationally.
- Child detention schools: youth advocacy programmes, pro-social development programme for pre-release children as a crime prevention support
- Probation services prioritised pro-social modelling behaviour, motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioural approaches, and restorative practice interventions. They also examined drug and alcohol abuse among probationers, which included children and young people, 89% of whom reported a current or a previous addiction problem (Department of Health 2016). The prevalence of substance misuse was associated with peak age of offending behaviour, which suggests that addiction may be a risk factor (Department of Health 2016).

In addition, the probation service aims to reduce the likelihood of reoffending and risk of harm to the public. It utilises risk assessment to determine the likelihood of reoffending and causing harm. Based on the outcome of the risk assessment, appropriate support and assistance is provided (Probation Service 2017)

#### **b) Organisational structures/coordinating bodies**

As reported in previous workbooks, responsibility for the prevention of drug trafficking rests primarily with the Revenue Commissioners Customs Division, whereas responsibility for the prevention of drug-related crime in within Ireland rests primarily with AGS. In addition to the exchange of information between the Customs Drugs Law Enforcement Head Office and the Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau, which is part of AGS, nation-wide liaison also takes place at local level between nominated Customs officers and Garda officers. Other State agencies engaged in supporting supply-reduction activities include the CAB and FSI. The Naval Service and the Air Corps cooperate with Revenue Customs and AGS, when called upon, through the Joint Task Force on Drugs Interdiction.

#### ***The Revenue Commissioners Customs Drugs Law Enforcement, Investigations and Prosecutions Division<sup>4</sup>***

As reported in previous workbooks, Revenue Commissioners Customs officers have the primary responsibility for the prevention, detection, interception and seizure of controlled drugs being smuggled into or out of Ireland. All strategic management functions relating to drugs issues are attached to the Investigations and Prosecutions Division and include:

- Gathering national and international intelligence and the dissemination of this intelligence as necessary. Since the creation of the National Freight Intelligence Unit, Revenue Customs has seen a significant increase in both the quantities of drugs and fiscal product that have been seized by Customs officers.
- Management of customs and Garda liaison functions
- Participation in the National Inter-Agency Drugs Joint Task Force
- Analysis of national and international drug smuggling trends
- Research, planning and organisation of both national and international operations targeting drug smuggling and related issues
- Liaison with other national and international enforcement agencies and government bodies, as well as the organisation of and participation in operations at both national and international level, including joint interagency operations

<sup>4</sup> Information downloaded on 8 August 2017 from <http://www.revenue.ie/en/customs/customs-drugs-watch-law-enforcement.html>

- Management of Revenue Customs' 13 detector dog teams located nationwide
- Management of Revenue Customs' Memorandum of Understanding Programme (MOU): The MOU initiative is a programme of cooperation between Customs and the business community on the prevention of smuggling, in particular drug smuggling. Revenue Customs has established working links with thousands of diverse companies ranging from airlines, air express couriers and shipping companies to airport and harbour authorities, freight forwarders, exporters, road hauliers, chemical companies, and yachtsmen. The MOU programme delivers training to company staff by Customs liaison officers in order to heighten drug smuggling awareness, and practical advice is offered to help prevent vehicles being used to smuggle drugs and other contraband goods. In addition, company staff are provided with ready channels of communication to Revenue Customs.
- Management of the Customs Drugs Watch Programme: Revenue Customs are responsible for monitoring 3,000 kilometres of coastline, and therefore help from individuals living in coastal communities, maritime personnel and yachting networks is vital. A *Customs Drugs Watch* guide has been published which provides guidance on how people can help.<sup>5</sup>
- Management of the Drug Precursor Programme: The Drug Precursor Programme is a mechanism for cooperation between Revenue Customs and the chemical industry, set up in order to detect the diversion of chemicals for illicit purposes. The programme is designed to increase the awareness of Customs officers and members of the chemical trade alike to the possibility of legitimate chemicals being diverted to the manufacture of illicit drugs. As part of this programme, the Customs Service now has dedicated Precursor Liaison Officers located in key areas around the country. These officers have been trained in the identification and handling of chemicals and are tasked with liaising with members of the chemical trade, with the purpose of identifying suspicious activity.

### ***An Garda Síochána***

As reported in previous workbooks, supply-reduction activity ranges from participation in international and cross-border operations to street-level policing of supply and possession offences and undercover operations targeting specific individuals or groups, or targeting specific locations, such as nightclubs, where drugs are consumed.

The Garda National Drugs Unit (GNDU), founded in 1995, had overall primary responsibility for drug law enforcement within Ireland. The GNDU carried out long-term strategic and short-term tactical investigations into the activities of organised crime gangs (OCGs) based both in Ireland and on the European continent. In February 2015, taking cognisance of the target-focused operations of both the Organised Crime Unit (OCU) and the GNDU, the Garda Commissioner merged the OCU and the GNDU to create a robust new entity, the Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau (GNDOCB), to tackle organised crime as it currently exists in Ireland. The recently amalgamated unit is expected to benefit from the skill sets of both OCU and GNDU personnel, establishing an enforcement and investigative unit that will manage national and international drug trafficking and organised crime investigations.

In 2016, the Covert Operations Unit (COU) attached to the GNDOCB targeted mid-range and low-level drug dealers. Investigations resulted in:

- 267 detections for offences contrary to Section 15 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1977/84
- Evidence was gathered against 110 suspects for drug supply offences.
- 75 suspects were arrested and charged.

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<sup>5</sup> *Customs Drugs Watch* guide <http://www.revenue.ie/en/corporate/documents/customs-drug-watch.pdf>

These arrests were carried out by local gardaí and were not included in GNDOCB arrest figures (An Garda Síochána 2017c).

Additionally, AGS was allocated €1.58 billion in the 2017 Budget; €88.5 million was set aside for overtime to facilitate the continuation of large-scale policing operations that target gangland crime, burglary and terrorist activities (Flanagan 2017, 12 July).

### ***Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB)***

As reported in previous National reports, the CAB statutory remit under the Proceeds of Crime Act 1996, as amended by the 2005 Act and Social Welfare and Revenue legislation, is to carry out investigations into the suspected proceeds of criminal conduct. CAB uses a multi-agency, multidisciplinary partnership approach in its investigations into the suspected proceeds of criminal conduct. CAB staff are drawn from AGS, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (including Customs), the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Justice and Equality. CAB also works closely with international crime investigation agencies, and has successfully targeted proceeds of foreign criminality.

CAB supports the roll-out of the Garda Divisional Profiler Programme by providing lectures, training and expertise, with particular reference to targeting middle-ranking drug dealers and others benefiting by derived assets from criminal activity. In turn, CAB receives intelligence, information and evidence from profilers.

In order to continue to identify and trace assets which are the proceeds of crime, and to present testimony before the courts, CAB has established a bureau analysis unit, adopted international best practices in the area of forensic analysis, and has adopted the use of enhanced training. Through making earlier or preliminary applications relating to lower-value assets, CAB has begun to target more middle-ranking criminals. While this approach may not realise extensive financial returns, it demonstrates CAB's ability to react to local community concerns.

### ***Forensic Science Ireland***

As reported in previous National reports the Drugs section of FSI (formerly known as the Forensic Science Laboratory) examines and analyses substances seized by AGS or Revenue Commissioners Customs Service officers and sometimes the Military Police that are thought to contravene the Misuse of Drugs Act. The drugs most commonly encountered in the FSI laboratory are herbal cannabis, cannabis resin, heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, BZP and MDMA tablets. However, in recent times there has been a huge increase in 'headshop' type drugs and further changes to drugs legislation, which has led to an exponential increase in the variety of compounds submitted to the laboratory for analysis. As a result, hundreds of different compounds can be analysed by staff on an annual basis. Items that possibly come into contact with such substances – for example, weighing scales, knives, and equipment from clandestine laboratories – may be examined to determine if traces of a controlled substance are present. A number of analytical procedures are used in the laboratory to determine if a substance is a controlled drug, the most common of which is gas chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (GC/MS). The results of the analysis are issued in a certificate of analysis that is presented as evidence in court.

### ***Joint task force on drug interdiction (JTF)***

As reported in previous National reports, the Joint Task Force on Drug Interdiction (JTF) was established in 1993 as a Government measure to improve law enforcement in relation to drugs; the JTF comprises members of AGS, the Revenue Commissioners, and the Naval Service (Department of Defence 2015). The JTF is convened whenever the agencies with primary responsibility in this area, including AGS and the Revenue Commissioners, review intelligence received and consider that a joint operation with the Naval Service and/or the Air Corps should be mounted. The Naval

Service is legally empowered under the Criminal Justice Act 1994 (as amended by the Criminal Justice (Illicit Traffic by Sea) Act 2003) to engage in drug interdiction operations. The Air Corps provides air support if required, and on occasion may be requested to carry members of the Revenue Commissioners in an observational capacity, for the purposes of monitoring vessels suspected of drug trafficking. The Air Corps provides an important intelligence gathering capability on the request of the JTF (p.37), (Department of Defence 2015).

## 2. Trends

### 2.1 Short term trends (5 years)

#### Seizures

The number of drug seizures in any given period can be affected by such factors as law enforcement resources, strategies and priorities, and by the vulnerability of traffickers to law enforcement activities. However, drug seizures are considered indirect indicators of the supply and availability of drugs (see Standard Table T13).

#### *Revenue Customs seizures*

Information regarding all Revenue Customs seizures, including Revenue Customs drugs seizures, are held in the Revenue National Seizure Register on C-NET, which is a secure networked intelligence system. Only Revenue seizures are recorded on this register. As set out in Table 22 in the Revenue Customs Annual Report 2017, drugs seizures are recorded by product type:

- Cannabis (herbal and resin)
- Cocaine and heroin
- Amphetamines, ecstasy, and other (Revenue Commissioners 2017).

No further category breakdown is available. When a prosecution is pending or presumptive field tests are not available, samples are sent to the FSI for analysis (Revenue Commissioners Press and Media Division, 2017, personal communication).

Drug interceptions by the Revenue Commissioners and joint operations in 2016 resulted in 5,997 seizures (1,677.7 kg), which was estimated to be valued at €30.49 million. The number of seizures for cocaine and heroin intercepted continued to rise in 2016, from 92 (2015) to 134 (2016). The quantity and estimated combined value of cocaine and heroin (171.7 kg; €12.03 million) was substantially higher than those seized in 2015 (95.4 kg; €6.69 million, respectively). A total of 940.7 kg of herbal cannabis and cannabis resin was intercepted in 1,222 separate seizures (Revenue Commissioners 2017).

#### *Garda Síochána seizures*

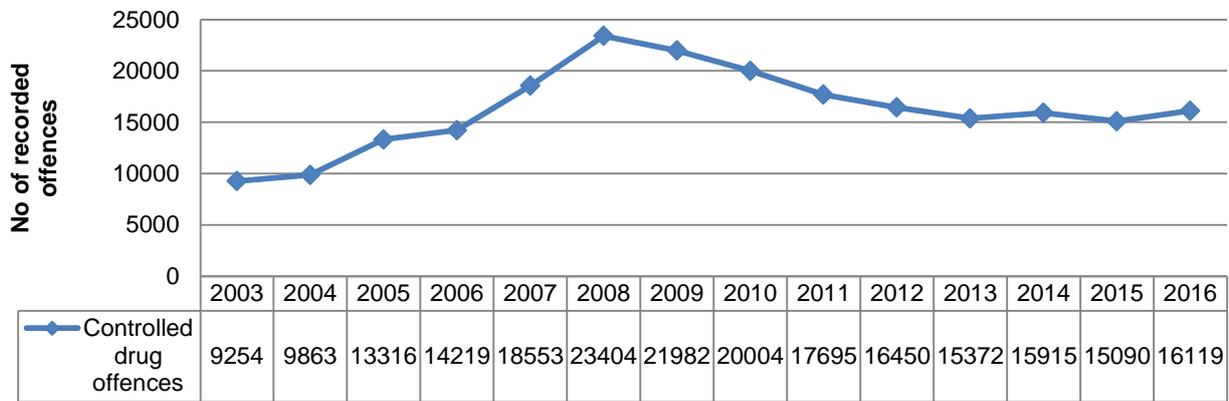
All drugs seized by AGS for supply offences are sent to FSI for analysis. Due to operational issues at FSI no figures are available for 2016 yet. The most recent figures available can be found in Section 2.1 of the 2016 National Report.

### 2.2 Short term trends in drug law offences data

#### **Garda recorded incidents of drug offences**

Crime data, which are collated on the Pulse System by AGS, are provided to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) for analysis. An incident may consist of more than one criminal offence. A primary offence or detection may refer to one offence within an incident. Sometimes, a charged offence may be different from the offence originally identified in the incident. Nevertheless, incidents are a useful indicator of the level of particular types of criminal activities (Central Statistics Office 2014). Figure 2.3.1 shows the available statistics for recorded incidents of drug offences and court proceedings, as entered on the Pulse System by Gardaí.

As Figure 2.3.1 shows, following a decline between 2008 and 2013, the total number of controlled drug offences recorded increased in 2014 (4%). Although a decline of 5% (15,915 to 15,090) was recorded between 2014 and 2015, the number of offences recorded increased by 7% between 2015 and 2016 ([www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)).



**Figure 2.3.1. Recorded total number of controlled drug offences between 2003 and 2015**

Source: CSO Website ([www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie))

*Supply: Recorded incidents*

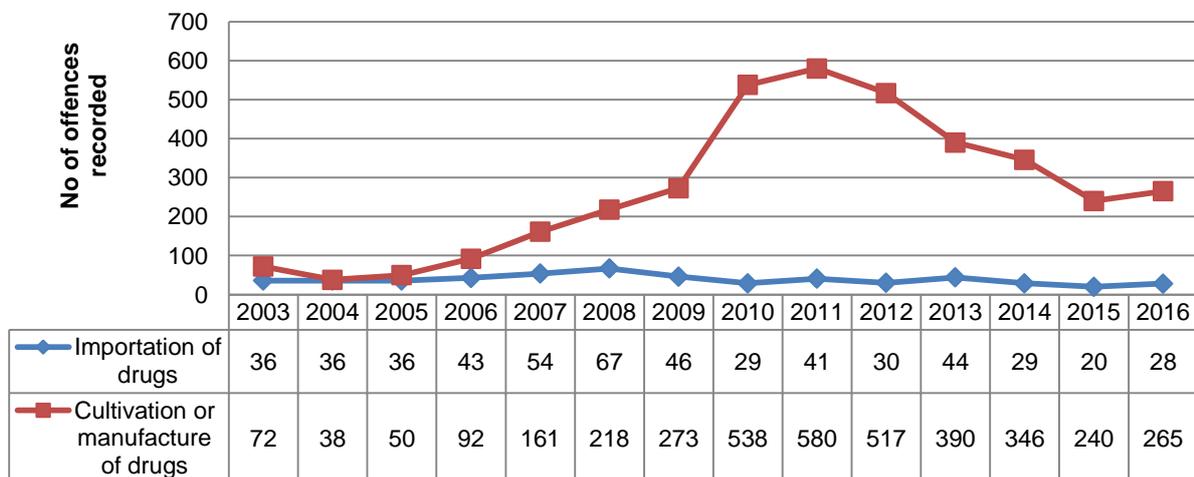
Figure 2.3.2 shows the number of controlled drug offences by importation, or cultivation, or manufacture of drugs, recorded between 2003 and 2016.

*Importation of drugs*

Essentially, from 2003 to date, an increase/decrease trend has been evident for recorded importation of drugs incidents. Increases were seen between 2005–2008 (86%), 2010–2011 (41%), 2012–2013 (47%) and 2015–2016 (40%). Decreases were seen between 2008–2010 (-57%), 2011–2012 (-27%), and 2013–2015 (-55%).

*Cultivation or manufacture of drugs*

Recorded incidents for the cultivation or manufacture of drugs increased between 2003 and 2011. The increase each year between 2006 and 2010 was substantial. Between 2011 and 2015, there was a steady decline in the number of such incidents reported; 2015 figures were nearly 60% lower than 2011 figures. Between 2015 and 2016, recorded incidents increased by 10% (see Figure 2.4.2).



**Figure 2.3.2 Recorded incidents of controlled drug offences categorised by importation of drugs, and by cultivation or manufacture of drugs, by year**

Source: CSO Website ([www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie))

*Possession of drugs for sale or personal use: Recorded incidents*

Figure 2.3.3 shows the number of recorded incidents for possession of drugs for sale or supply and personal use.

*Possession of drugs for sale or supply*

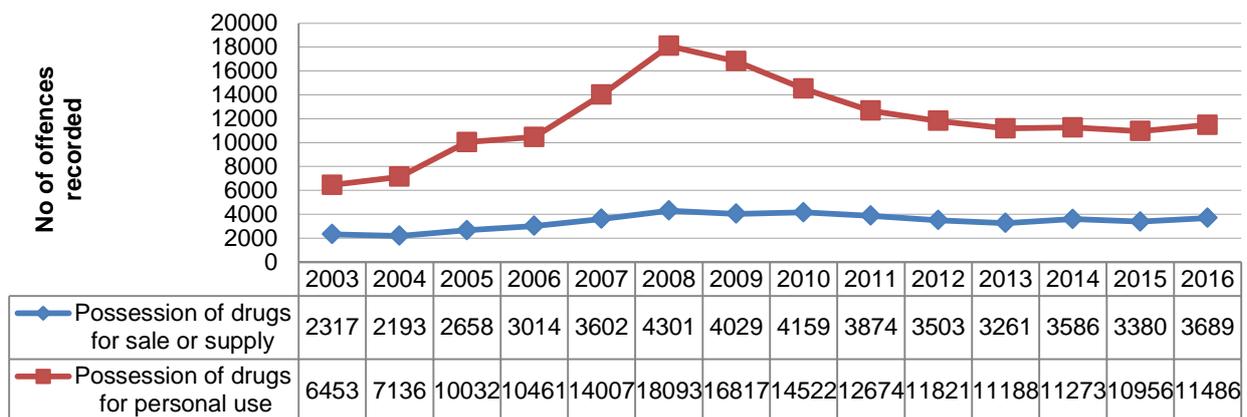
Although the number of recorded offences for possession of drugs for sale or supply increased between 2004 and 2008, between 2008 and 2013 a steady decline was seen. Since 2013, the

number of incidents recorded increased by 10% in 2014, decreased in 2015 (6%) and increased again in 2016 (9%).

### Possession of drugs for personal use

The number of incidents recorded for possession of drugs for personal use increased between 2003 and 2008. A decreasing trend was seen between 2008 and 2013. Since 2013, incidents recorded for possession of drugs increased in 2014 (<1%, 85), decreased in 2015 (3%, 317) and increased again by 5% (530) in 2016 (see Figure 3.3).

A possible explanation for the continual decline in the number of drug offences is that both supply and possession of drugs have been the target of focused operations by Gardaí and other agencies in recent years.

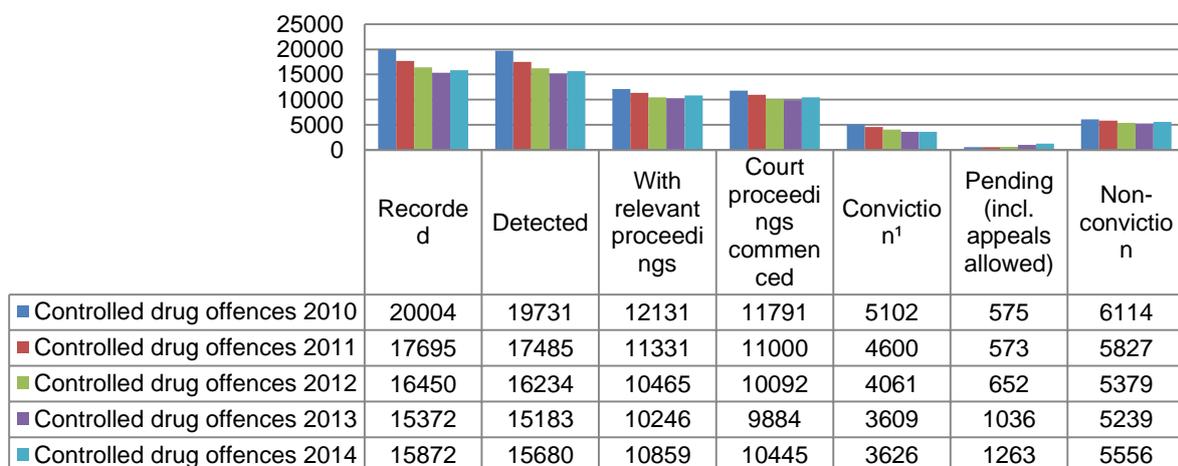


**Figure 2.3.3. Recorded incidents of controlled drug offences categorised by possession for sale or supply or personal use**

Source: CSO Website ([www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie))

### Garda recorded crime statistics: Court proceedings between 2010 and 2014

Court proceedings statistics recorded by AGS for the total number of controlled drug offences is available for the period 2010 to 2014 (see Figure 2.3.4). Across all categories there was a decrease between 2010 and 2013, except for the category 'Pending (incl. appeals allowed)', which showed a substantial increase between 2012 (652) and 2013 (1,036). In 2014, increases were evident across all categories. The largest was for 'court proceedings commenced', which increased by 6% between 2013 (9,884) and 2014 (10,445).



**Figure 2.3.4 Court proceedings for all controlled drug offences between 2010 and 2014**

<sup>1</sup>Includes Conviction; Proved and order made without conviction; Probation of Offenders Act.

Source: (CSO, 2017, personal communication)

### Garda court proceedings for supply of controlled drug offences

Table 2.3.1 shows the total number of court proceedings commenced in the period 2010 to 2014 for supply of controlled drug offences, broken down by importation and cultivation or manufacture of drugs. The decreasing trajectory evident between 2012 and 2013 continued in 2014. An examination of controlled drugs by category indicated that the decrease was only evident in the number of proceedings for importation of drugs category and not for the cultivation or manufacture of drugs category.

**Table 2.3.1 Court proceedings: Controlled drug offences broken down by importation of drugs, or cultivation or manufacture of drugs**

		Recorded	Detected	With relevant proceedings	Court proceedings commenced	Conviction <sup>1</sup>	Pending (incl. appeals allowed)	Non-conviction
Overall total	2010	567	554	341	333	185	25	123
	2011	621	607	402	389	217	47	125
	2012	547	540	374	364	214	58	92
	2013	434	419	294	288	159	53	76
	2014	374	368	278	277	145	61	71
Importation of drugs	2010	29	27	24	24	13	7	4
	2011	41	40	36	36	31	3	2
	2012	30	27	25	25	22	3	0
	2013	44	39	30	30	24	5	1
	2014	29	27	19	19	14	2	3
Cultivation or manufacture of drugs	2010	538	527	317	309	172	18	119
	2011	580	567	366	353	186	44	123
	2012	517	513	349	339	192	55	92
	2013	390	380	264	258	135	48	75
	2014	345	341	259	258	131	59	68

Note. 1Includes Conviction; Proved and order made without conviction; Probation of Offenders Act.  
Source: (CSO, 2017, personal communication)

#### *Garda court proceedings for possession of drug offences*

Table 2.3.2 shows the total number of court proceedings between 2010 and 2014 for controlled drug offences, broken down by possession of drugs for sale or personal use. During this period, the overall total number of convictions for possession of drugs decreased from 4,661 to 3,269. An examination by category indicated that the decrease was evident only in possession of drugs for personal use. Between 2013 and 2014, convictions for possession of drugs for sale or supply increased by 2%.

**Table 2.3.2 Controlled drug offences, broken down by possession of drugs, from 2010 to 2014**

		Recorded	Detected	With relevant proceedings	Court proceedings commenced	Conviction <sup>1</sup>	Pending (incl. appeals allowed)	Non-conviction
Overall total	2010	18681	18431	11290	10974	4661	511	5802
	2011	16548	16354	10583	10282	4214	502	5566
	2012	15324	15122	9728	9376	3673	556	5147
	2013	14449	14283	9645	9304	3326	944	5034
	2014	14819	14636	10081	9683	3269	1142	5272
Possession of drugs for sale or supply	2010	4159	4132	2988	2872	1775	293	804
	2011	3874	3855	2843	2754	1641	248	865
	2012	3503	3492	2601	2500	1453	271	776
	2013	3261	3245	2462	2378	1204	464	710
	2014	3566	3548	2582	2472	1227	487	758
Possession	2010	14522	14299	8302	8102	2886	218	4998

		Recorded	Detected	With relevant proceedings	Court proceedings commenced	Conviction <sup>1</sup>	Pending (incl. appeals allowed)	Non-conviction
of drugs for personal use	2011	12674	12499	7740	7528	2573	254	4701
	2012	11821	11630	7127	6876	2220	285	4371
	2013	11188	11038	7183	6926	2122	480	4324
	2014	11253	11088	7499	7211	2042	655	4514

Note. 1Includes Conviction; Proved and order made without conviction; Probation of Offenders Act.  
Source (CSO, 2017, personal communication)

## Defence Forces

As stated in Section 1.1.4 of the Legal workbook, compulsory random drug testing (CRDT) and targeted drugs testing has existed for Defence Force personnel (Army, Air Corps, Naval Service and Reserve) since 2002 and 2009 respectively. Table 2.3.3 shows the total number of personnel who were tested between 2009 and 2016 (Department of Defence 2017) (Kehoe 2017, 11 April). Table 2.3.4 shows a breakdown by location in 2015 and 2016 (Department of Defence 2016) (Department of Defence 2017) Overall, in the past five years 63 members failed the CRDT; 59 were tested positive and 4 missed the test. Table 2.3.5 shows the actions that were taken.

**Table 2.3.3 Details of compulsory random drug tests between 2009 and 2016**

Year	Total tested	Positive tests
2009	1719	6
2010	1586	7
2011	1362	6
2012	2058	16
2013	1054	13
2014	1092	5
2015	1184	17
2016	1204	12
Total	11259	82

Source: Department of Defence and Defence Forces Annual Report 2015 and 2016

**Table 2.3.4 Details of compulsory random drug tests completed by location in 2015 and 2016**

Brigade/formation	2015		2016	
	Numbers tested	Positive tests	Numbers tested	Positive tests
One Brigade	553	-	453	5
Two Brigades	220	-	376	2
Defence Forces Training Centre	54	-	242	4
Air Corps	230	-	47	1
Naval Service	76	-	86	0
Total	1133	-	1204	12

Source: Department of Defence and Defence Forces Annual Report 2015 and 2016

<sup>1</sup>Data for Positive tests by location was not provided in 2015

**Table 2.3.5 Details of actions taken in the past five years**

Action taken	No of personnel
Discharge by purchase	23
Discharged	6
Being processed	7
Retained after TDT	4
Retained in service	2
Retired	1
Service no longer required	14
Targeted drug testing (TDT) *	5
TDT/Retired	1
Grand total	63

Note. \* The objective of targeted Drugs Testing (TDT) is to ensure that an individual, who has tested positive for the presence of a controlled drug in a compulsory random drug test but who conditionally remains in service as a result of a decision of their Formation Commander, is devoid of the presence and/or influence of any controlled drug or substance. TDT involves the individual agreeing to submit to targeted drugs testing, in addition to the random selection process, for a period of up to 18 months.  
Source: [Kehoe P 2017]

## 2.4 Other drug offences

### Other drug offences

The category ‘possession/supply drug offences, drug-related crime’ also has a classification for other drug offences, which includes forged or altered prescription/obstruction offences.

### Forged or altered prescription/obstruction under the Drugs Act

Although a substantial decrease (28%) was shown in this category between 2014 (681) and 2015 (494), crimes recorded increased by 24% (157) to 651 in 2016 (See Figure 2.4.1).

### Driving under the influence of drugs

Driving under the influence of drugs has been a statutory offence in Ireland since the enactment of the Road Traffic Act 1961.<sup>6</sup> A decreasing trend for this offence has been evident since 2009, and it continued in 2016 (see Figure 2.4.1) (CSO 2017, website). One possible explanation for this is that it coincides with changes that have occurred in road traffic legislation. Since the enactment of the Road Traffic Act 2010, gardaí have the power to request a sample of blood, urine or breath to be tested by the Medical Bureau of Road Safety (MBRS) when a driver is suspected of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (Cusack, *et al.* 2012). If the blood alcohol concentration is 89 mg/100 ml or less, or if the urine alcohol concentration is 107 mg/100 ml or less, the specimen is tested for the presence of drugs using a two-stage analytical process. Drugs tested include cannabinoids, benzodiazepine class, amphetamines class, methamphetamine class, cocaine, methadone and opiate class drugs. A certificate, which is issued by the MBRS, indicates whether a drug is present or not. The Road Traffic Act 2010 also made provisions for Roadside Impairment Testing (RIT), which came into operation in late 2014. This extended gardaí powers further by allowing them to carry out roadside impairment tests. The certificate from the MBRS, plus Garda evidence of impairment, is needed in order to prosecute an offender (Cusack, *et al.* 2012). In addition, the Road Safety Authority ran a number of campaigns on Anti-Drug Driving in 2011 and 2014<sup>7</sup> with the aim of increasing awareness, which may have also contributed to the reduction in driving under the influence of drugs offences. For an update on the new Road Traffic Act 2016 see Section 3.1, Legal workbook).

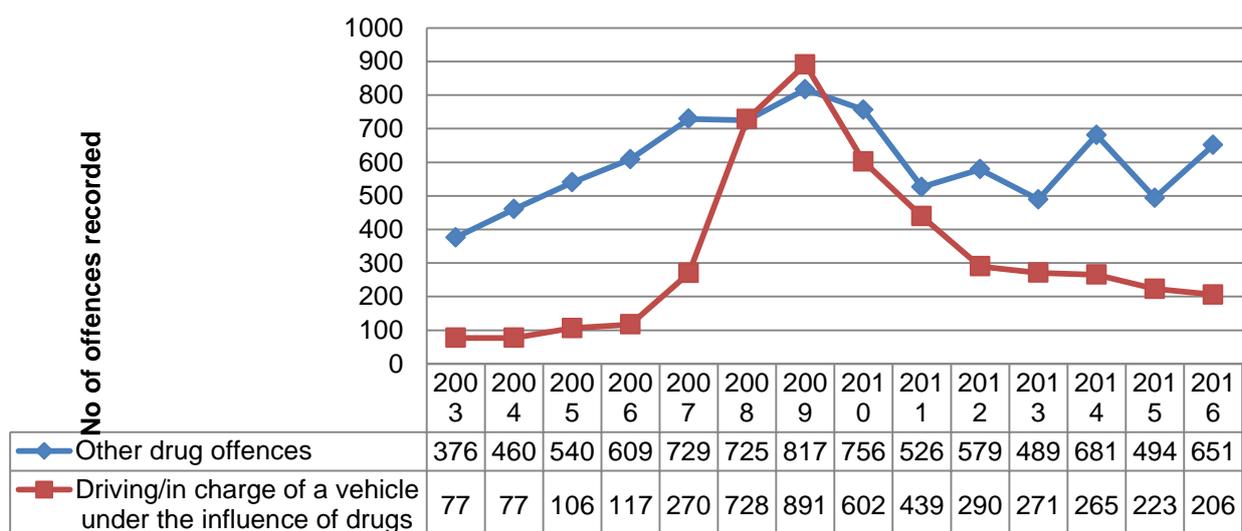


Figure 2.4.1 Recorded incidents of other drug offences and driving under the influence of drugs, 2003–2016

Source: (CSO website)

\*Other drug offences include forged or altered prescription offences and Obstruction under the Drugs Act

<sup>6</sup> Road Traffic Act 1961 available at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/ResultsTitle.html?q=Road+Traffic+Act&=&=>

<sup>7</sup> More information available at <http://www.rsa.ie/RSA/Road-Safety/Campaigns/Current-road-safety-campaigns/Anti-Drug-Driving/>

## Garda recorded court proceedings between 2010 and 2013 for other drug offences

### Other drug offences

Table 2.4.1 shows a breakdown of court proceedings between 2010 and 2014 for other drug offences. Although the total number of other drug-related offences recorded, detected, and associated relevant proceedings, declined between 2010 and 2013, a sharp increase was evident across all categories between 2013 and 2014. The substantial increase was only evident in court proceedings for obstruction under the Drugs Act

**Table 2.4.1 Garda recorded crime: Court proceedings between 2010 and 2014 for other drug offences**

		Recorded	Detected	With relevant proceedings	Court proceedings commenced	Conviction <sup>1</sup>	Pending (incl. appeals allowed)	Non-conviction
Other drug offences total	2010	756	746	500	484	256	39	189
	2011	526	524	346	329	169	24	136
	2012	579	572	363	352	174	38	140
	2013	489	481	307	292	124	39	129
	2014	679	676	500	485	212	60	213
Forged or altered prescription offences	2010	176	170	124	119	71	9	39
	2011	150	149	101	95	54	9	32
	2012	146	143	102	100	54	23	23
	2013	105	104	69	66	20	10	36
	2014	96	94	62	60	21	7	32
Obstruction under the Drugs Act	2010	580	576	376	365	185	30	150
	2011	376	375	245	234	115	15	104
	2012	433	429	261	252	120	15	117
	2013	384	377	238	226	104	29	93
	2014	583	582	438	425	191	53	181

Note: <sup>1</sup>Includes Conviction; Proved and order made without conviction; Probation of Offenders Act.

Source: (CSO Website)

### Driving under the influence of drugs

Table 2.4.2 shows a breakdown of recorded and detected crimes and their associated court proceedings status for drug driving between 2010 and 2014. The number of driving under the influence of drugs convictions decreased by 53% between 2010 and 2012. Despite a 5% increase in 2013, a 9% decrease was evident in 2014.

**Table 2.4.2 Garda recorded crime: Court proceeding between 2010 and 2014 for driving/in charge of a vehicle under the influence of drugs offence**

	Year	Recorded	Detected	With relevant proceedings	Court proceedings commenced	Conviction <sup>1</sup>	Pending (incl. appeals allowed)	Non-conviction
Driving/In charge of a vehicle under the influence of drugs	2010	602	598	456	450	256	17	177
	2011	439	438	348	343	204	8	131
	2012	290	289	217	212	120	8	84
	2013	271	270	222	222	127	17	78
	2014	265	264	222	217	109	22	86

Note: <sup>1</sup>Includes Conviction; Proved and order made without conviction; Probation of Offenders Act.

Source: (CSO Website)

## 3. New developments

### 3.1 New or topical developments observed in the drug market in Ireland since 2015

#### Key priorities for supply reduction: National Drug Strategy from 2017-2025

Ireland's third national drugs strategy 2017–2025, which was published in July 2017, outlines the Government's response to overcoming harm caused by substance misuse in Irish society. Key actions to be delivered between 2017 and 2020 have been identified. Similar to the National Drugs Strategy (NDS) 2009–2016 (Department of Community 2009), the 2017-2025 strategy (Department of Health 2017b) will continue to take a harm reduction approach by addressing supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and research. A health-led response will, however, be prioritised (see section 4.2 of the Policy workbook).

#### **4. Additional information**

##### **4.1 Specific studies**

###### ***Lifting the lid on Greentown***

On 13 February 2017, Dr Sean Redmond, Adjunct Professor of Youth Justice at the School of Law, University of Limerick, launched the *Lifting the lid on Greentown* report (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2016). The report outlined a study that examined the effect of a criminal network on the offending behaviour of children between 2010 and 2011 in a regional Garda Sub-District outside Dublin (given the pseudonym Greentown).

###### **Background**

Research into youth crime has been extensive and tends to focus on descriptive analysis of general populations and large offending subpopulations (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2016). A tool that has been shown to increase understanding of this area is network analysis (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2016). Although the literature examining associations between criminal networks and children has been slowly emerging internationally, scant attention has been given to examining this area in Ireland.

The main research questions addressed in this study were:

- How and why did children become involved with the criminal network initially and what factors shaped and maintained this involvement?
- How did the criminal network support the offending behaviour?
- How easy or difficult was it for children involved in the criminal network to make and follow through on their own decisions, including quitting the network?

###### **Methodology**

The study involved a case study design and consisted of the following sequential steps: Burglary and drugs for sale and supply data collated on AGS's PULSE (police using leading systems effectively) system were analysed and ranked.

Based on the previous analysis, geographical location and other criteria, such as containment of criminal activity to the Sub-District, number of young offenders, willingness of AGS to take part in the study, and availability of facilities to undertake the fieldwork, 'Greentown' was chosen as the most appropriate location for the study.

A criminal network map was developed by Garda analysts using PULSE data and illustrated how offenders aged 11–36 years, who carried out burglary or drugs for sale and supply offences between 2010 and 2011 in Greentown, linked together via common offences.

In order to ensure anonymity of individuals on the criminal network map, a blinding process, coined by the author as the *Twinsight* method, was utilised. Two versions of the map were developed: a 'live' version that contained personal details of the offenders involved. This was only seen by Garda members or analysts. The second version, a 'researcher' version, was similar to the first version, except that there was no identifying or personal information, and it was used only by the researcher. The maps shared unique identifier codes, which allowed Garda respondents (n=16) taking part in semi-structured interviews to 'ground' (p. 24) their views by linking real events to the individuals on the map via the unique identifier.

The coding and data analysis of transcriptions were collated on NVivo and informed by grounded theory.

###### **Results**

Four key findings emerged from the analysis. First, the analysis indicated the presence of a criminal hierarchical network that differentiated between family and non-family members in Greentown. For example, at the top of the hierarchy was the network leader ( $A_2$ ). His second-in-command was ( $Z_1$ ), while middle management consisted of associates ( $D_1$ ,  $E_1$  and  $A_1$ ). Younger family members of  $A_2$  ( $B_2$  and  $D_2$ ) also appeared in the network.

Second, the hierarchical structure evident was supported by processes and sympathetic embedded cultures. The study showed that  $A_2$  and his family had an imposing effect over associates, clients and non-aligned residents. In addition, there was a mismatch between how the criminal justice system operates and the lived reality. For example, to get  $A_2$  convicted, a complaint by someone willing to follow it through to court was necessary, but the lived reality was that  $A_2$  managed to distance himself from criminal activities, while very few would complain or act as a witness against him.

Third, the power and effect of the network was shown to be strongest on the estate where  $A_2$  lived.  $A_2$ 's influence was thought to decline with distance; however, in associates and clients, particularly those living on the same estate, the influence remained the same. Moreover, regardless of distance, having any relationship with  $A_2$ , whether by choice or circumstance, resulted in independence and privacy being taken away.

Finally, for five or more offences, child offending in Greentown (75%) was shown to be five times higher than the national average for burglary (15%). A possible explanation for this outcome is that a 'network effect' (p. 50) was present, persuading children to offend. The evidence in the Greentown study suggests that network factors differ between associates and family members. For associates, factors included how children were selected and recruited; strong *pull* and *push* dynamics; living in compliant surroundings; making deals to retain them; limiting their options and creating indecision to deter those who want to get out. However, factors for family members include 'history, expectation, family brand, legitimacy to control, emergence, succession' which suggest 'a preordained role' (p. 51). Garda respondents in this study believe that network factors are pervasive in both children who reside near  $A_2$  and those whose family members are clients of  $A_2$ .

### **Limitations**

The author identified a number of limitations to the study:

The criminal network map relied on specific parameters, namely data for burglary and drugs for sale and supply offences (PULSE), which may have resulted in individuals clustering together on the map.

Gardaí were asked to link their experiences to their interpretation of the network map, which was then interpreted by the researcher.

'Time' (2010–2011) and the 'offence type' parameters (burglary and drugs for sale and supply) decided who did or who did not appear on the network map.

There were also limitations and weaknesses present in the PULSE data upon which the criminal network is based (Central Statistics Office 2015, Central Statistics Office 2016).

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to explore whether criminal networks influenced children moving into a life of crime. As acknowledged by the author, it was problematic trying to determine cause and effect; at best this study provides sufficient evidence that 'plausibly' suggests that criminal networks may influence offending in children.

However, the study increases the understanding of factors that influence offending in children under the age of 18 in an Irish context. It involved a multi-agency response, which included the Department of Justice, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, An Garda Síochána (members and analyst) and the University of Limerick. Policy and practical implications are also discussed in the report.

With the aim of extending this research further and helping vulnerable youths and children who are enticed into a life of crime in Ireland, a replication study is currently underway. The aim of this new study is to determine whether the results of the Greentown study can be generalised across Ireland.

Although it will involve similar methodology, there will be slight differences, such as:

- Two additional sites instead of one
- Criminal network maps based on more recent PULSE data (2014–2015)
- Semi-structured interviews of frontline Gardaí on both sites (n=20)
- Additionally, in order to broaden the data collection, juvenile liaison officers throughout Ireland will be invited to participate in the survey.

## 5. Sources and methodology

### 5.1 Sources

Web sites, annual reports and unpublished data from the following agencies are the 'notable' sources of information:

[Central Statistics Office](#)

[Courts Service](#)

[Customs](#)

[Forensic Science Ireland](#)

[Garda Síochána](#)

[Revenue](#)

### 5.2 Methodology

One new study was referred to in this report.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs. (2016) *Lifting the lid on Greentown: Why we should be concerned about the influence criminal networks have on children's offending behaviour In Ireland*. Dublin: Government Publications. Available online at <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/26850/> This study examined the effect of a criminal network on the offending behaviour of children between 2010 and 2011 in a regional Garda sub-district outside Dublin referred to as Greentown. Further information about the study can be found in Section T4.1 of this workbook.

Previous studies cited:

Connolly J and Buckley L (2016) *Demanding money with menace: drug-related intimidation and community violence in Ireland*. Dublin: CityWide Drugs Crisis Campaign. Available at <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/25201/>

This report presented the findings of research on drug-related intimidation and community violence in a number of Local and Regional Drugs Task Force areas throughout Ireland. Further information on this study can be found in Section T6.2 of the 2016 National Report.

Connolly J and Donovan AM (2014) *Illicit drug markets in Ireland*. National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol, Dublin.

Available at <http://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/22837/>

This study examined the nature, structure and organisation of four local drug markets over a three year timespan (2008-2010). Further information on this study can be found in Section T1.1.3 and T6.2 of the 2015 National Report.

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## European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is a decentralised EU agency based in Lisbon. The EMCDDA provides the EU and its Member States with information on the nature, extent, consequences and responses to illicit drug use. It supplies the evidence base to support policy formation on drugs and addiction in both the European Union and Member States.

There are 30 National Focal Points that act as monitoring centres for the EMCDDA. These focal points gather and analyse country data according to common data-collection standards and tools and supply these data to the EMCDDA. The results of this national monitoring process are supplied to the Centre for analysis, from which it produces the annual *European drug report* and other outputs.

The Irish Focal Point to the EMCDDA is based in the Health Research Board. The focal point writes and submits a series of textual reports, data on the five epidemiological indicators and supply indicators in the form of standard tables and structured questionnaires on response-related issues such as prevention and social reintegration. The focal point is also responsible for implementing Council Decision 2005/387/JHA on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances.

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Drugs Policy Unit, Department of Health  
Forensic Science Ireland  
Health Protection Surveillance Centre, Health Service Executive  
Hospital In-Patient Enquiry Scheme, Health Service Executive  
Irish Prison Service  
National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol, Department of Health  
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