



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

National Social Inclusion Office
Primary Care Division
Health Service Executive
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16th December, 2015

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan,
Dáil Eireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 42112/15

* To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who availed of all public addiction services, both alcohol and drugs services, in 2014 and 2015 to date; the number currently on waiting lists for such services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 42113/15

* To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who availed of public addiction intervention services, both alcohol and drugs awareness and education services, in 2014 and in 2015 to date; the number currently on waiting lists for such services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 42114/15

* To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who availed of public addiction drug-related intervention services, both alcohol and drugs primary care/pharmaceutical services in 2014 and in 2015 to date; the number currently on waiting lists for such services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 42115/15

* To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who availed of public addiction specialist drug-related intervention services, both alcohol and drugs services in 2014 and in 2015 to date; the number currently on waiting lists for such services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 42116/15

* To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who availed of public addiction services in inpatient, residential and detox units, both alcohol and drugs services in 2014 and in 2015 to date ; the number currently on waiting lists for such services; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Broughan,

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

Data for 2015 is not yet available but preliminary analysis of the 2014 National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) treatment data shows that approximately 16,500 cases entered drug or alcohol treatment. The main treatment interventions are given below in Table 1. A case may have had more than one type of treatment so percentages are based on a multi-response analysis – i.e. if a case received more than one type of treatment it is counted more than once so percentages will add up to more than 100%.

Table 1 Preliminary data - Main treatment interventions, cases treated for problem drug or alcohol use, NDTRS 2014

Type of treatment	%
Brief intervention	42.2%
Individual Counselling	40.2%
Medication free therapy	18.0%
Group education/awareness programme	16.3%
Group Counselling	14.6%
Brief intervention: individual Education/awareness programme	11.6%
Alcohol detoxification	9.1%
Social and/or occupational reintegration	7.6%
Detoxification	4.1%
Benzodiazepine detoxification	1.4%

The NDTRS does not record numbers on waiting lists but does record time between referral and assessment and time between assessment and treatment.

In 2014, preliminary data from the NDTRS shows that the majority of cases (62.6%) were treated in outpatient facilities (Table 2). Table 2 also displays the mean time between referral and assessment, and assessment and treatment for each type of service.

Table 2 Preliminary data – service type, cases treated for problem drug or alcohol use, mean times between referral and assessment and assessment and treatment, NDTRS 2014

	% treated	Mean time between referral and assessment	Mean time between assessment and treatment
Outpatient	62.6%	12 days	4 days
Inpatient	25.0%	14 days	12 days
Low threshold	10.8%	4 days	0 days
GP	1.5%	5 days	4 days

It is important to note (see attached Appendix) that the NDTRS only report on cases who enter treatment in a particular calendar year, not on those who continue in treatment from one year to the next without a break.

Finally, in relation to Methadone Treatment, as of the end of June 2015 there were 249 people nationally on a waiting list in thirty eight HSE Clinics with a mean waiting time of 1.2 months.

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

Yours sincerely,



Joseph Doyle
National Planning Specialist

Appendix

Background to the National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS)

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

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

Compliance with the NDTRS requires that one form be completed for each new client coming for first treatment and for each previously treated client returning to treatment for problem drug use. Service providers at treatment centres throughout Ireland collect data on each individual who attends for first treatment or returns to treatment in a calendar year.

Staff at the NHIS unit in the HRB compile anonymous, aggregated data, which are analysed and reported at national and EU levels.

The main elements of the reporting system are defined as follows:

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

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

Previously treated cases – describes cases who were treated previously for problem drug/alcohol use at any treatment centre and have returned to treatment in the reporting year;

New cases treated – describes cases who have never been treated for problem drug/alcohol use; and

Status unknown – describes cases whose status with respect to previous treatment for problem drug/alcohol use is not known.

* It is very important to note that **each case refers to an episode of treatment**, not an individual. Therefore 'previously treated cases' could appear more than once in the database, in a calendar year, if for example they receive treatment at more than one centre or at the same centre more than once per year. The NDTRS also does not include those cases in continuous care i.e. cases who remained in treatment without a break from one year to the next. It also does not include those treated in psychiatric hospitals.