

# Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland and Drug Use in Northern Ireland

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## Introduction

This Bulletin presents the key findings from the fourth drug prevalence survey of households in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Within Ireland the survey sampled a representative number of people aged 15+ from August 2014 to August 2015. Within Northern Ireland a representative sample of persons aged 15-64 years was selected. The survey was carried out according to standards set by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). Data relating to drug prevalence on a lifetime (ever used), last year (recent) and last month (current) basis for Ireland, Northern Ireland and the island of Ireland are presented in this bulletin. Statistically significant changes in prevalence rates between 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11 and 2014/15 are presented in the tables and comparisons between 2010/11 and 2014/15 are discussed in each section.

The National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol (NACDA) Drug Prevalence Survey 2014/15 for the Republic of Ireland introduced a number of key changes to the questionnaire and sample population targeted, most notably;

- ▶ The sample population was extended from 15-64 years to include all those aged 15+ years.
- ▶ A new section focusing on gambling prevalence was included.

These changes, therefore, require some modification of the Bulletin layout to ensure that the valuable insights garnered from the trend data of 15-64 year olds is continued, but also to ensure that the 2014/15 data of all those aged 15+ is adequately addressed.

The survey was commissioned by the NACDA in Ireland, and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland. The main focus of the survey was to obtain prevalence rates for key illegal drugs, such as cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine and heroin on a lifetime (ever used), last year (recent use), and last month (current use) basis. Similar prevalence questions were also asked of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (e.g. tranquillisers); attitudinal and demographic information was also sought from respondents.

## Methodology

The questionnaire and methodology for this general population survey were based on best practice guidelines drawn up by the EMCDDA. The questionnaires were administered through face-to-face interviews with respondents aged 15+ years in Ireland and respondents aged 15-64 years in Northern Ireland and who are normally resident in households. Thus persons outside these age ranges, or who do not normally live in private households, have not been included in the survey (for example prisons, nursing homes etc.).

Fieldwork for the survey was carried out between August 2014 and August 2015 and the final achieved sample comprised of 7,005 respondents in the Republic of Ireland and 2,511 respondents in Northern Ireland.

Area-based sampling was applied in Ireland and Northern Ireland. A three-stage process was used to construct the sample for this survey. The first stage involved stratifying by former Health Board regions in Ireland and sampling within each Health Board was primarily in proportion to the population. The achieved sample was weighted by gender, age and former Health Board region to maximise its representativeness of the general population. In Northern Ireland, the first stage involved stratifying by Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) and within the strata, simple random sampling was used. The achieved sample was weighted by gender, age and HSCT area. Details of the methodology can be found in the technical report.

Interviews were conducted using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). These techniques allow interviews to be conducted more efficiently and more accurately than other techniques, such as pen-and-paper completion.

## What is prevalence?

The term prevalence refers to the proportion of a population who have used a drug over a particular time period. In general population surveys, prevalence is measured by asking respondents in a representative sample drawn from the population to recall their use of drugs. The three most widely used recall periods are: lifetime (ever used a drug), last year (used a drug in the last twelve months), and last month (used a drug in the last 30 days). Provided that a sample is representative of the total population, prevalence information obtained from a sample can be used to infer prevalence in the population.

Lifetime prevalence refers to the proportion of the sample that reported ever having used the named drug at the time they were surveyed. A person who records lifetime prevalence may or may not be currently using the drug. Lifetime prevalence should not be interpreted as meaning that people have necessarily used a drug over a long period of time or that they will use the drug in future.

Last year prevalence refers to the proportion of the sample that reported using a named drug in the year prior to the survey. Last year prevalence is often referred to as recent use.

Last month prevalence refers to the proportion of the sample that reported using a named drug in the 30 day period prior to the survey. Last month prevalence is often referred to as current use. A proportion of those reporting current use may be occasional (or first-time) users who happen to have used in the period leading up to the survey. It should therefore be appreciated that current use is not synonymous with regular use.

## Understanding the results of this bulletin

The first section of this bulletin provides 2014/15 prevalence data (adults aged 15+ years) for the Republic of Ireland, followed by trend data (2002/03, 2006/07 and 2010/11) for adults aged 15-64 years in the Republic of Ireland. Drug prevalence rates for Northern Ireland are based on adults aged 15-64 years and the trend data is then presented. The final section presents drug prevalence rates for the Island of Ireland.

The results comparing 2014/15 and 2010/11 are discussed throughout and significant differences are indicated in the trend tables. Significant differences between 2002/03 and 2006/07 results as well as significant differences between 2006/07 results and 2010/11 results are also indicated in the trend tables.

The figures for Ireland in 2002/03 and 2006/07 reported in this bulletin may differ slightly from figures reported in earlier publications. These differences are due to applying new estimation procedures which were necessary to ensure the comparability between 2002/03, 2006/07 and 2010/11 drug prevalence survey data. The 2010/11 data presented in this bulletin has not been adjusted since its publication.

All prevalence rates presented in the accompanying tables are rounded to one decimal place.

As in all sample surveys, the greater the sample size the more statistically reliable are the results. Some of the differences in prevalence rates in the tables will be attributable to natural sample variations. Details of confidence intervals for all of the figures contained in this bulletin can be found on the NACDA website.

Percentages may not always sum to 100 due to either the effect of rounding or where respondents could give more than one answer.

Those over 65 were included in the Republic of Ireland survey for the first time in 2014/15, therefore the current results report prevalence levels of all those aged 15+ years, while the comparative results are provided for those aged 15-64 years.



Prevalence of Drug Use  
and Gambling in Ireland  
2014/15  
(Adults 15+ years)



## Key Findings in Ireland:

- ▶ 26.4% of Irish adults aged 15 years or older report using an illegal drug in their lifetime, 7.5% in the past 12 months and 4.0% in the past month.
- ▶ Lifetime usage of cannabis (24.0%) is considerably higher than any other form of drug. The second most commonly used drug is ecstasy (7.8%) with lifetime usage of cocaine (including crack) and cocaine powder at 6.6% and 6.4% respectively.
- ▶ Almost a fifth (19.9%) of Irish adults have used other opiates in the past month, with 43.4% doing so in the past 12 months and 61.5% having done so at some stage during their life. Results for other opiates are not comparable to previous waves of the survey due to wording and showcard changes (see showcard 138 in the technical report for a list of drugs included in the other opiates category).
- ▶ Over 6 in 10 (62.1%) Irish adults have consumed alcohol in the past month, with past year and lifetime usage at 77.0% and 82.8% respectively.
- ▶ Just over a quarter (25.1%) have smoked a tobacco product in the past month, with twice as many (50.9%) having done so at some stage during their life.
- ▶ Lifetime usage of any illegal drug has increased significantly from 27.2% in 2010/11 to 30.7% in 2014/15 in adults aged 15-64. Similarly, last year and last month prevalence of any illegal drug has also increased since the previous study (respectively from 7.0% to 8.9%, and from 3.2% to 4.7%).
- ▶ Significant increases in lifetime prevalence have been observed for cannabis (25.3% to 27.9%), ecstasy (6.9% to 9.2%), and crack (0.6% to 1.1%).
- ▶ Significant increases in last year prevalence have been observed for cannabis (6.0% to 7.7%), ecstasy (0.5% to 2.1%), poppers (0.2% to 0.6%) and anti-depressants (4.8% to 5.9%).
- ▶ Significant increases in last month prevalence have been observed for cannabis (2.8% to 4.4%) and ecstasy (0.1% to 1.0%).
- ▶ Last year usage of New Psychoactive Substances has declined significantly from 3.5% to 0.8%. This follows legislative changes in this respect during that time period. Last year prevalence of new psychoactive substances amongst those aged 15 to 34 has declined significantly from 6.7% to 1.6%, and from 1.0% to 0.2% in the 35 to 64 age group.
- ▶ There has been a significant increase in the lifetime prevalence of anti-depressants amongst women (from 12.4% to 14.5%). Last year prevalence has increased from 5.6% to 7.0% and last month from 5.0% to 5.7%.
- ▶ There has been a statistically significant increase in lifetime prevalence of illegal drugs amongst those aged 35 to 64 since the previous study (from 20.6% to 25.6%). Statistically significant increases in last year and last month usage of any illegal drug are observed amongst the 15 to 34 age group.
- ▶ Statistically significant increases amongst those aged 15 to 34 are observed for lifetime (10.9% to 14.0%), last year (0.9% to 4.4%) and last month use (0.1% to 2.1%) of ecstasy. This age group also show increases in last year (37.3% to 38.3%) and last month (31.3% to 32.8%) use of tobacco.
- ▶ Statistically significant increases amongst those aged 35 to 64 are observed for lifetime use of ecstasy (3.7% to 5.6%) and solvents (1.5% to 2.5%).

## Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+) 2014/15

Drug Type	Lifetime	Last Year	Last Month
Any illegal drug*	26.4	7.5	4.0
Cannabis	24.0	6.5	3.7
Ecstasy	7.8	1.8	0.8
Cocaine (including crack)	6.6	1.3	0.4
Cocaine powder	6.4	1.2	0.4
Magic mushrooms	5.2	0.5	0.1
Amphetamines	3.5	0.2	0.0
Poppers	3.5	0.5	0.1
LSD	3.3	0.2	0.1
New psychoactive substances	3.0	0.7	0.1
Solvents	2.7	0.2	0.1
Crack	0.9	0.2	0.1
Heroin	0.7	0.2	0.0
Other Opiates <sup>††</sup> (see footnote below)	61.5	43.4	19.9
Sedatives or Tranquillisers	14.3	7.1	4.4
Anti-depressants	11.4	5.8	4.8
Anabolic Steroids	1.3	0.3	0.2
Methadone	0.6	0.2	0.2
Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	82.8	77.0	62.1
Gambling <sup>**</sup>	~	64.5	41.4
Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	50.9	28.6	25.1
E-cigarettes	13.6	~	3.1

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Please note the addition of new psychoactive substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010.

<sup>††</sup> 2014/15 results for other opiates, alcohol and tobacco are not comparable with previous prevalence surveys due to wording and showcard changes. Other opiates – In 2010/11 the category “Other Opiates” also asked specifically about substances containing codeine. There were further changes to the showcard in 2014/15, see showcard 138 in the technical report. Alcohol – changes in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 alcohol prevalence, please see Appendix 3 for details. Tobacco – change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 tobacco prevalence. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

\*\* A broad definition of gambling was utilised, which included; buying a lottery ticket or scratchcard, playing lottery games online, gambling in a bookmaker’s shop, gambling online or by telephone, placing a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, playing games at a casino, playing gaming/slot machines, playing card games for money with friends/family, playing bingo.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

26.4% of Irish adults report using an illegal drug in their lifetime.

Lifetime usage of cannabis (24.0%) is considerably higher than any other form of drug. The second most commonly used drug is ecstasy (7.8%) with lifetime usage of cocaine (including crack) and cocaine powder at 6.6% and 6.4% respectively.

7.5% of adults have used an illegal drug in the past 12 months. As with lifetime prevalence, usage of cannabis (6.5%) is far higher than any other drug, with ecstasy (1.8%), cocaine (including crack) (1.3%) and cocaine powder (1.2%) more commonly used than other forms of illegal drugs.

4.0% have used an illegal drug in the past month, equating to over half of those who have done so in the previous 12 months. Again, cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug with 3.7% using this within the past month.

Almost a fifth (19.9%) of Irish adults have used other opiates in the past month, with 43.4% doing so in the past 12 months and 61.5% having done so at some stage during their life. Results for other opiates are not comparable to previous waves of the survey due to wording and showcard changes.

Over 6 in 10 (62.1%) of Irish adults have consumed alcohol in the past month, with past year and lifetime usage at 77.0% and 82.8% respectively.

Just over a quarter (25.1%) have smoked a tobacco product in the past month, with twice as many (50.9%) having done so at some stage during their life.

## Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+), by Age, 2014/15

### Lifetime Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+), by Age, 2014/15

LIFETIME	Drug Type	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	Any illegal drug*	28.6	43.8	35.0	22.8	14.9	2.6
Cannabis	24.4	40.4	32.1	20.5	14.4	2.2	
Ecstasy	10.8	16.4	10.8	3.2	0.6	0.0	
Cocaine (including crack)	7.3	13.4	9.2	4.2	1.8	0.0	
Cocaine powder	7.0	12.9	9.1	4.0	1.8	0.0	
Magic mushrooms	4.7	8.7	8.4	4.4	2.0	0.1	
Amphetamines	2.6	6.5	5.9	2.5	1.1	0.3	
Poppers	4.4	7.0	5.1	1.9	0.3	0.0	
LSD	2.2	3.7	7.2	3.0	2.1	0.3	
New psychoactive substances	5.0	6.8	2.2	1.8	0.1	0.3	
Solvents	3.0	4.9	4.5	1.8	0.5	0.0	
Crack	0.8	2.1	1.3	0.6	0.1	0.0	
Heroin	0.3	1.2	1.3	0.7	0.4	0.0	
Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	62.4	62.8	66.0	67.2	59.5	49.0	
Sedatives or Tranquillisers	4.8	11.9	14.1	15.6	20.5	21.4	
Anti-depressants	5.1	10.7	13.1	15.2	14.5	10.5	
Anabolic Steroids	1.4	1.6	0.8	1.2	1.0	1.7	
Methadone	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.2	0.0	
Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	78.5	87.1	89.2	85.1	85.0	69.8	
Gambling <sup>**</sup>	~	~	~	~	~	~	
Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	36.6	54.9	51.6	56.7	53.2	52.1	
E-cigarettes	14.7	21.5	14.9	11.8	10.6	4.6	

### Last Year Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+), by Age, 2014/15

LAST YEAR	Drug Type	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	Any illegal drug*	18.7	13.4	5.5	2.8	1.7	0.0
Cannabis	16.2	11.9	4.5	2.3	1.7	0.0	
Ecstasy	6.7	2.6	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	
Cocaine (including crack)	3.2	2.6	0.8	0.6	0.0	0.0	
Cocaine powder	3.0	2.6	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	
Magic mushrooms	1.6	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Amphetamines	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Poppers	2.1	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
LSD	0.8	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	
New psychoactive substances	1.9	1.3	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	
Solvents	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	
Crack	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	
Heroin	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	50.9	46.8	45.6	46.5	37.1	29.7	
Sedatives or Tranquillisers	2.3	5.4	5.4	8.1	10.5	12.7	
Anti-depressants	2.9	4.8	6.0	9.0	7.6	5.0	
Anabolic Steroids	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.7	
Methadone	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	77.4	81.8	83.3	78.1	76.8	61.4	
Gambling <sup>**</sup>	46.5	63.9	70.5	69.4	72.4	65.3	
Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	33.5	42.1	28.7	25.9	21.6	13.6	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	~	~	~	

## Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+), by Age, 2014/15

	Drug Type	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
LAST MONTH	Any illegal drug*	9.6	7.7	2.6	1.0	1.0	0.0
	Cannabis	9.2	7.3	2.2	0.9	1.0	0.0
	Ecstasy	3.3	1.2	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.7	1.0	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0
	Cocaine powder	0.6	0.9	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Magic mushrooms	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Amphetamines	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Poppers	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	LSD	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	New psychoactive substances	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Solvents	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Crack	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Heroin	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other Opiates <sup>††</sup> (see footnote below)	23.0	21.9	19.7	22.3	17.4	13.5
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	0.6	2.3	2.5	5.2	6.9	10.9
	Anti-depressants	2.0	3.8	4.6	7.9	6.3	4.8
	Anabolic Steroids	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.5
Methadone	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	60.3	67.9	67.2	64.3	63.3	46.4	
Gambling <sup>**</sup>	22.0	41.9	44.7	46.4	49.4	45.0	
Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	27.3	37.1	25.9	23.3	19.1	12.5	
E-cigarettes	2.0	3.5	3.5	4.2	4.1	1.5	

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Please note the addition of new psychoactive substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010.

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~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

Lifetime usage of illegal drugs is highest amongst those aged 25-34 (43.8%). Past year and past month usage is highest amongst the 15 to 24 age group (18.7% and 9.6% respectively).

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug across all age groups, regardless of whether considering lifetime, past year or past month usage.

Lifetime usage of cannabis is highest amongst the 25 to 34 age group with over 4 in 10 (40.4%) in this age group having used this drug at some stage during their lives. The only type of illegal drug where a different age group has significantly higher lifetime prevalence is LSD with 7.2% of 35 to 44 year olds having used this compared to 3.7% of those aged 25 to 34.

Those aged 15 to 24 are the most likely to have used cannabis both in the past year and past month, with prevalence rates of 16.2% and 9.2% respectively.

A smaller difference in usage of other opiates exists across most age groups. The majority of all age groups (except those aged 65 and over) have used it at some stage of their lives. The highest past year and past month prevalence rates are reported by those aged 15 to 24 (50.9% and 23.0% respectively). Results for other opiates are not comparable to previous waves of the survey due to wording and showcard changes.

Lifetime and past year usage of alcohol is highest amongst those aged 35 to 44, and the majority of all age groups (except those aged 65 and over) have used it in the past month.

## Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+), by Gender and Age, 2014/15

### Lifetime Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+), by Gender and Age, 2014/15

LIFETIME	Drug Type	Male						Female					
		15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	Any illegal drug*	37.2	53.6	43.5	29.5	21.6	2.9	19.9	34.5	26.3	16.2	8.3	2.4
	Cannabis	31.8	49.9	41.5	27.1	20.7	2.7	17.0	31.4	22.7	13.9	8.2	1.7
	Ecstasy	14.7	22.7	15.0	5.4	1.3	0.0	7.0	10.4	6.5	1.0	0.0	0.0
	Cocaine (including crack)	10.3	18.3	13.3	6.3	3.1	0.1	4.2	8.7	5.0	2.1	0.5	0.0
	Cocaine powder	9.7	17.3	13.3	5.9	3.1	0.1	4.2	8.7	4.8	2.1	0.5	0.0
	Magic mushrooms	6.2	11.2	12.6	7.2	3.4	0.2	3.3	6.2	4.2	1.7	0.6	0.0
	Amphetamines	3.5	8.7	8.6	4.6	1.5	0.4	1.7	4.5	3.2	0.4	0.7	0.2
	Poppers	6.1	9.9	7.9	3.0	0.5	0.1	2.7	4.3	2.3	0.7	0.2	0.0
	LSD	3.1	5.1	10.9	5.3	3.0	0.5	1.3	2.3	3.5	0.7	1.3	0.1
	New psychoactive substances	5.4	9.8	3.3	2.7	0.2	0.1	4.6	3.9	1.2	0.9	0.1	0.4
	Solvents	3.6	5.8	7.2	2.9	0.9	0.1	2.4	4.0	1.7	0.7	0.1	0.0
	Crack	1.5	3.6	2.2	1.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Heroin	0.0	1.3	2.2	1.4	0.6	0.0	0.5	1.2	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.0
	Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	51.8	57.9	63.4	66.4	56.4	44.1	73.0	67.6	68.6	68.1	62.6	53.1
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	4.1	11.2	11.6	11.0	17.1	15.6	5.6	12.7	16.7	20.1	24.0	26.2
	Anti-depressants	5.0	7.0	9.3	11.7	11.1	6.5	5.3	14.2	16.9	18.8	17.8	13.8
	Anabolic Steroids	2.7	3.2	1.2	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.1	0.0	0.4	1.0	1.2	1.6
	Methadone	0.9	0.9	1.6	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	80.6	88.9	90.1	87.2	89.8	77.6	76.4	85.4	88.2	83.1	80.1	63.3
	Gambling <sup>**</sup>	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
	Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	39.7	60.2	56.6	60.8	55.7	62.8	33.6	49.8	46.6	52.7	50.6	43.2
	E-cigarettes	16.9	21.4	18.6	10.0	9.3	3.6	12.5	21.6	11.1	13.6	12.0	5.5

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Please note the addition of new psychoactive substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010.

<sup>†</sup> 2014/15 results for other opiates, alcohol and tobacco are not comparable with previous prevalence surveys due to wording and showcard changes. Other opiates – In 2010/11 the category "Other Opiates" also asked specifically about substances containing codeine. There were further changes to the showcard in 2014/15, see showcard 138 in the technical report. Alcohol – changes in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 alcohol prevalence, please see Appendix 3 for details. Tobacco – change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 tobacco prevalence. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

<sup>\*\*</sup> A broad definition of gambling was utilised, which included; buying a lottery ticket or scratchcard, playing lottery games online, gambling in a bookmaker's shop, gambling online or by telephone, placing a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, playing games at a casino, playing gaming/slot machines, playing card games for money with friends/family, playing bingo.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

Lifetime usage of illegal drugs is higher amongst males than females across all age groups. The widest gap is amongst those aged 25 to 34 with 53.6% of males and 34.5% of females using an illegal drug during their life. Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug across all age groups for both genders. Similarly the highest usage levels are recorded amongst those aged 25 to 34 with 49.9% of males and 31.4% of females having used cannabis during their life.

Lifetime usage of other opiates is higher for females than males across all age groups, and the majority of females in all age groups have used other opiates. Lifetime usage amongst females is highest in the youngest age group with 73.0% having taken other opiates at some stage. Results for other opiates are not comparable to previous waves of the survey due to wording and showcard changes.

Sedative and tranquilliser use is highest among females aged 65+ at 26.2% and lowest amongst young males (15-24) at 4.1%. Lifetime use of anti-depressants is highest amongst 45-54 year olds of both genders, at 11.7% of males and 18.8% of females. Just over a fifth of males (21.4%) and females (21.6%) aged 25-34 years report using of e-cigarettes in their lifetime.

## Last Year Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+), by Gender and Age, 2014/15

LAST YEAR	Drug Type	Male						Female					
		15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	Any illegal drug*	25.4	20.3	8.4	4.3	2.5	0.1	12.0	6.7	2.6	1.4	0.9	0.0
	Cannabis	21.5	18.0	7.1	3.8	2.5	0.0	10.9	6.1	2.0	0.7	0.9	0.0
	Ecstasy	9.7	3.8	1.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	3.7	1.5	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cocaine (including crack)	5.5	4.5	1.1	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Cocaine powder	5.1	4.4	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Magic mushrooms	2.4	1.1	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
	Amphetamines	0.9	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Poppers	3.2	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	LSD	1.3	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	New psychoactive substances	2.7	2.2	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.0
	Solvents	0.8	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Crack	1.0	0.8	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Heroin	0.0	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	38.6	44.1	41.8	43.8	31.0	24.1	63.3	49.5	49.3	49.2	43.3	34.3
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	1.6	4.3	4.1	5.8	7.0	8.1	3.0	6.5	6.7	10.5	14.0	16.5
	Anti-depressants	2.5	4.1	3.9	7.4	6.9	2.6	3.3	5.4	8.1	10.5	8.3	7.1
	Anabolic Steroids	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.6
	Methadone	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Alcohol <sup>†</sup>	79.6	86.4	84.9	79.5	79.9	69.2	75.2	77.5	81.7	76.7	73.7	55.0
	Gambling <sup>**</sup>	51.6	65.7	71.9	69.7	72.7	63.1	41.4	62.2	69.1	69.2	72.0	67.1
	Tobacco <sup>†</sup>	36.4	46.4	34.6	27.4	21.3	13.1	30.5	37.9	22.9	24.5	21.9	14.0
	E-cigarettes	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Please note the addition of new psychoactive substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010.

<sup>†</sup> 2014/15 results for other opiates, alcohol and tobacco are not comparable with previous prevalence surveys due to wording and showcard changes. Other opiates – In 2010/11 the category "Other Opiates" also asked specifically about substances containing codeine. There were further changes to the showcard in 2014/15, see showcard 138 in the technical report. Alcohol – changes in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 alcohol prevalence, please see Appendix 3 for details. Tobacco – change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 tobacco prevalence. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

<sup>\*\*</sup> A broad definition of gambling was utilised, which included; buying a lottery ticket or scratchcard, playing lottery games online, gambling in a bookmaker's shop, gambling online or by telephone, placing a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, playing games at a casino, playing gaming/slot machines, playing card games for money with friends/family, playing bingo.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

Last year usage of illegal drugs is highest amongst those aged 15 to 24 for both genders, however usage amongst males of this age (25.4%) is considerably higher than females of the same age (12.0%).

Cannabis is the most commonly used illegal drug for both genders across all age groups, with usage amongst males in most age categories at least twice as high as that for females.

As with lifetime prevalence, last year usage of other opiates is higher for females than males across all age categories. The highest level of usage is amongst females aged 15 to 24 (63.3%). Results for other opiates are not comparable to previous waves of the survey due to wording and showcard changes.

Last year use of alcohol is highest amongst males aged 25-34 years (86.4%) and females aged 35-44 years (81.7%).

## Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15+), by Gender and Age, 2014/15

LAST MONTH	Drug Type	Male						Female					
		15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	Any illegal drug*	13.4	12.8	4.0	1.7	1.5	0.0	5.8	3.0	1.2	0.2	0.6	0.0
	Cannabis	12.7	11.8	3.5	1.7	1.5	0.0	5.6	3.0	0.9	0.1	0.6	0.0
	Ecstasy	4.0	1.2	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	2.7	1.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cocaine (including crack)	1.5	1.5	0.2	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Cocaine powder	1.3	1.4	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Magic mushrooms	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Amphetamines	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Poppers	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	LSD	0.6	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	New psychoactive substances	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
	Solvents	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Crack	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Heroin	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	12.0	19.8	16.1	19.0	13.4	10.4	34.1	24.0	23.3	25.5	21.5	16.0
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	0.9	1.6	2.1	3.3	4.6	7.1	0.3	2.9	2.9	7.1	9.2	14.1
	Anti-depressants	2.1	3.1	2.9	6.5	5.5	2.4	1.9	4.5	6.5	9.3	7.1	6.8
	Anabolic Steroids	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.3
	Methadone	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	61.2	76.6	72.7	68.7	70.0	57.6	59.4	59.7	61.7	59.9	56.6	37.1
	Gambling <sup>**</sup>	26.8	49.7	49.0	52.2	52.1	45.8	17.1	34.6	40.4	40.6	46.7	44.4
	Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	30.9	42.0	31.1	25.0	19.1	12.6	23.6	32.5	20.7	21.6	19.1	12.5
	E-cigarettes	1.8	3.8	4.4	2.6	3.0	0.8	2.2	3.3	2.6	5.9	5.2	2.0

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Please note the addition of new psychoactive substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010.

<sup>†</sup> 2014/15 results for other opiates, alcohol and tobacco are not comparable with previous prevalence surveys due to wording and showcard changes. Other opiates – In 2010/11 the category "Other Opiates" also asked specifically about substances containing codeine. There were further changes to the showcard in 2014/15, see showcard 138 in the technical report. Alcohol – changes in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 alcohol prevalence, please see Appendix 3 for details. Tobacco – change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 tobacco prevalence. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

<sup>\*\*</sup> A broad definition of gambling was utilised, which included; buying a lottery ticket or scratchcard, playing lottery games online, gambling in a bookmaker's shop, gambling online or by telephone, placing a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, playing games at a casino, playing gaming/slot machines, playing card games for money with friends/family, playing bingo.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

A similar pattern in terms of last month usage of illegal drugs can be seen for both genders, with the highest usage levels amongst those aged 15 to 24 (males: 13.4%, females: 5.8%)

For most age groups, cannabis is the most commonly used drug with highest levels of usage for both genders amongst those aged 15 to 24 (males: 12.7%, females: 5.6%)

Over a third (34.1%) of females aged 15 to 24 have used other opiates during the past month. Less than 1 in 5 males across all age groups have used other opiates. Results for other opiates are not comparable to previous waves of the survey due to wording and showcard changes.

Last month use of tobacco is highest amongst 25-34 year olds, with 42.0% of males and 32.5% of females currently using tobacco.

Males across all age groups report higher last month usage of alcohol and tobacco when compared to females within the same age range.

# Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15-64 years)

Trend Data for 2002/03,  
2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15



## Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling (Adults 15-64) in Ireland 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15

### Lifetime Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling (Adults 15-64) in Ireland 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LIFETIME	Any illegal drug*	18.5	24.0 <sup>+</sup>	27.2 <sup>+</sup>	30.7 <sup>+</sup>
	Cannabis	17.3	21.9 <sup>+</sup>	25.3 <sup>+</sup>	27.9 <sup>+</sup>
	Ecstasy	3.7	5.5 <sup>+</sup>	6.9 <sup>+</sup>	9.2 <sup>+</sup>
	Cocaine (including crack)	3.0	5.3 <sup>+</sup>	6.8 <sup>+</sup>	7.8
	Cocaine powder	2.9	5.1 <sup>+</sup>	6.7 <sup>+</sup>	7.6
	Magic mushrooms	3.8	5.9 <sup>+</sup>	6.5	6.1
	Amphetamines	2.9	3.5	4.5 <sup>+</sup>	4.1
	Poppers	2.6	3.3	3.9	4.1
	LSD	2.9	2.9	4.4 <sup>+</sup>	3.8
	New Psychoactive Substances	~	~	~	3.5
	Solvents	1.7	1.9	2.6	3.2
	Crack	0.3	0.6	0.6	1.1 <sup>+</sup>
	Heroin	0.5	0.4	0.8 <sup>+</sup>	0.9
	Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	3.0	6.2	38.8	63.8
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	~	10.6	13.9 <sup>+</sup>	13.1
	Anti-depressants	~	9.3	10.4	11.6
	Anabolic Steroids	0.0	0.6 <sup>+</sup>	1.3 <sup>+</sup>	1.2
	Methadone	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.7
	Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	90.1	90.2	90.3	85.3
	Gambling <sup>**</sup>	~	~	~	~
Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	60.0	57.9	56.7	50.8	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	15.3	

### Last Year Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling (Adults 15-64) in Ireland 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LAST YEAR	Any illegal drug*	5.6	7.2 <sup>+</sup>	7.0	8.9 <sup>+</sup>
	Cannabis	5.1	6.3 <sup>+</sup>	6.0	7.7 <sup>+</sup>
	Ecstasy	1.1	1.2	0.5 <sup>+</sup>	2.1 <sup>+</sup>
	Cocaine (including crack)	1.1	1.7 <sup>+</sup>	1.5	1.5
	Cocaine powder	1.1	1.6 <sup>+</sup>	1.5	1.4
	Magic mushrooms	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6
	Amphetamines	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
	Poppers	0.4	0.5	0.2 <sup>+</sup>	0.6 <sup>+</sup>
	LSD	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3
	New Psychoactive Substances	~	~	3.5	0.8 <sup>+</sup>
	Solvents	0.1	0.0	0.1 <sup>+</sup>	0.2
	Crack	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Heroin	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	0.5	2.2	27.9	45.8
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	~	4.7	6.5 <sup>+</sup>	6.1
	Anti-depressants	~	4.4	4.8	5.9 <sup>+</sup>
	Anabolic Steroids	0.0	0.3 <sup>+</sup>	0.5	0.3
	Methadone	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
	Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	83.3	84.0	85.3	79.9
	Gambling <sup>**</sup>	~	~	~	64.4
Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	38.0	36.3	32.5 <sup>+</sup>	31.3	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	~	

**Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling (Adults 15-64) in Ireland  
2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15**

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LAST MONTH	Any illegal drug*	3.0	2.9	3.2	4.7 <sup>+</sup>
	Cannabis	2.6	2.6	2.8	4.4 <sup>+</sup>
	Ecstasy	0.3	0.3	0.1 <sup>+</sup>	1.0 <sup>+</sup>
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Cocaine powder	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4
	Magic mushrooms	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Amphetamines	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0
	Poppers	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	LSD	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	New psychoactive substances	~	~	~	0.1
	Solvents	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
	Crack	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Heroin	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
	Other Opiates <sup>††</sup> (see footnote below)	0.2	0.9	14.2	21.0
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	~	3.0	2.8	3.3
	Anti-depressants	~	3.2	4.1 <sup>+</sup>	4.8
	Anabolic Steroids	0.0	0.1 <sup>+</sup>	0.3	0.2
	Methadone	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
	Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	73.9	73.2	70.6 <sup>+</sup>	65.0
	Gambling <sup>**</sup>	~	~	~	40.7
Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	33.2	32.6	28.3 <sup>+</sup>	27.4	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	3.4	

<sup>+</sup> Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug when compared to prevalence reported in the previous survey.

<sup>\*</sup> Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Please note the addition of new psychoactive substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010.

<sup>††</sup> 2014/15 results for other opiates, alcohol and tobacco are not comparable with previous prevalence surveys due to wording and showcard changes. Other opiates – In 2010/11 the category "Other Opiates" also asked specifically about substances containing codeine. There were further changes to the showcard in 2014/15, see showcard 138 in the technical report. Alcohol – changes in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 alcohol prevalence, please see Appendix 3 for details. Tobacco – change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 tobacco prevalence. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

<sup>\*\*</sup> A broad definition of gambling was utilised, which included; buying a lottery ticket or scratchcard, playing lottery games online, gambling in a bookmaker's shop, gambling online or by telephone, placing a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, playing games at a casino, playing gaming/slot machines, playing card games for money with friends/family, playing bingo.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

Lifetime usage of any illegal drug has increased from 18.5% in 2002/03 to 30.7% in 2014/15. There has also been a significant increase since the 2010/11 study from 27.2%. Similarly last year and last month prevalence of any illegal drug has also increased since the previous study (respectively from 7.0% to 8.9%, and from 3.2% to 4.7%)

Significant increases in lifetime prevalence have been observed for cannabis (25.3% to 27.9%), ecstasy (6.9% to 9.2%), and crack (0.6% to 1.1%).

Significant increases in last year prevalence have been observed for cannabis (6.0% to 7.7%), ecstasy (0.5% to 2.1%), poppers (0.2% to 0.6%) and anti-depressants (4.8% to 5.9%).

Significant increases in last month prevalence have been observed for cannabis (2.8% to 4.4%) and ecstasy (0.1% to 1.0%).

Last year usage of new psychoactive substances has declined significantly from 3.5% to 0.8%. This follows legislative changes in this respect during that time period.

An increase in prevalence of anti-depressants since the previous study has also been observed. This is the case across lifetime (from 10.4% to 11.6%), last year (from 4.8% to 5.9%) and last month (from 4.1% to 4.8%)



**Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15-64), by Gender, 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15**

LAST MONTH	Drug Type	Male				Female			
		2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
	Any illegal drug*	4.1	4.5	5.3	7.1 <sup>+</sup>	1.8	1.4	1.1	2.2 <sup>+</sup>
	Cannabis	3.4	4.1	4.7	6.6 <sup>+</sup>	1.7	1.2	0.9	2.1 <sup>+</sup>
	Ecstasy	0.6	0.5	0.1 <sup>+</sup>	1.1 <sup>+</sup>	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.8 <sup>+</sup>
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.0	0.2 <sup>+</sup>	0.3	0.2
	Cocaine powder	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.2 <sup>+</sup>	0.3	0.2
	Magic mushrooms	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Amphetamines	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
	Poppers	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
	LSD	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	New psychoactive substances	~	~	~	0.1	~	~	~	0.1
	Solvents	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Crack	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Heroin	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
	Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	0.2	0.9	11.1	16.3	0.1	1.0	17.1	25.6
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	~	2.4	2.3	2.4	~	3.6	3.3	4.1
	Anti-depressants	~	2.3	3.2	3.9	~	4.0	5.0	5.7
	Anabolic Steroids	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1
	Methadone	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
	Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	78.3	78.1	76.3	70.3	69.4	68.3	65.1 <sup>+</sup>	59.7
	Gambling <sup>**</sup>	~	~	~	46.0	~	~	~	35.5
	Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	33.4	33.6	31.3	30.7	33.0	31.6	25.2 <sup>+</sup>	24.1
	E-cigarettes	~	~	~	3.2	~	~	~	3.7

<sup>+</sup> Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug when compared to prevalence reported in the previous survey. Please see Appendix for definition of significant change.

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Please note the addition of new psychoactive substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010.

<sup>†</sup> 2014/15 results for other opiates, alcohol and tobacco are not comparable with previous prevalence surveys due to wording and showcard changes. Other opiates – In 2010/11 the category "Other Opiates" also asked specifically about substances containing codeine. There were further changes to the showcard in 2014/15, see showcard 138 in the technical report. Alcohol – changes in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 alcohol prevalence, please see Appendix 3 for details. Tobacco – change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 tobacco prevalence. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

\*\* A broad definition of gambling was utilised, which included; buying a lottery ticket or scratchcard, playing lottery games online, gambling in a bookmaker's shop, gambling online or by telephone, placing a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, playing games at a casino, playing gaming/slot machines, playing card games for money with friends/family, playing bingo.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

Lifetime, last year and last month prevalence of illegal drugs has increased across both genders. This is the case both since the previous study (2010/11) and the first prevalence survey (2002/03)

Much of the increase is coming from increased usage of cannabis or ecstasy. Last month prevalence of cannabis amongst men has increased from 4.7% to 6.6%, and of ecstasy from 0.1% to 1.1%. Amongst women, last month prevalence of cannabis has increased from 0.9% to 2.1%, and of ecstasy from 0.0% to 0.8%

There has been a significant increase in the lifetime prevalence of anti-depressants amongst women (from 12.4% to 14.5%). Last year prevalence has increased from 5.6% to 7.0% and last month from 5.0% to 5.7%.



**Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use and Gambling in Ireland (Adults 15-64), by Age, 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15**

LAST MONTH	Drug Type	15-34 Years				35-64 Years			
		2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
	Any illegal drug*	5.2	5.0	5.3	8.5+	0.9	1.2	1.6	1.7
	Cannabis	4.3	4.3	4.5	8.1+	0.9	1.2	1.4	1.5
	Ecstasy	0.6	0.6	0.1+	2.1+	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.7	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Cocaine powder	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Magic mushrooms	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3+	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
	Amphetamines	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
	Poppers	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.3+	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
	LSD	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	New psychoactive substances	~	~	~	0.1	~	~	~	0.0
	Solvents	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
	Crack	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Heroin	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
	Other Opiates <sup>†</sup> (see footnote below)	0.1	0.8	14.2	22.4	0.2	1.1	14.1	19.9
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	~	1.3	1.0	1.6	~	4.5	4.1	4.6
	Anti-depressants	~	2.3	2.3	3.0	~	4.0	5.5+	6.2
	Anabolic Steroids	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1
	Methadone	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
	Alcohol <sup>††</sup>	74.6	73.7	70.9	64.6	73.3	72.7	70.4	65.2
	Gambling <sup>**</sup>	~	~	~	33.3	~	~	~	46.5
	Tobacco <sup>††</sup>	36.9	36.0	31.3+	32.8	29.8	29.7	25.9+	23.2
	E-cigarettes	~	~	~	2.8	~	~	~	3.9

+ Significant change (p<0.05) in prevalence of a drug when compared to prevalence reported in the previous survey. Please see Appendix for definition of significant change.

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Please note the addition of new psychoactive substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010.

† 2014/15 results for other opiates, alcohol and tobacco are not comparable with previous prevalence surveys due to wording and showcard changes. Other opiates – In 2010/11 the category “Other Opiates” also asked specifically about substances containing codeine. There were further changes to the showcard in 2014/15, see showcard 138 in the technical report. Alcohol – changes in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 alcohol prevalence, please see Appendix 3 for details. Tobacco – change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 tobacco prevalence. Please see Appendix 2 for further details.

\*\* A broad definition of gambling was utilised, which included; buying a lottery ticket or scratchcard, playing lottery games online, gambling in a bookmaker’s shop, gambling online or by telephone, placing a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, playing games at a casino, playing gaming/slot machines, playing card games for money with friends/family, playing bingo.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

There has been a statistically significant increase in lifetime prevalence of illegal drugs amongst those aged 35 to 64 since the previous study (from 20.6% to 25.6%). Statistically significant increases in last year and last month usage of any illegal drug are observed amongst the 15 to 34 age group.

Statistically significant increases amongst those aged 15 to 34 are observed for lifetime (10.9% to 14.0%), last year (0.9% to 4.4%) and last month use (0.1% to 2.1%) of ecstasy. This age group also show increases in last year (37.3% to 38.3%) and last month (31.3% to 32.8%) use of tobacco.

Statistically significant increases amongst those aged 35 to 64 are observed for lifetime use of ecstasy (3.7% to 5.6%) and solvents (1.5% to 2.5%).

Last year prevalence of new psychoactive substances amongst those aged 15 to 34 has declined significantly from 6.7% to 1.6%, and from 1.0% to 0.2% in the 35 to 64 age group.

An increase in prevalence of anti-depressants is observed for last year use among 15-64 year olds.



Prevalence of Drug Use  
in Northern Ireland  
2014/15  
(Adults 15-64)



## Key Findings in Northern Ireland

- ▶ More than a quarter of people surveyed (28%) reported having used an illegal drug during their lifetime, with 6% having done so during the previous year and 3% during the last month.
- ▶ Cannabis was the most commonly reported illegal drug with a quarter of respondents (25%) reporting having ever used the drug, 5% reporting recent use and 3% reporting current use.
- ▶ After cannabis, the most commonly reported drugs ever used were ecstasy (10%), poppers (7%) and cocaine powder (7%).
- ▶ A small proportion of respondents reported lifetime, last year and last month usage of New Psychoactive Substances.
- ▶ Over a third of males (35%) and a fifth of females (20%) had ever taken an illegal drug. Lifetime prevalence for cannabis for males (32%) was almost twice that for females (17%).
- ▶ A third of younger respondents (aged 15-34 years) (34%) and almost a quarter of older respondents (aged 35-64 years) (23%) had ever taken an illegal drug.
- ▶ Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) reported ever taking anti-depressants, while over a fifth reported taking other opiates (22%) and sedatives or tranquillisers (21%). Females and older respondents were the most likely to have taken these drugs.
- ▶ A fifth of respondents (20%) had used e-cigarettes at least once in their lifetime with 6% currently using them.
- ▶ There was a significant increase between 2010/11 to 2014/15 in the proportion of respondents who had taken other opiates across all prevalence periods.
- ▶ There was a significant decrease between 2010/11 and 2014/15 for last year prevalence of amphetamines and New Psychoactive Substances.
- ▶ Since the previous survey in 2010/11 there has been a significant increase in both last year prevalence and last month prevalence for anti-depressants.
- ▶ Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, there were significant decreases for tobacco use in lifetime, last year and last month prevalence periods.
- ▶ Current use of alcohol decreased between 2010/11 and 2014/15.

## Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) 2014/15

### Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) 2014/15

Drug Type	Lifetime	Last Year	Last Month
Any illegal drug*	27.7	5.9	2.9
Cannabis	24.6	4.6	2.2
Ecstasy	9.6	0.8	0.3
Cocaine (including crack)	7.4	1.8	0.6
Cocaine powder	7.2	1.8	0.6
Magic mushrooms	5.7	0.4	0.1
Amphetamines	6.1	0.5	0.2
Poppers	7.4	1.1	0.3
LSD	5.7	0.5	0.1
Mephedrone	2.5	0.6	0.3
New psychoactive substances	2.2	0.3	0.2
Solvents	3.1	0.0	0.0
Crack	0.8	0.3	0.1
Heroin	0.4	0.2	0.1
Other Opiates	22.2	10.0	5.1
Sedatives or tranquillisers	20.9	10.3	7.2
Anti-depressants	23.7	14.0	12.2
Anabolic steroids	1.6	0.6	0.3
Methadone	1.1	0.3	0.1
Alcohol	87.6	77.4	61.8
Tobacco	51.2	29.8	26.0
E-cigarettes	20.5	~	6.5

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

Over a quarter (28%) of respondents in Northern Ireland reported ever having used an illegal drug. The proportion that used illegal drugs in the last year was 6% and in the last month was 3%.

Cannabis was the most commonly reported drug used by respondents during their lifetime (25%), last year (5%) and last month (2%).

For other illegal drugs, lifetime, last year and last month prevalence rates were highest for ecstasy, poppers and cocaine powder.

A relatively small proportion of respondents reported use of new psychoactive substances and mephedrone over lifetime, last year and last month.

Almost a quarter of respondents (24%) had taken anti-depressants at some point during their lifetime, while more than a fifth had taken other opiates (22%) and sedatives or tranquillisers (21%).

Three-fifths of respondents (62%) were current drinkers while a quarter (26%) had smoked tobacco in the preceding month.

A fifth of respondents had used e-cigarettes at least once in their lifetime, while 6% were current users.

## Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) by Age 2014/15

### Lifetime Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) by Age 2014/15

LIFETIME	Drug Type	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
	Any illegal drug*	26.2	41.9	34.1	22.1	11.7
Cannabis	22.9	37.6	30.4	19.3	10.8	
Ecstasy	7.4	17.7	15.4	5.5	0.7	
Cocaine (including crack)	6.7	14.8	8.9	4.6	0.9	
Cocaine powder	6.4	14.6	8.7	4.6	0.9	
Magic mushrooms	2.3	9.2	7.7	6.6	2.1	
Amphetamines	2.9	9.4	11.3	4.2	2.3	
Poppers	7.0	14.8	9.3	4.6	0.5	
LSD	3.7	6.5	12.0	4.4	1.4	
Mephedrone	3.7	6.5	1.8	0.2	0.0	
New psychoactive substances	2.5	4.4	2.8	0.7	0.2	
Solvents	2.5	5.4	4.5	2.4	0.2	
Crack	1.0	1.0	1.2	0.6	0.0	
Heroin	0.0	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.0	
Other Opiates	13.5	22.9	26.6	25.7	22.1	
Sedatives or tranquillisers	7.4	19.6	23.5	26.6	28.1	
Anti-depressants	11.3	22.0	24.5	31.7	29.5	
Anabolic steroids	1.0	2.7	1.2	2.2	0.9	
Methadone	2.1	2.1	0.6	0.4	0.5	
Alcohol	82.0	93.5	89.9	88.8	83.1	
Tobacco	41.0	54.0	51.6	55.1	54.8	
E-cigarettes	24.2	23.7	20.1	19.3	14.3	

### Last Year Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) by Age 2014/15

LAST YEAR	Drug Type	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
	Any illegal drug*	11.5	9.8	4.4	1.7	1.6
Cannabis	9.4	7.3	3.2	1.5	1.4	
Ecstasy	1.8	1.5	0.6	0.0	0.0	
Cocaine (including crack)	3.7	3.5	1.4	0.4	0.0	
Cocaine powder	3.7	3.5	1.4	0.4	0.0	
Magic mushrooms	1.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Amphetamines	0.6	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.5	
Poppers	2.7	1.7	0.6	0.4	0.0	
LSD	1.6	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.0	
Mephedrone	1.0	1.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	
New psychoactive substances	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.0	0.0	
Solvents	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Crack	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.0	
Heroin	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	
Other Opiates	6.1	12.7	9.1	11.9	9.8	
Sedatives or tranquillisers	4.7	7.9	10.5	14.9	14.0	
Anti-depressants	7.0	11.9	12.8	20.2	18.3	
Anabolic steroids	0.6	1.0	0.4	0.7	0.2	
Methadone	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.2	
Alcohol	76.1	83.5	81.1	75.4	70.0	
Tobacco	30.5	34.9	29.1	30.0	23.4	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	~	~	

## Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) by Age 2014/15

	Drug Type	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
LAST MONTH	Any illegal drug*	5.9	4.6	1.8	0.6	1.2
	Cannabis	4.3	3.8	1.2	0.6	0.9
	Ecstasy	0.2	1.0	0.4	0.0	0.0
	Cocaine (including crack)	1.0	1.5	0.4	0.2	0.0
	Cocaine powder	1.0	1.5	0.4	0.2	0.0
	Magic mushrooms	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Amphetamines	0.0	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.2
	Poppers	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0
	LSD	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Mephedrone	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.0
	New psychoactive substances	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
	Solvents	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Crack	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Heroin	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0
	Other Opiates	1.2	5.4	4.9	7.2	7.3
	Sedatives or tranquillisers	2.3	4.0	7.3	11.8	10.5
	Anti-depressants	4.5	10.0	10.8	18.8	17.1
	Anabolic steroids	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.2
	Methadone	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2
	Alcohol	55.9	66.9	65.5	60.8	59.7
Tobacco	25.0	30.2	24.9	27.2	21.8	
E-cigarettes	5.3	7.3	7.7	7.5	4.2	

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

A higher proportion of younger respondents (15-34 years) than older respondents (35-64 years) had taken an illegal drug across each of the three prevalence periods (lifetime, last year and last month). The highest lifetime prevalence rate was found for those aged 25-34 years (42%) and the lowest among those aged 55-64 years (12%).

In each of the three prevalence periods younger respondents (15-34 years) were more likely to have ever used cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, poppers and mephedrone than older respondents aged 35-64 years.

Cannabis and amphetamines were the only illicit drugs reported as having been used by those aged 55-64 years in the last year and last month.

Those aged 25-34 were much more likely than those aged 55-64 to have used new psychoactive substances during their lifetime.

A higher proportion of older (35-64 years) than younger adults (15-34 years) had used anti-depressants, other opiates and sedatives or tranquillisers, in each of the three prevalence periods. Those aged 45 and over were over five times more likely to have used other opiates in the last month than those aged 15-24 years.

Older respondents (35-64 years) were more likely to have smoked tobacco during their lifetime, while younger respondents (15-34 years) were more likely to have smoked in the last year or last month.

While a higher proportion of 15-34 year olds (24%) than 35-64 year olds (18%) had used e-cigarettes during their lifetime, similar proportions were currently using them (6% and 7% respectively).



## Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) by Gender and Age 2014/15

Drug Type	Male					Female				
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64
Any illegal drug*	7.3	6.6	3.7	0.7	2.4	4.4	3.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
Cannabis	5.4	5.1	2.4	0.7	1.9	3.2	2.6	0.0	0.4	0.0
Ecstasy	0.4	2.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cocaine (including crack)	1.1	2.0	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cocaine powder	1.1	2.0	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Magic mushrooms	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Amphetamines	0.0	1.2	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Poppers	0.8	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
LSD	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mephedrone	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0
New psychoactive substances	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Solvents	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Crack	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Heroin	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Opiates	0.0	5.1	2.4	6.4	7.1	2.4	5.7	7.3	7.6	7.5
Sedatives or tranquillisers	2.3	3.9	7.3	12.4	8.5	2.4	4.2	6.9	11.2	12.6
Anti-depressants	1.9	9.8	6.5	15.7	15.6	7.2	10.2	15.0	21.7	18.6
Anabolic steroids	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.5
Methadone	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Alcohol	58.6	73.0	73.2	64.4	70.9	53.4	60.8	58.1	57.4	48.4
Tobacco	24.5	34.4	30.5	26.9	24.1	25.6	26.1	19.6	27.4	19.2
E-cigarettes	4.2	7.1	7.7	8.6	3.8	6.0	7.6	7.7	6.5	5.1

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

Males were most likely to have taken illegal drugs at least once in their lifetime. Over a third of male respondents (35%) compared with a fifth of females (20%) had ever taken an illegal drug. The proportion of males who had ever taken cannabis (32%) was almost double that of females (17%).

In contrast, females were more likely than males to have ever taken sedatives or tranquillisers, anti-depressants and other opiates.

The last year prevalence rate for any illegal drug was three times higher for males (9%) than for females (3%). In particular, these differences were found for cannabis, cocaine powder, amphetamines and ecstasy.

A higher proportion of females (17%) than males (11%) reported using anti-depressants within the last year. Females (11%) reported greater usage in the last year of other opiates than males (8%). Usage of sedatives or tranquillisers was broadly similar.

Males (4%) were more likely than females (2%) to report current use of an illegal drug, in particular, cannabis, ecstasy, mephedrone and new psychoactive substances.

A higher proportion of males had taken mephedrone and new psychoactive substances for lifetime, last year and last month prevalence periods.

Females were 50% more likely than males to report current use of both anti-depressants and other opiates, although similar proportions reported using sedatives or tranquillisers.

Females were more likely than males to have ever taken sedatives or tranquillisers, anti-depressants and other opiates for lifetime, last year and last month usage. This was particularly true in relation to older respondents (35-64 years).



Prevalence of Drug Use  
in Northern Ireland  
2002/03, 2006/07,  
2010/11, 2014/15  
(Adults 15-64 Years)



## Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11 and 2014/15

### Lifetime Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (Adults 15-64) 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11 and 2014/15

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LIFETIME	Any illegal drug*	20.0	28.0	27.3	27.7 <sup>b</sup>
	Cannabis	16.8	24.7	24.0	24.6 <sup>b</sup>
	Ecstasy	5.8	7.7	8.8	9.6 <sup>b</sup>
	Cocaine (including crack)	1.6	5.2	6.7	7.4 <sup>b</sup>
	Cocaine powder	1.6	5.1	6.5	7.2 <sup>b</sup>
	Magic mushrooms	4.3	6.7	5.8	5.7 <sup>b</sup>
	Amphetamines	4.0	5.8	6.3	6.1 <sup>b</sup>
	Poppers	5.5	7.8	8.8	7.4 <sup>b</sup>
	LSD	4.5	6.6	5.1	5.7
	Mephedrone	~	~	2.0	2.5
	New psychoactive substances	~	~	2.4	2.2
	Solvents	2.9	3.5	3.9	3.1
	Crack	0.2	0.4	0.9	0.8 <sup>b</sup>
	Heroin	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4
	Other Opiates	18.0	20.2	15.6	22.2 <sup>ab</sup>
	Sedatives or tranquillisers	~	20.2	20.7	20.9
	Anti-depressants	~	21.0	21.9	23.7
	Anabolic steroids	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.6 <sup>b</sup>
	Methadone	0.1	0.1	1.0	1.1 <sup>b</sup>
	Alcohol	88.2	87.3	88.9	87.6
Tobacco	58.6	55.3	54.9	51.2 <sup>ab</sup>	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	20.5	

### Last Year Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11 and 2014/15

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LAST YEAR	Any illegal drug*	6.4	9.4	6.6	5.9
	Cannabis	5.4	7.2	5.1	4.6
	Ecstasy	1.6	1.8	1.1	0.8 <sup>b</sup>
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.5	1.9	1.5	1.8 <sup>b</sup>
	Cocaine powder	0.5	1.9	1.5	1.8 <sup>b</sup>
	Magic mushrooms	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4
	Amphetamines	0.8	1.0	1.1	0.5 <sup>a</sup>
	Poppers	0.5	1.3	0.8	1.1 <sup>b</sup>
	LSD	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.5 <sup>b</sup>
	Mephedrone	~	~	1.1	0.5
	New psychoactive substances	~	~	1.0	0.3 <sup>a</sup>
	Solvents	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0
	Crack	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3
	Heroin	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2 <sup>b</sup>
	Other Opiates	8.0	8.4	6.4	10.0 <sup>ab</sup>
	Sedatives or tranquillisers	~	9.2	11.0	10.3
	Anti-depressants	~	9.1	12.0	14.0 <sup>a</sup>
	Anabolic steroids	0.3	0.2	0.8	0.6
	Methadone	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.3 <sup>b</sup>
	Alcohol	79.3	79.0	79.1	77.4
Tobacco	40.2	33.5	33.2	29.8 <sup>ab</sup>	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	~	

**Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland  
2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11 and 2014/15**

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LAST MONTH	Any illegal drug*	3.4	3.6	3.3	2.9
	Cannabis	2.9	2.6	2.7	2.2
	Ecstasy	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.3
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.6 <sup>b</sup>
	Cocaine powder	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.6 <sup>b</sup>
	Magic mushrooms	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Amphetamines	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2
	Poppers	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.3
	LSD	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Mephedrone	~	~	0.1	0.3
	New psychoactive substances	~	~	0.2	0.2
	Solvents	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
	Crack	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Heroin	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Other Opiates	4.1	4.9	3.6	5.1 <sup>a</sup>
	Sedatives or tranquillisers	~	7.1	8.0	7.2
	Anti-depressants	~	7.5	10.2	12.2 <sup>a</sup>
	Anabolic steroids	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.3
	Methadone	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Alcohol	67.6	69.5	67.5	61.8 <sup>ab</sup>
Tobacco	37.0	29.5	30.0	26.0 <sup>ab</sup>	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	6.5	

a Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug in 2014/15 when compared to prevalence reported in the 2010/11 survey. Please see Appendix for definition of significant change.

b Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug in 2014/15 when compared to prevalence reported in the 2002/03 survey. Please see Appendix 1 for definition of significant change.

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Prior to 2014/15, mephedrone and new psychoactive substances were not included in this category.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix 1 for details.

The proportion of respondents having taken illegal drugs increased between 2002/03 and 2014/15. This was true for cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, magic mushrooms, amphetamines and crack.

There were significant increases for last year use of ecstasy, cocaine, amphetamines, poppers, LSD and heroin between 2002/03 and 2014/15.

There was an increase in the proportion of respondents that had used cocaine in the previous month between 2002/03 and 2014/15.

Between 2002/03 and 2014/15, in terms of prescription medicines, there were lifetime prevalence increases for other opiates, anabolic steroids and methadone.

The proportion of respondents who reported having taken an illegal drug was similar in 2010/11 and 2014/15 for lifetime, last year and last month prevalence periods.

There were no significant differences reported for use of any of the listed illegal drugs between 2010/11 and 2014/15 for lifetime prevalence and last month prevalence. In relation to last year prevalence, there was a significant decrease in the proportion that had taken amphetamines and new psychoactive substances between 2010/11 and 2014/15.

The proportion of respondents that stated using other opiates and anti-depressants significantly increased between 2010/11 and 2014/15.

Both current alcohol and tobacco consumption decreased between 2010/11 and 2014/15.



**Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (15-64 year olds) by Gender  
2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15**

LAST MONTH	Drug Type	Male				Female			
		2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
	Any illegal drug*	5.7	4.9	5.1	4.2	1.1	2.4	1.6	1.6
	Cannabis	5.1	3.7	4.4	3.1 <sup>b</sup>	0.8	1.6	1.1	1.3
	Ecstasy	0.9	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.0
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.2	0.7	0.9	0.9 <sup>b</sup>	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.3 <sup>b</sup>
	Cocaine powder	0.2	0.7	0.9	0.9 <sup>b</sup>	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3 <sup>b</sup>
	Magic mushrooms	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Amphetamines	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0
	Poppers	0.2	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.2
	LSD	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
	Mephedrone	~	~	0.1	0.5	~	~	0.0	0.1
	New psychoactive substances	~	~	0.3	0.3	~	~	0.1	0.0
	Solvents	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Crack	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
	Heroin	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
	Other Opiates	3.1	5.1	3.3	4.1	5.2	4.7	3.8	6.1 <sup>a</sup>
	Sedatives or tranquillisers	~	5.7	7.3	6.8	~	8.4	8.7	7.4
	Anti-depressants	~	4.2	7.6	9.8	~	10.7	12.8	14.5
	Anabolic steroids	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.3
	Methadone	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Alcohol	72.7	69.5	72.4	67.8 <sup>ab</sup>	62.5	64.5	62.6	55.9 <sup>ab</sup>
	Tobacco	37.0	29.5	31.7	28.2 <sup>b</sup>	37.1	28.1	28.3	23.8 <sup>ab</sup>
	E-cigarettes	~	~	~	6.4	~	~	~	6.6

a Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug in 2014/15 when compared to prevalence reported in the 2010/11 survey. Please see Appendix 1 for definition of significant change.

b Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug in 2014/15 when compared to prevalence reported in the 2002/03 survey. Please see Appendix 1 for definition of significant change.

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Prior to 2014/15, mephedrone and new psychoactive substances were not included in this category.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix for details.

There was a significant increase for both males and females in lifetime prevalence for illegal drugs between 2002/03 and 2014/15. This was true for cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamines.

Between 2002/03 and 2014/15, there were significant increases in lifetime prevalence rates for anabolic steroids and methadone for males and for other opiates for females.

Although there was no significant difference for last year prevalence for any illegal drug overall between 2002/03 and 2014/15, there was increased use of cocaine and LSD for males and cocaine, magic mushrooms and poppers for females. Over the same period, use of ecstasy declined for males.

Significant increases between 2002/03 and 2014/15 for last year prevalence were found for males for methadone and females for other opiates.

In terms of current drug use, use of cannabis by males fell between 2002/03 and 2014/15. Conversely, there was a rise in cocaine use by males and females over the same period.

Between 2002/03 and 2014/15, current consumption of alcohol and tobacco use fell significantly for both males and females.

There were no significant differences for any of the listed illegal drugs for males for each of the three prevalence periods (lifetime, last year and last month) between 2010/11 and 2014/15.

There were significant increases for female use of other opiates between 2010/11 and 2014/15 for lifetime, last year and last month periods, while this was true for males for lifetime and last year prevalence.



**Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use in Northern Ireland (15-64 year olds) by Age  
2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15**

LAST MONTH	Drug Type	15-34 Years				35-64 Years			
		2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
	Any illegal drug*	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.2	1.2	2.0	1.7	1.2
	Cannabis	5.4	3.7	4.6	4.1	1.0	1.8	1.3	0.9
	Ecstasy	1.1	1.4	0.6	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.2	0.6	0.6	1.2 <sup>b</sup>	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.2
	Cocaine powder	0.2	0.6	0.6	1.2 <sup>b</sup>	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.2
	Magic mushrooms	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Amphetamines	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.4	0.1
	Poppers	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1
	LSD	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
	Mephedrone	~	~	0.1	0.5	~	~	0.0	0.1
	New psychoactive substances	~	~	0.4	0.3	~	~	0.0	0.1
	Solvents	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Crack	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
	Heroin	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
	Other Opiates	3.3	3.6	2.9	3.2	4.8	5.8	4.0	6.4 <sup>ab</sup>
	Sedatives or tranquillisers	~	2.3	3.6	3.2	~	10.7	11.2	9.9
	Anti-depressants	~	4.2	5.0	7.3	~	10.0	14.0	15.6
	Anabolic steroids	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.3
	Methadone	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
	Alcohol	70.1	71.0	70.2	61.5 <sup>ab</sup>	65.5	68.6	65.6	62.0 <sup>ab</sup>
	Tobacco	39.3	32.8	32.2	27.7 <sup>b</sup>	35.2	27.1	28.4	24.8 <sup>ab</sup>
	E-cigarettes	~	~	~	6.3	~	~	~	6.6

a Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug in 2014/15 when compared to prevalence reported in the 2010/11 survey. Please see Appendix for definition of significant change.

b Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug in 2014/15 when compared to prevalence reported in the 2002/03 survey. Please see Appendix for definition of significant change.

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Prior to 2014/15, mephedrone and new psychoactive substances were not included in this category.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix for details.

There was no significant difference for lifetime prevalence for any illegal drug for younger adults (aged 15-34 years) between 2002/03 and 2014/15. However, lifetime use of cannabis and cocaine rose, while use of LSD decreased. In contrast, there was a significant increase among older respondents (aged 35-64 years) in the use of illegal drugs during their lifetime which was true for the majority of illegal drug categories.

Lifetime usage of methadone increased between 2002/03 and 2014/15 for both younger and older adults. There were also increases in lifetime usage of other opiates and anabolic steroids for older adults over the same period. There was no significant difference in the use of any illegal drug during the previous 12 months for younger or older adults between 2002/03 and 2014/15. There was an increase in methadone use for younger adults with regards last year use and an increase in other opiate use for older adults between 2002/03 and 2014/15.

Cocaine usage increased significantly for all three prevalence periods between 2002/03 and 2014/15 for younger adults. There were significant decreases for use of tobacco for all prevalence periods for both older and younger respondents between 2002/03 and 2014/15.

Between 2010/11 and 2014/15 there were no significant differences in relation to the proportions of younger and older respondents that had taken any illegal drug across all three prevalence periods. The proportion of younger adults (15-34 year olds) that used amphetamines during their lifetime declined between 2010/11 and 2014/15. In relation to lifetime prevalence for older adults (35-64 years) there were significant increases in use for cocaine, amphetamines and ecstasy. Conversely there was a significant decrease in the use of amphetamines among older adults during the previous year. Significant increases between 2010/11 and 2014/15 were found for 15-34 year olds with regards to other opiates for lifetime and last year prevalence. This was also true for older adults.



Prevalence of Drug Use and  
Gambling on the Island of Ireland  
2014/15  
(Adults 15+ years)



## Prevalence of Drug Use (Adults 15-64) on the Island of Ireland 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15

### Lifetime Prevalence of Drug Use (Adults 15-64) on the Island of Ireland 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LIFETIME	Any illegal drug*	18.9	25.1+	27.3+	29.8+
	Cannabis	17.2	22.7+	24.9+	26.9+
	Ecstasy	4.3	6.0+	7.4+	9.3+
	Cocaine (including crack)	2.6	5.2+	6.8+	7.7
	Cocaine powder	2.5	5.1+	6.7+	7.5
	Magic mushrooms	4.0	6.0+	6.3	6.0
	Amphetamines	3.3	4.2+	5.0+	4.6
	Poppers	3.4	4.6+	5.3	5.1
	LSD	3.4	3.9	4.6	4.4
	Solvents	2.0	2.4	3.0	3.2
	Crack	0.3	0.5+	0.7	1.0
	Heroin	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.7
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	~	13.3	15.8+	15.3+
	Anti-depressants	~	12.5	13.6	15.0+
	Anabolic Steroids	~	~	~	1.3
	Methadone	0.3	0.3	0.6+	1.2+
	E-cigarettes	~	~	~	16.7

### Last Year Prevalence of Drug Use (Adults 15-64) on the Island of Ireland 2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LAST YEAR	Any illegal drug*	5.8	7.8+	6.9	8.0+
	Cannabis	5.1	6.5+	5.7	6.8+
	Ecstasy	1.3	1.4	0.7+	1.7+
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.9	1.7+	1.5	1.6
	Cocaine powder	0.9	1.7+	1.5	1.5
	Magic mushrooms	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5
	Amphetamines	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.3
	Poppers	0.4	0.7+	0.4+	0.7+
	LSD	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3
	Solvents	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Crack	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
	Heroin	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	~	6.0	7.8+	7.3+
	Anti-depressants	~	5.7	6.8+	8.2+
	Anabolic Steroids	~	~	~	0.4
	Methadone	0.2	0.1	0.3+	0.3
	E-cigarettes	~	~	~	~

**Last Month Prevalence of Drug Use (Adults 15-64) on the Island of Ireland  
2002/03, 2006/07, 2010/11, 2014/15**

	Drug Type	2002/03	2006/07	2010/11	2014/15
LAST MONTH	Any illegal drug*	3.1	3.1	3.2	4.1+
	Cannabis	2.7	2.6	2.8	3.7+
	Ecstasy	0.4	0.4	0.1+	0.8+
	Cocaine (including crack)	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Cocaine powder	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5
	Magic mushrooms	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
	Amphetamines	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
	Poppers	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
	LSD	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1+
	Solvents	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
	Crack	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1+
	Heroin	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
	Sedatives or Tranquillisers	~	4.1	4.3	4.4+
	Anti-depressants	~	4.3	5.8+	6.9+
Anabolic Steroids	~	~	~	0.2	
Methadone	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	
E-cigarettes	~	~	~	3.5	

+ Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug when compared to prevalence reported in the previous survey. Please see Appendix for definition of significant change.

\* Any illegal drug refers to cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine powder, magic mushrooms, amphetamines, poppers, LSD, new psychoactive substances, mephedrone, solvents, crack, heroin. Mephedrone is treated separately to new psychoactive substances in Northern Ireland, but included in the definition of new psychoactive substances in the Republic of Ireland.

~ Prevalence not asked or reported on, see Appendix for details.

Results for alcohol cannot be combined for Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland due to differences in how the questions were asked.

Lifetime usage of any illegal drug has increased from 27.3% in 2010/11 to 29.8% in 2014/15. Cannabis has the highest lifetime prevalence at 26.9% (increased from 24.9% in 2010/11). Lifetime prevalence of ecstasy has also increased since 2010/11 from 7.4% to 9.3%.

15.3% have taken sedatives or tranquillisers during their life; however this represents a decline from 15.8% in 2010/11.

Lifetime prevalence of anti-depressants has increased to 15.0% (from 13.6% in 2010/11).

Last year prevalence of any illegal drug is 8.0%. Last year usage of cannabis, ecstasy and poppers have all increased since 2010/11, with the 2014/15 survey recording usage levels of 6.8%, 1.7% and 0.7% respectively.

Last year usage of sedatives or tranquillisers has decreased to 7.3% (from 7.8% in 2010/11). However, last year usage of anti-depressants has increased to 8.2% (from 6.8% in 2010/11).

Last month usage of any illegal drug is 4.1%, an increase from 3.2% in 2010/11. Cannabis, ecstasy, LSD and crack have all increased in last month usage since the 2010/11 survey to 3.7%, 0.8%, 0.1% and 0.1% respectively.

Last month usage of sedatives or tranquillisers has increased to 4.4% (from 4.3% in 2010/11), with last month usage of anti-depressants increasing from 5.8% to 6.9%.



# Appendices



## Appendix 1

**Alcohol** – Change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 alcohol prevalence, please see appendix 3 for details.

**Any illegal drug** in the Republic of Ireland refers to Cannabis, Cocaine (including crack), Ecstasy, Cocaine Powder, Magic Mushrooms, Amphetamines, Poppers, LSD, New Psychoactive Substances, Solvents, Crack, and Heroin. Please note the addition of New Psychoactive Substances into this category for 2014/15 following the Criminal Justice (Psychoactive Substances) Act 2010 in the Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland includes a separate question on Mephedrone use which is asked separately from New Psychoactive Substances which means that comparisons on an all-island basis are not possible.

**E-Cigarettes** – Lifetime and Last Month Prevalence of E-Cigarettes was asked for the first time in the 2014/15 survey. Last Year Prevalence of E-cigarettes was not asked. Lifetime use refers to those who tried E-Cigarettes and no longer use them combined with those who still use them. Last Month prevalence was calculated as those who have tried e-cigarettes and still use them.

**Gambling** – In 2014/15, in Ireland, the survey asked about the last year and last month prevalence of Gambling for the first time. Lifetime prevalence was not asked. Gambling includes all forms of gambling, buying a lottery ticket or scratchcard in person, playing lottery games online, gambling in a bookmaker's shop, gambling online or by telephone, placing a bet at a horse or dog racing meeting, playing games at a casino, playing gaming/slot machines, playing card games for money with friends/family, playing bingo in person and other such as work sweepstakes.

**New Psychoactive Substances** – In 2010/11 the survey asked respondents about their use of New Psychoactive Substances for the first time (classed as legal highs in Northern Ireland in 2010/11). The survey asked about use in the last 12 months only. In 2014/15 the survey asked respondents about their last year and last month use of New Psychoactive Substances for the first time.

**Other Opiates** – Tests for statistical significance between the prevalence of 'Other Opiates' are not reported in Ireland. As a result of measurement changes in 2006/07 and 2010/11, the 'Other Opiates' category is not comparable between the surveys. In 2010/11 the category 'Other Opiates' also asked specifically about substances containing codeine. Further, in 2010/11 there were two showcards for the 'Other Opiates' questions. There were further changes to the showcard in 2014/15, please see showcard 138 in the technical report for the full list of drugs included in the 'Other Opiates' Category.

**Sedatives and Tranquillisers** – In 2002/03 the survey asked about use of sedatives, tranquillisers or anti-depressants together. Since 2006/07 the survey has asked about sedatives/tranquillisers and anti-depressants separately.

**Tobacco** – Change in question wording and calculation for 2014/15 tobacco prevalence in Ireland, please see appendix 2 for details.

+ Significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) in prevalence of a drug when compared to prevalence reported in the previous survey i.e. significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) between 2010/11 and 2014/15 or significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) between 2006/07 and 2010/11 or significant change ( $p < 0.05$ ) between 2002/03 and 2006/07. When considering the results it should be borne in mind that statistical significance does not imply that the change is of practical importance.

## Appendix 2

### Smoking Prevalence Questions in Ireland in 2010/11 and 2014/15

Smoking Prevalence	
2010/11	2014/15
<b>Q1 Do you smoke tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars or a pipe?</b>	<b>Q1 Do you smoke tobacco products?</b>
1. Yes	1. Yes Daily
2. No	2. Yes Occasionally
	3. No
<b>Q2 Have you ever smoked tobacco products in the past?</b>	<b>Q2 Did you ever smoke tobacco products (in the past)?</b>
1. Yes	1. Yes Daily
2. No	2. Yes Occasionally
	3. No
<b>Q4 During the past 12 months have you smoked tobacco products?</b>	<b>Q200 About how long has it been since you last smoked tobacco products?</b>
1. Yes	1. Within the past month (anytime < than 1 month ago)
2. No	2. Within the past 3 months (1 month but < than 3 months ago)
	3. Within the past 6 months (3 months but < than 6 months ago)
<b>Q5 During the last 30 days have you smoked tobacco products?</b>	4. Within the past year (6 months but < than 1 year ago)
1. Yes	5. Within the past 5 years (1 year but < than 5 years ago)
2. No	6. Within the past 10 years (5 years but < than 10 years ago)
	7. 10 or more years ago

### Calculation of Smoking Prevalence 2010/11 compared to 2014/15

<b>Life Time</b>	
2014/15	Q1 (Code 1+2) + Q2 (Code 1+2)
2010/11	Q1 (Code 1) + Q2 (Code 1)
<b>Last Year</b>	
2014/15	Q1 (Code 1+2) + Q200 (Code 1+2+3+4)
2010/11	Q4 (Code 1)
<b>Last Month</b>	
2014/15	Q1 (Code 1+2) + Q200 (Code 1)
2010/11	Q5 (Code 1)

## Appendix 3

### Alcohol Prevalence Questions 2010/11 and 2014/15

Alcohol Prevalence	
2010/11	2014/15
<b>Q11b How often have you consumed alcohol in the last 12 months</b>	<b>Q11b How often have you consumed alcohol in the last 12 months?</b>
1. Daily	1. Daily
2. 4/5 times a week	2. 5-6 times a week
3. 2/3 times a week	3. 4 times a week
4. Once a week	4. 3 times a week
5. 2/3 times a month	5. Twice a week
6. Once a month	6. Once a week
7. Less often than once a month	7. 2-3 times a month
	8. Once a month
	9. 6-11 times a year
	10. 2-5 times a year
	11. Once a year
	12. Dramatically changed drinking in last 12 months
	13. I did not drink in the last year but I drank longer ago

### Calculation of Alcohol Prevalence 2010/11 compared to 2014/15

Last Year	
2014/15	Q11b (Code 1-11)
2010/11	Q11b (Code 1-7)
Last Month	
2014/15	Q11b (Code 1-8)
2010/11	Q11b (Code 1-6)



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