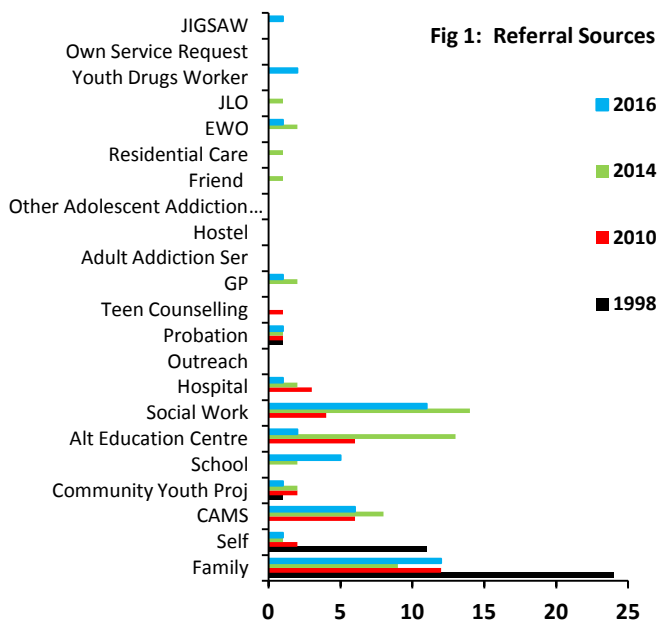




Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

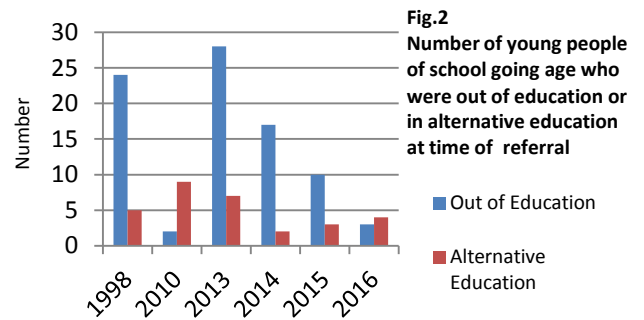
Adolescent Addiction Service Report 2017

In 2016 the Adolescent Addiction Service worked with 49 young people and their families with a mean age of 15.5 years (range 14–18 years), comprising new referrals, re-referrals and continuances. The majority (77%) were male. Referrals were received from a broad range of services. See Fig.1 for a comparison with previous years. In addition to direct work with young people and families the service engaged in consultations with other professionals and services about young people for whom there were concerns in relation to substance misuse, including consultations relating to young people who live outside of catchment area.



The numbers of young people attending the service of school going age, who were out of education/training at time of referral decreased significantly from 18% in 2015 to 6% reflecting continuing improvements in terms of educational retention, see Fig.2 for comparison with other years. The number of young people who had previous/current contact with CAMHS was similar to previous years at 60%, with the overall profile of attendees consistent with research highlighting that young people with pre-existing mental health or behavioural difficulties are at greater risk of engaging in substance misuse and other risk behaviours. All attendees were known to a number of agencies and on average the service worked with two other agencies on behalf of young people (range=1-5) in addition to other concerned persons. The extent to which substance misuse featured within families was similar to 2015 at 36%. The incidence of parental separation decreased to 56% compared to 66% in 2015. In terms of referral areas, the greatest numbers

of referrals were from Clondalkin (40%) but referrals from Ballyfermot showed increase at (37%), while Lucan (16%), Palmerstown (2%) and Inchicore (5%). See Fig.3 for comparison with previous years.



Cannabis/weed continues to be the main substance of use at 63% in terms of primary use and with an overall use rate of 90%. Alcohol use among attendees showed a primary use rate of 12% and overall use of 60%. Other substances of use included Benzodiazepines 33%; Amphetamines 31%; Cocaine 29%; and LSD 2%. The biggest shift concerning secondary drug use related to drop in Alcohol use by 26% and Cocaine use by 11%. Solvents and Head Shop type products did not feature among young people's reported substance use in 2016 and 34% had issues relating to indebtedness compared to 46% in 2015. Other issues related to absconding 40% representing a 14% increase on 2015 and resulted in increased number of people accessing Out of Hours Services 8% and care placement 12%. Also the proportion of young people who had Hospital admission was high at 14% and 13% had a history of self-harm with 2% having attempted suicide.

The majority of young people 87% were seen by Family Therapist only, with 13% having Psychiatric Assessment. No young person required medication. As in previous years most young people had established patterns of substance use prior to referral (range 1mth to 4 years) and as a consequence many struggle to maintain drug free status but most achieve stability and several remain abstinent. Currently, in some areas, a number of families are facing threat of eviction due to landlords using excuse of anti-social behaviour by young people as competition for accommodation escalates.

