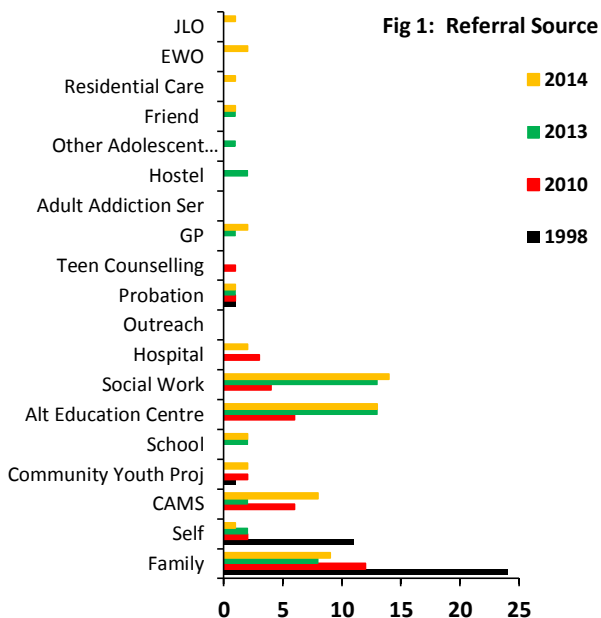


Adolescent Addiction Service Report 2015

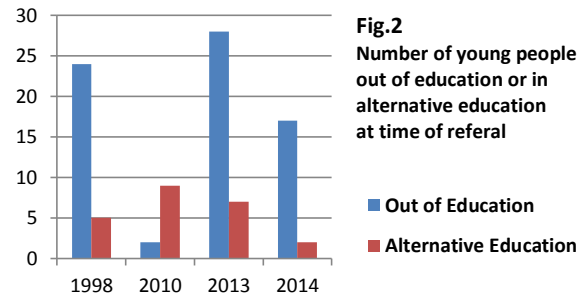
In 2014 the Adolescent Addiction Service worked with 59 young people and their families with a mean age of 15 years (range 13–19 years), comprising new referrals, re-referrals and continuances. The majority (69%) were male. Referrals were received from a broad range of services See Fig. 1 for a comparison 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, from as far afield as Wicklow, Louth, Meath, Kildare as well as Dun-Laoghaire and Bray.



The numbers of young people attending the service of school going age and who were out of education/training at time of referral remained high at 29%. See Fig 2 for comparison with other years. Also the number of young people who had previous/current contact with CAMHS was similar to previous years at 72%, which is 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. 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 lower than in 2013 at 45%, representing a drop of 23%.

The number of young people who had parent/sibling linked to Adult Addiction services remained high at 24%. The incidence of parental separation was also high at 72%. In terms of referral areas, the greatest numbers of referrals were from Clondalkin (42%), Ballyfermot (26%), Lucan (23%), Palmerstown (7%) and Inchicore (2%). See Fig 3 for comparison with previous years.



Cannabis/weed continues to be the primary substance of use (94%) which represents a 7% increase on 2013. Other substances used included Alcohol (83%); Amphetamines (34%); Benzodiazepines (24%); Cocaine (22%); Solvents (2%); and LSD (2%). The biggest shift concerning secondary drug use related to increased Amphetamine and Cocaine usage. As a consequence 34% had issues relating to indebtedness. Other issues related to absconding (22%); self-harm (14%); care placement (10%); child protection (10%) and child to parent violence (3%). Additionally, young people's capacity to purchase alcohol or to have alcohol purchased for them continues to be an issue.

The majority of young people 88% (N=52) were seen by Family Therapist only while 12% (N=7) had Psychiatric Assessment with 4% (N=2) receiving medication for treatment of ADHD and Benzodiazepine detoxification. In most cases young people had established patterns of substance for over two years 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.

