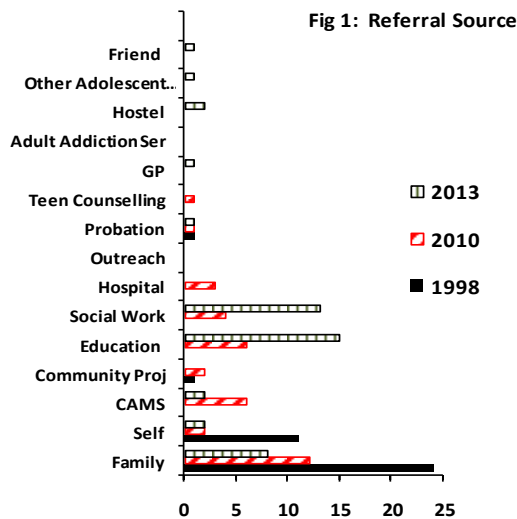
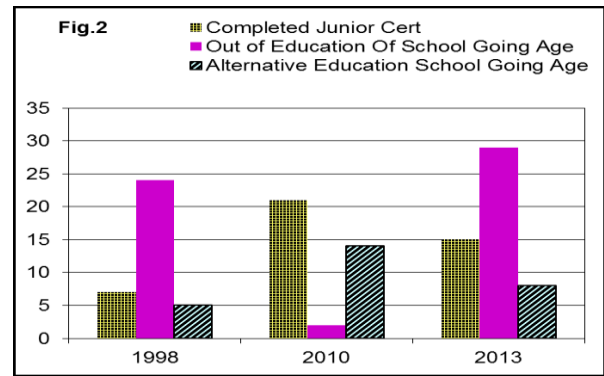


Adolescent Addiction Service Report 2014

In 2013 the Adolescent Addiction Service worked with 53 young people and their families of which 68% (36) were new referrals with a mean age of 15 years (range 13–18 years). The majority (63%) were male. Referrals were received from a broad range of services with Alternative Education Projects representing (33%) followed by Social Work (29%), Family (18%), Self (5%), CAMHS (4%), Hostel (4%), School (4%) and friend, GP and other Adolescent Substance Misuse Treatment Service all at (2%). See Fig. 1 for a comparison with other years. In addition to direct work with young people and families the service also engaged consultations with other professionals and services about young people for whom there were concerns in relation to substance misuse.



The numbers of young people attending the service of school going age who were out of education was high compared to previous years at 28 out of 31 young people under age 16 years old (90%). See Fig 2 for comparison with other years. Also the number of young people who had previous/current contact with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was higher than in other years at 73%. There was a rise in the number of young people who were linked to social work services at 29% (N=15) with 12% (N=6) subject to Child Protection Notification System. All attendees were known to a number of services. The extent to which to which substance misuse featured within families was also high (68%) and significantly 26% had a parent who was linked to Adult Addiction Services.



In terms of referral areas there was a shift in 2013 in that for the first time since 1997 no referrals were received from Inchicore. In contrast referrals from Clondalkin continue to rise (44%), followed by Lucan (32%), Ballyfermot (20%) and Palmerstown (4%). See Fig 3.

Cannabis/weed continues to be the primary substance of use (87%) which represents a 7% increase on 2012. Some young people view weed to be less harmful than cigarettes and quote various information sources in support of their position. The issues of indebtedness, poor school attendance, lack of motivation, challenging behaviour, memory loss and mental health concerns are often overlooked. Other substances used include Alcohol, Benzodiazepines, Amphetamines, Cocaine, Solvents and Heroin. The majority of young people 92% (N=49) were seen by Family Therapist only while 8% (N=4) had Psychiatric Assessment with 4% (N=2) receiving medication for treatment of ADHD. There is a trend among some young females engaging with older men whom they make contact with through internet sites. Another feature of the work over the past year has been the number of Non-Irish Nationals attending the service who live mainly in Lucan area. Nationalities include Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Nigerian. In most cases young people had established patterns of substance use prior to referral and as a consequence many struggle to maintain drug free status but the majority achieve stability and several remain abstinent.

