

National Drug Treatment Reporting System 2012 – 2018 Alcohol Data

Introduction

In this bulletin, trends in **treated problem alcohol use** are described for the seven-year period from 2012 to 2018. The data are taken from the **National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS)**, the national surveillance system that records and reports on cases of drug and alcohol treatment in Ireland.

Overview

In this seven-year period, 54,263 cases were treated for **alcohol** as a main problem.

- The number of cases decreased from 8,609 in 2012 to **7,464** in 2018.
- The proportion of *new cases* decreased from 48.2% in 2012 to 43.3% in 2018.

Level of problem alcohol use

- In 2018, the **median age** at which cases first started drinking for those treated for problem alcohol use was 15 years.
- Seven-in-every-ten (71.0%) cases were classified as **alcohol dependent**. *For definition of alcohol dependent please see page 4.*
- In 2018, 65.6% of new cases were classified as **alcohol dependent** as compared to 48.4% in 2012.
- The proportion of previously treated cases classified as **alcohol dependent** increased from 62.6% in 2012 to 76.8% in 2018.
- In 2018, 73.4% of males were classified as **alcohol dependent**, as compared to 66.8% of females.

Socio-demographics

- In 2018, the **median age** of treated cases was 41 years, similar to previous years.
- Almost two-thirds of cases in 2018 were **male** (64.5%).

- Cases recorded as **Irish Traveller** in ethnicity represented 1.9% of all cases in 2018.
- Over half (50.7%) of cases in 2018 were **unemployed**.
- The proportion of cases that were **homeless** increased from 5.6% in 2012 to 9.6% in 2018.
- In 2018, 11.6% of males and 5.8% of females were recorded as **homeless**.
- Almost one-third (30.6%) of females were aged **50 years** and over compared to one-quarter (25.1%) of males.

Polydrug use

Polydrug use was reported by 18.7% of cases in 2012 and 21.5% in 2018, accounting for more than one-fifth of those treated for problem alcohol use.

- **Cannabis** was the most common additional drug used. The proportion of cases reporting cannabis use declined from 65.7% in 2012 to 58.6% in 2018.
- **Cocaine** was the second most common additional drug recorded. This has increased from 28.1% in 2012 to 48.2% in 2018.
- In 2018, **cocaine** as an additional drug was more common among males (50.9%) than females (40.8%).
- **Benzodiazepines** were the third most common additional drug reported (23.4%) in 2018. The proportion reporting **benzodiazepines** as an additional problem increased from 26.0% in 2012 to 28.6% in 2016 and decreased to 23.4% in 2018.
- In 2018, **opioids** as an additional problem drug were more common among females (17.2%) than among males (11.7%).

NDTRS cases 2012 to 2018

This bulletin presents **alcohol treatment data** from the NDTRS for the period 2012–2018.¹ Included are cases treated in outpatient, inpatient, low threshold services, and those treated in prison.²

Data in this bulletin supersede all previously published data from NDTRS publications.

In the seven-year period, a total of 54,263 cases treated for problem alcohol use reported alcohol as the main problem substance.³

The number of cases treated decreased from 8,609 in 2012 to 7,464 in 2018 (Table 1).^{4,5,6}

The proportion of *new* cases presenting to treatment decreased from 48.2% in 2012 to 43.3% in 2018. The proportion of *previously treated* cases has remained relatively stable over the reporting period, decreasing slightly from 50.6% in 2012 to 49.6% in 2018. The proportion of cases recorded with *treatment status unknown* increased to 7.1% in 2018.⁷

Table 1: Number of cases with alcohol as a main problem, by treatment status, NDTRS 2012 to 2018

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	8609		7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464	
New cases	4149	(48.2)	3708	(47.4)	3772	(48.6)	3553	(46.6)	3678	(48.1)	3500	(47.6)	3230	(43.3)
Previously treated cases	4353	(50.6)	3932	(50.3)	3807	(49.1)	3948	(51.8)	3783	(49.5)	3652	(49.7)	3705	(49.6)
Treatment status unknown	107	(1.2)	179	(2.3)	181	(2.3)	117	(1.5)	182	(2.4)	198	(2.7)	529	(7.1)

Type of service provider

In 2018, over half (54.8%) of cases were treated in outpatient facilities similar to previous years (Table 2). Over one-third of cases (37.4%) were treated in residential settings, similar to previous years.

The proportion of cases treated in prison decreased from 3.1% in 2012 to 1.8% in 2018.

Alcohol treatment figures from general practitioners are currently not collected by the NDTRS.

Table 2: No. of cases in treatment with alcohol as a main problem, by type of service provider, NDTRS 2012 - 2018

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	8609		7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464	
Outpatient	4510	(52.4)	4221	(54.0)	4133	(53.3)	4018	(52.7)	4005	(52.4)	3894	(53.0)	4087	(54.8)
Inpatient*	3309	(38.4)	2809	(35.9)	2803	(36.1)	2916	(38.3)	2994	(39.2)	2949	(40.1)	2792	(37.4)
Low threshold	519	(6.0)	521	(6.7)	605	(7.8)	480	(6.3)	495	(6.5)	436	(5.9)	451	(6.0)
Prison	271	(3.1)	268	(3.4)	219	(2.8)	204	(2.7)	149	(1.9)	71	(1.0)	134	(1.8)

* Includes any service where the client stays overnight, e.g., in-patient detoxification, therapeutic communities, respite and step down

Polydrug use

In 2018, 21.5% of alcohol cases treated for problem alcohol use reported **problem use of more than one drug** (polydrug use) (Table 3). This proportion has remained similar over the reporting period.

Cannabis (58.6%) was the most common additional drug reported by cases treated for problem alcohol use in 2018, followed by **cocaine** (48.2%) and then **benzodiazepines** (23.4%). Cocaine has increased from 28.1% in 2012 to 48.2% in 2018. The proportion

of cases reporting benzodiazepines as an additional problem drug decreased from 26.0% in 2012 to 23.4% in 2018.

The proportion of cases reporting **cannabis** decreased from 65.7% in 2012 to 58.6% in 2018.

The proportion of cases with a **novel psychoactive substance (NPS)** as an additional problem decreased from 3.1% in 2012 to 0.9% in 2018.

Table 3: Polydrug use in cases treated for problem alcohol use, NDTRS 2012 to 2018

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	8609		7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464	
Alcohol only	6999	(81.3)	6258	(80.0)	6252	(80.6)	6196	(81.3)	6315	(82.6)	5898	(80.2)	5861	(78.5)
Reported other additional drug(s)	1610	(18.7)	1561	(20.0)	1508	(19.4)	1422	(18.7)	1328	(17.4)	1452	(19.8)	1603	(21.5)

Table 4: Polydrug use - additional problem drugs for all cases and new cases, NDTRS 2012 to 2018

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	1610		1561		1508		1422		1328		1452		1603	
Cannabis	1057	(65.7)	1008	(64.6)	953	(63.2)	852	(59.9)	766	(57.7)	878	(60.5)	940	(58.6)
Cocaine	453	(28.1)	458	(29.3)	426	(28.2)	462	(32.5)	470	(35.4)	607	(41.8)	772	(48.2)
Benzodiazepines	419	(26.0)	424	(27.2)	421	(27.9)	357	(25.1)	380	(28.6)	332	(22.9)	375	(23.4)
Opioids	251	(15.6)	236	(15.1)	230	(15.3)	200	(14.1)	202	(15.2)	207	(14.3)	212	(13.2)
MDMA (ecstasy)	227	(14.1)	187	(12.0)	173	(11.5)	142	(10.0)	99	(7.5)	134	(9.2)	185	(11.5)
Other	50	(3.1)	46	(2.9)	48	(3.2)	27	(1.9)	38	(2.9)	62	(4.3)	71	(4.4)
Amphetamines	68	(4.2)	87	(5.6)	57	(3.8)	66	(4.6)	51	(3.8)	49	(3.4)	57	(3.6)
Z Drugs*	40	(2.5)	40	(2.6)	38	(2.5)	39	(2.7)	33	(2.5)	27	(1.9)	19	(1.2)
NPS	50	(3.1)	27	(1.7)	18	(1.2)	27	(1.9)	30	(2.3)	18	(1.2)	15	(0.9)
Volatile inhalants	10	(0.6)	8	(0.5)	7	(0.5)	~	~	~	~	6	(0.4)	~	~
New cases	723		695		678		625		593		656		635	
Cannabis	496	(68.6)	473	(68.1)	442	(65.2)	385	(61.6)	340	(57.3)	408	(62.2)	390	(61.4)
Cocaine	204	(28.2)	199	(28.6)	201	(29.6)	225	(36.0)	221	(37.3)	290	(44.2)	331	(52.1)
Benzodiazepines	153	(21.2)	139	(20.0)	158	(23.3)	109	(17.4)	149	(25.1)	122	(18.6)	106	(16.7)
Opioids	101	(14.0)	90	(12.9)	84	(12.4)	72	(11.5)	57	(9.6)	57	(8.7)	77	(12.1)
MDMA (ecstasy)	78	(10.8)	61	(8.8)	75	(11.1)	50	(8.0)	62	(10.5)	63	(9.6)	45	(7.1)
Amphetamines	29	(4.0)	39	(5.6)	21	(3.1)	28	(4.5)	19	(3.2)	22	(3.4)	22	(3.5)
NPS	18	(2.5)	18	(2.6)	21	(3.1)	10	(1.6)	18	(3.0)	29	(4.4)	21	(3.3)
Z Drugs*	19	(2.6)	12	(1.7)	~	~	14	(2.2)	10	(1.7)	8	(1.2)	~	~
Other	12	(1.7)	11	(1.6)	13	(1.9)	9	(1.4)	7	(1.2)	13	(2.0)	~	~
Volatile inhalants	7	(1.0)	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	0

* Z-Drugs are non-benzodiazepine hypnotic sedative drugs, e.g., zolpidem, zopiclone

~ Cells with five cases or fewer

Level of problem alcohol use

In 2018, the median age to start drinking for cases in treatment for problem alcohol use was 15 years (Table 5).

Over the period, the majority of those (63.0%) treated were classified as **alcohol dependent** (by the health care professional treating them). The proportion of cases classified as dependent increased from 55.7% in 2012 to 71.0% in 2018.

In 2018, almost two-thirds (65.6%) of *new cases* (those who have never been treated for problem alcohol use before) were classified as alcohol dependent, and this has increased from 48.4% in 2012.

Hazardous: a pattern of alcohol use that increases the risk of harmful consequences for the user. The term describes drinking over the recommended limits by a person who has no apparent alcohol-related health problems. Includes experimental drinking. [AUDIT score 8 – 15: Increasing risk]

Harmful: a pattern of use that results in damage to physical or mental health; can include negative social consequences. [AUDIT score 16 – 19: High risk]

Dependent: a cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological symptoms. Typically, includes a strong desire to consume alcohol, impaired control over its use, persistent drinking despite harmful consequences, a higher priority given to drinking than to other activities and obligations, increased alcohol tolerance. Also, notably a physical withdrawal reaction when alcohol use is discontinued. [AUDIT score 20+: Possible dependence]

Table 5: Age first started drinking and level of problem alcohol use, NDTRS 2012 to 2018

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	8609		7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464	
Median age first started drinking (range ⁸)	15	12-22	15	11-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	15	12-22
<i>Level of problem alcohol use*</i>														
Hazardous	964	(11.2)	872	(11.2)	851	(11.0)	673	(8.8)	748	(9.8)	711	(9.7)	746	(10.0)
Harmful	1544	(17.9)	1483	(19.0)	1417	(18.3)	1396	(18.3)	1279	(16.7)	1174	(16.0)	1236	(16.6)
Dependent	4794	(55.7)	4450	(56.9)	4644	(59.8)	4719	(62.0)	4957	(64.9)	5290	(72.0)	5300	(71.0)
New cases	4149		3708		3772		3553		3677		3500		3230	
Median age first started drinking (range ⁸)	16	12-22	16	12-21	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22	16	12-22
<i>Level of problem alcohol use*</i>														
Hazardous	654	(15.8)	573	(15.5)	494	(13.1)	370	(10.4)	426	(11.6)	412	(11.8)	385	(11.9)
Harmful	956	(23.0)	911	(24.6)	858	(22.7)	802	(22.6)	731	(19.9)	674	(19.3)	677	(21.0)
Dependent	2010	(48.4)	1881	(50.7)	2008	(53.2)	2026	(57.0)	2212	(60.2)	2339	(66.8)	2118	(65.6)
Previously treated	4351		3930		3807		3946		3783		3652		3705	
Median age first started drinking (range ⁸)	15	11-22	15	11-22	15	11-23	15	12-22	15	12-22	15	12-22	15	11-22
<i>Level of problem alcohol use*</i>														
Hazardous	292	(6.7)	284	(7.2)	324	(8.5)	285	(7.2)	300	(7.9)	277	(7.6)	297	(8.0)
Harmful	571	(13.1)	544	(13.8)	543	(14.3)	572	(14.5)	515	(13.6)	445	(12.2)	479	(12.9)
Dependent	2723	(62.6)	2528	(64.3)	2537	(66.6)	2633	(66.7)	2649	(70.0)	2865	(78.5)	2847	(76.8)
Treatment status unknown	107		179		181		117		182		198		529	

* Where recorded. The proportion of cases where level of alcohol use is not known is not shown in the table.

Socio-demographic characteristics

The **median age** of treated cases increased from 40 years in 2012 to 41 years in 2015 and has remained at 41 years since 2015 (Table 6). The **median age** of new cases also rose in this period, from 37 years in 2012 to 39 years in 2018.

The proportion of new cases **aged under 18 years** has decreased from 5.1% in 2012 to 2.7% in 2018.

The majority of cases in 2018 were **male** (64.5%), similar to previous years.

The proportion of cases recorded as **homeless** increased from 5.6% in 2012 to 9.6% in 2018.

In 2018, 1.9% of cases identified as Irish Traveller.⁹

In 2018, 23.1% of cases reported ceasing education (for the first time) before the age of 16 years, a slight decrease on previous years.

Just over half of reported cases were **unemployed**, this rate decreased over the reporting period from 55.6% in 2012 to 50.7% in 2018.

Unemployment rates were higher among previously treated cases (56.9%) compared with new cases (43.9%).

Table 6: Socio-demographic characteristics of cases treated for problem alcohol use, NDTRS 2012 to 2018

	2012		2013		2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	8609		7819		7760		7618		7643		7350		7464	
Median age (range ⁸)	40	19-63	40	19-64	40	20-63	41	21-64	41	21-64	41	21-64	41	21-65
Under 18	285	(3.3)	220	(2.8)	163	(2.1)	103	(1.4)	124	(1.6)	112	(1.5)	114	(1.5)
Male	5673	(65.9)	5072	(64.9)	4966	(64.0)	4961	(65.1)	4884	(63.9)	4769	(64.9)	4812	(64.5)
Homeless	486	(5.6)	507	(6.5)	494	(6.4)	572	(7.5)	613	(8.0)	620	(8.4)	713	(9.6)
Traveller	178	(2.1)	144	(1.8)	208	(2.7)	141	(1.9)	161	(2.1)	118	(1.6)	145	(1.9)
Education ceased before 16 years	2357	(27.4)	2066	(26.4)	1991	(25.7)	1965	(25.8)	1808	(23.7)	1726	(23.5)	1727	(23.1)
Employed	1647	(19.1)	1545	(19.8)	1628	(21.0)	1724	(22.6)	1889	(24.7)	2056	(28.0)	2067	(27.7)
Unemployed	4789	(55.6)	4356	(55.7)	4377	(56.4)	4215	(55.3)	4110	(53.8)	3827	(52.1)	3783	(50.7)
Retired/unable to work including disability	1141	(13.3)	986	(12.6)	912	(11.8)	925	(12.1)	964	(12.6)	887	(12.1)	958	(12.8)
New cases	4149		3708		3772		3553		3678		3500		3230	
Median age (range ⁸)	37	17-64	38	18-64	39	19-63	39	20-64	40	20-64	40	19-64	39	19-65
Under 18	213	(5.1)	176	(4.7)	125	(3.3)	83	(2.3)	87	(2.4)	90	(2.6)	87	(2.7)
Male	2667	(64.3)	2368	(63.9)	2420	(64.2)	2279	(64.1)	2290	(62.3)	2234	(63.8)	2087	(64.6)
Homeless	124	(3.0)	154	(4.2)	156	(4.1)	148	(4.2)	160	(4.4)	166	(4.7)	191	(5.9)
Traveller	102	(2.5)	73	(2.0)	104	(2.8)	60	(1.7)	78	(2.1)	50	(1.4)	59	(1.8)
Education ceased before 16 years	1061	(25.6)	902	(24.3)	882	(23.4)	815	(22.9)	768	(20.9)	768	(21.9)	639	(19.8)
Employed	986	(23.8)	949	(25.6)	962	(25.5)	1014	(28.5)	1176	(32.0)	1209	(34.5)	1165	(36.1)
Unemployed	2036	(49.1)	1772	(47.8)	1916	(50.8)	1725	(48.6)	1690	(45.9)	1587	(45.3)	1417	(43.9)
Retired/unable to work including disability	517	(12.5)	451	(12.2)	410	(10.9)	384	(10.8)	404	(11.0)	367	(10.5)	354	(11.0)
Previously treated	4353		3932		3807		3948		3783		3652		3705	
Median age (range ⁸)	41	21-63	41	22-64	41	22-63	42	23-64	43	24-64	43	24-64	42	23-65
Under 18	70	(1.6)	42	(1.1)	33	(0.9)	19	(0.5)	20	(0.5)	17	(0.5)	20	(0.5)
Male	2927	(67.2)	2570	(65.4)	2420	(63.6)	2599	(65.8)	2480	(65.6)	2394	(65.6)	2382	(64.3)
Homeless	358	(8.2)	342	(8.7)	325	(8.5)	405	(10.3)	433	(11.4)	432	(11.8)	473	(12.8)
Traveller	73	(1.7)	69	(1.8)	96	(2.5)	77	(2.0)	70	(1.9)	62	(1.7)	67	(1.8)
Education ceased before 16 years	1273	(29.2)	1129	(28.7)	1072	(28.2)	1124	(28.5)	1003	(26.5)	912	(25.0)	957	(25.8)
Employed	642	(14.7)	570	(14.5)	638	(16.8)	688	(17.4)	674	(17.8)	804	(22.0)	778	(21.0)
Unemployed	2702	(62.1)	2485	(63.2)	2357	(61.9)	2423	(61.4)	2331	(61.6)	2145	(58.7)	2109	(56.9)
Retired/unable to work including disability	600	(13.8)	513	(13.1)	482	(12.7)	527	(13.3)	540	(14.3)	498	(13.6)	535	(14.4)
Treatment status unknown	107		179		181		117		182		198		529	

Focus on gender

This section focuses on the socio-demographic characteristics of cases based on gender for those with alcohol as the main problem in 2018.

Table 7: Socio-demographic and polydrug characteristics by gender, NDTRS 2018

	Male		Female	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
All cases	4812	(64.5)	2634	(35.3)
Median age (range ⁸)	40	21-64	43	21-66
Under 35	1541	(32.0)	699	(26.5)
35-49	2029	(42.2)	1095	(41.6)
50+	1209	(25.1)	806	(30.6)
Median age (first used alcohol)	15	12-21	16	12-25
Traveller	109	(2.3)	34	(1.3)
Education ceased before 16	1233	(25.6)	493	(18.7)
Employed	1349	(28.0)	714	(27.1)
Unemployed	2567	(53.3)	1206	(45.8)
Homeless	558	(11.6)	153	(5.8)
Dependent alcohol use	3532	(73.4)	1760	(66.8)
<i>Reported other additional drug(s)</i>	1158	(24.1)	441	(16.7)
<i>Cannabis</i>	714	(61.7)	223	(50.6)
<i>Cocaine</i>	589	(50.9)	180	(40.8)
<i>Benzodiazepines</i>	248	(21.4)	125	(28.3)
<i>Opioids</i>	136	(11.7)	76	(17.2)
New cases	2087	(43.4)	1138	(43.2)
Median age (range ⁸)	39	(20-65)	42	(19-66)
Under 35	786	(37.7)	355	(31.2)
35-49	830	(39.8)	453	(39.8)
50+	467	22.4	326	(28.6)
Median age (first used alcohol)	15	12-21	16	12-25
Traveller	44	(2.1)	15	(1.3)
Education ceased before 16	451	(21.6)	188	(16.5)
Employed	784	(37.6)	378	(33.2)
Unemployed	950	(45.5)	465	(40.9)
Homeless	146	(7.0)	45	(4.0)
Dependent alcohol use	1431	(68.6)	685	(60.2)
<i>Reported other additional drug(s)</i>	452	(21.7)	181	(15.9)
<i>Cannabis</i>	290	(64.2)	99	(54.7)
<i>Cocaine</i>	248	(54.9)	82	(45.3)
<i>Benzodiazepines</i>	67	(14.8)	38	(21.0)
<i>Opioids</i>	21	(4.6)	24	(13.3)

The **median age** when entering treatment was higher for females (43 years) than males (40 years). This is also reflected in the median age for new cases entering treatment (39 years for males and 42 years for females).

Among females 30.6% were aged **50 years or over** compared to 25.1% of males.

Homelessness was more prevalent among males (11.6%) than females (5.8%).

The proportion of cases who reported an **additional other drug** was higher for males (24.1%) than for females (16.7%). The four most common additional drugs for cases in alcohol treatment remain the same for both males and females (cannabis, cocaine, benzodiazepines, and opioids). There are, however, differences in the proportion reporting use of these drugs based on gender.

Cannabis is the most common additional problem drug used for both males and females; however, it is reported at a higher proportion for males (61.7%) than females (50.6%). **Cocaine** shows a similar trend (50.9% males and 40.8% females).

Conversely, **benzodiazepines** are reported at a greater rate by females (28.3%) than males (21.4%). Similarly, **opioids** are reported at a greater rate (17.2%) by females than males (11.7%).

In 2018, 73.4% of males were classified as **alcohol dependent**, as compared to 66.8% of females.

The **preferred types of alcohol** used varied by gender. In 2018, the three most common preferred types of alcohol for males were beer (45.0%), spirits (37.8%), wine (8.7%). Among females the preferred types of alcohol were spirits (35.9%), wine (34.8%) and beer (20.0%).

The majority of cases (74.9%) had used alcohol in the month prior to treatment. Of these, on a typical drinking day the median number of **standard drinks** consumed by males was 20 (range⁸ 7-34) and 15 (range⁸ 5-28) for females. The risk from alcohol increases in line with the amount consumed. The low-risk drinking guidelines are: up to 11 standard drinks in a week for women, and up to 17 standard drinks in a week for men. Drinks should be spaced out over the week, with two to three alcohol free days per week.¹⁰

Among those previously treated for alcohol, 77.7% of males had previously received an **alcohol detox** as compared to 73.4% of females.

Community Healthcare Organisation (CHO) area of residence

In 2018, the highest number of **cases resided** in CHO 5 (Table 8) (see below for reference to areas included in each CHO). The number of cases fluctuated for all CHOs over the period.

It should be noted, however, that poor levels of participation in the NDTRS by alcohol services in some CHOs affects this geographic analysis.

Table 8: Number of cases treated for problem alcohol use, by CHO area of residence, NDTRS 2012 to 2018

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
All cases	8609	7819	7760	7618	7643	7350	7464
CHO 1	1290	864	765	870	945	952	896
CHO 2	484	449	400	430	452	395	398
CHO 3	391	456	504	489	507	487	536
CHO 4	1675	1613	1617	1365	1411	1242	1293
CHO 5	1667	1413	1311	1349	1264	1316	1356
CHO 6	255	318	345	314	245	298	341
CHO 7	1079	1028	976	873	800	842	912
CHO 8	961	844	971	880	856	727	635
CHO 9	585	673	707	852	912	882	933
Other/unknown	222	161	164	196	251	209	164
New cases	4149	3708	3772	3553	3678	3500	3230
CHO 1	616	462	402	430	487	434	303
CHO 2	217	209	198	188	227	216	158
CHO 3	171	190	248	247	256	234	253
CHO 4	872	770	749	646	694	641	579
CHO 5	848	672	624	619	586	630	632
CHO 6	109	150	183	154	108	152	174
CHO 7	504	485	445	383	360	355	366
CHO 8	475	436	533	440	435	360	306
CHO 9	271	278	335	379	427	404	391
Other/unknown	66	56	55	67	98	74	68
Previously treated	4353	3932	3807	3948	3783	3652	3705
CHO 1	663	399	359	431	434	477	489
CHO 2	266	237	198	240	218	177	195
CHO 3	216	235	238	236	247	248	246
CHO 4	795	812	846	710	690	594	654
CHO 5	808	730	675	723	661	658	638
CHO 6	136	155	147	150	127	134	157
CHO 7	553	521	488	468	412	453	490
CHO 8	467	376	405	427	411	339	290
CHO 9	297	367	350	445	447	447	468
Other/unknown	152	100	101	118	136	125	78

LHO areas in each Community Healthcare Organisation area:

CHO 1 – Donegal LHO, Sligo/Leitrim/West Clare LHO and Cavan/Monaghan LHO

CHO 2 – Galway LHO, Roscommon and Mayo LHO

CHO 3 – Clare LHO, Limerick LHO, North Tipperary/East Limerick LHO

CHO 4 – Kerry LHO, North Cork LHO, North Lee LHO, South Lee LHO and West Cork LHO

CHO 5 – South Tipperary LHO, Carlow/Kilkenny LHO, Waterford LHO and Wexford LHO

CHO 6 – Wicklow LHO, Dun Laoghaire LHO and Dublin South East LHO

CHO 7 – Kildare/West Wicklow LHO, Dublin West LHO, Dublin South City LHO and Dublin South West LHO

CHO 8 – Laois/Offaly LHO, Longford/Westmeath LHO, Louth LHO and Meath LHO

CHO 9 – Dublin North LHO, Dublin North Central LHO and Dublin North West LHO

Incidence and prevalence of treatment

Annual rates for the incidence (new cases) and prevalence (all cases) of treated problem alcohol use were calculated per 100,000 of the population age 15 to 64 years based on census figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO)¹¹ (Figure 1).

Incidence decreased from 128.4 cases per 100,000 in 2012, to 95.4 cases in 2018.

Prevalence, which includes both new cases and those cases returning to treatment, also decreased from 269.1 cases per 100,000 in 2012 to 219.8 cases per 100,000 in 2018.

Changes in incidence and prevalence should be interpreted with caution.⁷

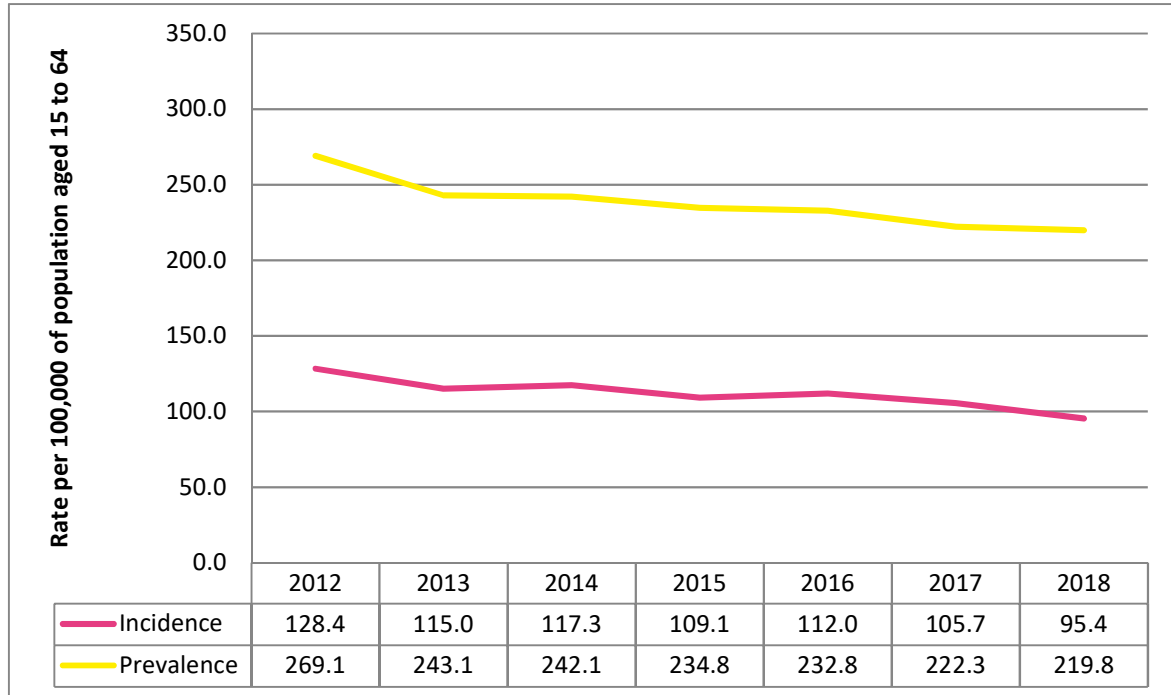


Figure 1: Incidence and prevalence of treated problem alcohol use per 100,000 of the 15 to 64-year-old population, NDTRS 2012 to 2018

Notes

This document may be cited as: Health Research Board (2019) Alcohol treatment in Ireland 2012 to 2018. Available at: www.drugsandalcohol.ie/30970 and at www.hrb.ie/publications

1. More detailed information on the NDTRS methodology can be found in previously published HRB Trends Series papers at www.hrb.ie/data-collections-evidence/alcohol-and-drug-treatment/publications/
2. NDTRS data are case-based which means there is a possibility that individuals appear more than once in the database; for example, where a person receives treatment at more than one centre, or at the same centre more than once in a calendar year.
3. The NDTRS interactive tables (2004 to 2016) will be updated to reflect the changes at www.drugsandalcohol.ie/tables/
4. It must be noted that not all alcohol treatment services were participating in the NDTRS during the period under review. Therefore, it may be assumed that the data presented in this bulletin underestimates the true extent of treated alcohol use in Ireland.
5. The NDTRS make every attempt to ensure as complete coverage of services as possible; however, the number of services participating in the reporting system does vary year to year. This makes small fluctuations in the numbers of cases more difficult to interpret.
6. Coverage in 2018 was 69.5% of Drug and Alcohol services known to the NDTRS.
7. Analysis by treatment status should be interpreted with caution due to the increase in the proportion of cases recorded with *treatment status unknown* in 2018. The NDTRS has undertaken initiatives to improve data quality and completeness.
8. Age range presented is 5th percentile to 95th percentile (90% of cases are included within this range).
9. Based on the 2016 Census, the proportion of Irish Travellers in the general population is 0.7% (Central Statistics Office, 2019) www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp8iter/p8iter/p8e/
10. Drink guidelines are taken from the Health Service Executive (HSE) at www.hse.ie/eng/health/hl/change/alcohol/
11. Population data is taken from the Central Statistics Office at www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigrationestimatesapril2018/

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