Alcohol and other drugs data factsheet: HSE South West 2026

November 2026

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Glossary of terms

The **Capture-Recapture** method utilises data on drug users identified from two or more sources, such as hospital admissions, methadone registers, police, prison or treatment agency data to estimate drug prevalence. The method examines the overlap between sources and uses modelling techniques to provide an estimate of the hidden population, that is, those not identified from the available sources. For more information see European Drugs Agency.

Central Treatment List (CTL), a register of the number of people who are receiving methadone or another opioid as a substitute drug treatment, (clinics, general practitioners and prisons), maintained by the Health Service Executive.

Confidence interval (CI) – A way of expressing how certain we are about the findings from a study, using statistics. It gives a range of results that is likely to include the 'true' value for the population. A wide confidence interval (CI) indicates a lack of certainty about the true effect of the test or treatment - often because a small group of patients has been studied. A narrow CI indicates a more precise estimate (for example, if a large number of patients have been studied). The CI is usually stated as '95% CI', which means that the range of values has a 95 in a 100 chance of including the 'true' value. For example, a study may state that 'based on our sample findings, we are 95% certain that the 'true' population blood pressure is not higher than 150 and not lower than 110'. In such a case the 95% CI would be 110 to 150. (From the NICE glossary)

HSE health regions - The Health Service Executive (HSE) remains a single organisation with six health regions. Services will integrate across hospitals and community organisations in these health regions. The six operational regions have responsibility for the planning and coordinated delivery of health and social care services within their respective defined geographies. Note that health regions are not separate statutory bodies. They will use the HSE logo and operate under the governance of the HSE Board. The regions management structure will replace existing Community Healthcare Organisations (CHO) and Hospital Group management structures. HSE national will oversee standards, and guidelines for implementation at regional level.

Prevalence – refers to the proportion of a population that has used a drug over a particular time period.

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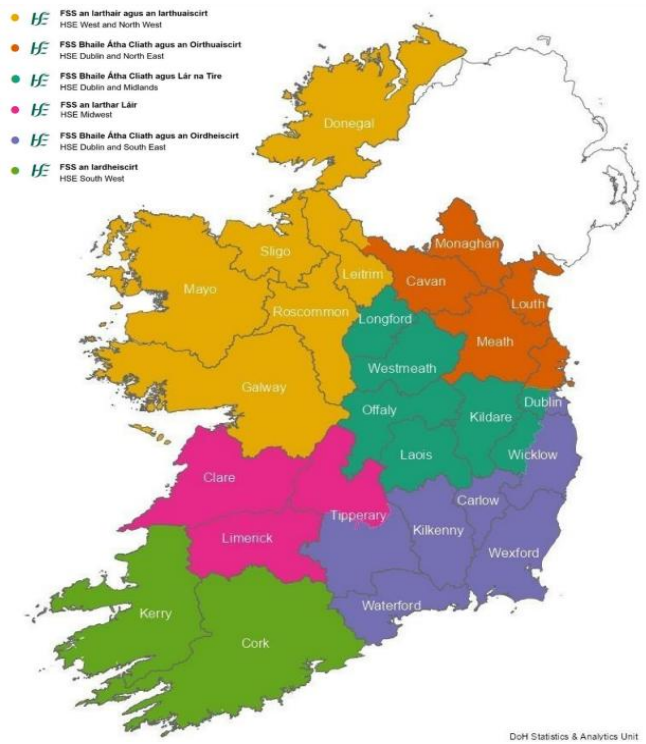
Introduction

This factsheet presents the most recently available alcohol and other drug data on treatment demand, drug-related deaths, and opioid prevalence for the HSE South West region, which includes Kerry and Cork.

There are six HSE health regions. This is a change from previous reporting of data by nine community healthcare organisations (CHOs).[a] For more information or to compare data across regions see our Alcohol and drugs data factsheet: HSE health regions 2026.

The 6 health regions cover the following areas:

- HSE Dublin and North East: North Dublin, Meath, Louth, Cavan, and Monaghan
- HSE Dublin and Midlands: Longford, Westmeath, Offaly, Laois, Kildare, and parts of Dublin South and Wicklow
- HSE Dublin and South East: Tipperary South, Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford, Wicklow, part of South Dublin
- HSE Mid West: Limerick, Tipperary and Clare
- HSE South West: Kerry and Cork
- HSE West and North West: Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, and Galway



Source: Department of Health (2023) Organisational reform: HSE health regions. Implementation plan. Dublin: Government of Ireland.

Note: West county Wicklow continues to be aligned with Kildare for health services, and a small portion of west county Cavan continues to be aligned with Sligo/Leitrim for health services, in recognition of existing patient flow patterns.

As the six regions each serve large populations, it is recognised that a sub-structure within each region will be required and must be designed from the ground up. It is currently proposed that these sub-structures will be called Integrated Health Areas (IHAs). Serving a population of up to 300,000.

[a] For information on Sláintecare, visit: https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/slaintecare-implementation-strategy/

We include some alcohol data in this publication. Please also see the 2024 factsheet **Alcohol-related harm: HSE Regional Health Areas**, and the **Alcohol Statistics Dashboard** which contain additional information. We have included some of the available data here, for more information see the latest published report.[5]

Treatment data for HSE health region areas

Data from the National Drug Treatment Reporting System

The data are drawn from the National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) [2,3] which is the national database that records and reports on treated problem alcohol and drug use in Ireland. Treatment in Ireland is provided by statutory and non-statutory services, including residential centres, community-based addiction services, general practices, and prison services. The dataset contains information only on those who started treatment in a particular year (for the first time or returning to treatment). It does not include service users in continuous care. As there is currently no national system-wide unique identifier in the Irish health system, the NDTRS records cases of treatment. In any given year, individuals may appear more than once if treated in different centres or if they return to treatment in the same centre. NDTRS data were analysed using HSE health regions to describe the national treatment data based on where the client resided in the 30 days prior to treatment, see Tables 1-6. Data are published in annual bulletins and can be viewed in interactive tables on the HRB National Drugs Library website see also our Addiction Treatment Services map for services in this region.

Note: As participation in the NDTRS is not uniform across the country, conclusions based on geographic analyses are limited. Also, treatment figures in 2020 were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tables 1 to 3 provide data for the number of cases who entered treatment for drugs (excluding alcohol) each year in Ireland and the HSE South West region, showing all cases, new cases (never treated before) and previously treated cases.[2]

Table 1: Number of cases treated for drugs (excluding alcohol) as a main problem, by HSE South West and year, NDTRS 2017–2025

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All cases	8,922	10,274	10,664	9702	10,769	12,009	13,104	13,295	15,422
HSE South West	1,055	1,169	1,216	1,007	939	944	1,045	1,029	1,113

Source for tables 1-3 [2]: Tierney, P *et al* (2026) National Drug Treatment Reporting System: 2025 drug treatment demand. Dublin: HRB.

Table 2: Number of new cases treated for drugs (excluding alcohol) as a main problem, by HSE South West and year, NDTRS 2017–2025

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All new cases*	3,257	3,962	3,979	3,796	4,206	4,456	4,792	4,471	5,134
HSE South West	467	530	515	465	431	487	505	425	445

Table 3: Number of previously treated cases treated for drugs (excluding alcohol) as a main problem, by HSE South West and year, NDTRS 2017–2025

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All previously treated cases	5,242	5,872	5,927	5,441	6,090	6,860	7,588	7,717	9,333
HSE South West	846	898	864	843	895	970	1,086	1,244	691

Tables 4 to 6 provide data for the number of cases who entered treatment for alcohol as the main problem each year in Ireland and the HSE South West region, showing all cases, new cases (never treated before) and previously treated cases.[3]

Table 4: Number of cases treated for alcohol as a main problem by HSE South West area of residence, NDTRS 2017 to 2025

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All cases	7,350	7,464	7,546	5,824	6,859	7,421	8,163	8,745	8,798
HSE South West	1,240	1,293	1,290	943	971	953	920	1,076	1,033

Source for tables 4-6 [3]: Ní Luasa, S et al (2026) National Drug Treatment Reporting System: 2025 alcohol treatment demand. Dublin: HRB.

Table 5: Number of new cases treated for alcohol as a main problem by HSE South West area of residence, NDTRS 2017 to 2025

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All new cases*	3,500	3,230	3,296	2,490	3,026	3,278	3,625	3,800	3,790
HSE South West	639	579	569	424	459	468	447	477	437

Table 6: Number of previously treated cases treated for alcohol as a main problem by HSE South West area of residence, NDTRS 2017 to 2025

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
All previously treated cases	**3,652**	**3,705**	**3,400**	**3,170**	**3,596**	**3,868**	**4,257**	**4,619**	**4,662**
HSE South West	594	654	668	512	488	465	462	576	581

You can access more detailed information on the number and characteristics of cases in treatment in the HSE South West area on our interactive tables https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/tables/ (Under the final option, 'Select geographical region of residence' – choose 'health area').

National Psychiatric Inpatient Reporting System (NPIRS)

The National Psychiatric Inpatient Reporting System (NPIRS)[4] gathers data on patient admissions to, and discharges from, psychiatric hospitals and units throughout Ireland. The most recent annual report (2025) on the activities of Irish psychiatric units and hospitals has a breakdown by HSE health regions (Excel NPRIS data tables 2024 2.21, 2.22 & 2.25).

Table 7: Admissions to psychiatric hospitals and units, 2025 for Ireland and the HSE South West region, Numbers with rates per 100,000 total population.

		Alcohol-related disorders		Other drug disorders	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Ireland		785	15.2	940	18.3
HSE South West		89	12.0	111	15.0

Source: NPIRS annual report on the activities of Irish psychiatric units and hospitals, 2025. (Excel data table 2.21)

Table 8: First admissions to psychiatric hospitals and units by primary admission diagnosis, 2025 by HSE South West

		Alcohol-related disorders		Other drug disorders	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Ireland		324	6.3	412	8.0
HSE South West		41	5.5	46	6.2

Source: NPIRS annual report on the activities of Irish psychiatric units and hospitals, 2025. (Excel data table 2.22)

Table 9: Discharges (including deaths) from psychiatric hospitals and units by primary discharge diagnosis, 2025 by HSE South West health region

		Alcohol-related disorders		Other drug disorders	
		Number	Rate	Number	Rate
Ireland		916	5.84	1171	7.46
HSE South West		99	4.37	128	5.64

Source: NPIRS annual report on the activities of Irish psychiatric units and hospitals, 2025. (Excel data table 2.25)

HSE data management key performance indicators

These reports[5] are prepared monthly by the Health Service Executive and provide detailed performance data for the full suite of key performance indicators, and activity targets contained in the National Service Plan. We have included some of the available data here, for more information see the latest published report.[5]

Table 10: HSE key performance indicator data, target/expected activity and activity, year to date (YTD), HSE South West, June and July 2026 report.

Key performance indicator	Reporting level	Target/EA YTD	Activity YTD	Latest data
Needle exchange: SI46: No of unique individuals attending the Pharmacy Needle Exchange Programme	National	1,200	1,432	March
	HSE South West	661	860	March
Homeless services: SI53: % of new individual homeless service users admitted to Supported Temporary Accommodations (STA), Private Emergency Accommodations (PEA), and/or Temporary Emergency Accommodations (TEA) during the quarter whose health needs have been assessed and are being supported to manage e.g. their physical / general health, mental health and / or addiction issues as part of their care / support plan	National	60%	92.8%	June
	HSE South West	60%	87.6%	June
Substance use: SI22: % of substance users (over 18 years) for whom treatment has commenced within one calendar month following assessment	National	100%	93.0%	June
	HSE South West	100%	81.7%	June
Substance use: SI25: % of substance users (under 18 years) for whom treatment has commenced within one week following assessment	National	100%	78.5%	March
	HSE South West	100%		March
Opioid agonist treatment: SI1: Total no. of clients in receipt of opioid agonist treatment (outside prisons)	National	10,100	9,807	July
	HSE South West	785	783	July
Problem alcohol use: SI36: % of problem alcohol users (over 18 years) for whom treatment has commenced within one calendar month following assessment	National	100%	98.0%	March
	HSE South West	100%	88.5%	March
Problem alcohol use: SI39: % of problem alcohol users (under 18 years) for whom treatment has commenced within one week following assessment	National	100%	53.8%	March
	HSE South West	100%		March
Tobacco: HWB27B: No. of smokers who received face to face or telephone intensive cessation support from a HSE trained and accredited stop smoking advisor (Community)	National	17,057	2,930	June
	HSE South West	2,005	591	June
Tobacco: HWB27C: No. of smokers who received face to face or telephone intensive cessation support from a HSE trained and accredited stop smoking advisor (Hospitals)	National	3,277	855	June
	HSE South West	275	92	June

Source: Health Service Executive (2026) HSE data management report, June and July 2026. Dublin: Health Service Executive.
Please note that the HSE issues regular data management reports, see the latest for the most up-to-date data.

Use of drugs in HSE health region areas

There are a number of studies that collect data on drug use in Ireland however they have not as yet published regional health data. An exception is the report on opioid use in Ireland discussed below.

Data from the problematic opioid use in Ireland report

The report, Problematic opioid use in Ireland, 2020–2022,[6] estimates the prevalence of problematic opioid use in Ireland from 2020 to 2022 using a four-source capture-recapture method. Three of the four data sources used for the analysis were derived from opioid substitution treatment records from the Central Treatment List (clinics, general practitioners and prisons) and the fourth data source was from the Irish Probation Service. In total, it is estimated that there were 19,460 problematic opioid users aged 15–64 years in Ireland in 2022. This corresponds to a prevalence rate of 5.79 per 1,000 population.

This study also provided data for the number of known problematic opioid users nationally (12,719) and by region. For the HSE South West this number was 967 (7.6%). This figure can be shown by age group:

- 2.5% were aged 15–24 years
- 32.1% were aged 25–34 years
- 61.4% were aged 35–64 years

Table 11: Estimates of the number and rate per 1,000 population of problematic opioid users by age in the HSE South West region (2022)

	Known	Estimate	95% CI	Rate	95% CI
15–24 years	53	87	81–108	0.96	0.89–1.19
25–34 years	347	433	402–540	5.11	4.74–6.37
35–64 years	567	828	769–1,033	2.73	2.53–3.40

Source Prevalence of problematic opioid use in Ireland, 2020–2022

Drug poisoning deaths for HSE health region areas

The Health Research Board's National Drug-Related Deaths Index (NDRDI) is a database which records cases of death by drug and alcohol poisoning, and deaths among drug users and those who are alcohol dependent. 343 people died from poisoning in 2022 (this number excludes alcohol only deaths, please see the report for further details).[7]

Table 12: Number of drug poisoning deaths by HSE South West region of incident, NDRDI 2013 to 2022, number and percentage

		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
HSE South West	n	26	31	31	39	38	39	50	58	53	51
	%	8.0	10.0	10.0	12.6	11.7	10.7	13.2	13.0	14.2	14.9

Source: Drug Poisoning Deaths in Ireland in 2022: Appendix - NDRDI data 2022 tables PDF – Table E-Appendix B

Table 13: Number of drug poisoning deaths by HSE health region of residence, NDRDI 2013 to 2022, number and percentage

		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
HSE South West	n	32	34	35	44	38	36	45	59	54	53
	%	9.9	10.9	11.3	14.2	11.7	9.9	11.9	13.2	14.5	15.5

Source: Drug Poisoning Deaths in Ireland in 2022: Appendix - NDRDI data 2022 tables PDF – Table E-Appendix C

See also, E-Appendix D Number of drug poisoning deaths by county of residence, NDRDI 2013 to 2022

The NDRDI also collects data on deaths among people who were homeless at the time of their death.[8] There were 128 deaths among people known to be homeless at the time of death in 2021.

Table 14: Deaths among people who were homeless by HSE South West health region of incident, 2019 to 2022, number and percentage

		2019	2020	2021	2022
HSE South West	n (%)	11 (11.6)	20 (15.7)	13 (9.8)	12 (9.7)

Source: Deaths among people who were homeless at time of death in Ireland, 2022

References

1. Department of Health (2023) Organisational reform: HSE health regions. Implementation plan. Dublin: Government of Ireland.
2. Tierney, P Lynch, T O'Sullivan, M and Carew AM (2026) National Drug Treatment Reporting System: 2025 drug treatment demand. Dublin: Health Research Board.
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7. Kelleher C, Riordan F and Lyons S (2025) Drug poisoning deaths in Ireland in 2022 - tables: data from the National Drug-Related Deaths Index (NDRDI). Dublin: Health Research Board.
8. Riordan F, Gopalakrishnan A, Kelleher C *et al.* (2026) Deaths among people who were homeless at time of death in Ireland, 2022. Dublin: Health Research Board.

For additional data, see:
Doyle, Anne (2026) Alcohol Statistics Dashboard [Online]
Doyle, Anne (2024) Alcohol-related harm - HSE Regional Health Areas. Dublin: Health Research Board. https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/41557/
Doyle, Anne (2023) Regional alcohol-related harm - County level factsheet. Dublin: Health Research Board. https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/39285/

How to cite this data factsheet:

HRB National Drugs Library (2026) Alcohol and other drugs data factsheet: HSE South West 2026. Dublin: HRB National Drugs Library https://www.drugsandalcohol.ie/45954

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