

## Changing Face of Addiction in Ireland as Crack Cocaine Emerges and Family Supports Reach Record Levels

- **Coolmine Therapeutic Community Q2 2026 report highlights evolving drug trends, growing demand for treatment and increasing impact on families**
- **For the first time, Coolmine has separately recorded crack cocaine presentations**

**August 2026** – [Coolmine Therapeutic Community](#), Ireland's national drug and alcohol treatment organisation, has today published its Q2 2026 National Trends Report, revealing significant changes in Ireland's addiction landscape, including the emergence of crack cocaine as a distinct presenting drug, continued growth in powder cocaine use and record demand for family support services.

The report, comparing the first six months of 2026 with the same period in 2025, shows that while the overall number of people accessing services has remained broadly stable, the nature of addiction continues to evolve rapidly.

Overall presentations remain largely unchanged compared with the first half of 2025, with men accounting for 59% of clients and women 41%. Alcohol continues to be the most common substance among people accessing treatment, representing 34% of presentations, however powder cocaine has continued its upward trajectory and now accounts for 29% of presentations, narrowing the gap significantly.

However, for the first time, Coolmine has separately recorded crack cocaine presentations rather than including them within broader cocaine statistics, providing a clearer picture of emerging trends. This follows new National Drug Treatment Reporting System guidance requiring services to record whether cocaine use involves powder cocaine or crack cocaine, providing more accurate monitoring of emerging trends.

Although crack cocaine currently represents a relatively small proportion of overall presentations, accounting for 114 clients, it now makes up almost one quarter of all cocaine-related presentations. The data also reveals that 57% of those presenting with crack cocaine use are women, highlighting an emerging trend that differs from traditional patterns of addiction.

Pauline McKeown, CEO of Coolmine Therapeutic Community noted that the report demonstrates that addiction in Ireland continues to evolve. *"While alcohol remains the most common substance among those accessing our services, cocaine is becoming increasingly embedded across communities, and for the first time we are able to clearly see the emergence of crack cocaine as a distinct pattern of presentation. These changing trends underline the importance of ensuring our services continue to adapt to the realities people are experiencing."*

McKeown continued: *"It is encouraging to see more families engaging with our services than ever before, reflecting growing recognition that recovery extends well beyond the individual. Continued investment in treatment, early intervention and family support remains essential if we are to respond effectively to these changing patterns."*

Regionally, crack cocaine remains relatively uncommon in the South-West, accounting for just 2% of presentations, but is considerably higher in both the East and Mid-West at 12%. Powder cocaine also continues

to increase across all regions, accounting for 31% of presentations in Dublin, 32% in the Mid-West and 24% in the South-West, despite alcohol remaining the dominant substance in Cork and Kerry.

The report also highlights the continued expansion of Coolmine's wider supports. Coolmine also continued to expand its wider recovery and family support services during the first half of 2026. Compared with the same period last year, residential placements increased from 141 to 175, while the number of family members supported rose significantly from 178 to 241.

Engagement with the Traveller community also grew substantially, increasing from 110 to 189 people supported. Residential support for children increased from 28 to 36, and the number of people graduating from Coolmine's therapeutic community programmes rose from 15 to 23, reflecting the organisation's continued investment in recovery-focused, whole-family care.

While overall demand remains consistent nationally, services in the East have experienced increased activity, particularly across Integration and Aftercare, Pre-Entry and PACT services. Retention rates remain strong overall, although some reductions were recorded in parts of the South-West and Mid-West during Q2.

Anita Harris, Deputy Head of Services Coolmine Therapeutic Community said: *"One of the most striking findings in this report is how addiction patterns continue to shift across different regions and demographics. We're seeing increasing complexity in the needs of people coming through our doors, with more women affected by cocaine-related harms and growing demand for integrated community-based support."*

Harris added: *"The data reinforces the importance of delivering flexible, person-centred care that adapts to changing trends. Whether it's residential treatment, family support, outreach or aftercare, our priority is ensuring people can access the right support at the right time to achieve long-term recovery."*

Coolmine said the findings highlight the need for continued investment in addiction treatment, prevention and family support services as Ireland's drug trends continue to change.

Visit [www.coolmine.ie](http://www.coolmine.ie) for more information.

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**About Coolmine Therapeutic Community:**

Coolmine believes everyone should have the opportunity to overcome addiction and lead a fulfilled, productive life. By addressing addiction as a root cause of social exclusion, Coolmine offers a holistic approach tackling both substance dependence and the socio-economic barriers it creates. This empowers individuals to reconnect with families, rebuild their lives, and reintegrate into their communities. For more information or support, visit [www.coolmine.ie](http://www.coolmine.ie).