



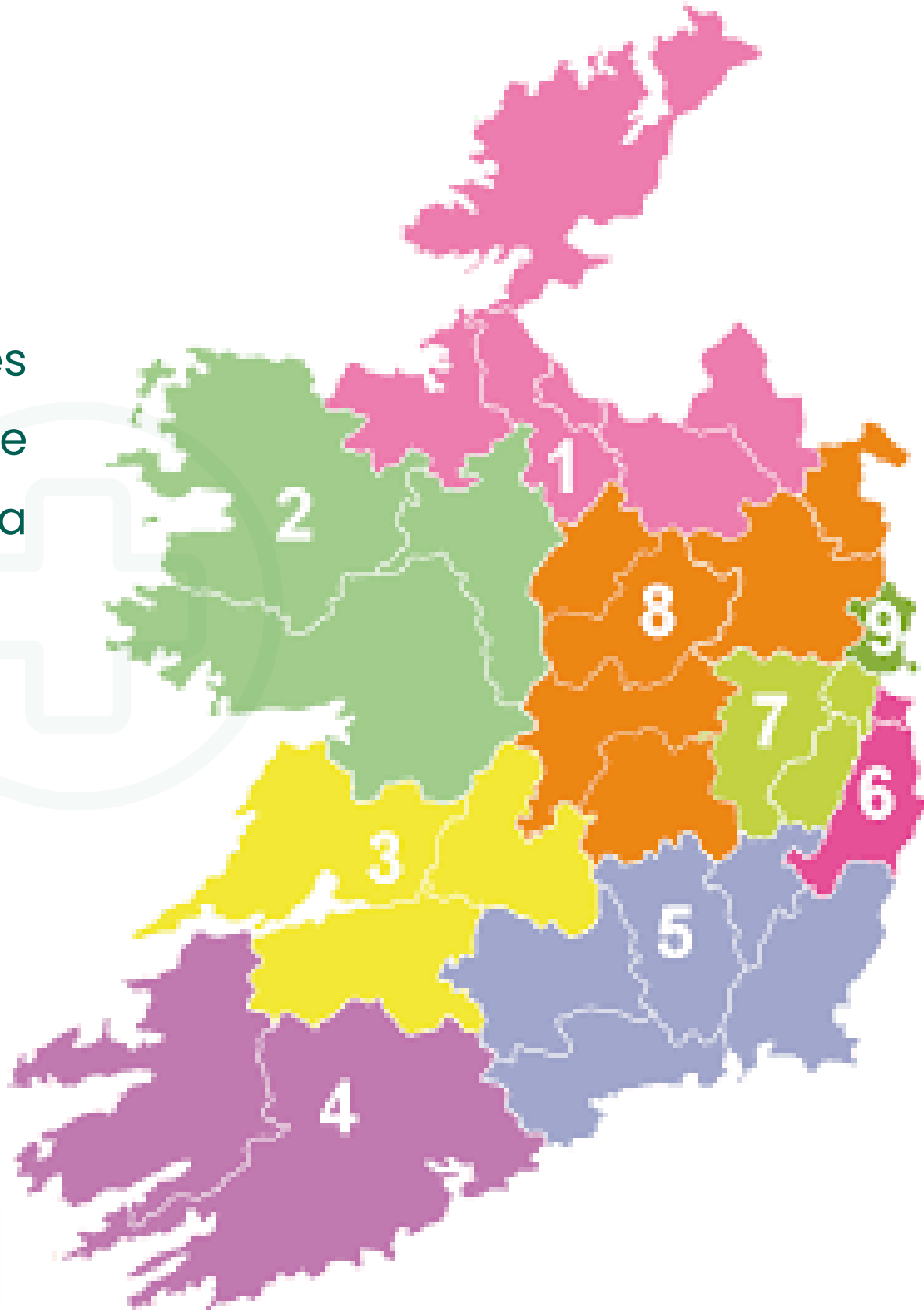
# ***HEALTH SERVICE PROVISION***

HARM REDUCTION AND BEYOND

PROF EAMON KEENAN  
CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON DRUG USE  
24TH JUNE 2023

# ADDICTION SERVICES IN IRELAND

HSE Social Inclusion Addiction Services  
in each Community Healthcare  
Organisation Area



Significant no. of services operated  
in the community by 10 Regional & 14  
Local Drug and Alcohol Task Forces  
under a Service Level Arrangement  
(SLA) with the HSE

# DRUG TREATMENT IN IRELAND ENCOMPASSING OPIOID AGONIST TREATMENT

Treatment access/referrals through GPs, hospitals, HSE Drugs & Alcohol Helpline (1800 459 459), self-referrals, and community-funded services



# TREATMENT FOR OPIOID USE: OST/OAT

- Currently 11,353 people on replacement therapy (methadone & buprenorphine)
- Service delivered via HSE Clinics, including community clinics, GPs (Level 1 & 2) and Community Pharmacies
- Numbers of new cases presenting for treatment are decreasing

## Declining HIV Incidence among PWID in Ireland

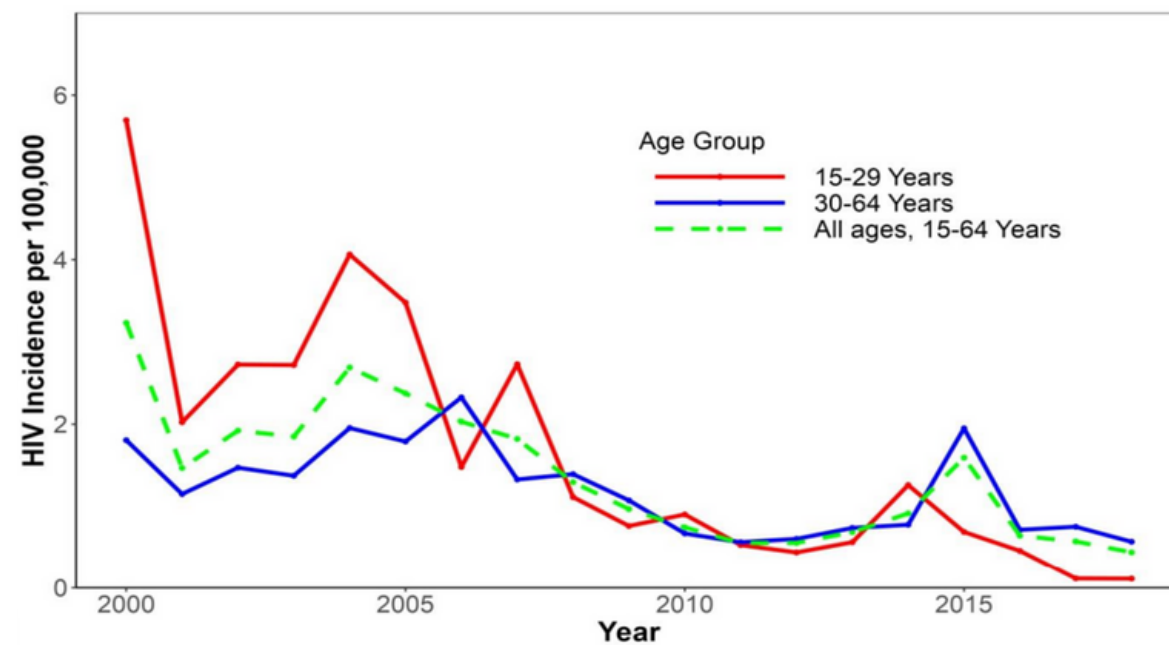
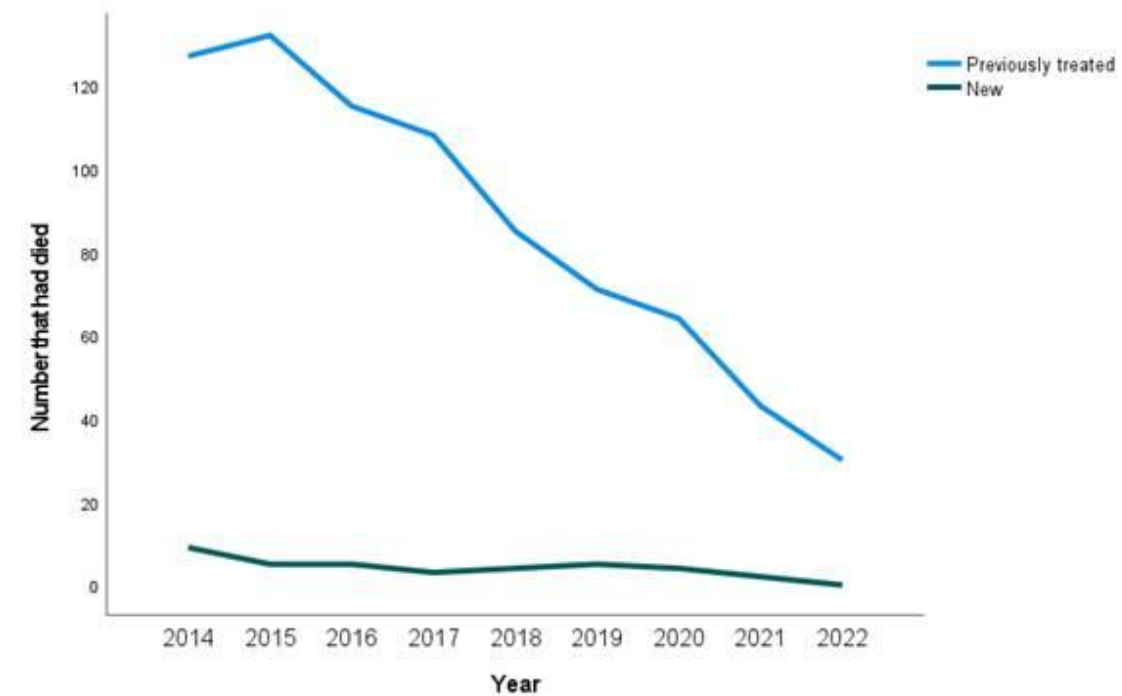


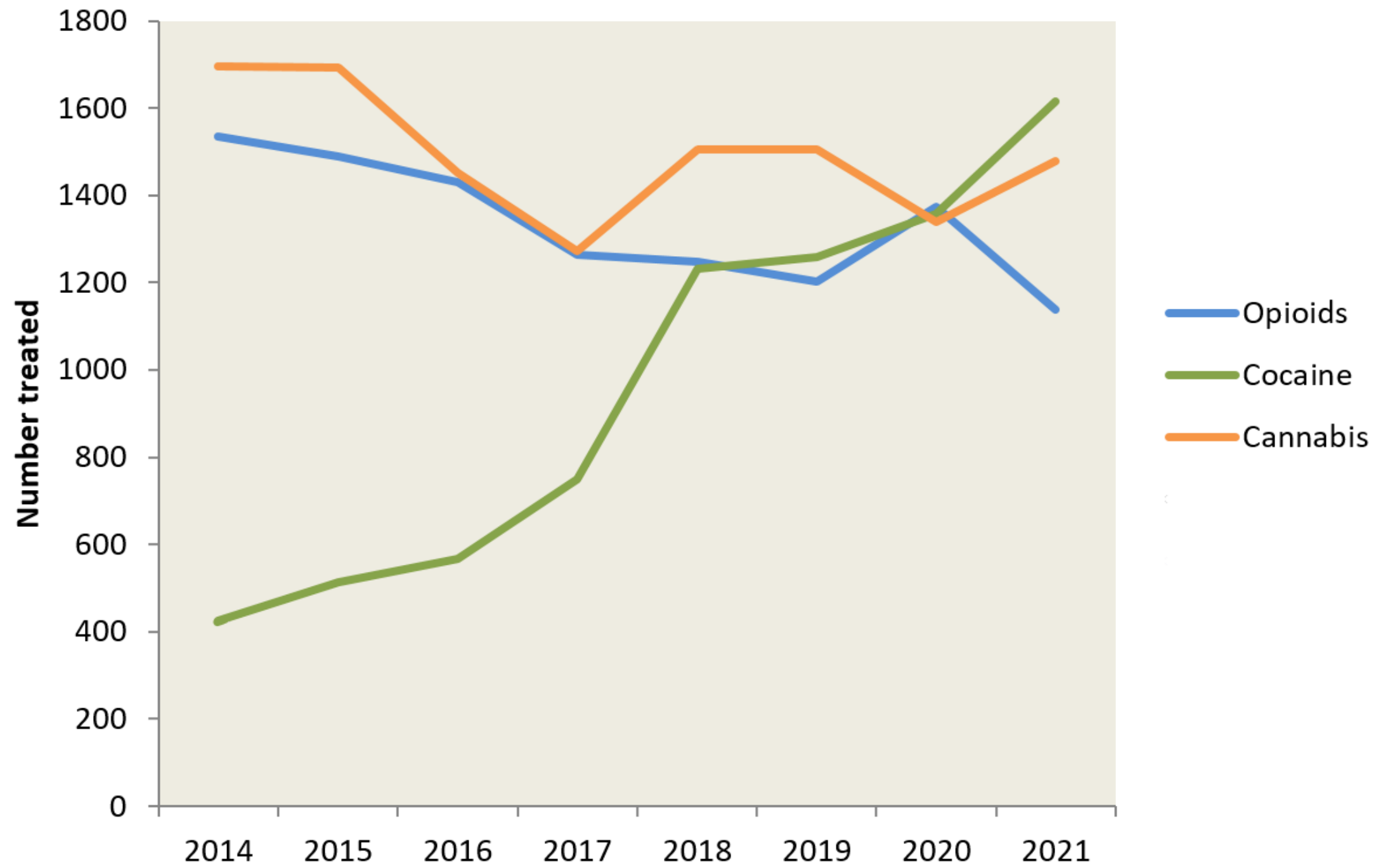
Figure 1. HIV Incidence among PWID in Ireland by Age Group from 2000-2018  
McCarron P, Smyth BP. Addiction 2023 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4367-035X>

## Deaths among people experiencing homelessness that received treatment



# GRAPH OF TREATMENT PATTERNS (HSE)

## Main Problem Drug Treated for New Treatment Cases (2014-2021)



# COCAINE TREATMENT

- 4,048 cases received treatment in 2022
- No approved medication for cocaine use disorder
- People presenting for treatment are given a range of psychosocial treatments

## **Cocaine/'Crack' Cocaine Treatment Pilot Initiatives to enhance existing cocaine responses**

- 850k Funding provided in 2022 for treatment and training of staff
- 4 Pilot Cocaine Treatment Initiatives currently being run
- Evaluation will be carried out to identify effective interventions



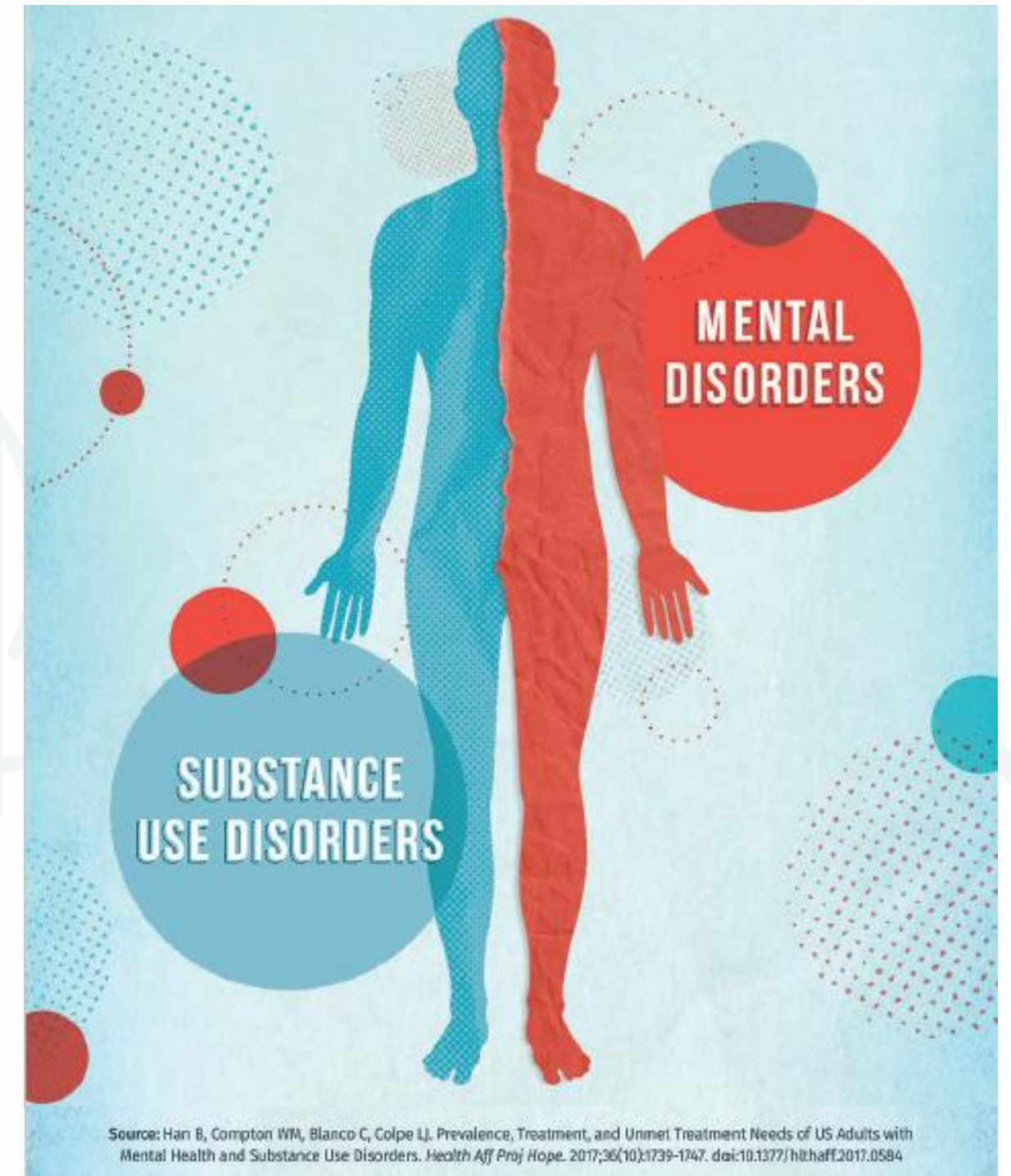
# CANNABIS

- 2,245 cases treated in 2022
- Main drug generating treatment demand among cases 19 years or younger
- Increasing potency
- Emergence of cannabis edibles, vapes and syrup has changed the market
- Synthetic cannabinoids emerging in Europe & identified in Ireland
- These changes are having particular impacts on presentations to mental health services



# HSE DUAL DIAGNOSIS CLINICAL PROGRAMME

- In collaboration with HSE Mental Health
- Model of Care launched 23rd May 2023
- Pilot Clinical Programme Initial Sites:
  - Adult Dual Diagnosis teams- Midwest (CHO 3) and Cork (CHO 4)
  - Adolescent Dual Diagnosis team- CHO 9
- HSE National Dual Diagnosis Rehabilitation Centre



**Dual Diagnosis**  
NATIONAL CLINICAL PROGRAMME

**DRUGS.ie**  
Drug and Alcohol Information and Support





# RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT SERVICES

- HSE-funded Residential Rehabilitation/Detoxification Treatment Programmes offered in over 50 services with a total of 1,028 beds available nationally as of May 2023.
- Number of women-only and mother-and-child services
- Not everyone who requires treatment for drug use will need residential treatment.
- A Unit Cost Analysis Study is currently being carried out to determine:
  - Current costs of treatment episodes
  - Funding required to maintain services



**900K IN BUDGET '23 TO  
MAINTAIN EXISTING**

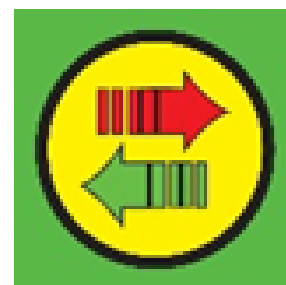
# HARM REDUCTION

## Pharmacy Needle Exchange Programme

- 90 community pharmacies nationwide
- Patients collect sterile injecting equipment & return used items to reduce transmission of infectious disease
- Pharmacists can refer patients to services

## Mobile needle exchange operating across CHO

areas 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 through statutory and NGO partners.



## Naloxone Programme

- Prescription medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an overdose
- 89 reported administrations to date in 2023
- 513 people trained in 2023
- Programme being developed in conjunction with peers & people with lived experience
- Expanding significantly in 2023



# MEDICALLY SUPERVISED INJECTING FACILITY PILOT

## What is an MSIF?

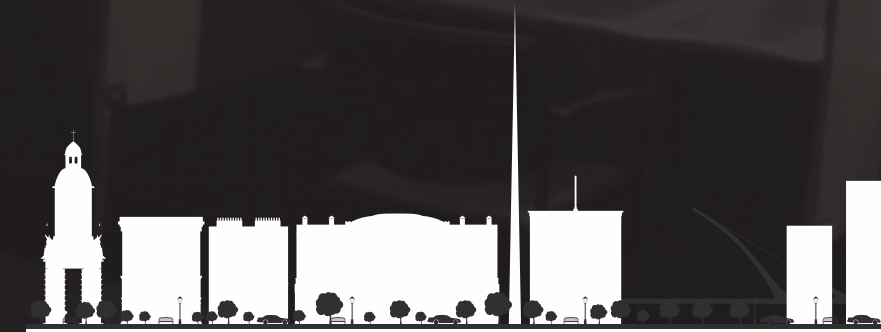
- Professionally supervised healthcare facilities where drug users can inject drugs in a healthcare environment.
- Purpose:
  - Reduce Overdose
  - Reduce spread of infectious disease
  - Provide access and referral to other health services, counselling etc.
  - Reduce drug-related litter & street injecting

## Planned Dublin Pilot Site:

- Tender awarded in 2018 -> lengthy planning permission process now complete

## Next Steps:

- Agree operating budget & sign contract
- Community & stakeholder engagement key
- Evaluation of Pilot at 6 & 18 months



# HIDDEN HARM PROJECT

- Hidden Harm: the experience of children living with and affected by parental problem alcohol and other drug use.
- Established by HSE and the Child and Family Agency (TUSLA) to inform service planning and improve services for children in relation to Hidden Harm
- Programme expanding in 2023 as a priority for the HSE

**Not all parents who misuse substances experience difficulties with parenting capacity.**

**Equally, not all children exposed to parental substance misuse are affected adversely either in the short or longer term.**

**However, most children exposed to parental substance misuse need some form of support.**

# HEALTH DIVERSION

- Health Diversion is recommended by Working Group (2019) for people caught in possession of **any drug** for personal use
- Possession remains a criminal offence but response to this will change:
  - 1st** Referral by AGS to health for screening & brief intervention **(no conviction)**
  - 2nd** Adult Caution **(no conviction)**
  - 3rd** Enters Criminal Justice System
- Current status:
  - Progressing via engagement with Dept of Health, Dept of Justice, HSE and AGS
  - HSE structures are established with dedicated practitioner in each area to carry out brief intervention and onward referral for treatment if necessary



**Awaiting legislative process to allow initiation**

# DRUG MONITORING

- Improves knowledge of circulating substances & allows for public health alerts in real-time
- **HSE Safer Nightlife Programme** - 'back-of-house' drug monitoring at festivals in 2022 & 2023



**Pilots:**

**Syringe Analysis**



**Hair Analysis**



**Wastewater Analysis**



# EUROPE'S DRUG PROBLEMS HAVE become more complex

Today, drug-related issues appear almost **EVERYWHERE**

Almost **EVERYTHING** with psychoactive potential can be a drug

**EVERYONE** can be affected, whether directly or indirectly

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# RECOMMENDATIONS



Aim: Opioid treatment to become routine in primary care nationally



Increase funding for Cocaine and 'Crack' Cocaine Initiatives to further develop and expand treatment programmes to all areas.



Expand Dual Diagnosis Clinical Programme to all areas



Progress Health Diversion & provide for expansion of referral & brief intervention services



Harm Reduction approaches & drug monitoring are a pragmatic response to changing substance use patterns & need to be resourced



Prevention & Recovery are key components of a national response to drug-related problems. These are not just the responsibility of health, but require cross-governmental commitment