HSC Public Health Agency

drugsandalcoholni
"Addressing drugs and alcohol together"

ASCERT

A WHOLE SYSTEM RESPONSIVE TO TACKLING SUBSTANCE USE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

6 November 2025

Stephanie Hanlon, Public Health Agency & Chris McMahon, ASCERT

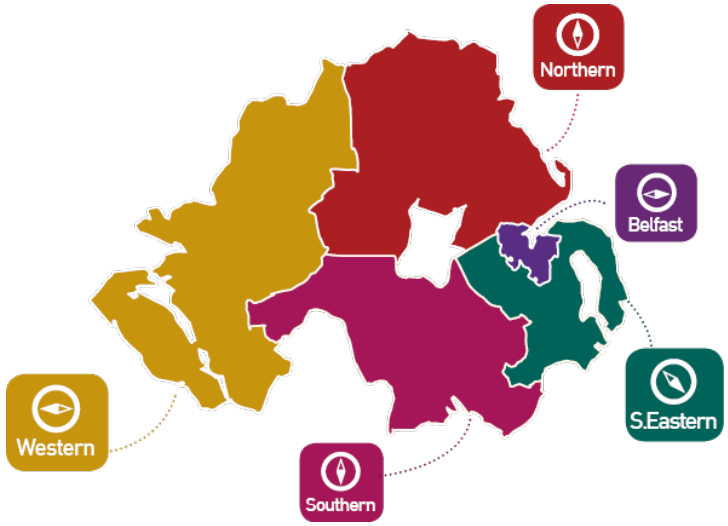
Substance Use Strategic Delivery Plan

1. Prevention and Early Intervention
2. Pathways Of Care and Models of Support
3. Trauma Informed System
4. Family Support
5. Stigma
6. Workforce Development
7. Digital Innovation
8. Data And Research

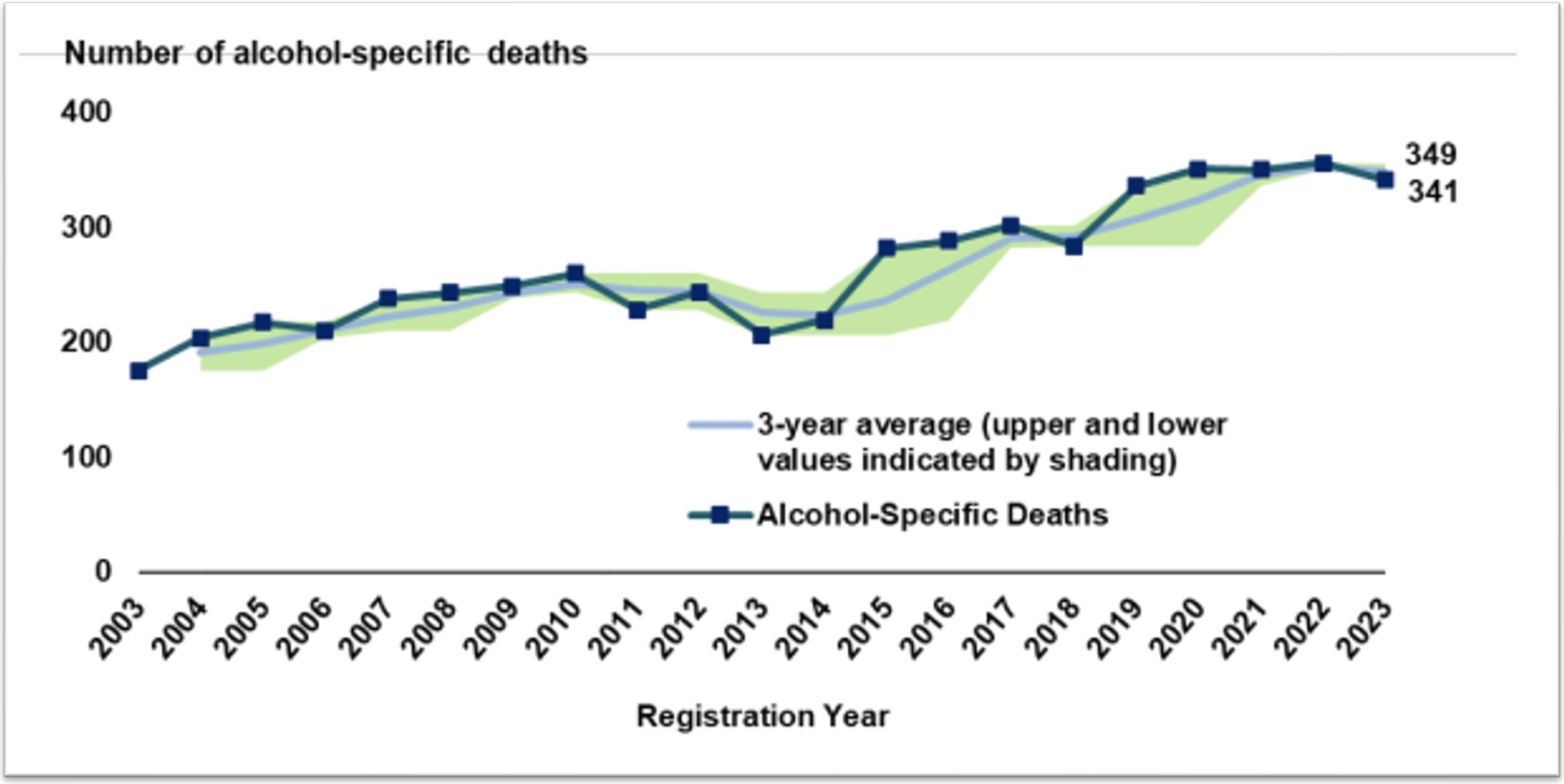


NI Population Needs

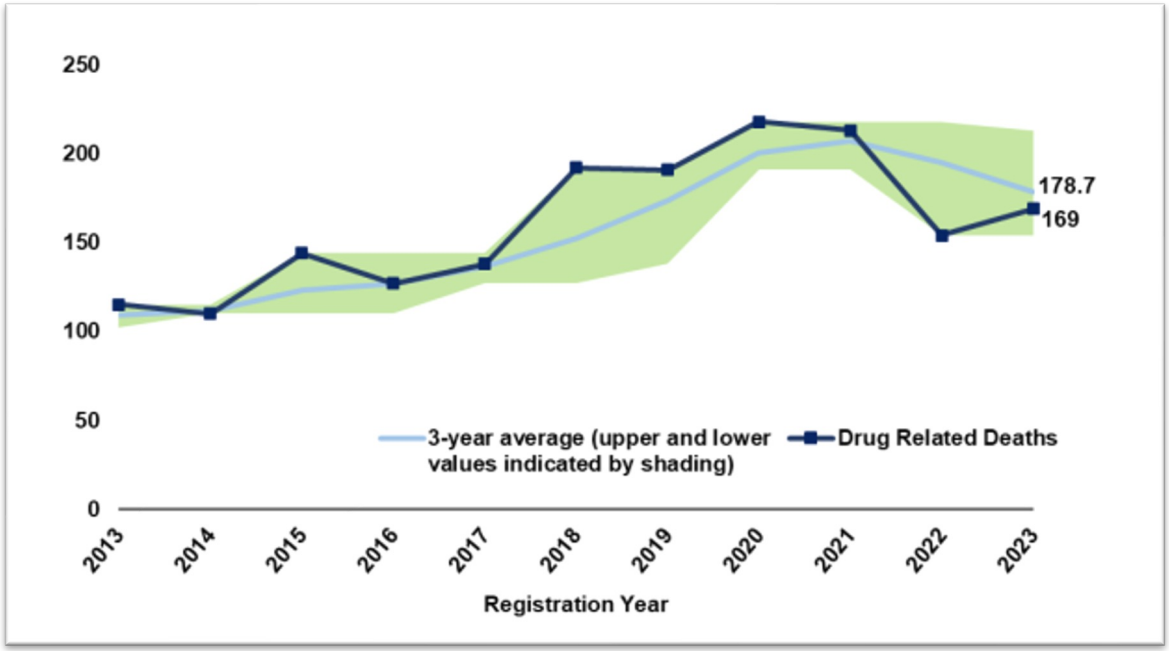
- Presentation of needs within substance use services
- Poly Drug Use
- Increasing complexity and trauma
- Co-Occurring presentations
- BBVs and Wounds
- Age / Gender of most common presentations

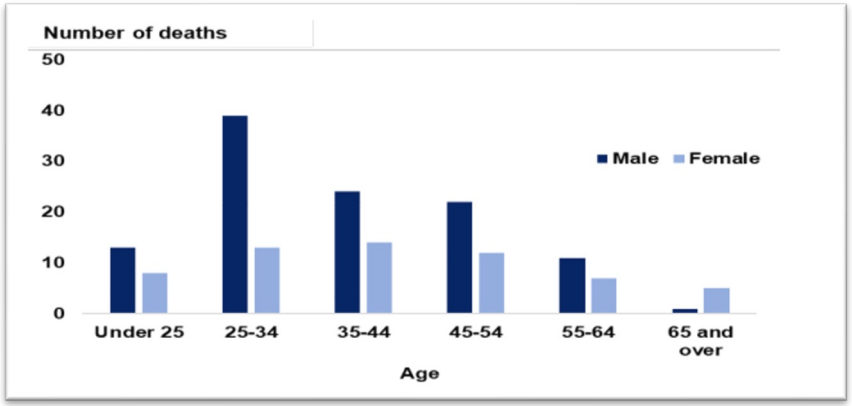


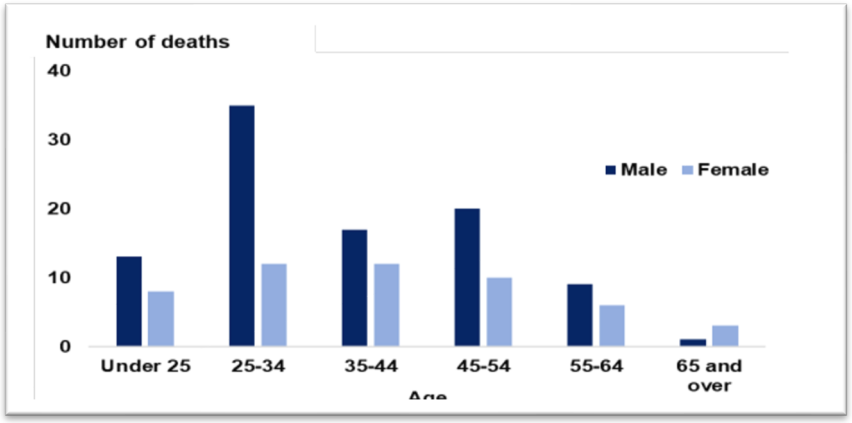
NI Population Data- Alcohol Related Deaths



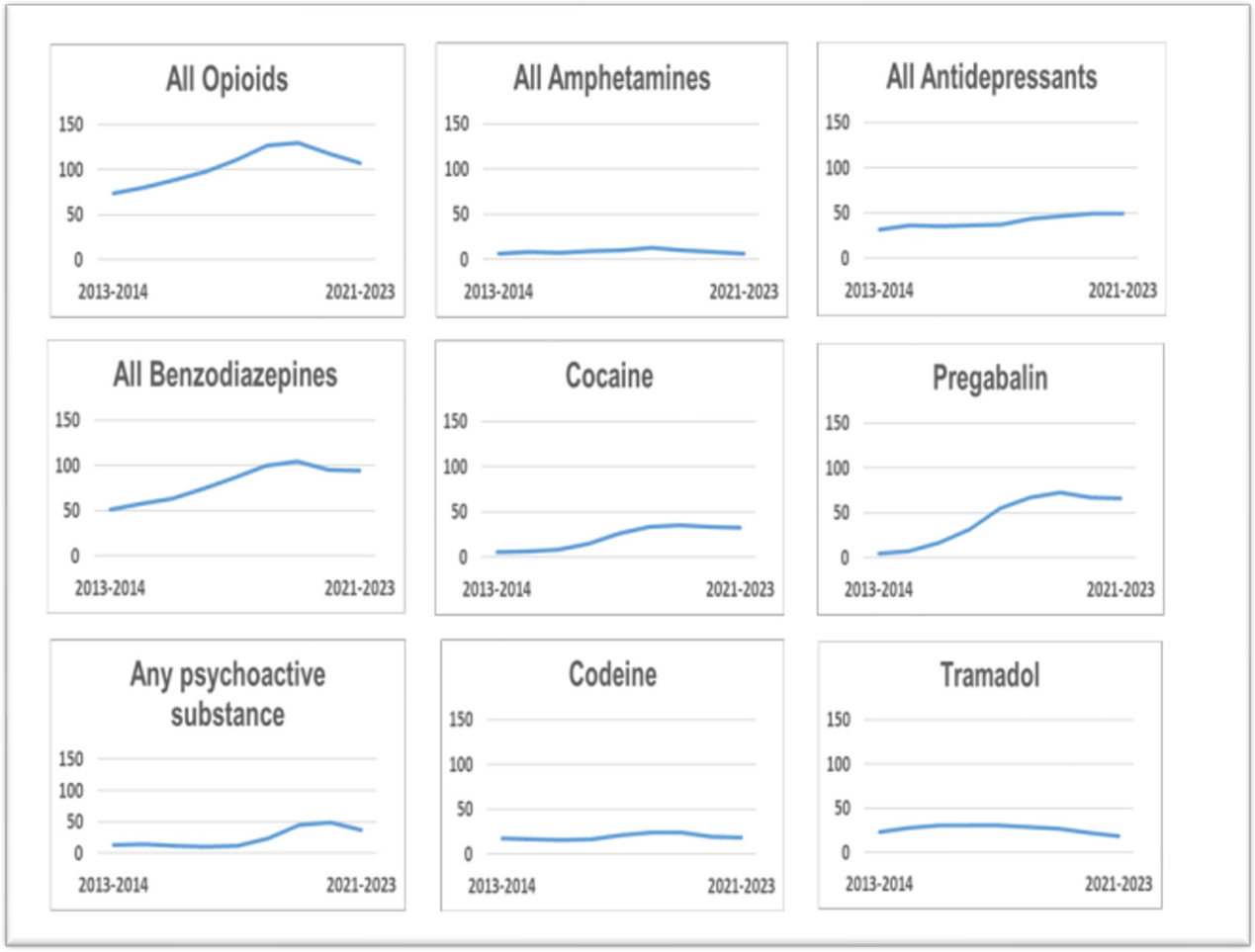
NI Population Data – Drug Related Deaths







NI Population Data - Drugs

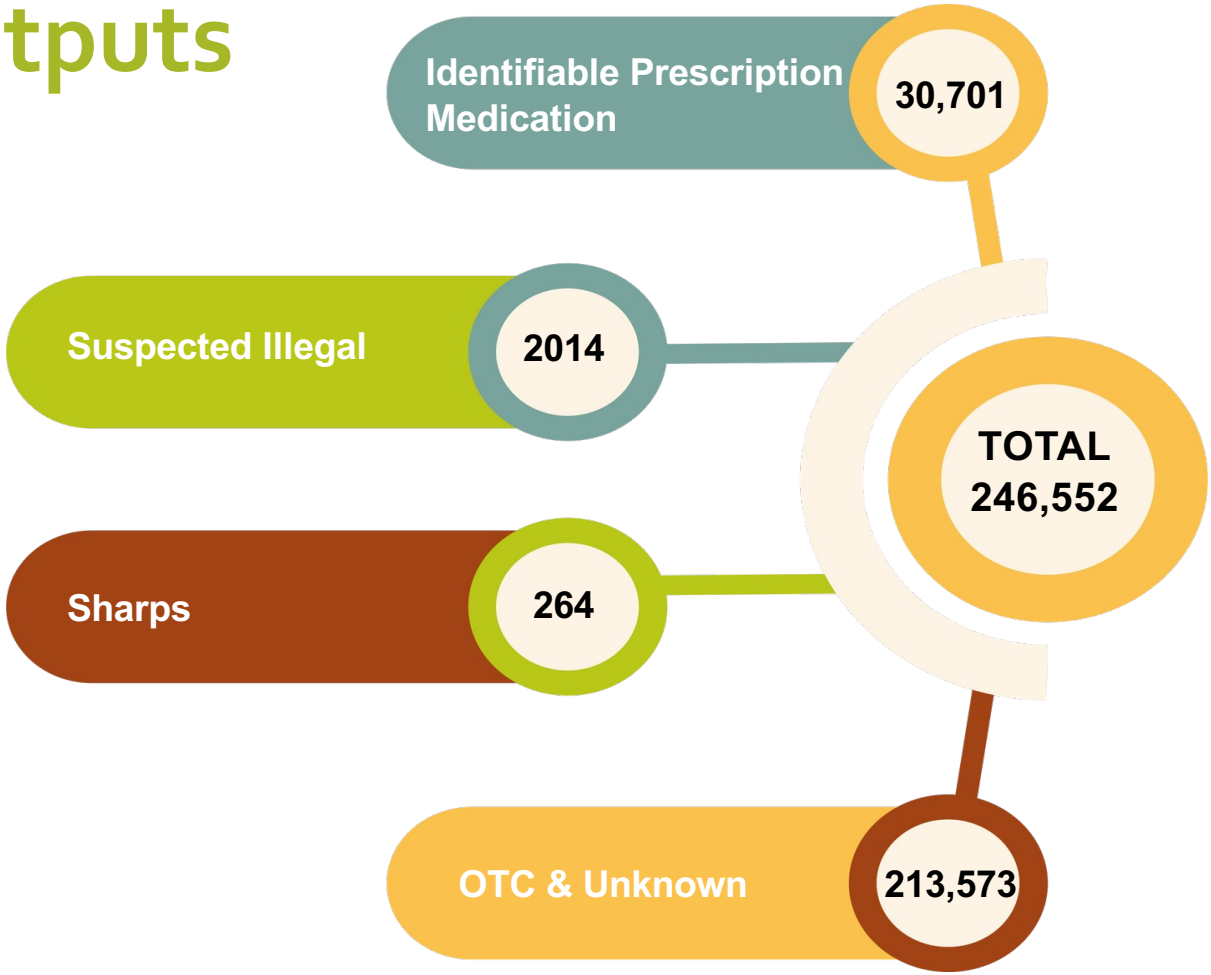


Drug & Alcohol Monitoring Information System (DAMIS)

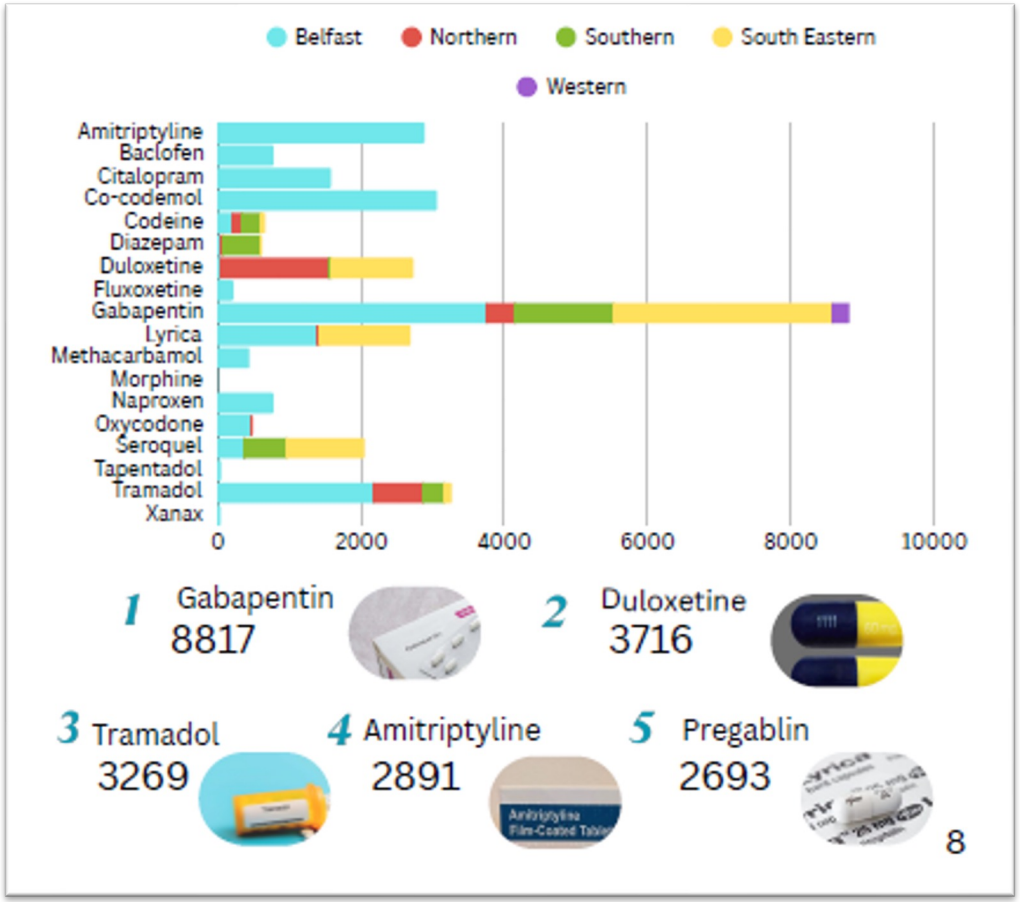
- DAMIS is an "early warning system" designed to identity, verify and assess emerging threats and potential trends in drug and alcohol misuse within Northern Ireland.
- These people can provide information on emerging issues at a **very early** stage and are also ideally placed to provide targeted harm reduction information to their clients. This is shared across the DAMIS Network in NI
- To register to the DAMIS network email damis@hscni.net to get an application form

2024/25 RAPID Outputs

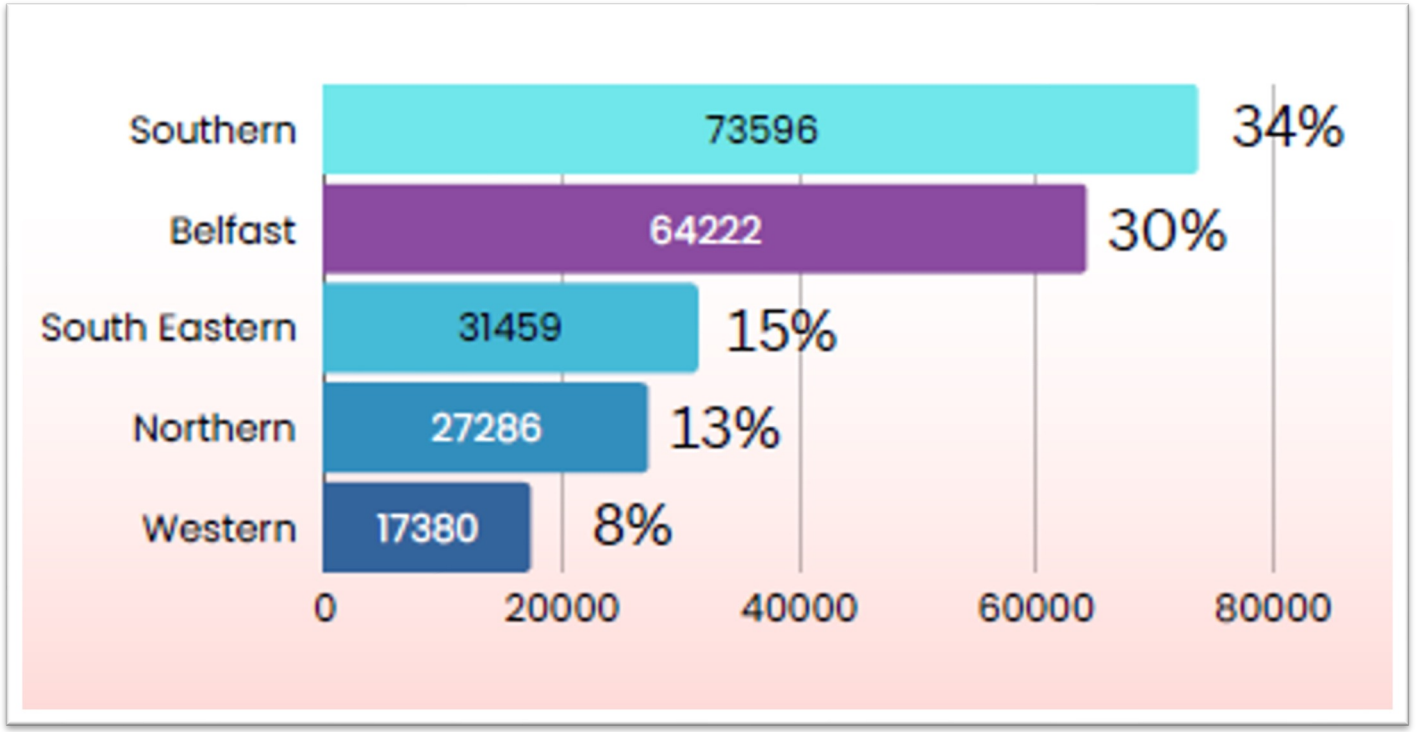




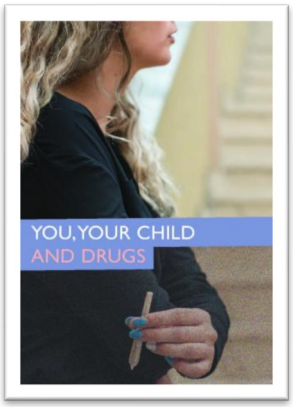
Identifiable Prescription Medication



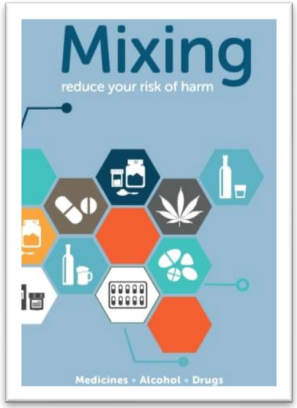
Over the Counter and Unknown Items



Self Help Resources - Drugs









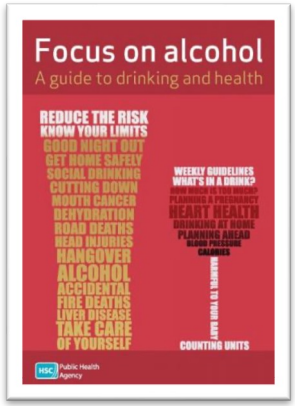


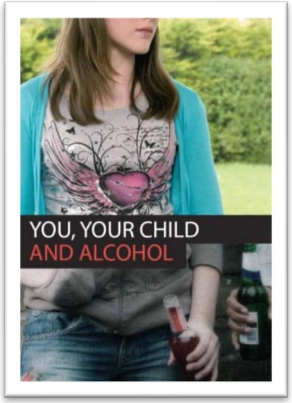






Self Help Resources – Alcohol

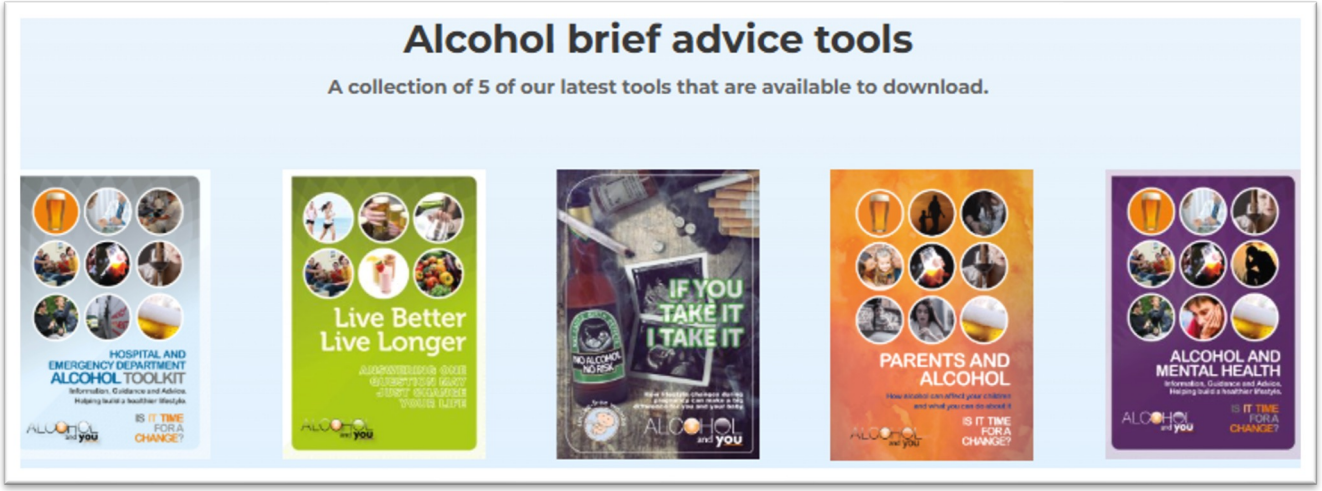














Find out about substance use services in NI

drugsand alcoholni

"Addressing drugs and alcohol together"

Northern Ireland Drugs & Alcohol Services Directory

Drugs and Alcohol - pha | NI

Belfast



S. Eastern



Western



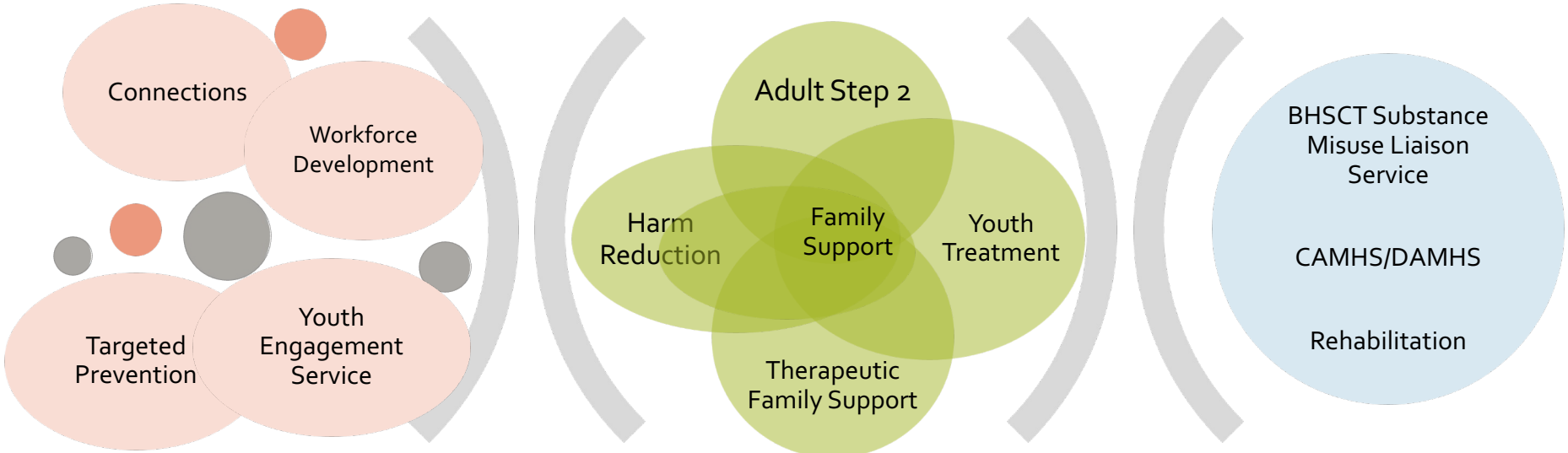
Southern



Northern



PHA Commissioned Substance Use Services



Tier 1 Early Intervention & Prevention Services

Tier 2 Treatment Services

Tier 3 & 4 Services

drugsandalcoholni

"Addressing drugs and alcohol together"

MINDING your HEAD .INFO

Contact Us

Stephanie Hanlon

Joint Substance Use Lead

Public Health Agency

Email: Stephanie.Hanlon@hscni.net

For more information on substance use services and the RAPID scheme visit:

Drugs and Alcohol - pha | NI

Community Based Adult Substance Use Treatment Service (Step 2)

New PHA Commissioned Community Based Service - October 2025

Delivery Partners

Service was retendered by the PHA in 2025 and the new service commenced on 1 October and is delivered by 3 agencies across 5 HSC Trust Areas



HSC Public Health Agency

Adult Substance Use Treatment Service (Step 2) – Overview

- Identical Service available in all 5 trust areas
- Supports Adults over 18 years of age with no upper age limit
- Family members can avail of support, even if loved ones not engaged
- Open referral process – Self, GP, SS, PBNI, MH, CAT and PSNI can all refer.
- Simple referral process – can be via websites, phone calls or email/postal referrals
- Interpreting support available via HSC (no cost)

HSC Public Health Agency

ASCERT

links counselling service

inspire wellbeing, ability, recovery

What is the Adult Substance Use Treatment Service (Step 2)?

- Provide counselling, brief interventions and family support services for adults to help with their alcohol and drug problems. It is a harm reduction focused service and does not follow a strict abstinence model.
- Designed to lessen impact on Statutory Services and allow people to be better supported within their communities.
- Robust links to Statutory Services for stepping clients up to CAT or CAMHS/DAMHS through data sharing agreements - enabling no wrong door approach for clients. Clients can be stepped up as well as down.
- Clinics organised across trust areas to ensure that services are available for those in both rural and urban areas.

HSC Public Health Agency

ASCERT

links counselling service

inspire wellbeing, ability, recovery

Continued >

- All clients assessed using Alcohol Audit and LDQ alongside Outcome Star and Core OM.
- Up to 10 sessions of counselling/intervention provided depending on client need.
- Brief Intervention (up to 6 Sessions provided)
- Family support provided (up to 5 Sessions provided)

HSC Public Health Agency

ASCERT

links counselling service

inspire wellbeing, ability, recovery

Referring into the service and thresholds of need

- **Referral Criteria**
- **Individuals suitable for referral to Step 2 services include:**
- Individuals scoring 16 and above on the AUDIT alcohol screening tool and who show signs of moderate alcohol dependence.
- LDQ score of 10- 22, and drinking over 15 units a day.
- Individuals who show signs of moderate drug dependence with anLDQ score of 10- 22.
- Individuals suffering from suspected co-occurring mild to moderate mental health problems such as; depression, anxiety disorder including panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder
- Clients who have successfully completed a Step 3 or 4 period of treatment but require additional support at Step 2

HSC Public Health Agency

ASCERT

links counselling service

inspire wellbeing, ability, recovery

When someone needs a service – what to expect?

- What can expected from the service:
- Contact made with all clients within 7 Days of initial referral and triage offered
- All clients assessed within 4 weeks of referral and allocated to a suitable part of the service
- Any client in distress or crisis will be prioritised or referred into a more suitable service
- Services will liaise with CAT around client need and step up as appropriate – no need for clients to refer separately

HSC Public Health Agency

ASCERT

links counselling service

inspire wellbeing, ability, recovery

Types of Support available

- **Counselling (PI)**- Focus on where clients are and can utilise CBT, PCT and other Solution Focused interventions. Clients able to explore underlying issues related to usage/behaviour. Support may include making referrals to CAT and MH services alongside C&V, for example Nexus or Wave Trauma. (Up to 10 sessions)

- **Brief Intervention –** Relapse Prevention which can help those worried about relapsing – this can be anticipatory, i.e. worried about going to a wedding and being around others drinking. Clients can be escalated to counselling if needed. (up to 6 sessions)

- **Family Support & Structured Family Support –** Advice, Support and Psychoeducation for family members, even when loved ones not engaging with services. (up to 5 sessions)

HSC Public Health Agency

ASCERT

links counselling service

inspire wellbeing, ability, recovery

Community Based Adult Substance Use Treatment Service (Step 2) – How its delivered?

- All sessions delivered one to one and face to face unless otherwise requested.
- All venues have ease of access and aim to be as near to clients as possible.
- Interpreting services available for clients where necessary
- Evening or early morning appointments available for those working and unable to attend during the day
- Service can refer/signpost clients to suitable postvention supports

HSC Public Health Agency

ASCERT

links counselling service

inspire wellbeing, ability, recovery

How to refer into the service

drugsandalcoholni
"Addressing drugs and alcohol together"

Visit www.drugsandalcoholni.info

Inspire Addiction Service Adult Step 2 Alcohol and Drug Support & Treatment Service (Community Step 2 Service) | Northern Ireland Drug and Alcohol Services

Links Counselling Service Adult Step 2 - Adult Drug and Alcohol Support and Treatment Service (Community Based Step 2) | Northern Ireland Drug and Alcohol Services

ASCERT Steps to Change - Alcohol & Drugs Support & Treatment Service (Adult Step 2 Service) | Northern Ireland Drug and Alcohol Services

HSC Public Health Agency

ASCERT

links counselling service

inspire wellbeing, ability, recovery

Community Based Adult Substance Use Treatment Service (Step 2)

Any Questions?

HSC Public Health Agency