

Northern Ireland Substitute Prescribing Database Report

31st March 2018

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Statistics from the Northern Ireland Substitute Prescribing Database: 31 March 2018

This report summarises information on individuals referred to the Northern Ireland Substitute Prescribing Scheme (SPS). It relates to those referred up to and including the 31 March 2018 and focuses on those patients in contact with Substitute Prescribing treatment services during 2017/18. The figures produced in this report are extracted from the Substitute Prescribing Database held by the Health & Social Care Board (HSCB), Performance Management & Service Improvement Directorate in County Hall, Ballymena. It collects detailed data, including information on drugs misused and injecting behaviour on these individuals at various stages throughout their course of Substitute Prescribing treatment. This is the eleventh such report produced since 2004, and the sixth produced since responsibility for managing the database was delegated to the HSCB from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2010.

Please also note that, where appropriate, some figures within this document may be anonymised.

Summary

- 845 individuals were in treatment across Northern Ireland as of 31st March 2018.
- 984 patients in total received substitute prescribing treatment in 2017/18. This was a 4% increase on the previous year.
- During 2017/18, NHSCT treated the highest number of patients 335(34%) followed by BHSCT 265 (27%).
- There were 185 initiations onto the scheme in 2017/18. This compares with 175 initiations in 2016/17.
- 103 patients discontinued from treatment in 2017/18, compared with 117 the previous year. Of these, 23 (22%) underwent “managed discontinuation of SP”.
- 43% of patients have been in treatment for 5 or more years. This was the same percentage in 2016/17.
- 39% of patients were prescribed Buprenorphine while 42% were prescribed Methadone.

The Database relies on the timely and accurate submission of forms from the Community Addiction Agencies. Each Health & Social Care Trust & the Prison service provide a Substitute Prescribing Treatment Service.

Summary of Activity 2010-2018

Figure 1 illustrates the number of patients that received Substitute Prescribing Treatment at 31st March each year between 2010 and 2018.

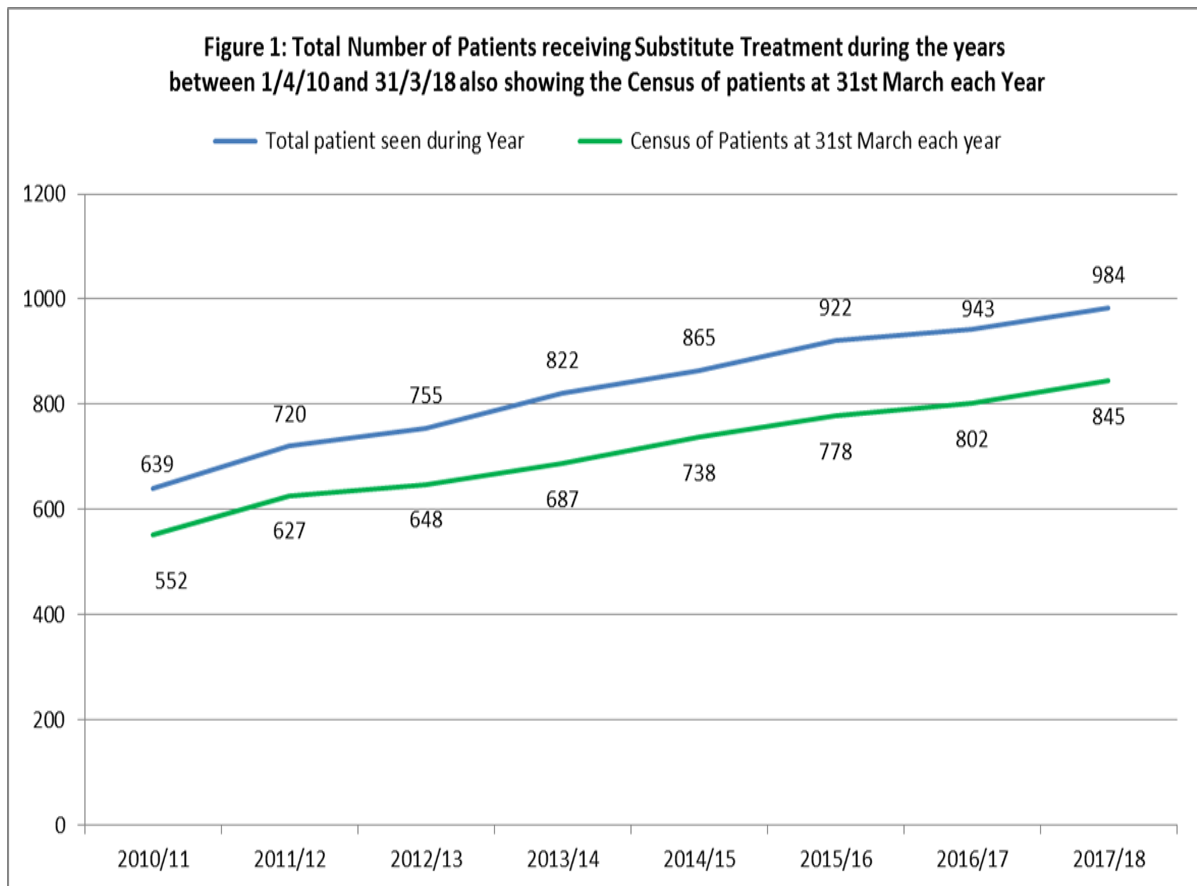
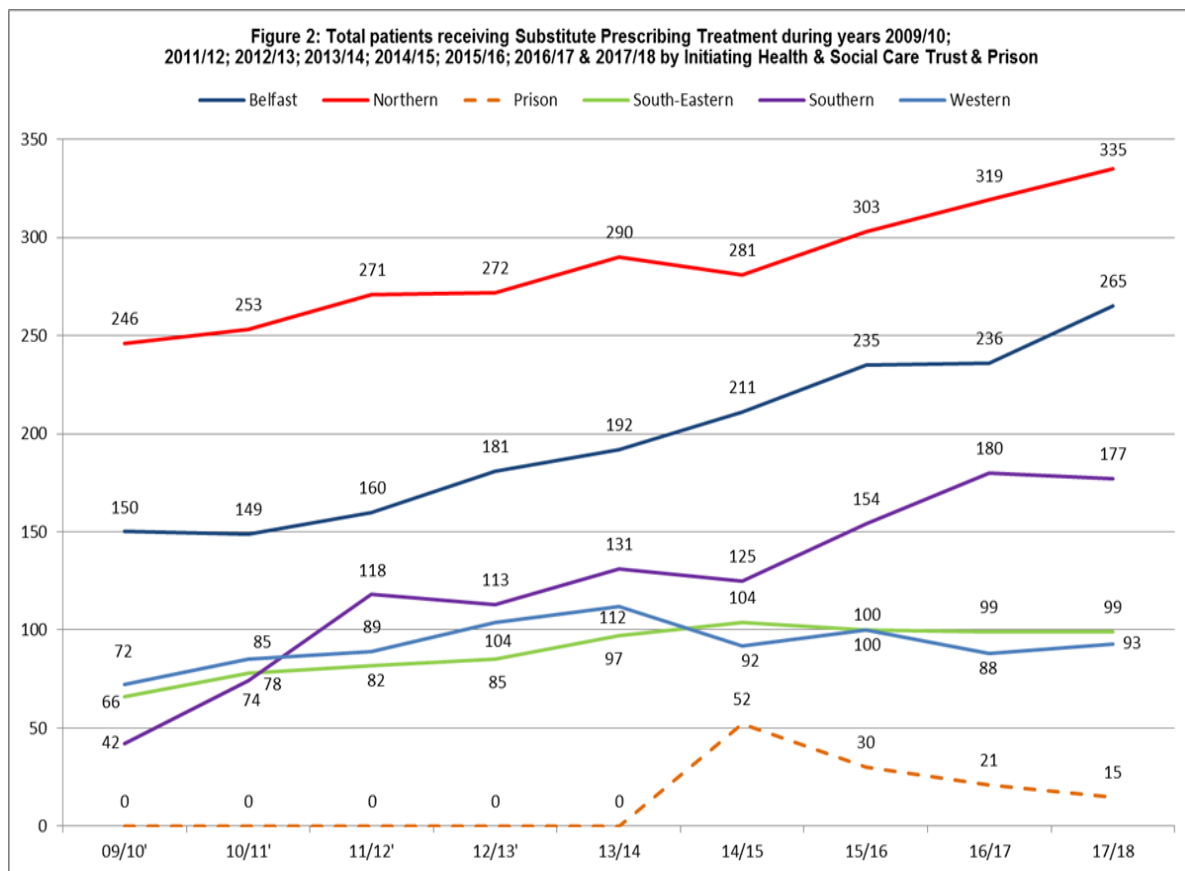


Figure 2 illustrates the number of patients by Trust that received Substitute Prescribing Treatment during each year from 2009/10 to 2017/18.



All activity during 2017/18:

A total of 984 individuals were in contact with Substitute Prescribing treatment services. There were 185 initiations during the time period.

103 patients discontinued from the scheme. "Unmanaged discontinuation of SP" accounted for 28 patients exiting the scheme with "Managed discontinuation of SP" and "Failing to present for SP" accounting for a further 23 and 19 patients respectively.

44 patients transferred between NI trusts and Prison in 2017/18 and 8 continued their treatment outside NI. 12 patients were recorded as deceased during the reporting period.

Census as of 31 March 2018:

On the 31st March 2018 a total of 845 individuals were receiving substitute medication. 671 (79%) of those patients were reported as stabilised. 361 (43%) patients were in treatment for 5 or more years.

42% of patients were in receipt of methadone and 39% buprenorphine, the remainder classed as “other” or “unknown” medication. As in previous years, there is considerable variation between Trusts, with 57% of patients receiving methadone in BHSC area compared to 12% in WHSCT area.

Table 1 shows that during the year between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018 the five Health & Social Care Trusts and Prison Health treated 984 patients in Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services.

Table 1: Total patients who received Substitute Prescribing Treatment by Trust between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018

Health & Social Care Trust Area	Total	Percentage	Trust Population	Patients per 100,000 population
Belfast	265	27%	355,593	75
Northern	335	34%	474,773	71
South-Eastern	99	10%	358,708	28
Southern	177	18%	380,312	47
Western	93	9%	301,448	31
Prison	15	2%	n/a	n/a
Total	984	100%	1,870,834	53

Population Source: (NISRA, Mid-2017 Population).

The figures are based on where people presented for treatment not their place of residence and are calculated as the incidence of treatment per 100,000 HSCT Trust area population. The figures range from 75 patients per 100,000 population in the Belfast Trust to 28 patients per 100,000 population in the South Eastern Trust. The overall figure for Northern Ireland has risen from 51 in 2016/17 to 53 per 100,000 population in 2017/18.

Table 2 shows the number of patients who commenced Substitute Prescribing Treatment between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018 and also the number who discontinued during the year. It also shows the number of patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment as at 31st March 2018.

Table 2: Number of Initiations and Discontinuations between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018.

Patients	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Total
Initiations	97	35	<20	23	16	<20	185
Discontinued Treatment During Year	51	22	<20	8	12	<20	103
In treatment as at 31/3/2018	209	294	86	157	77	22	845

The initiations can be categorised as follows:

- New patient (new to the Service, never previously treated in NI);
- Recommended (patients had stopped receiving treatment, then restarted within 3 months);
- Returned (patients had received treatment in the past and had returned to the Service, this is considered a break in treatment rather than recommencing current treatment episode)

Table 3 shows the initiation type of the 185 patients who started Substitute Prescribing Treatment between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018.

Table 3: Initiations by Type of Initiation between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018

Patients	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Total
New Patients	50	20	8	17	11	0	106
Recommended (<3 months)	17	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	26
Returned (>3 months)	30	<20	<20	<20	<20	<20	53
Total	97	35	<20	23	16	<20	185

Please note some figures in the tables above have been anonymised due to data protection in relation to low numbers.

Figure 3 illustrates by Health & Social Care Trust the patients who returned to the Substitute Prescribing Service during 2017/18 after earlier treatment. The total figure of 53 patients includes 20 patients who returned and/or recommenced more than once.

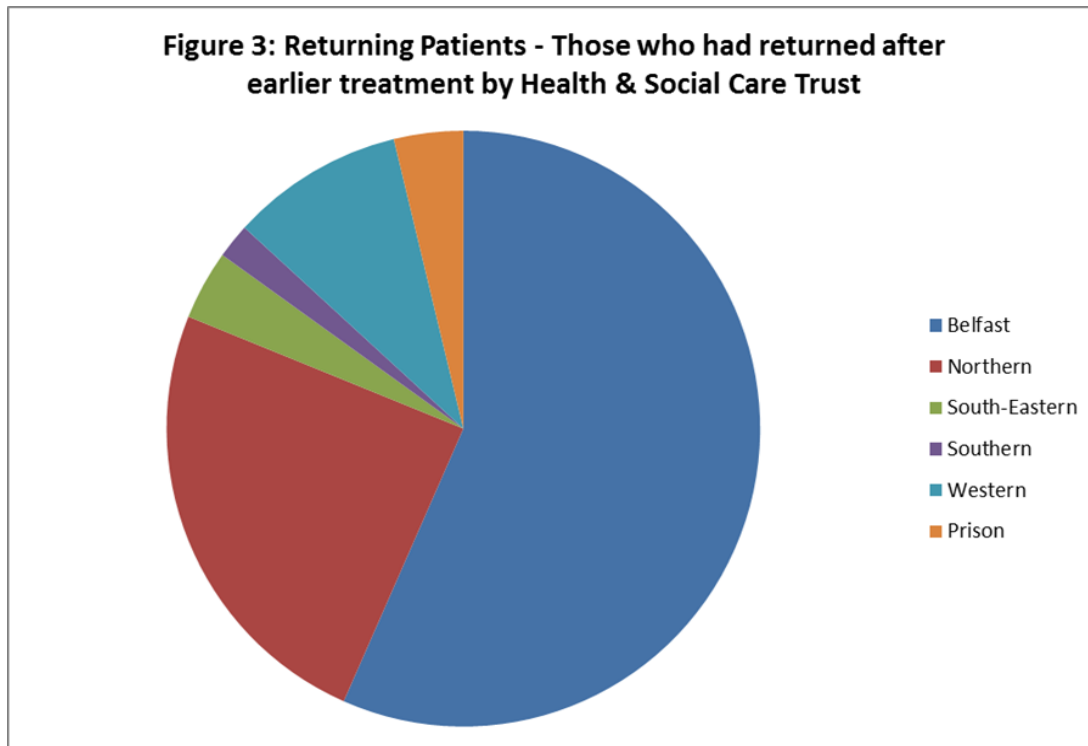


Figure 4 shows the % breakdown by gender and age-band, of the 185 new patients who started to receive Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018. The highest number of new patients 22.2% was in the 35-39 age-band, an increase from the 19.4% figure in 2016/17. In the 30-34 age-band the figure was 20.0%, a decrease on the 23.4% figure in 2016/17. The 18-25 years category had an increase from 10.3% in 2016/17 to 17.3% in 2017/18. In the 26-29 age-band, there was a decrease from 24.6% in 2016/17 to 16.8% in 2017/18. The 40-44 age-band saw a change from 11.4% in 2016/17 to 10.8% in 2017/18. The 45+ category was 10.9% last year and now sits at 13.0% in 2017/18.

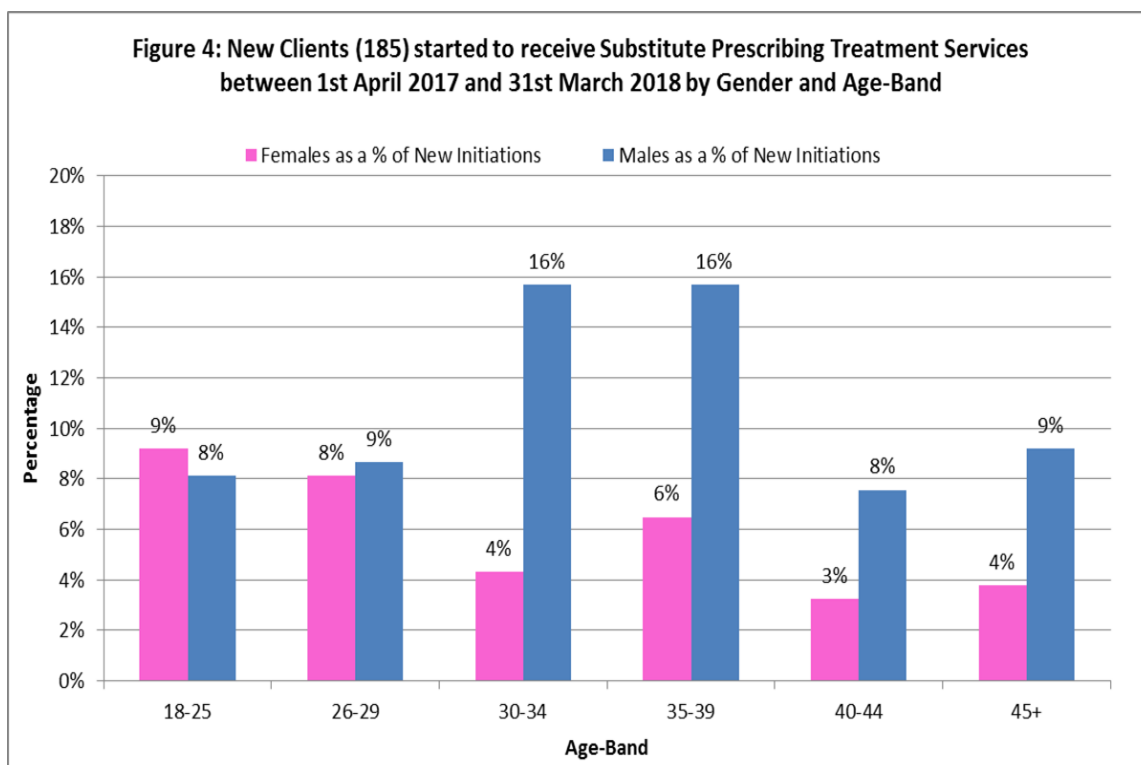


Table 4: Initiations by Gender and Age-Band between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018

Gender	18-25	26-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45+	Grand Total
F	15	15	8	12	6	7	63
M	17	16	29	29	14	17	122
Grand Total	32	31	37	41	20	24	185

Since May 2013 data has been collected from the Prison Addictions Team. Previously, data in reports would have appeared to show that treatment discontinued on entering prison and was initiated again on release, this will now correctly show continuing treatment and any initiations in prison, when either occur. New initiations in prison are shown from November 2014.

Table 5 shows the split by gender and location of treatment. As of 31st March 2018, 845 people were receiving Substitute Prescribing treatment services. The proportion of females and males is shown with the highest percentage being males 70%. Within Trusts the highest percentage of males is within Western Trust >73% and the highest percentage of females accessing the service is in the South Eastern Trust 35%.

Table 5: All Patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services at 31st March 2018 by Gender.

Gender	Belfast	Northern	South - Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Grand Total
Female	69 (33%)	90 (31%)	30 (35%)	45 (29%)	<75 (%)	<25 (%)	255 (30%)
Male	140 (67%)	204 (69%)	56 (65%)	112 (71%)	<75 (%)	<25 (%)	590 (70%)
Total	209 (100%)	294 (100%)	86 (100%)	157 (100%)	77 (100%)	22 (100%)	845 (100%)

Please note some numbers/percentages in the previous table have been anonymised due to data protection in relation to low numbers. Where the "<" symbol is shown both the number and percentage have been anonymised.

Figure 5 below shows the 845 patients by age-band. The majority of patients both male and female receiving the service are in the 45+ age-band 28%. The lowest percentage of patients 5% was in the youngest age-band, 18-25. The youngest person accessing the service at 31st March 2018 was <21 and the oldest was >68.

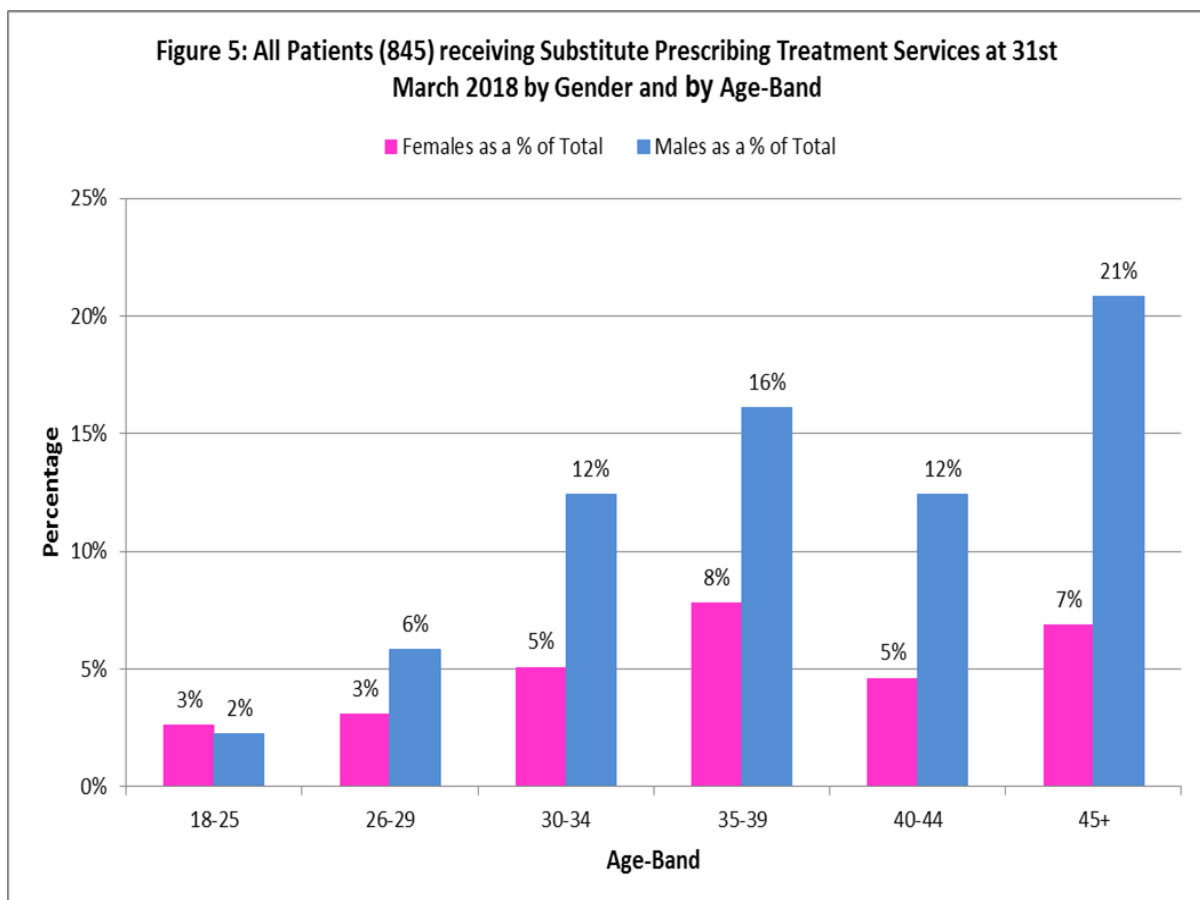
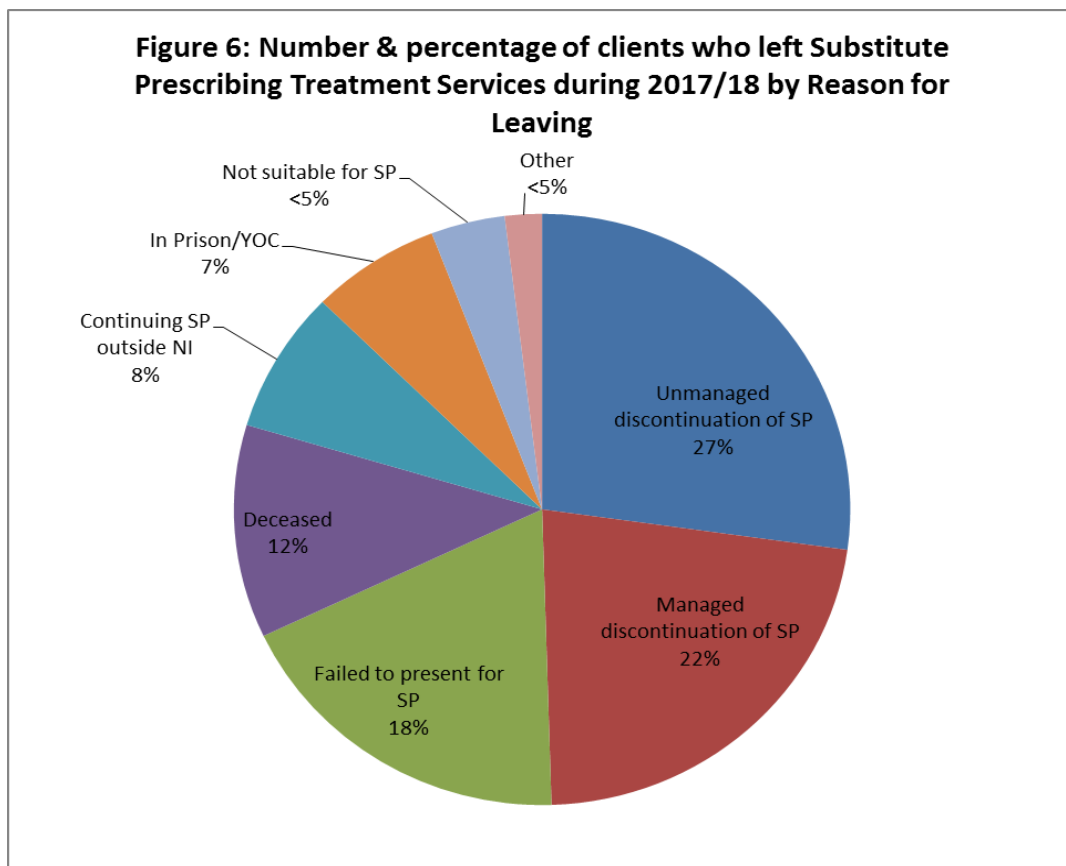


Table 6: All patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment by Gender and Age-Band between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018

Gender	18-25	26-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45+	Grand Total
F	22	26	43	66	39	59	255
M	19	49	105	136	105	176	590
Grand Total	41	75	148	202	144	235	845

Discontinuation from Substitute Prescribing Services

103 patients discontinued from Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services during 2017/18. Figure 6 shows their reason for leaving with the main reasons being “Unmanaged Discontinuation of SP” (27%); “Managed Discontinuation of SP” (22%); “Failed to present for Substitute Prescribing” (18%) and “Deceased” (12%).



Time in Treatment

Table 7 and Figure 7 illustrate the length of time patients were in treatment at 31st March 2018. The table shows that 43% of patients have been receiving treatment for 5 years or more (among those aged over 40 years the proportion in treatment over 5 years increases to 59.6% - Table 8). Of the number of patients within each Trust, the South Eastern Trust has the highest percentage of patients receiving treatment for more than 5 years while the Belfast Trust has the lowest percentage.

Table 7: All Patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment services at 31st March 2018 by Length of Time in Treatment by Service

Time in Treatment	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Grand Total
1 yr	70 (33%)	32 (11%)	<45 (%)	23 (15%)	13 (17%)	<10 (%)	149 (18%)
>1 - 2yrs	21 (10%)	33 (11%)	<45 (%)	29 (18%)	14 (18%)	<10 (%)	111 (13%)
>2 - 3yrs	23 (11%)	34 (12%)	<45 (%)	19 (12%)	6 (8%)	<10 (%)	93 (11%)
>3 - 4yrs	15 (7%)	20 (7%)	12 (14%)	12 (8%)	8 (10%)	5 (23%)	72 (9%)
>4 - 5yrs	8 (4%)	28 (10%)	<45 (%)	9 (6%)	7 (9%)	<10 (%)	59 (7%)
>5yrs	72 (34%)	147 (50%)	<45 (%)	65 (41%)	29 (38%)	<10 (%)	361 (43%)
All Patients	209 (100%)	294 (100%)	86 (100%)	157 (100%)	77 (100%)	22 (100%)	845 (100%)

Please note some numbers/percentages in the table above have been anonymised due to data protection in relation to low numbers. Where the “<” symbol is shown both the number and percentage have been anonymised.

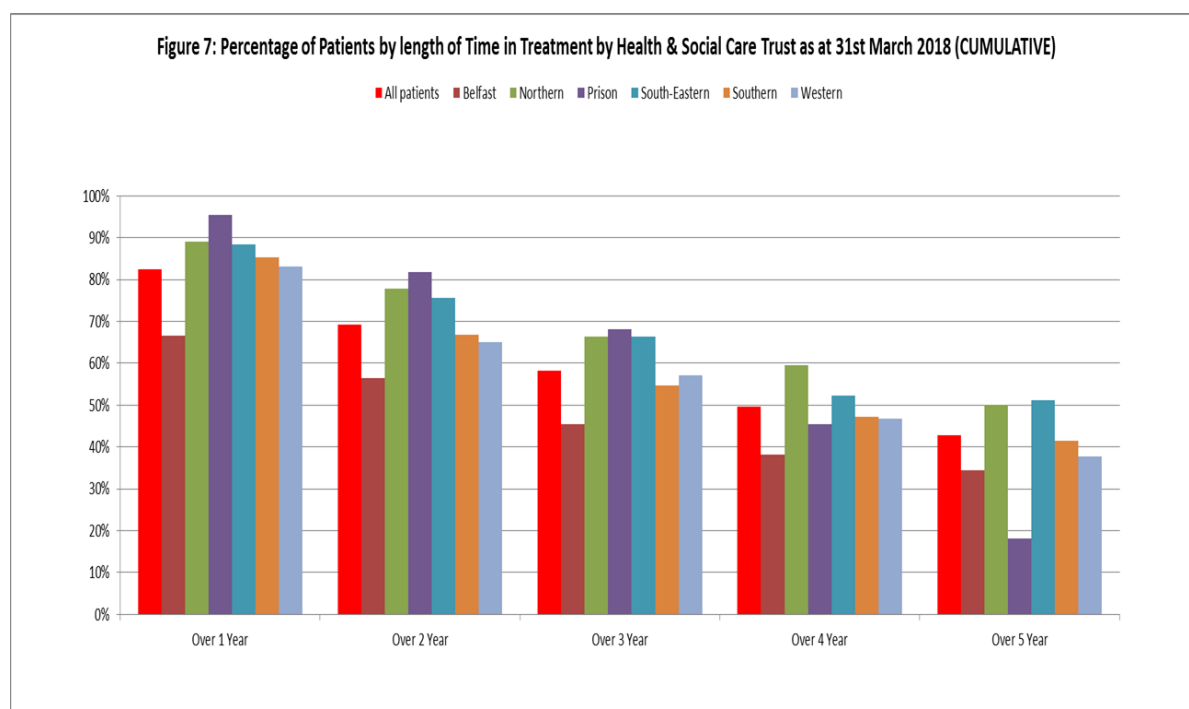


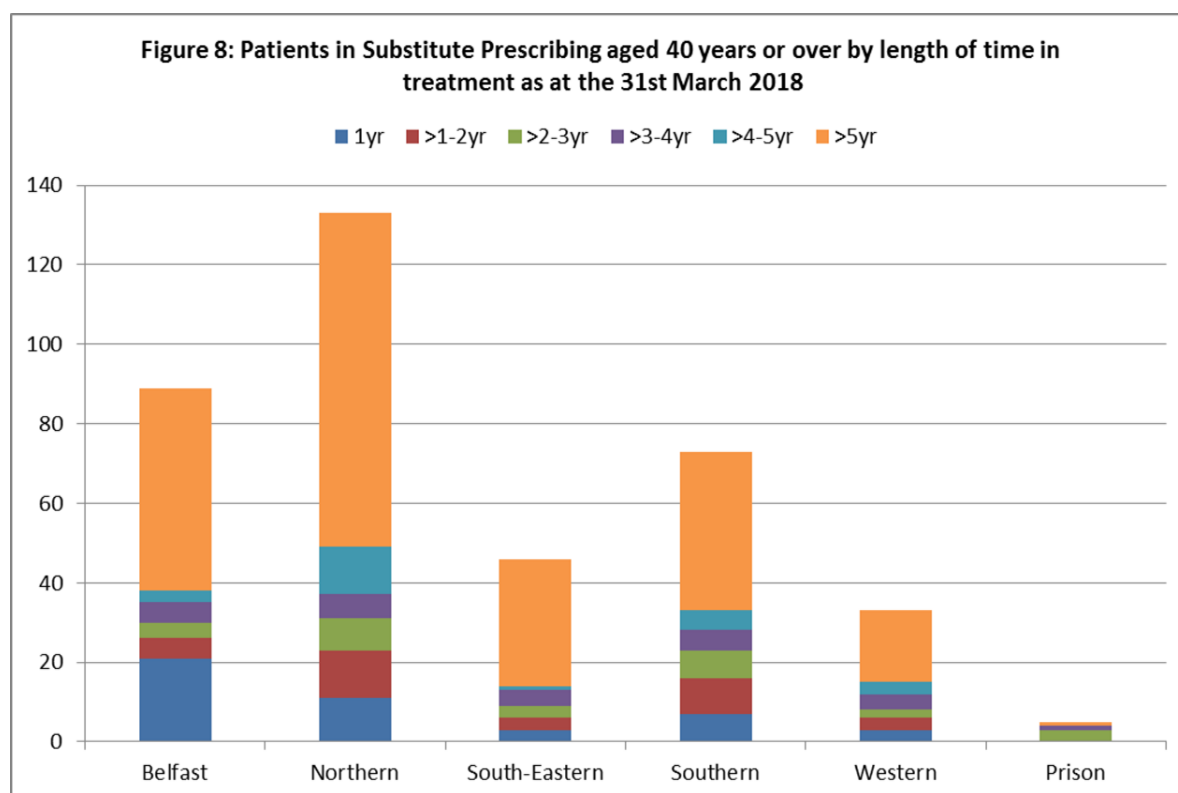
Table 8: Number of patients aged 40 years and over by Trust and by their length of time in treatment

Length of Time in Treatment	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Grand Total
<1 yr	21	11	<10	7	<20		45
>1 - 2yrs	5	12	<10	9	<20		32
>2 - 3yrs	<10	8	<10	7	<20	<10	27
>3 - 4yrs	5	6	<10	5	<20	<10	25
>4 - 5yrs	<10	12	<10	5	<20		24
>5yrs	51	84	32	40	<20	<10	226
Grand Total	89	133	46	73	33	5	379

Please note some trust figures in the table above have also been anonymised due to data protection in relation to low numbers.

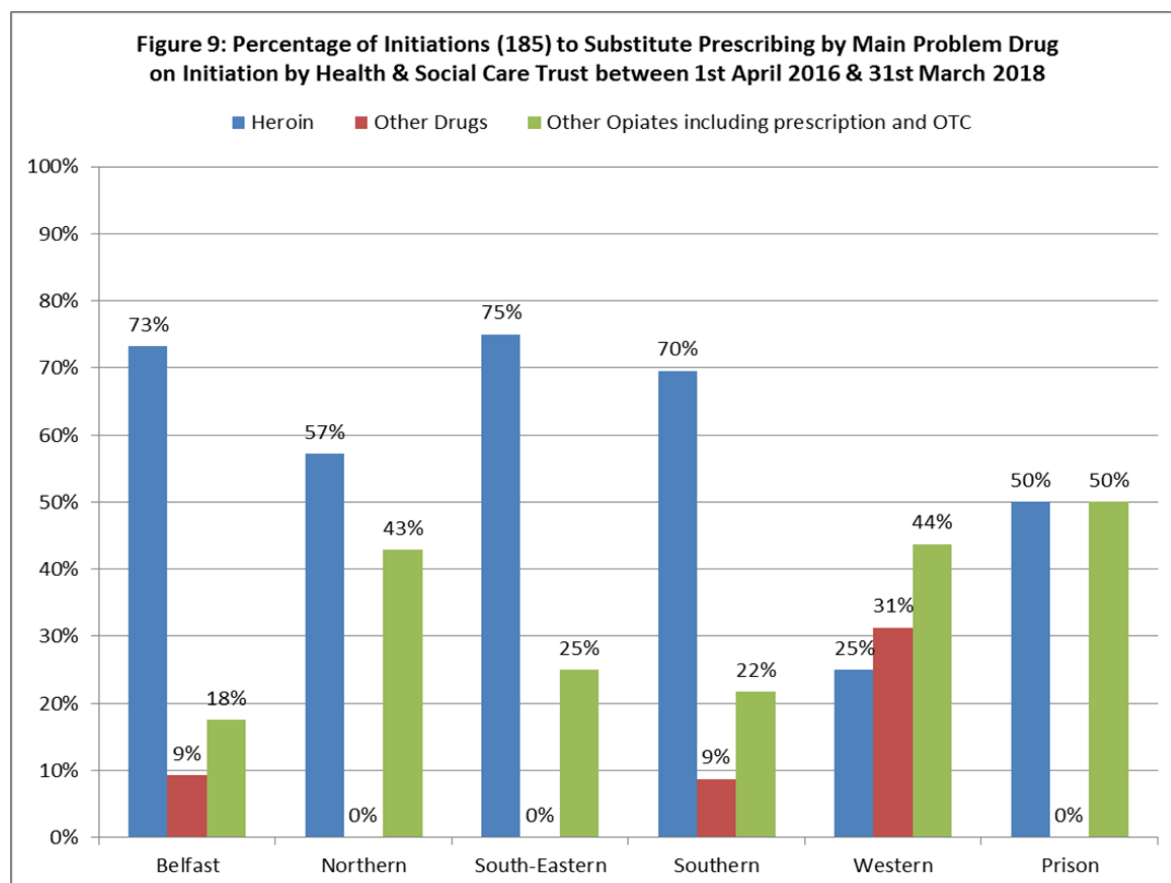
The total number of patients in treatment aged 40 years and over has increased from 336 last year to 379 this year. This is an increase of 13% on the previous year.

Figure 8: Shows 226 Patients who were over 40 years of age at 31st March 2018 and who had been in treatment for 5 years or more. This is an increase of 11% from the 203 patients the previous year.



Main Problem Drug

The database records information on the main problem drug for the patient and up to four other drugs that the patient may be using; these drugs do not have to be opiates. Figure 9 shows the main problem drug used by new patients to the service between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018.



“Other Drugs” include (in decreasing order of popularity): cannabis, other drugs, benzodiazepine, opiates- others, diazepam, codeine, cocaine, tramadol, buprenorphine, and codeine & paracetamol etc.

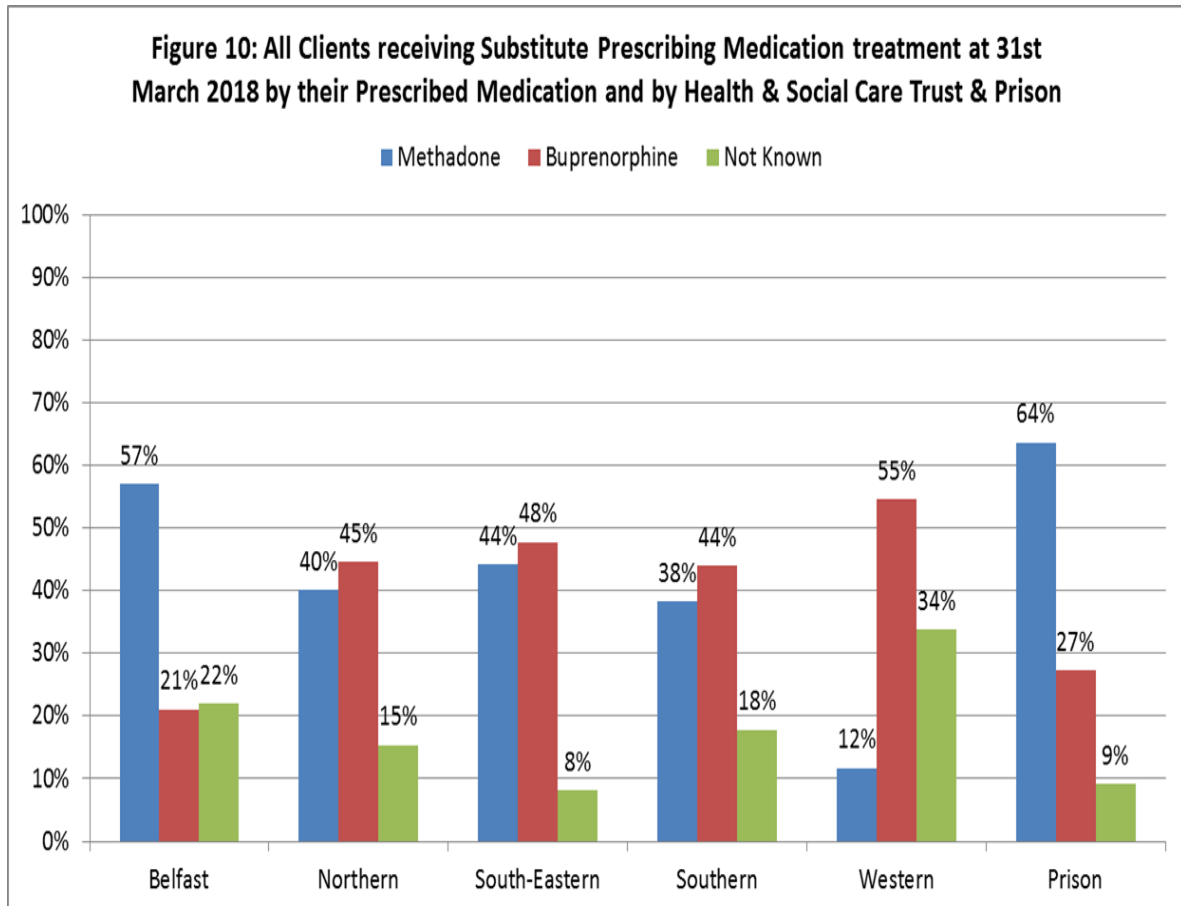
Table 9: Main problem drug at initiation comparison between 16/17 and 17/18

Main Problem Drug at Initiation	17/18	16/17
Heroin	65%	66%
Other Opiates including prescriptions and OTC	26%	25%
Other Drugs	9%	9%

Table 9 above shows that the main problem drug at initiation currently in 17/18 and previously in 16/17 continues to be heroin.

Substitute Medication

Figure 10 shows the Substitute Medication prescribed to the 845 patients who were in receipt of treatment (whether they had stabilised or not) as at 31st March 2018. The chart includes Substitute Medication prescribed to patients in Prison at 31st March 2018.

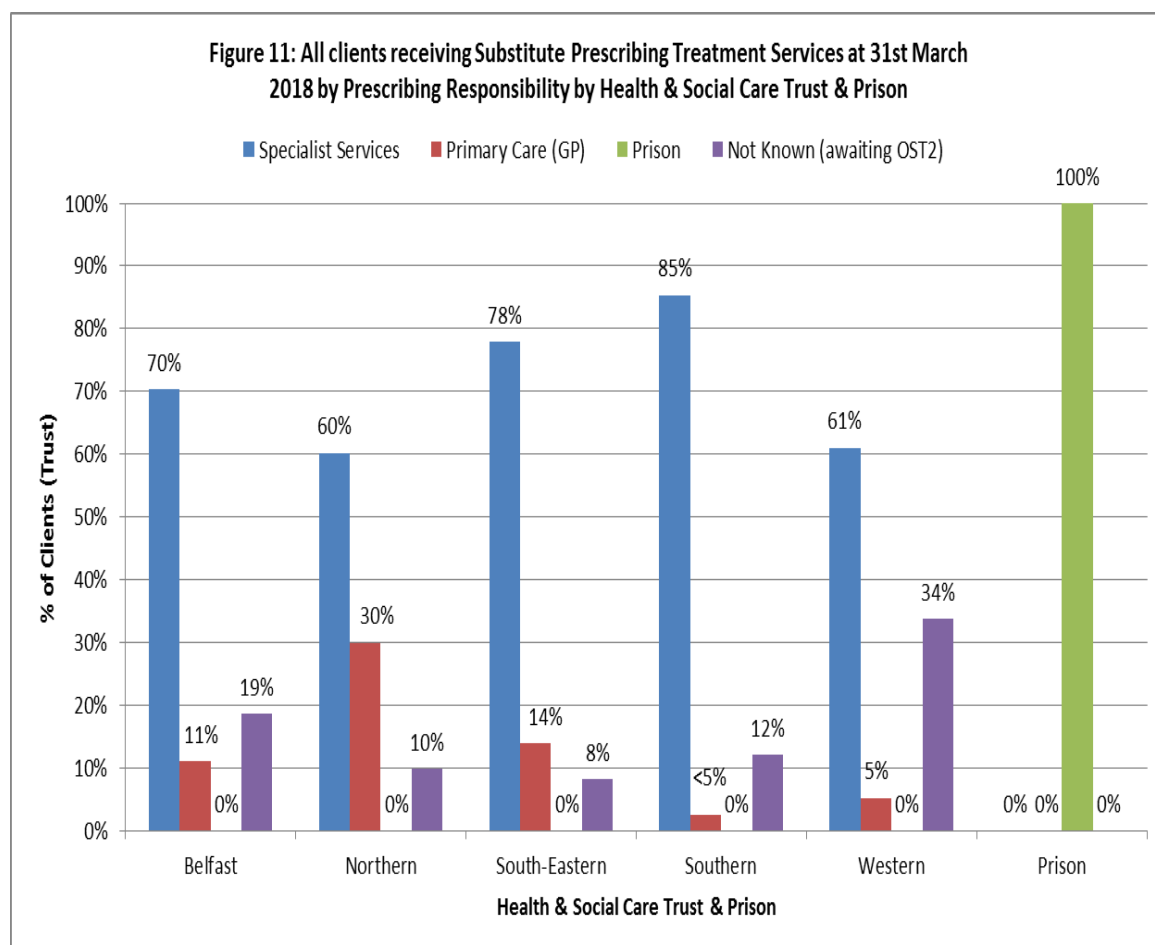


Overall, data shows that 39% of patients received buprenorphine, 42% received methadone and 18% is not known. This information relies on the submission of OST2 forms submitted in time for the report.

Prescribing Responsibility

Figure 11 illustrates that the majority of prescribing responsibility remains with Specialist Services. Northern Trust has the highest percentage of patients whose prescribing responsibility is with/shared with Primary Care (GP) 30%. For those patients in prison, prescribing responsibility remains with the Prison Addictions Team.

Within a Shared Care arrangement, prescribing responsibility may reside with the GP (including potentially other elements of care), with Trust services continuing to provide specialist care as required.



Patient Improvement

Stabilisation

Table 10 shows that of the 845 patients receiving substitute medication, 79% were reported by Trust services as being stabilised. This data is only available on the OST2 form as returned by Trusts and therefore reflects the assessment of specialist practitioners within Trust services.

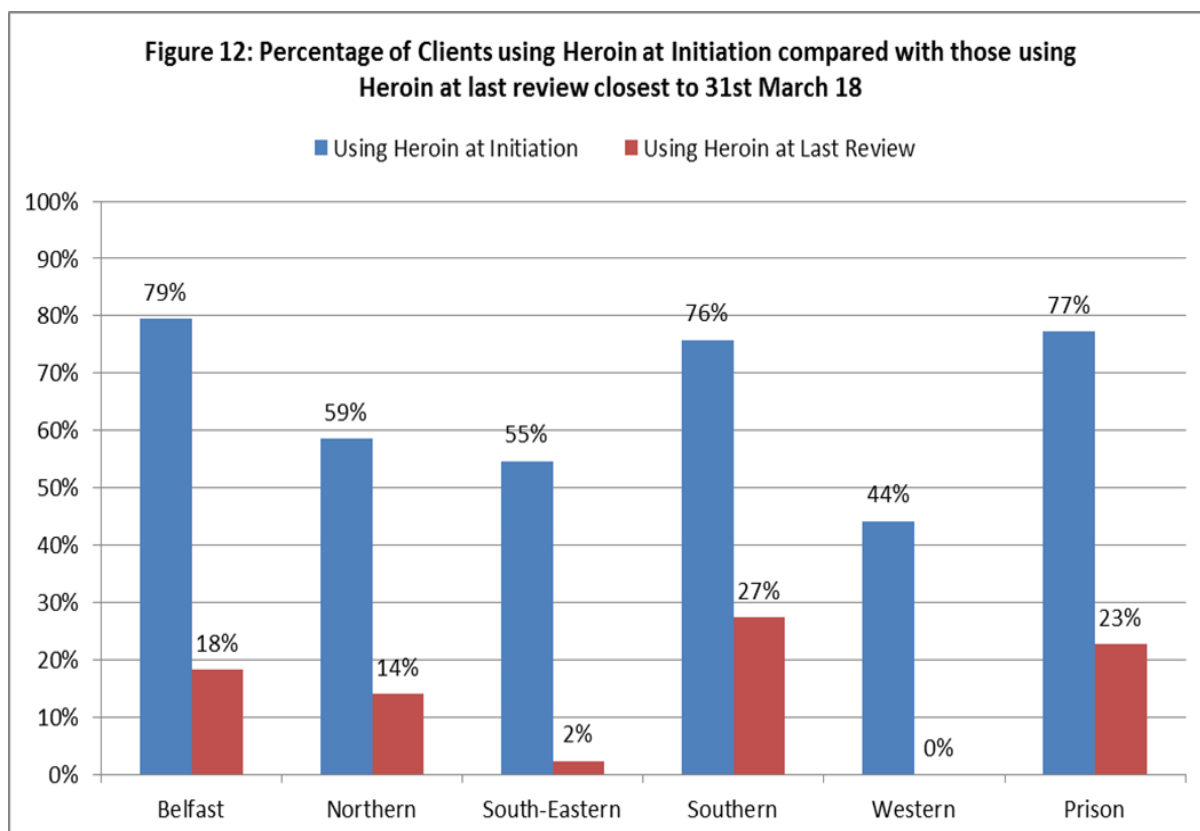
Table 10: Patients stabilised receiving Substitute Prescribing Medication at 31st March 2018 by Health & Social Care Trust & Prison

Stabilisation	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Total
Yes	161 (77%)	256 (87%)	67 (78%)	122 (78%)	46 (60%)	19 (86%)	671 (79%)
No	<50 (24%)	10 (3%)	11 (13%)	14 (9%)	<40 (52%)	<5 (23%)	40 (5%)
Not Known	<50 (24%)	28 (10%)	8 (9%)	21 (13%)	<40 (52%)	<5 (23%)	134 (16%)
Total	209 (100%)	294 (100%)	86 (100%)	157 (100%)	77 (100%)	22 (100%)	845 (100%)

Please note some numbers/percentages in the table above have been anonymised due to data protection in relation to low numbers. Where the "<" symbol is shown both the number and percentage have been anonymised.

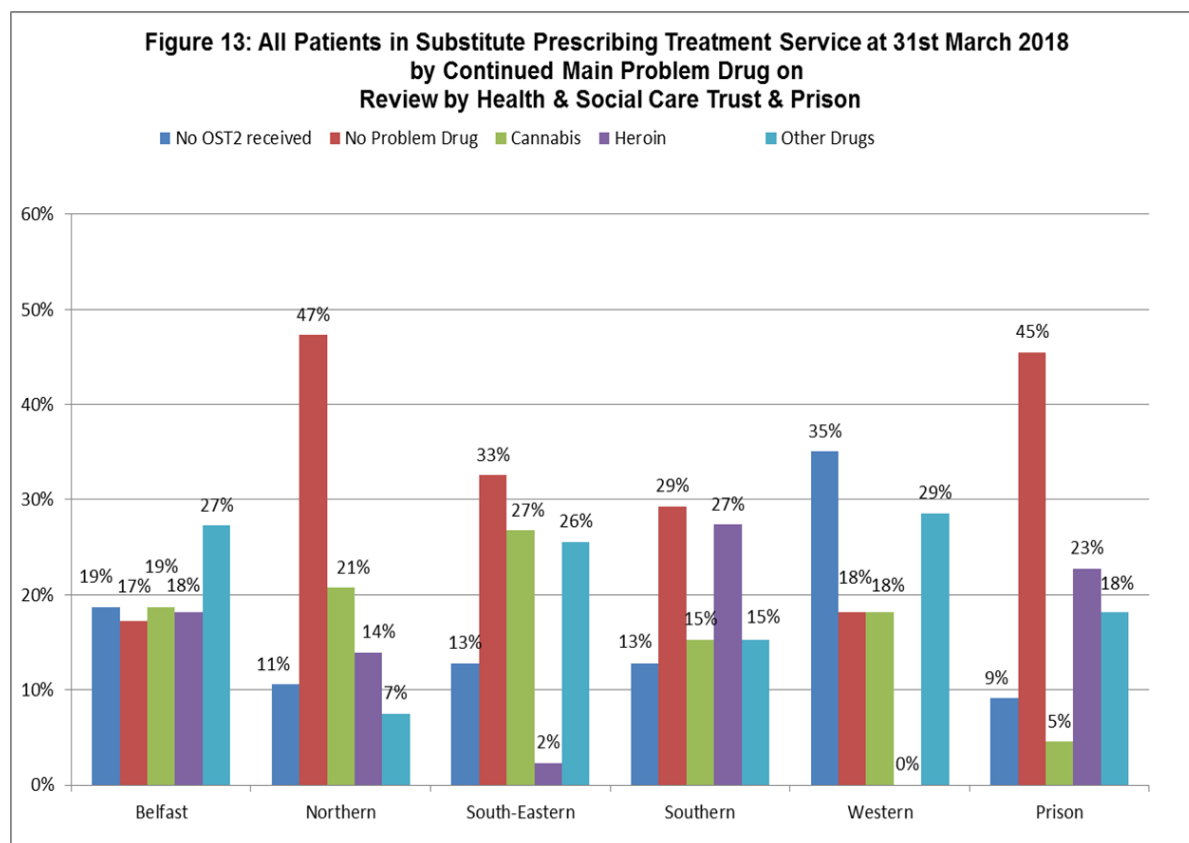
Heroin usage at Initiation of Treatment and at subsequent Review closest to 31st March 2018

Figure 12 shows the comparison of the use of Heroin as a main problem drug at the start of treatment and at subsequent review closest to 31st March 2018. Overall 66% of patients used heroin at the start of treatment and at subsequent review closest to 31st March 2018, 15% were using heroin, therefore indicating a positive outcome.



Continuing Drug Usage

Figure 13 gives a more detailed breakdown of the continued drug use by patients. 32% had no continued problem drug recorded the same as the previous year. 19% had recorded cannabis as their main continued problem drug, 18% had a variety of "Other Drugs*" recorded, while 15% recorded heroin as their continued main problem drug.

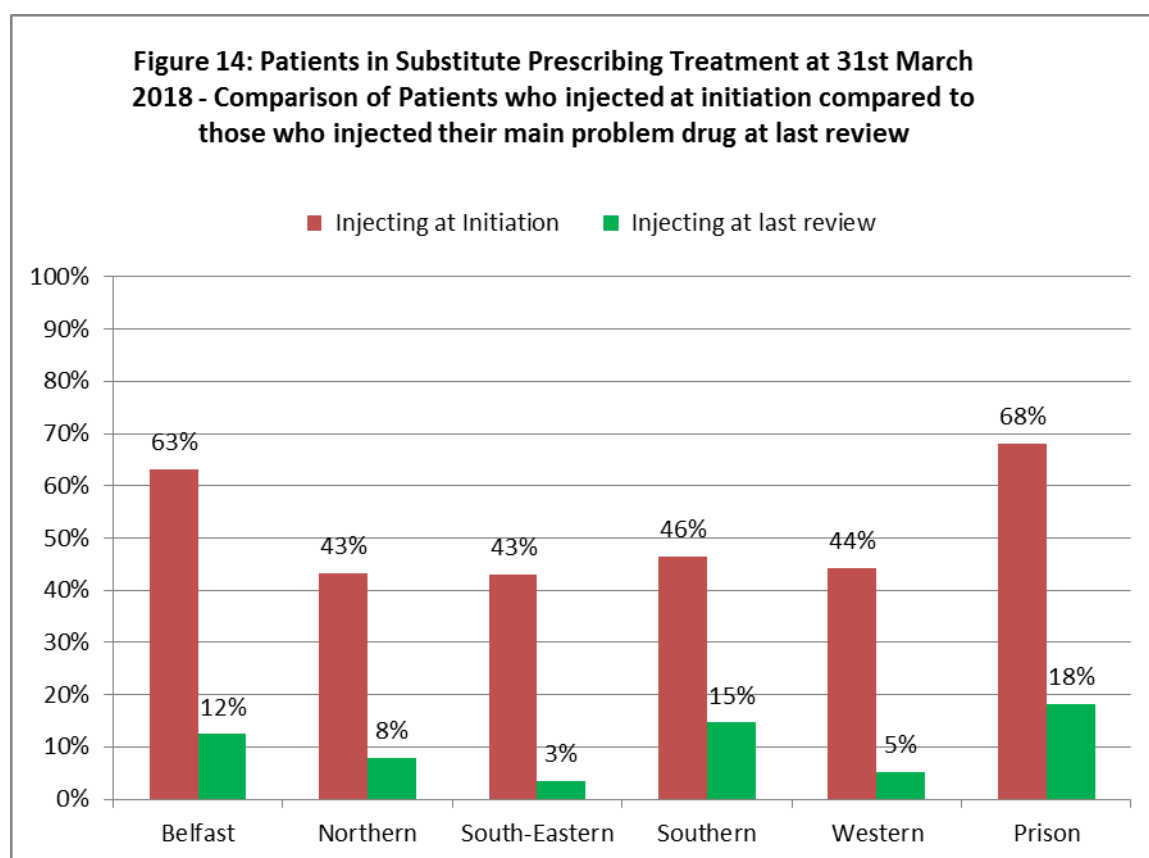


*Other Drugs covers other Class A/B/C drugs, 'New Psychoactive Substances' (NPS), prescription drugs and OTC drugs.

In decreasing order of popularity, the other drugs most commonly referenced are* benzodiazepines (of which diazepam is most frequent), cocaine, tramadol, codeine & paracetamol, morphine, codeine, opiates-others, temazepam, buprenorphine, Amphetamines, etc.

Injecting Behaviour at Initiation of Latest Treatment and at Review closest to 31st March 2018

A measure of patient improvement is comparing the injecting behaviour of patients at initiation of treatment and at their latest review closest to 31st March 2018. Overall, 49% of patients injected at initiation of treatment; this decreased to 10% at last review. Figure 14 compares this with their injecting behaviour at last review closest to 31st March 2018. Overall there was an 80% reduction in the number who were injecting at start of treatment with Substitute Prescribing Services.



Missed Appointments

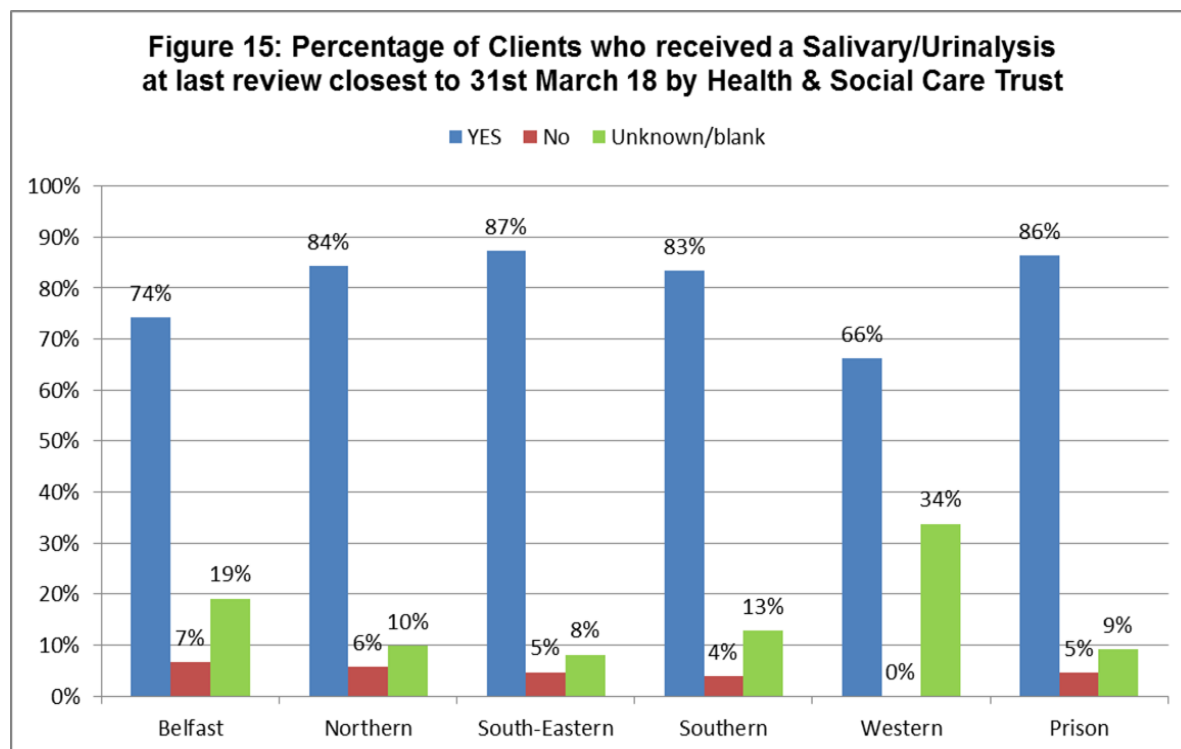
Of the 845 patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment at 31st March 2018, it was recorded on their last review that 13% had missed appointments. Table 11 illustrates this by Health & Social Care Trust & Prison. This is the same percentage figure as the previous year.

Table 11: Number & Percentage of Patients who missed appointments, as recorded on their last Review closest to the 31st March 2018.

Missed Appointments	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Total
Total Patients	209	294	86	157	77	22	845
No. of Missed appointments	27 (13%)	29 (10%)	14 (16%)	17 (11%)	25 (32%)	<5 (<23%)	114 (13%)

Salivary/Urinalysis Testing by Health & Social Care Trust

Figure 15 shows the percentage of patients tested at the review most recent to 31st March 2018. South Eastern Trust had the highest percentage of tested patients (87%).



Personal Living Arrangements

With data taken from their last review, Figure 16 shows that 37% of patients reported that they were living alone, 13% lived with their spouse, partner and children and 11% lived with their parents or their spouse/partner only, 14% of forms did not specify the living circumstances of the patients.

The “Living With” status of patients is recorded on initiation of treatment and at each review. Of the patients receiving treatment at 31st March 2018, at initiation of Substitute Prescribing Treatment less than 1% of them were recorded as homeless. Continuing to look at those patients, at their last review <5 patients were homeless.

Where the “Other” option was included it showed that the patients lived with: brother, daughter, son, sister, grand-child, grandparents; MH care facility; supported accommodation and residential home.

