

Northern Ireland Substitute Prescribing Database Report

31st March 2016

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Statistics from the Northern Ireland Substitute Prescribing Database: 31 March 2016

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 2016 and focuses on those patients in contact with Substitute Prescribing treatment services during 2015/16. 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 ninth such report produced since 2004, and the fourth produced since responsibility for managing the database was delegated to the HSCB from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2010.

Summary

- 778 individuals were in treatment across Northern Ireland as of 31st March 2016.
- 922 patients in total received substitute prescribing treatment in 2015/16. This was a 7% increase on the previous year.
- During 2015/16, NHSCT treated the highest number of patients 303(33%) followed by BHSC 235 (25%).
- There were 175 initiations onto the scheme in 2015/16. This compares with 181 initiations in 2014/15.
- 108 patients discontinued from treatment in 2015/16, compared with 109 the previous year. Of these, 44 (41%) underwent “managed discontinuation of SP”.
- 42% of patients have been in treatment for 5 or more years, up slightly from 40% in 2014/15
- 43% 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 provides a Substitute Prescribing Treatment Service.

Summary of Activity 2010-2016

Figure 2 illustrates the number of patients that received Substitute Prescribing Treatment at 31st March each year between 2010 and 2016

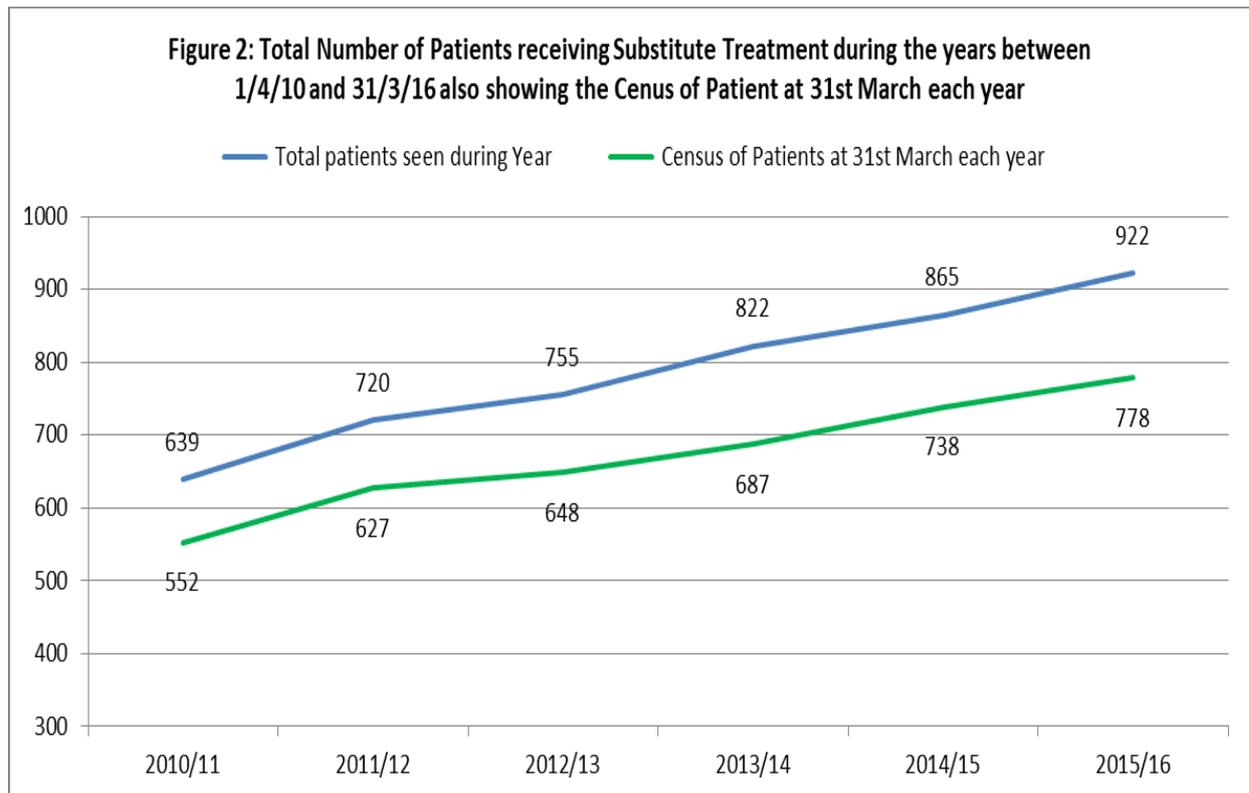
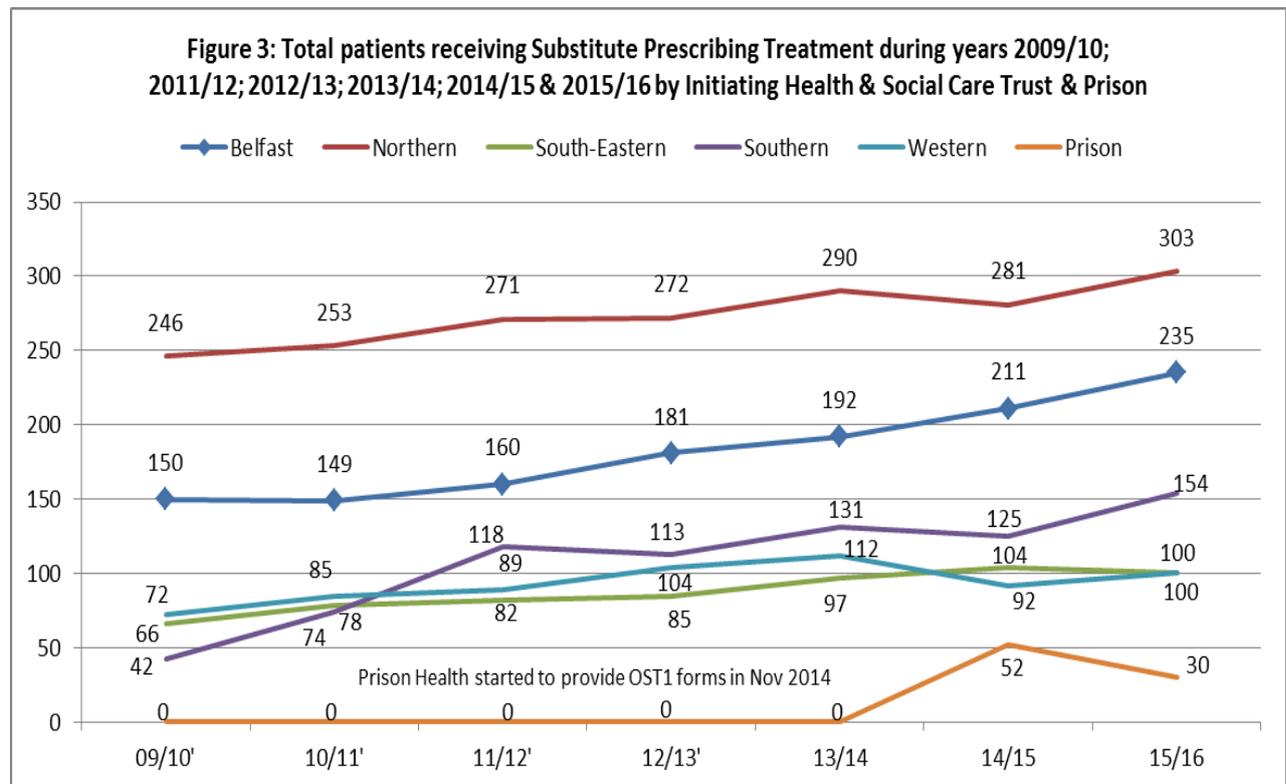


Figure 3 illustrates the number of patients by Trust that received Substitute Prescribing Treatment during each year from 2009/10 to 2015/16



All activity during 2015/16:

A total of 922 individuals were in contact with Substitute Prescribing treatment services. There were 175 initiations during the time period.

108 patients discontinued from the scheme. “Managed discontinuation of SP” accounted for 41 patients leaving the scheme, with “unmanaged discontinuation of SP” and “failing to present for SP” accounting for a further 21 and 20 patients respectively.

36 patients transferred between NI trusts and Prison in 2015/16 and 14 continued their treatment outside NI.

<10 patients were recorded as deceased during the reporting period.

Census as of 31 March 2016:

On the 31st March 2016 a total of 778 individuals were receiving substitute medication. 628 (81%) of those patients were reported as stabilised. 328 (42%) patients were in treatment for 5 or more years.

42% of patients were in receipt of methadone and 43% buprenorphine, the remainder classed as “other” or “unknown”. As in previous years, there is considerable variation between Trusts, with 63% of patients receiving methadone in BHSC area compared to 8% in WHSCT area.

Table 1 shows that during the year between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 the five Health & Social Care Trusts and Prison Health treated 922 patients in Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services.

Table 1: Total patients who received Substitute Prescribing Treatment by Trust between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016

Health & Social Care Trust Area	Total	Percentage	Trust Population	Patients per 100,000 population
Belfast	235	25%	353,778	66
Northern	303	33%	471,188	64
South-Eastern	100	11%	354,651	28
Southern	154	17%	372,976	41
Western	100	11%	299,028	33
Prison	30	3%	n/a	n/a
Total	922	100%	1,851,621	50

Population Source: (NISRA, Mid-2015 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 66 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 47 to 50 per 100,000 population.

Table 2 shows the number of patients who commenced Substitute Prescribing Treatment between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 and also the number who discontinued during the year. It also shows the number of patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment as at 31st March 2016.

Table 2: Number of Initiations and Discontinuations between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016.

Patients	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Total
Initiations	70	32	10	31	20	12	175
Discontinued Treatment During Year	49	18	8	15	10	8	108
In treatment as at 31/3/2016	179	265	89	131	88	26	778

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 175 patients who started Substitute Prescribing Treatment between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016.

Table 3: Initiations by Type of Initiation between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016

Patients	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Total
New Patients	38	25	6	18	12	11	110
Recommended (<3 months)	14	<10	<10	5	<10	<10	26
Returned (>3 months)	18	<10	<10	8	<10	<10	39
Total	70	32	10	31	20	12	175

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

Figure 4 illustrates by Health & Social Care Trust the patients who returned to the Substitute Prescribing Service during 2015/16 after earlier treatment. The total figure of 39 patients includes 14 patients who returned and/or recommenced more than once.

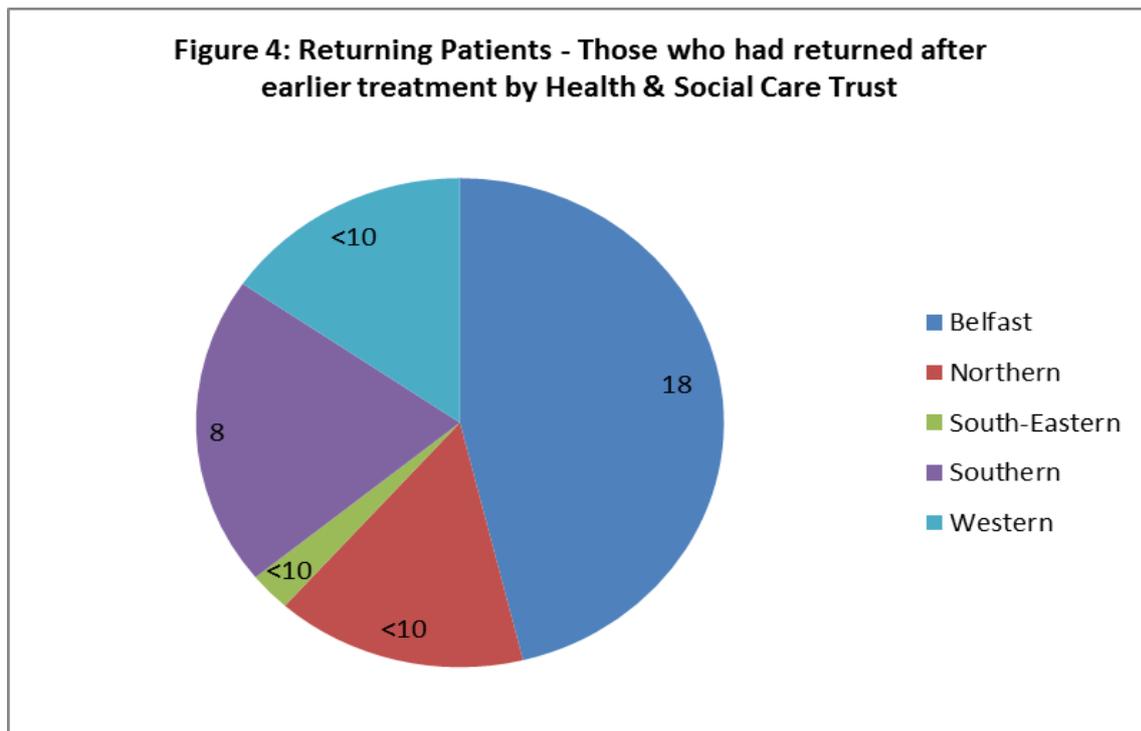
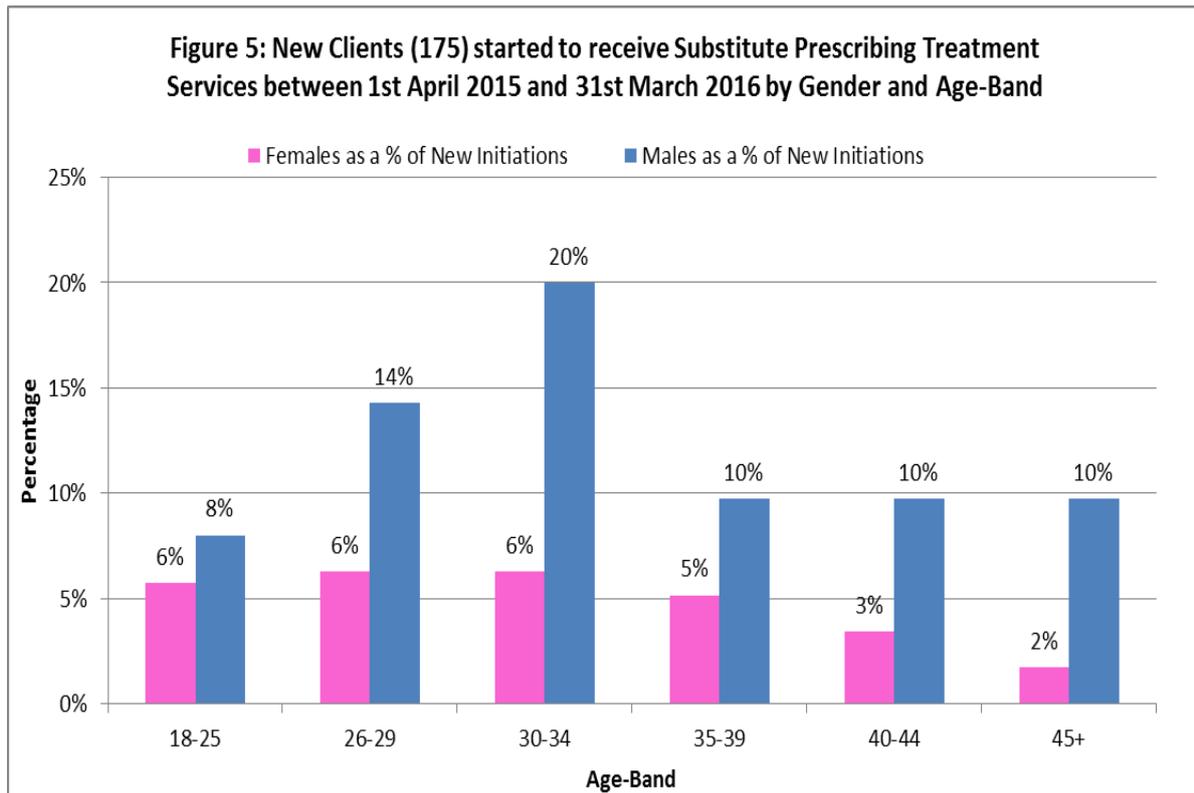


Figure 5 shows the breakdown by gender and age-band, the 175 new patients who started to receive Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016. The highest number of new patients 26% was in the 30-34 age-band, a decrease on the 28% in 2014/15. The 18-25 years category had a decrease from 15% in 2014/15 to 14% in 2015/16. The 26-29 age-band had an increase of just over 1% in 2015/16 from 2014/15. In the 35-39 age-band, there was a decrease from 18% in 2014/15 to 15% in 2015/16. The 40-44 age-band saw an increase from 8% in 2014/15 to 13% in 2015/16, whereas the 45+ category saw the same percentage in new patients for both years.



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.

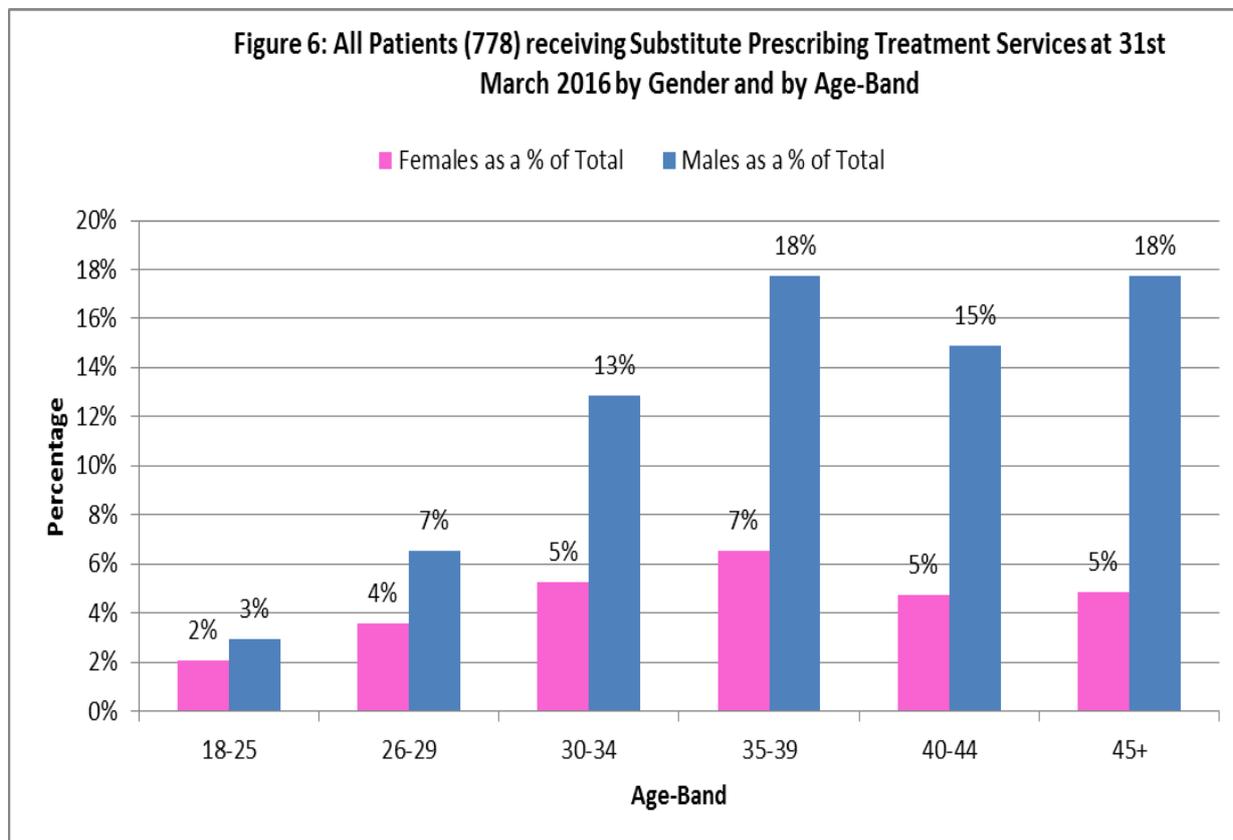
Table 4 shows the split by gender and location of treatment. As of 31st March 2016, 778 people were receiving Substitute Prescribing treatment services. The proportion of females and males is shown with the highest percentage being males 73%. Within Trusts the highest percentage of males is within Southern Trust 78% and the highest percentage of females accessing the service is in the Western Trust 33%.

Table 4: All Patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services at 31st March 2016 by Gender

Gender	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Grand Total
Female	51(28%)	72 (27%)	<65 (73%)	29 (22%)	29 (33%)	<25 (96%)	211 (27%)
Male	128 (72%)	193 (73%)	<65 (73%)	102 (78%)	59 (67%)	<25 (96%)	567 (73%)
Total	179 (100%)	265 (100%)	89 (100%)	131 (100%)	88 (100%)	26 (100%)	778 (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.

Figure 6 below shows the 778 patients by age-band. The majority of patients both male and female receiving the service are in the 35-39 age-band 24.3%. The lowest percentage of patients 5% was in the youngest age-band, 18-25. The youngest person accessing the service at 31st March 2016 was <21 and the oldest was >67.



Time in Treatment

Table 5 and Figure 7 illustrate the length of time patients were in treatment at 31st March 2016. The table shows that 42% of patients have been receiving treatment for 5 years or more. Of the number of patients within each Trust, the Northern Trust has the highest percentage of patients receiving treatment for more than 5 years (51%) while the Western Trust has the lowest percentage.

Table 5: All Patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment services at 31st March 2016 by Length of Time in Treatment by Service

Time in Treatment	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Grand Total
1 yr	47 (26%)	28 (11%)	9 (10%)	28 (21%)	19 (22%)	7 (28%)	138 (18%)
>1 - 2yrs	26 (14%)	25 (9%)	19 (21%)	14 (11%)	17 (19%)	5 (19%)	106 (14%)
>2 - 3yrs	15 (8%)	34 (13%)	<10 (11%)	14 (11%)	10 (11%)	<10 (38%)	85 (11%)
>3 - 4yrs	12 (7%)	20 (8%)	<10 (11%)	11 (8%)	9 (10%)	<10 (38%)	61 (8%)
>4 - 5yrs	8 (4%)	23 (9%)	7 (8%)	18 (14%)	<31 (35%)	<10 (38%)	60 (8%)
>5yrs	71 (40%)	135 (51%)	43 (48%)	46 (35%)	<31 (35%)	<10 (38%)	328 (42%)
All Patients	179 (100%)	265 (100%)	89 (100%)	131 (100%)	88 (100%)	26 (100%)	778 (100%)

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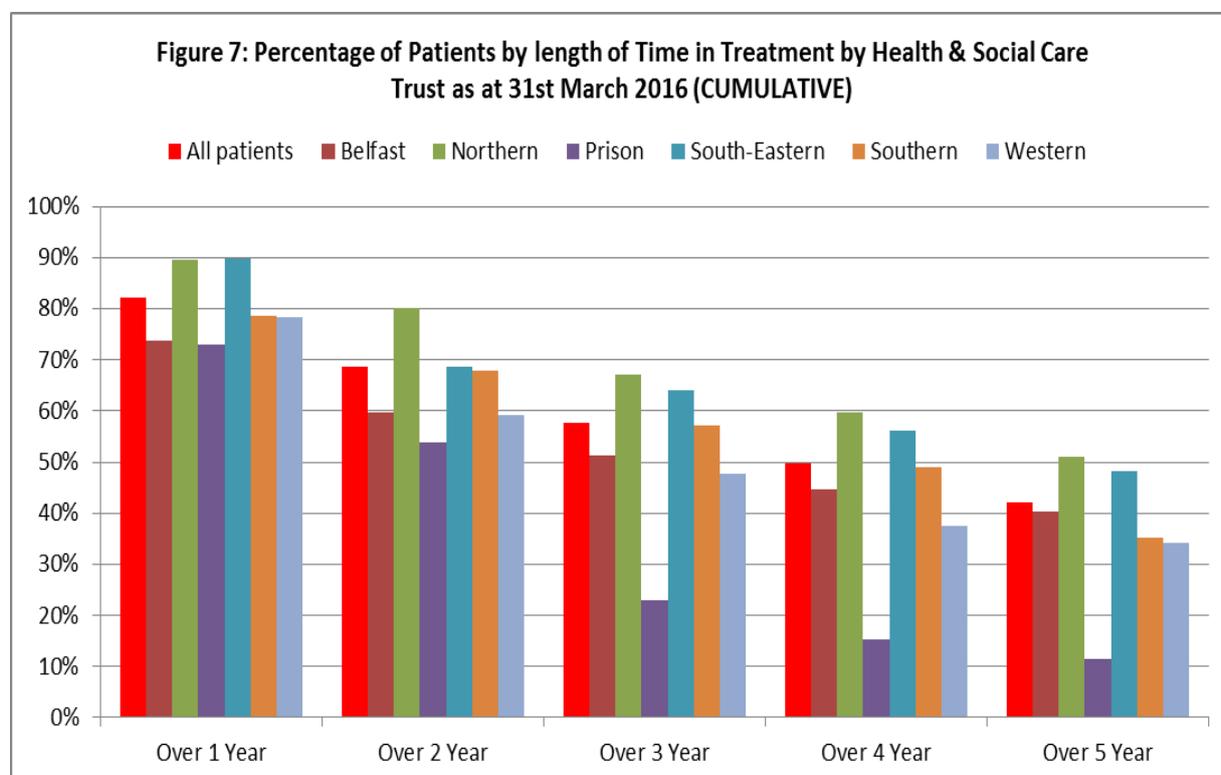


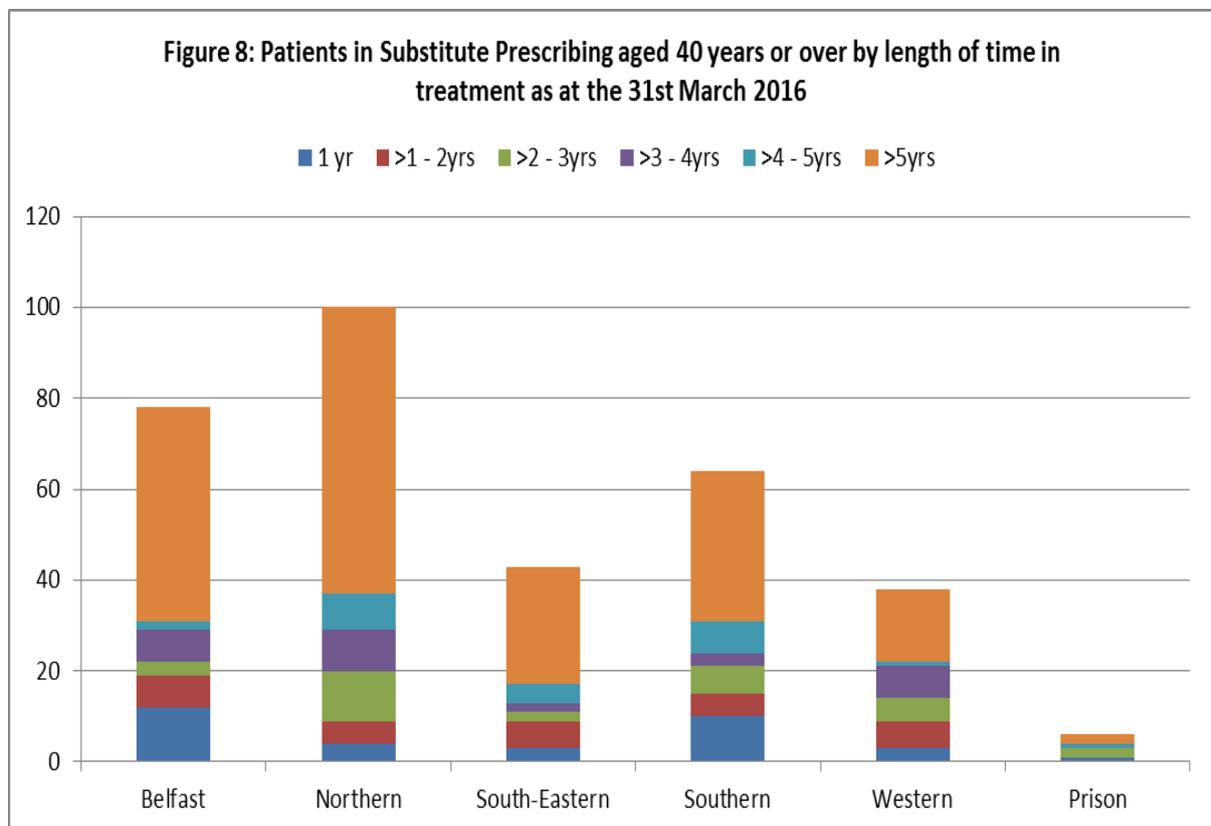
Table 6: Number of patients aged 40 years and over by Trust and by their length of time in treatment

Length of Time in Treatment	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Grand Total
<1 yr	12	<10	<10	10	<10	<10	33
>1 - 2yrs	7	5	6	5	6		29
>2 - 3yrs	3	11	<10	<10	5	<10	29
>3 - 4yrs	7	9	<10	<7	7		28
>4 - 5yrs	<50	<10	<10	7	<10	<10	23
>5yrs	<50	63	26	33	16	<10	187
Grand Total	78	100	43	64	38	6	329

The total number of patients in treatment aged 40 years and over has increased from 302 last year to 329 this year. This is an increase of 9% on the previous year. Because of low numbers, it is not possible to provide the breakdown of prison numbers

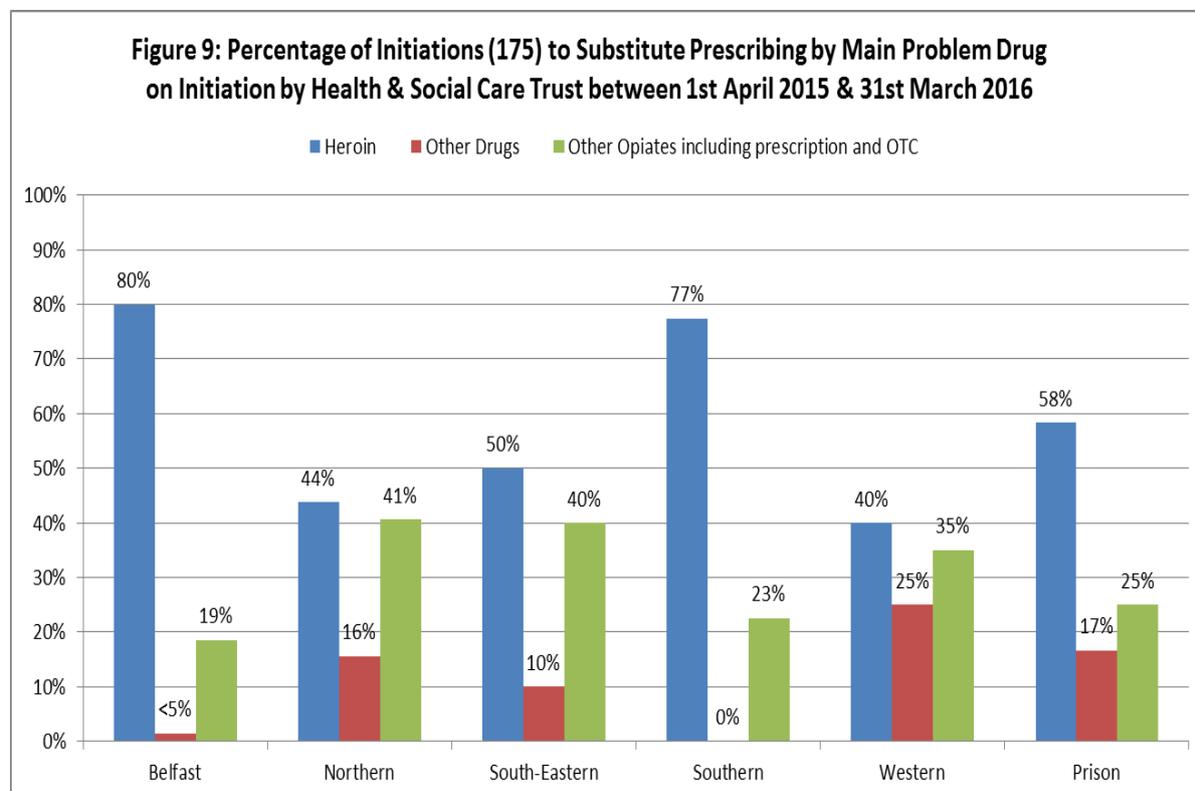
Please note some figures in the table above have been anonymised due to data protection in relation to low numbers.

Figure 8: Shows 187 Patients who were over 40 years of age at 31st March 2016 and who had been in treatment for 5 years or more. This is an increase of 13% from the 166 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 2015 and 31st March 2016. The chart shows that the main problem drug continues to be Heroin.



“Other Drugs” include (in decreasing order of popularity): cannabis, diazepam, tramadol, other drugs, buprenorphine, cocaine, benzodiazepine and methadone etc.

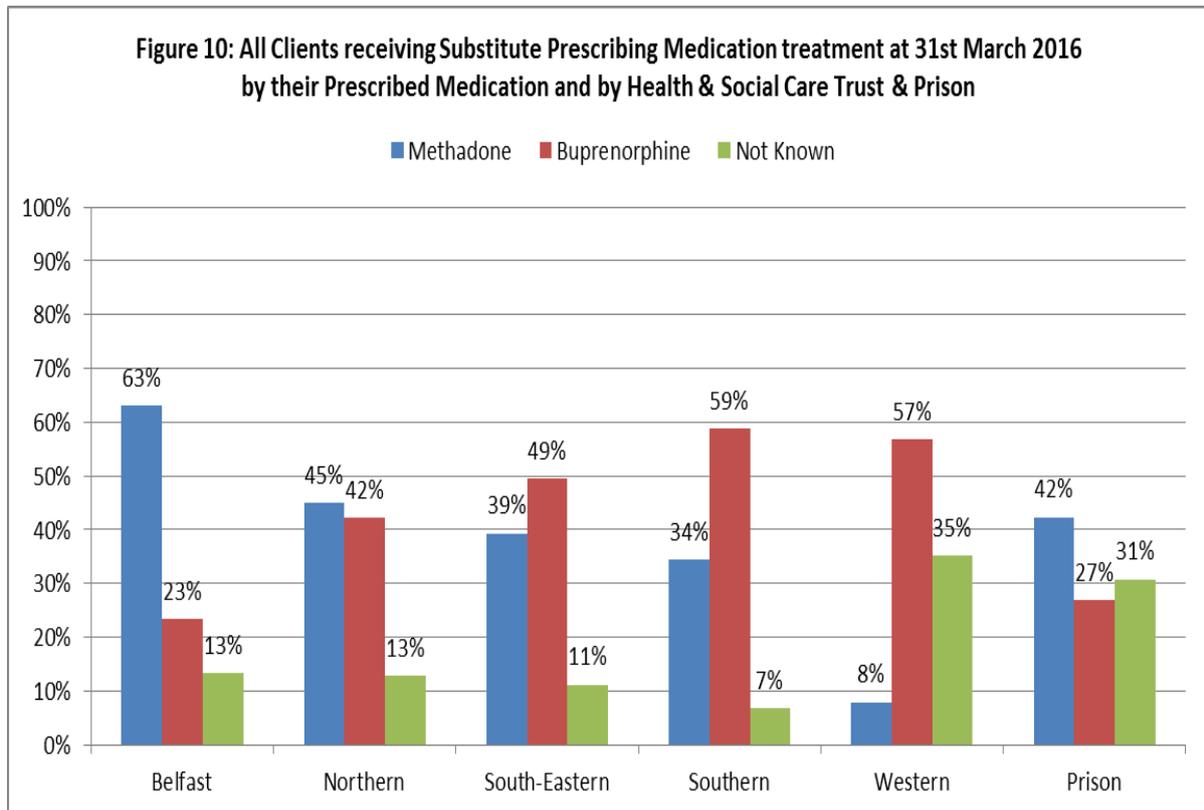
Table 7: Main problem drug at initiation comparison between 14/15 and 15/16

Main Problem Drug at Initiation	15/16	14/15
Heroin	65%	62%
Other Opiates including prescriptions and OTC	27%	26%
Other Drugs	8%	12%

Table 7 above shows that the main problem drug at initiation currently in 15/16 and previously in 14/15 continues to be heroin.

Substitute Medication

Figure 10 shows the Substitute Medication prescribed to the 778 patients who were in receipt of treatment (whether they had stabilised or not) as at 31st March 2016. The chart includes Substitute Medication prescribed to patients in Prison at 31st March 2016.

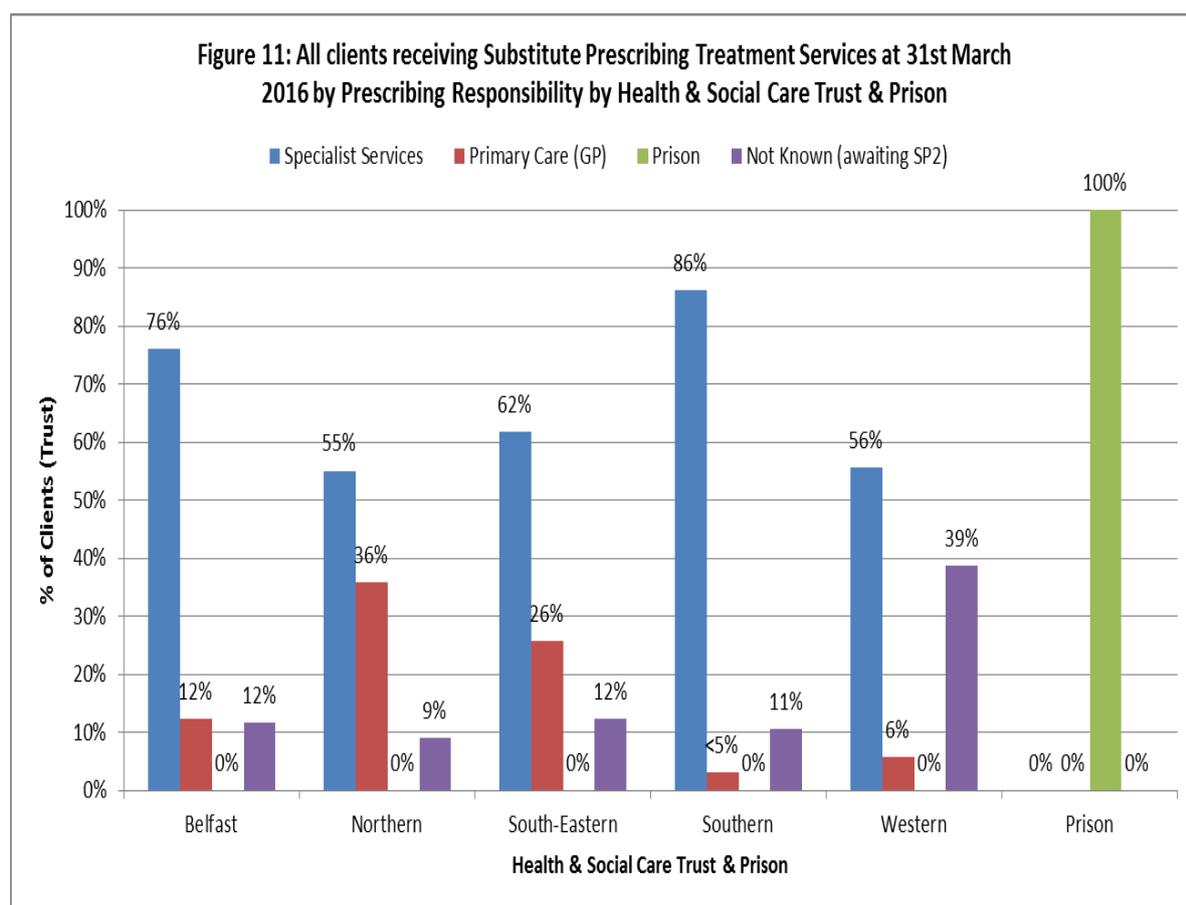


Overall, data shows that 43% of patients received buprenorphine, 42% received methadone and 15% is not known. This information relies on the submission of OST2 forms submitted in time for the report.

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) 36%. For those patients in prison, prescribing responsibility remains with the Prison Addictions Team.

Even for patients where the prescribing responsibility is with the GP, the vast majority of such patients remain in a Shared Care arrangement, with specialist services and roles continuing to be provided by the Trust, for example Key Worker.



Patient Improvement

Stabilisation

Table 8 shows that of the 778 patients receiving substitute medication, 81% were reported as being stabilised. This data is only available on the OST2 form; there may be a degree of subjectivity with this data.

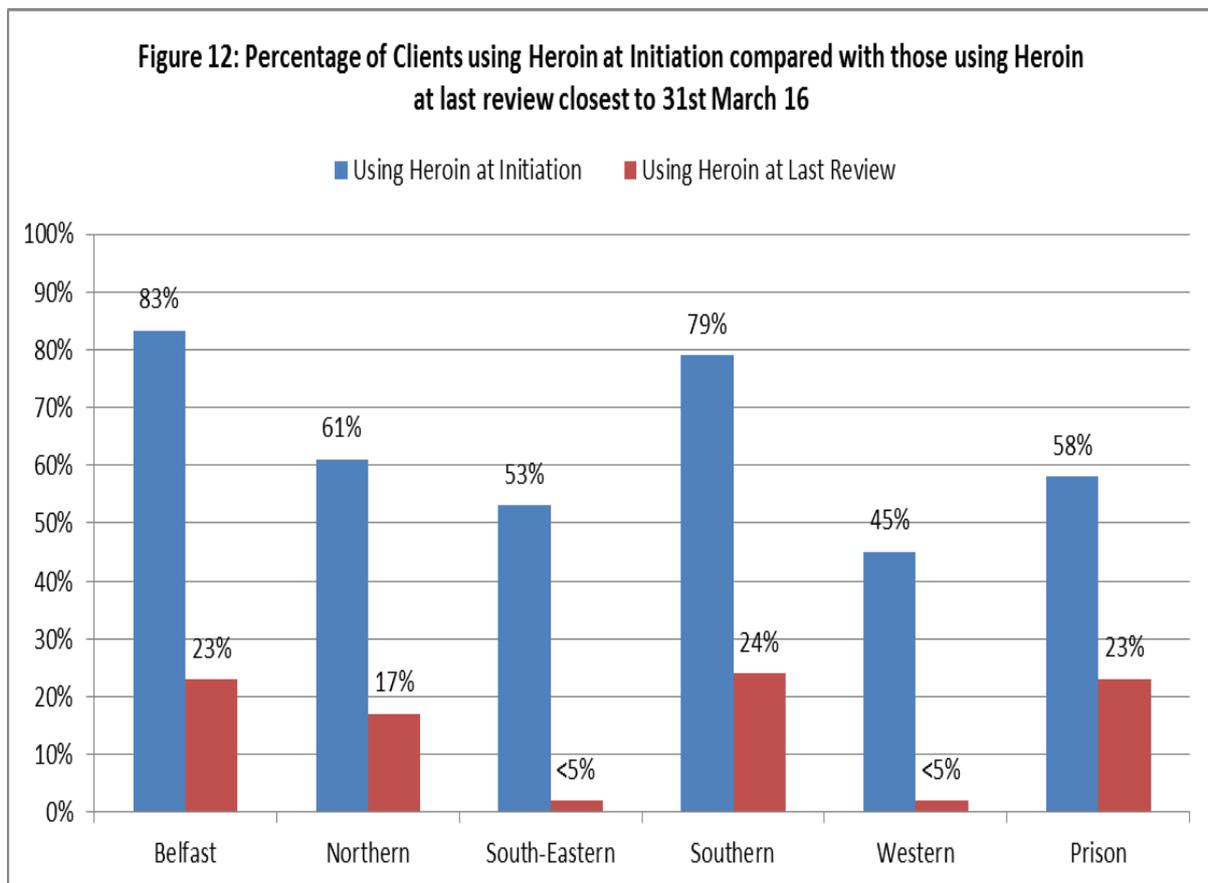
Table 8: Patients stabilised receiving Substitute Prescribing Medication at 31st March 2016 by Health & Social Care Trust & Prison

Stabilisation	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Total
Yes	152 (85%)	225 (85%)	77 (87%)	108 (82%)	49 (56%)	17 (65%)	628 (81%)
No	7 (4%)	18 (7%)	<15 (17%)	12 (9%)	<40 (45%)	<10 (38%)	40 (5%)
Not Known	20 (11%)	22 (8%)	<15 (17%)	11 (8%)	<40 (45%)	<10 (38%)	110 (14%)
Total	179 (100%)	265 (100%)	89 (100%)	131 (100%)	88 (100%)	26 (100%)	778 (100%)

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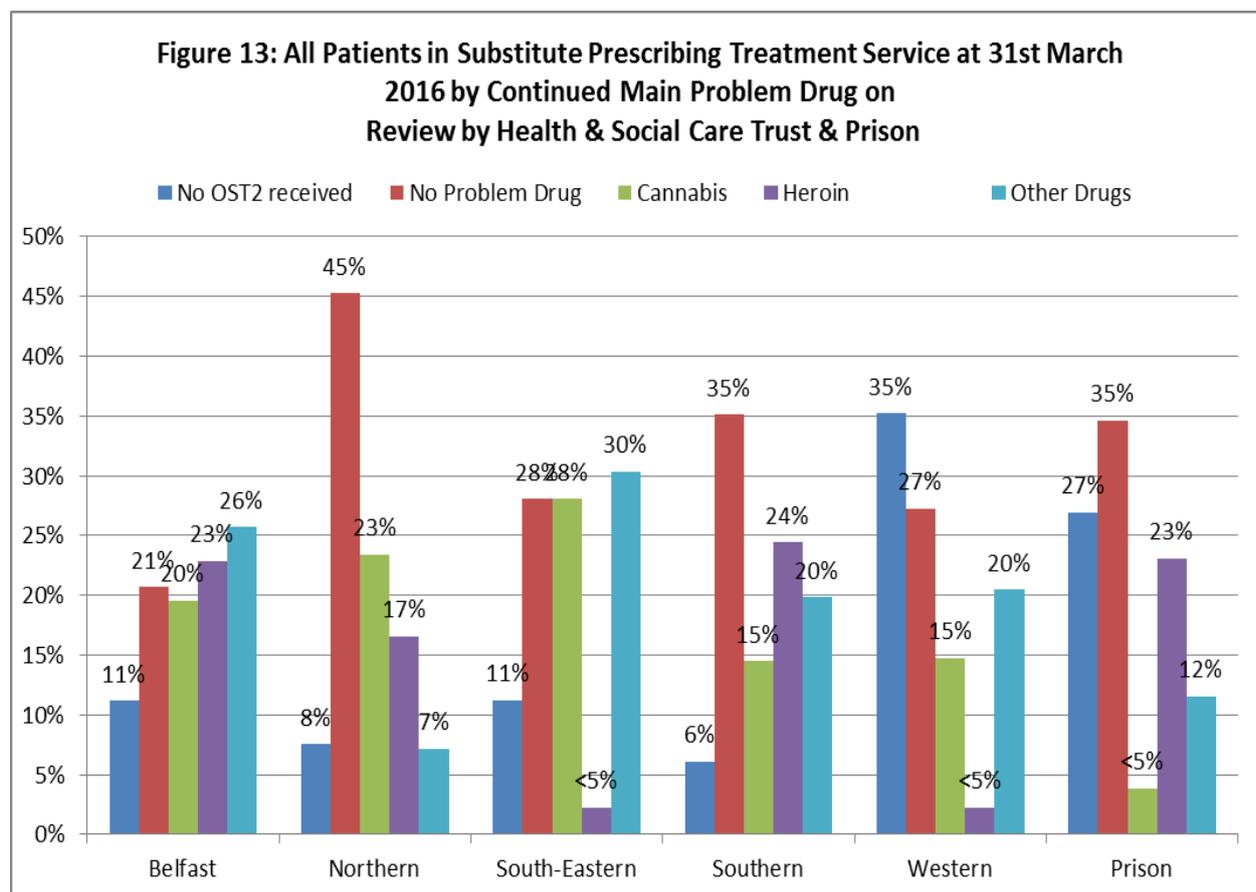
Heroin usage at Initiation of Treatment and at Review closest to 31st March 2016

Figure 12 shows the comparison of the use of Heroin as a main problem drug at the start of treatment and at latest review closest to 31st March 2016. Overall 66% of patients used heroin at the start of treatment and at last review closest to 31st March 2016, 16% were using heroin.



Continuing Drug Usage

Figure 13 gives a more detailed breakdown of the continued drug use by patients. 34% had no continued problem drug recorded, which has decreased from the 2014/15 figure 42%. 20% had recorded cannabis as their main continued problem drug, 18% had a variety of "Other Drugs*" recorded while 16% recorded heroin as their continued main problem drug.

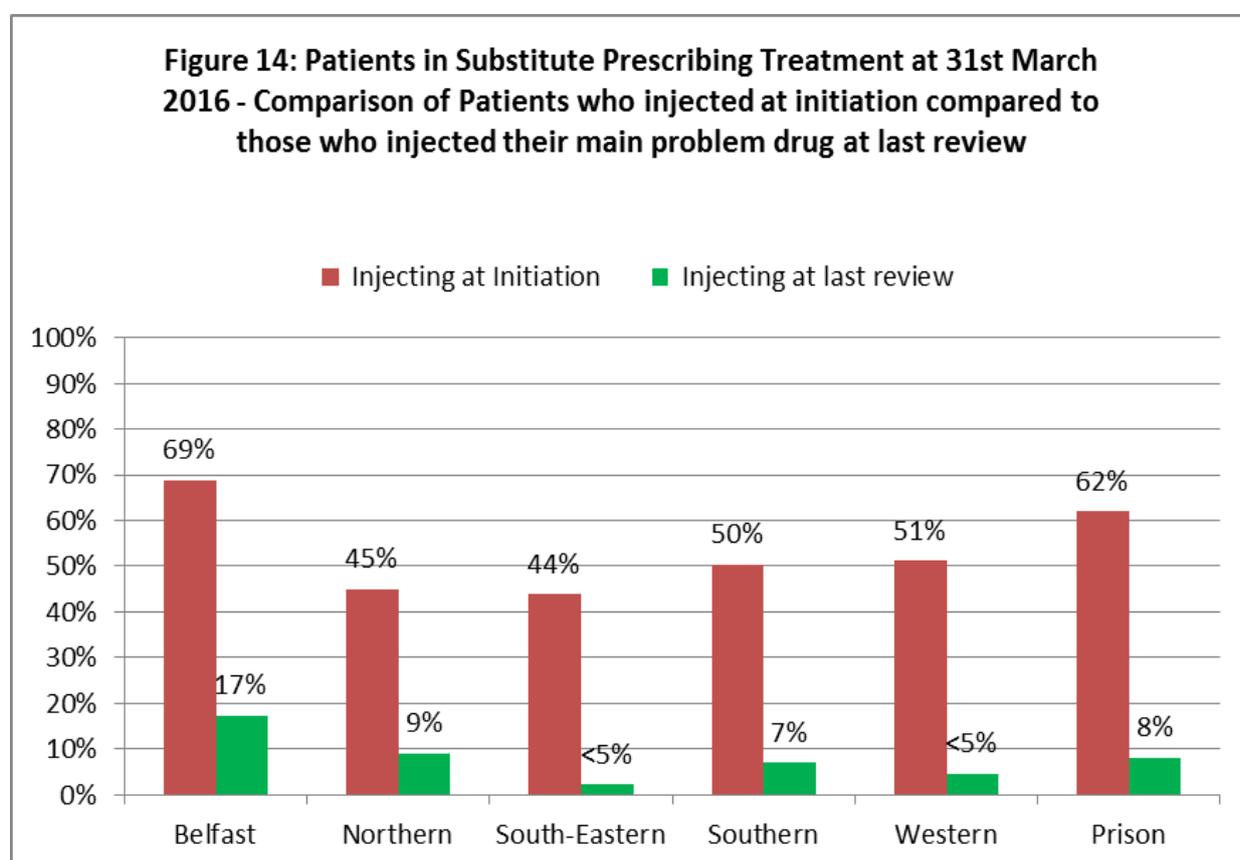


*Other Drugs covers other Class A/B/C drugs, 'New Psychoactive Substances' (NPS), prescription drugs and OTC drugs.

In decreasing order of popularity the other drugs most commonly referenced are * benzodiazepines (of which diazepam is most named), cocaine, tramadol, opiates – others, morphine, mephedrone, codeine, codeine & paracetamol, amphetamines & dihydrocodeine etc.

Injecting Behaviour at Initiation of Latest Treatment and at Review closest to 31st March 2016

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 2016. Overall, 52% of patients injected at initiation of treatment compared to 9% at last review. Figure 14 compares this with their injecting behaviour at last review closest to 31st March 2016. Overall there was an 82% reduction in the number who were injecting at start of treatment with Substitute Prescribing Services.



Missed Appointments

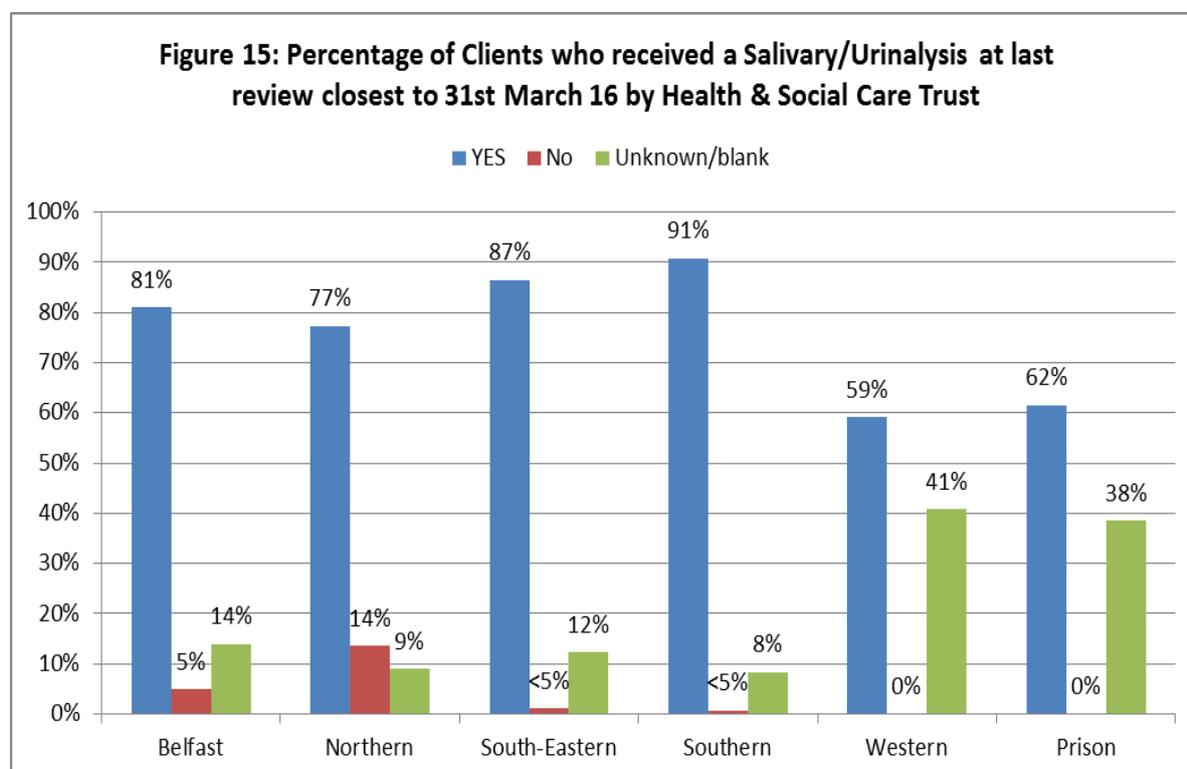
Of the 778 patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment at 31st March 2016 it was recorded on their last review that 14% of them missed appointments. Table 8 illustrates this by Health & Social Care Trust & Prison. This is an increase from the 6% figure at the 31st March 2015.

Table 9: Number & Percentage of Patients who missed appointments, as recorded on their last Review closest to the 31st March 2016

Missed Appointments	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Prison	Total
Total Patients	179	265	89	131	88	26	778
No. of Missed Appointments	36 (20%)	19 (7%)	20 (22%)	18 (14%)	14 (16%)	0%	107 (14%)

Salivary/Urinalysis Testing by Health & Social Care Trust

Figure 15 shows the percentage of patients tested at the review most recent to 31st March 2016. Southern Trust had the highest percentage of tested patients (91%).

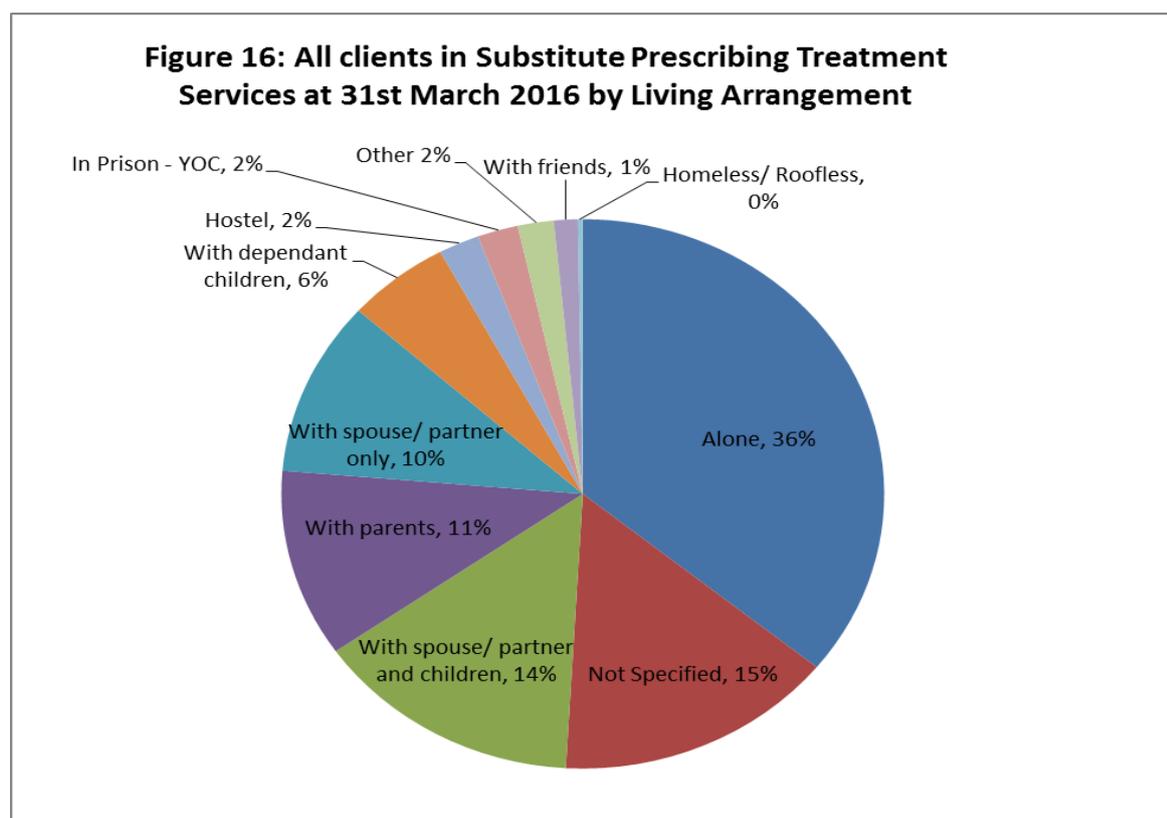


Personal Living Arrangements

With data taken from their last review Figure 16 shows that 36% of patients reported that they were living alone, 14% lived with their spouse, partner and children and 11% lived with their parents, 10% lived with their spouse/partner only, 15% 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 2016, at initiation of Substitute Prescribing Treatment 1% of them was 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, parents, nursing home, grandparents; family member, Community Psychiatric Home and aunt.



Discontinuation from Substitute Prescribing Services

108 patients discontinued from Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services during 2015/16. Figure 17 shows their reason for leaving with the main reasons being “Managed Discontinuation of SP” (41%); “Failed to present for Substitute Prescribing” (19%) and “Unmanaged Discontinuation of SP” (19%).

