



29<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Deputy Louise O'Reilly, TD  
Dáil Eireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2.

**Re PQ: 1663/19**

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons that were treated for gambling addiction in each of the years 2015 to 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

Although the HSE Addiction Services has been traditionally funded to treat problematic Drug and Alcohol use some cases of problematic gambling have been provided with treatment.

For the Deputy's information see below table re data for gambling addiction between 2015 and 2017.

There were 208 cases assessed and treated for gambling as a main problem in 2015, 195 cases assessed and treated in 2016, and 219 cases assessed and treated in 2017, as reported to the National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS) (see attached appendix). Data for 2018 is currently incomplete as not all 2018 data has been submitted to the NDTRS. In addition the figures relate to the number of cases rather than the number of individuals, and reporting of gambling to the NDTRS is optional, therefore these figures cannot be considered complete or representative of treatment for gambling in a national context.



**Table: Main Problem Gambling by Year treated**

	Year ENTERED treatment			Total
	2015	2016	2017	
Main Problem Gambling (detailed drug code)	208	195	219	622
Total	208	195	219	622

The deadline for submitting final 2018 data to the NDTRS is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, therefore figures for 2018 are not yet available. To date, with approximately 60% of 2018 data available on LINK, there are currently 174 cases assessed and treated for gambling as a main problem in 2018.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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Joseph Doyle  
National Planning Specialist

## Appendix

### National Drug Treatment Reporting System

Treatment for problem alcohol and drug use in Ireland is provided by statutory and non-statutory services, including residential centres, community-based addiction services, general practices and prison services.

For the purpose of the NDTRS, treatment is broadly defined as ‘any activity which aims to ameliorate the psychological, medical or social state of individuals who seek help for their substance misuse problems’. Clients who attend needle-exchange services are not included in this reporting system. From 2004 onwards, clients who report alcohol as their main problem drug have been recorded by the system. These data have been presented in an earlier paper in the HRB Trends Series (Fanagan et al. 2008). Drug treatment options include one or more of the following: medication (detoxification, methadone reduction, substitution programmes and psychiatric treatment), brief intervention, counselling, group therapy, family therapy, psychotherapy, complementary therapy, and/or life-skills training.

Compliance with the NDTRS requires that one form be completed for each new client coming for first treatment and for each previously treated client returning to treatment for problem drug use. Service providers at treatment centres throughout Ireland collect data on each individual who attends for first treatment or returns to treatment in a calendar year. The HRB compile anonymous, aggregated data, which are analysed and reported at national and EU levels.

The main elements of the reporting system are defined as follows:

*All cases treated* – describes individuals who receive treatment for problem drug and/or alcohol use at each treatment centre in a calendar year, and includes:

- *Cases assessed only* - describes individuals who were assessed but who did not progress to treatment
- *Previously treated cases* – describes individuals who were treated previously for problem drug/alcohol use at any treatment centre and have returned to treatment in the reporting year;
- *New cases treated* – describes individuals who have never been treated for problem drug/alcohol use; and
- *Status unknown* – describes individuals whose status with respect to previous treatment for problem drug/alcohol use is not known.

In the case of the data for ‘previously treated cases’, there is a possibility that individuals appear more than once in the database: for example, where a person receives treatment at more than one centre or at the same centre more than once per year.