

SDR 135/2006

## Substance misuse in Wales, 2005-06

26 October 2006

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Theme: Health and Care

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National Assembly for Wales

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Next Update

October 2007 (provisional - to be confirmed on the Due Out Soon page)

This is the first in a series of annual Statistical Releases on referrals to drug and alcohol treatment agencies in Wales. The source of the data is the Welsh Database for Substance Misuse held by Health Solutions Wales. The data only relates to people presenting to treatment services for substance misuse and these may constitute only a proportion of all substance misusers. Data in this Release will differ slightly from Reports published previously at:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/safety/substancemisuse/pmfwnd?lang=en> because of revised / updated data.

Please see page 6 for notes on data quality issues and definitions.

The Release has been classed as "Experimental Statistics" because this is the first year of data collection and improvements to completeness and quality are still being made. See [Statistical Article](#) for more details.

### Key Facts

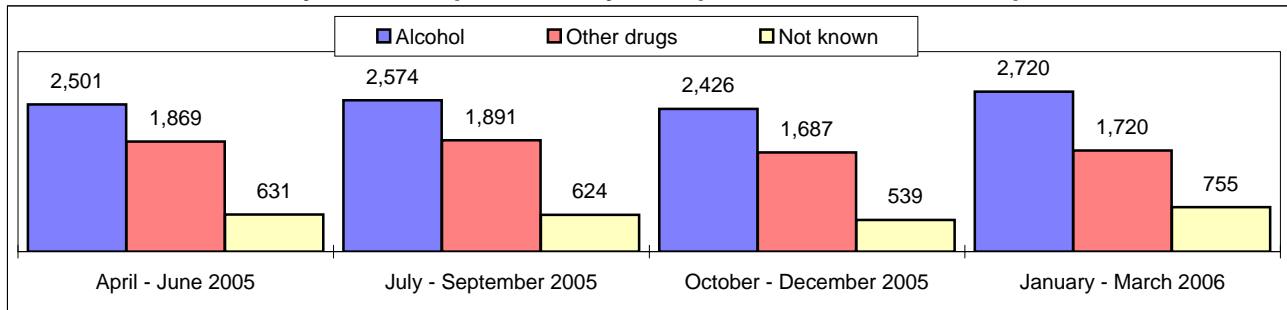
#### During 2005-06:

- There were 19,937 clients seen for treatment of alcohol or drug misuse in Wales <sup>(1)</sup>.
- 67% of clients seen were male.
- For 51% of clients seen the main problem substance was alcohol <sup>(2)</sup>.
- For 18% of clients seen the main problem substance was heroin <sup>(2)</sup>.
- 29% of clients seen were self referrals and 16% were referred by a GP.
- 32% of clients whose main problem substance was alcohol were aged under 30.
- 58% of people whose main problem substance was drugs were aged under 30.
- Swansea had the highest rate of clients seen for alcohol and drug misuse, the lowest rate was in Isle of Anglesey/Gwynedd.
- 75% of clients seen for alcohol or drug misuse started treatment in less than 4 weeks.

(1) The dataset excludes clients who did not attend (2,229 in 2005-06).

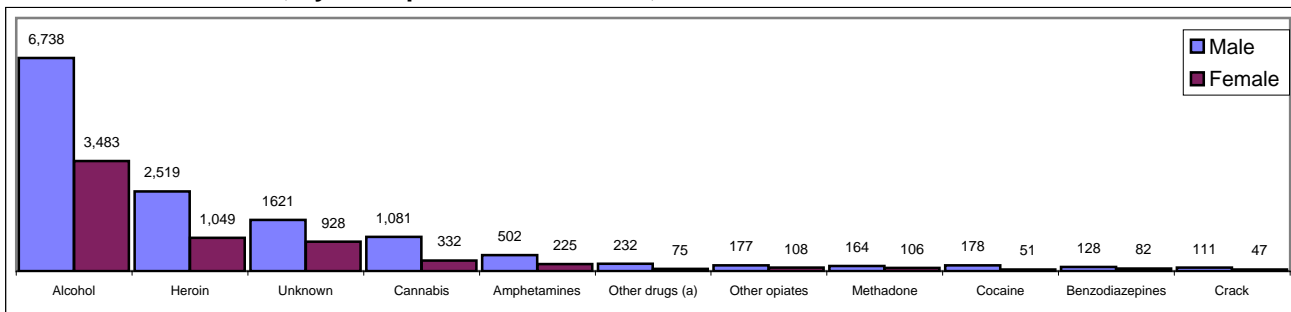
(2) For 13% of clients seen no main problem substance was recorded

**Chart 1: Clients seen by treatment providers, by main problem substance and quarter**



No overall trend can be ascertained from the data submitted for the four quarters available. In all four quarters clients treated for alcohol misuse was higher than for misuse of other drugs. Note that for 13% of clients treated no main problem substance was recorded. Clients treated where the main problem substance was not recorded are excluded from charts 2 - 7. See table 1 for further detail.

**Chart 2: Clients seen, by main problem substance, 2005-06**



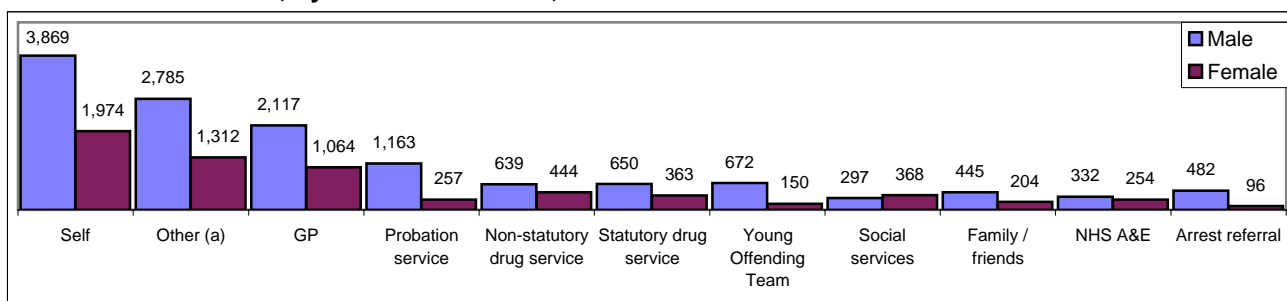
(a) Anti-depressants, barbiturates, ecstasy, hallucinogens, poly use (no details), solvents, steroids and other drugs

67% of clients treated during the year were male.

For over half of clients treated (51%) alcohol was the main problem substance - 50% of males and 54% of females. For both sexes heroin was the second largest main problem substance - 19% of males and 16% of females.

See table 2 for further detail.

**Chart 3: Clients seen, by source of referral, 2005-06**



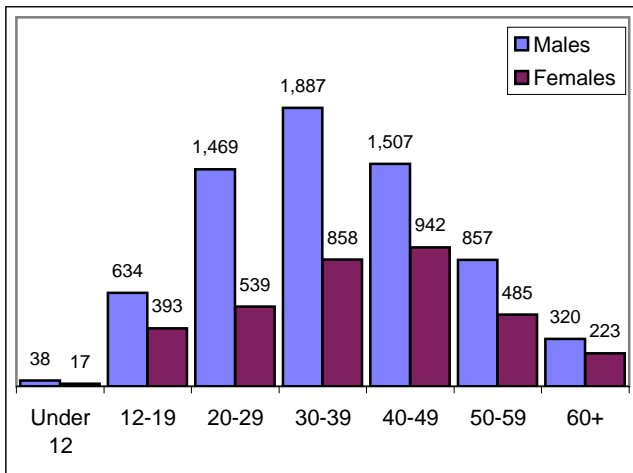
(a) Community care assessment, Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) / Community Mental Health, Drug Intervention Project (DIP), Drug Testing Treatment Order (DTTO), educational establishment, job centre, needle / syringe exchange scheme, police, psychiatry, solicitor, support agencies, unknown and other.

29% of males and 30% of females were self referred. More males than females were referred from each source except Community Care Assessment and Social services.

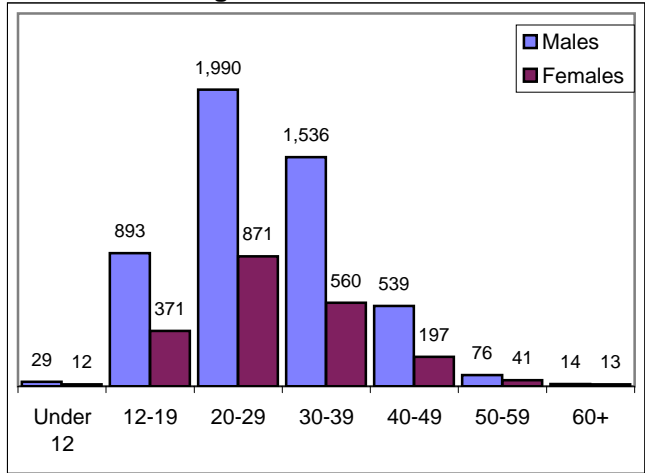
See table 3 for further detail.

**Clients seen, by sex and age - main problem substance, 2005-06 (a)**

**Chart 4: Alcohol**

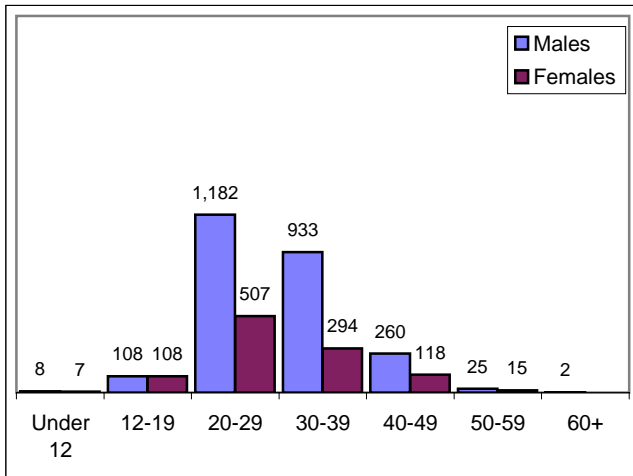


**Chart 5: All drugs**

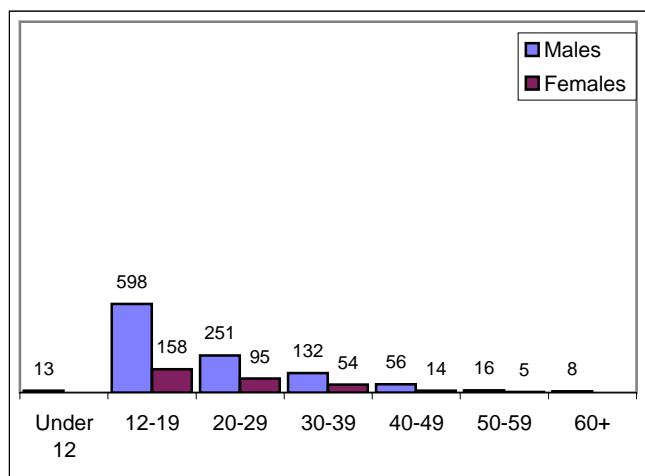


The pattern of misuse is different for alcohol and drugs. 30% of clients treated for misusing alcohol were aged under 30 (32% of males and 27% of females). 58% of clients treated for misusing drugs were aged under 30 (57% of males and 60% of females). See table 4 for further detail.

**Chart 6: Heroin**



**Chart 7: Cannabis**

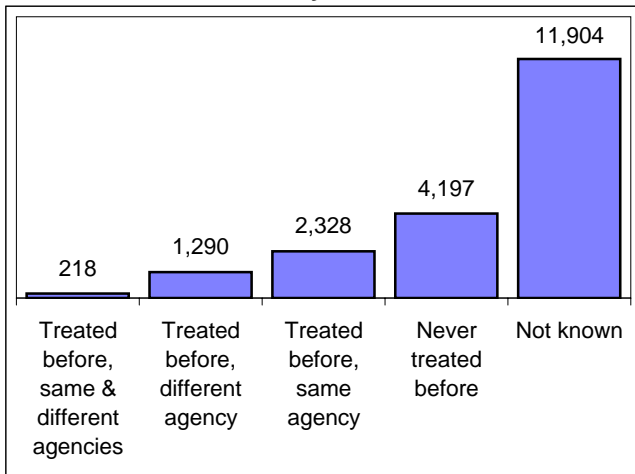


The two largest categories recorded as main problem substance after alcohol were heroin and cannabis. 54% of clients treated for misusing heroin were aged under 30 (52% of males and 59% of females). 79% of clients treated for misusing cannabis were aged under 30 (80% of males and 76% of females) and 54% were aged under 20.

Table 5 shows the age distribution for clients treated with all problem substances recorded, not just the main problem substance.

(a) No age was recorded for 136 (1.0%) of males and 119 (1.8%) of females.

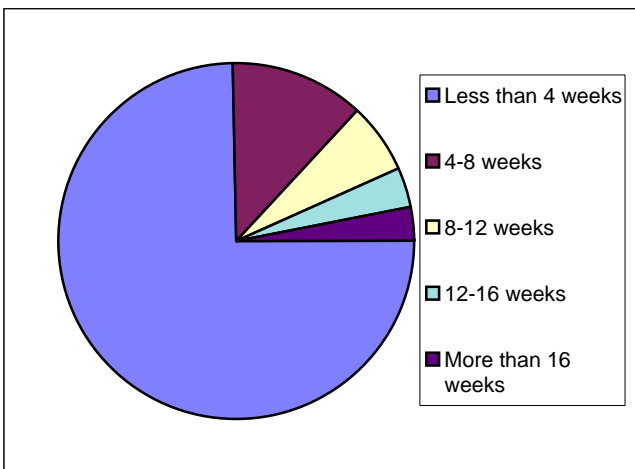
**Chart 8: Clients seen, by whether ever treated before, 2005-06**



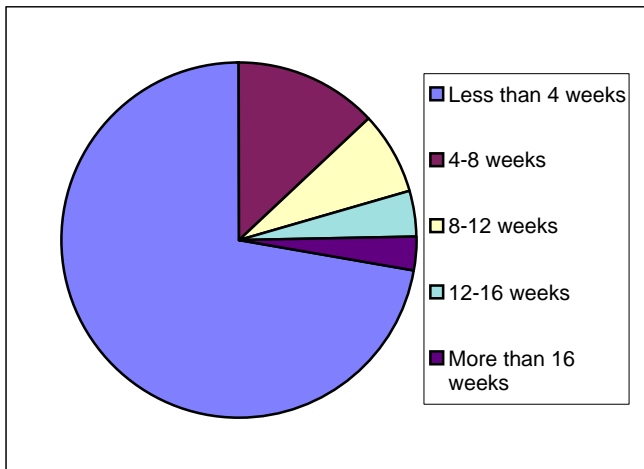
19% of those treated indicated that they had been treated before.

**Waiting time between referral and treatment**

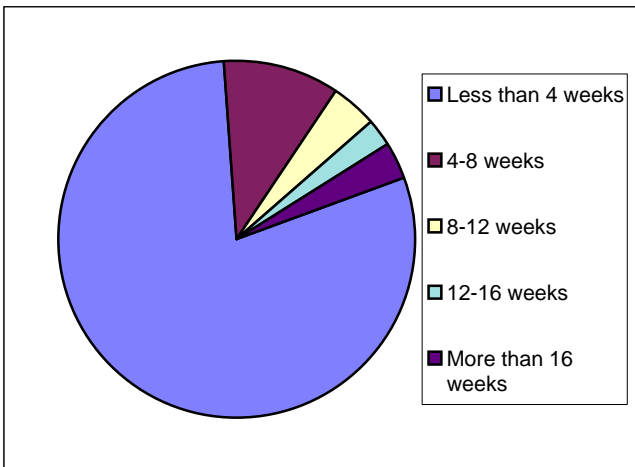
**Chart 9: All referrals**



**Chart 10: Alcohol misuse referrals**



**Chart 11: Drug misuse referrals**



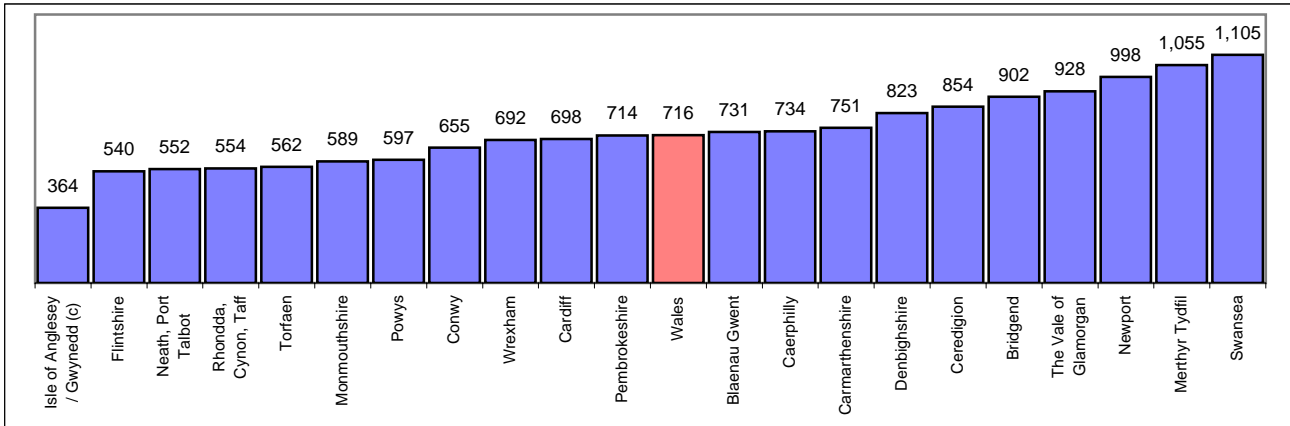
The data in these three charts relates to only those clients who have started treatment and where the agency has submitted a treatment date (data from 36 agencies or 37% of clients seen).

75% of those for whom dates were provided were treated in less than 4 weeks, 3% waited more than 16 weeks.

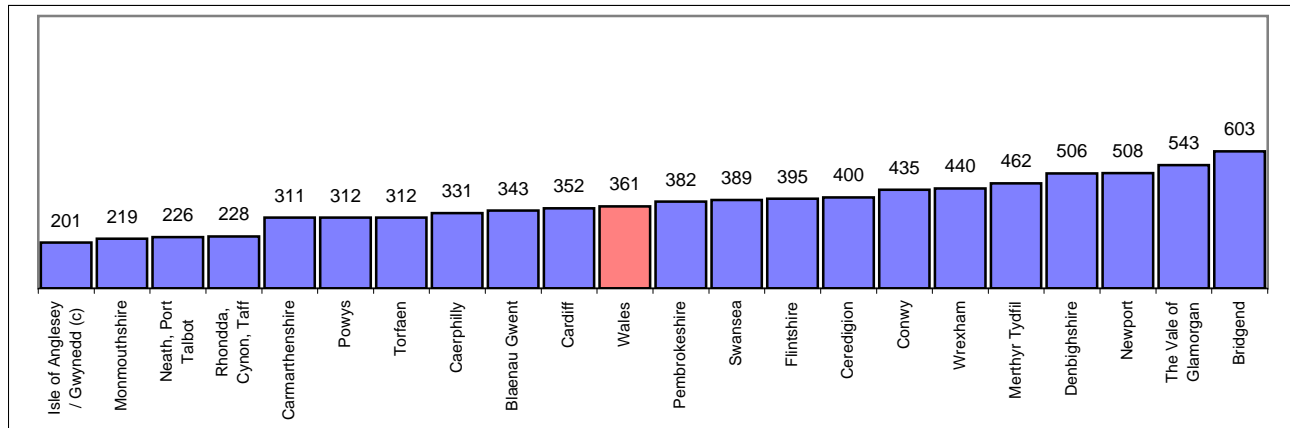
72% of those (for whom dates were provided) seen for alcohol misuse were treated in less than 4 weeks, 3% waited more than 16 weeks. 80% of those (for whom dates were provided) seen for drug misuse were treated in less than 4 weeks, 3% waited more than 16 weeks.

**Clients treated by main problem substance and Unitary Authority  
of residence - rate per 100,000 population (a) (b)**

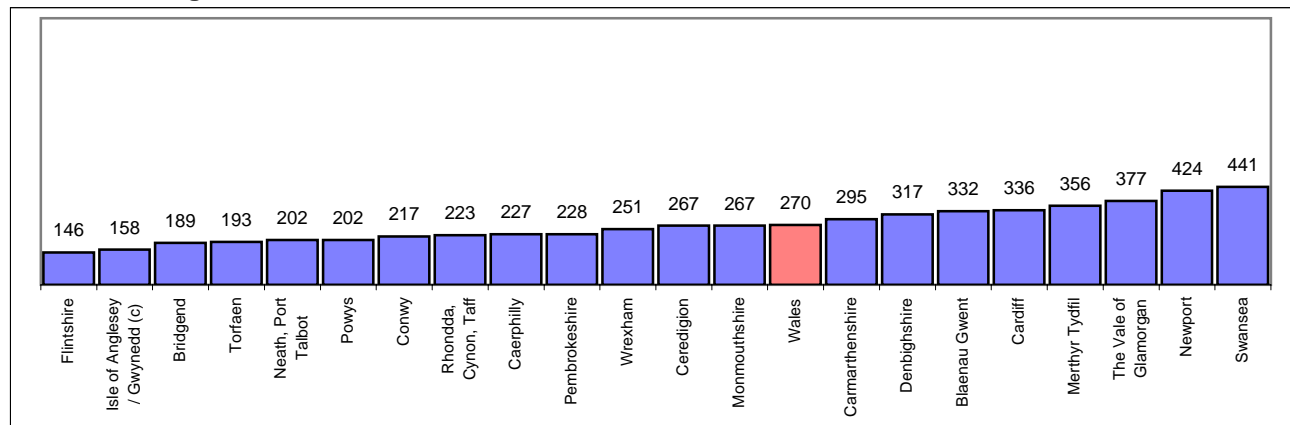
**Chart 8: All referrals**



**Chart 9: Alcohol misuse**



**Chart 10: Drug misuse**



(a) European standardised rate per 100,000 population using 2005 mid year estimates of population. See notes for explanation European Age-Standardised Rate.

(b) Unitary Authority based on postcode of residence except for 9% of referrals where postcode is not known and postcode of treatment agency is used. This percentage is highest in Anglesey / Gwynedd (73%), Bridgend (41%) and Swansea (23%). This will affect the Unitary Authority rates. See table 8.

(c) No disaggregation for these two Unitary Authorities was possible.

## Key Quality Issues

There are a number of issues relating to data quality which must be taken into account.

- This is only the first year of the Welsh National Database for Substance Misuse and data quality issues exist.
- Although some clients may have had a referral prior to 1 April 2005 and still be in treatment, they are not included in the data used in this Release.
- Not all agencies are able to submit all the fields and so care needs to be exercised when looking at trends. Data Quality exercises are currently being undertaken.
- The number of referrals for some Community Safety Partnership areas are artificially low due to technical difficulties which are still to be resolved.
- There is some concern that some of the demographic data may be inaccurate since some clients are reluctant or unable to provide accurate responses to some questions.
- Clients are categorised by 'main problem substance' which means that many clients categorised under 'Alcohol' may also be receiving treatment for drug misuse.
- Where the local authority of the client is unknown, the local authority of the treatment agency is used for this analysis. This varies across Wales.
- Where a client is transferred between agencies and the discharge details are not populated, the client may be counted more than once.
- The activity reported excludes cases where the client did not attend (DNA). There were 2,229 recorded DNAs in 2005-06.

## Definitions

The following definitions are used within this report:

**Clients seen** - refers to clients who were referred and treated between April 2005 and March 2006. If more than 6 weeks elapsed between the end of a course of treatment and the start of a new course then the patient is counted again.

**European Age-Standardised Rate (EASR)** - A European Age-Standardised Rate is one which is corrected for the age structure of the population. It is the rate for a particular area (say a Local Authority area) which would result from applying age-specific rates for that area to an artificial age structure known as the Standard European population. The object of the standardisation is to facilitate comparison between areas with varying age structures.

**Drugs** - The term 'Drugs' includes illegal drugs, misuse of legal prescriptions and solvent abuse.

**Main substance** - The term 'Main Substance' refers to the problem substance that led the client to seek help or be referred for help. This includes any illegal drug, over the counter medicine, and volatile substances used inappropriately.

**Table 1: Number of clients treated by main problem substance**

<u>Main problem substance</u>	<u>April- June 2005</u>	<u>July- September 2005</u>	<u>October- December 2005</u>	<u>January- March2006</u>	<u>Total</u>
Alcohol	2,501	2,574	2,426	2,720	10,221
Amphetamines	194	207	189	137	727
Anti-depressants	10	2	7	1	20
Barbiturates	0	1	0	0	1
Benzodiazepines	61	56	38	55	210
Cannabis	369	358	293	393	1,413
Cocaine	57	54	54	64	229
Crack	54	27	34	43	158
Ecstasy	31	20	16	11	78
Hallucinogens	3	1	2	1	7
Heroin	903	969	870	826	3,568
Methadone	64	70	58	78	270
Other Drugs	17	10	14	14	55
Other Opiates	63	72	90	60	285
Poly use; no details	4	7	8	7	26
Solvents	7	13	12	8	40
Steroids	32	24	2	22	80
Unknown	631	624	539	755	2,549
<b>All referrals</b>	<b>5,001</b>	<b>5,089</b>	<b>4,652</b>	<b>5,195</b>	<b>19,937</b>

**Table 2: Number of clients treated by sex and main problem substance, 2005-06**

<u>Main problem substance</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Persons</u>
Alcohol	6,738	3,483	10,221
Amphetamines	502	225	727
Anti-depressants	11	9	20
Barbiturates	1	0	1
Benzodiazepines	128	82	210
Cannabis	1,081	332	1,413
Cocaine	178	51	229
Crack	111	47	158
Ecstasy	53	25	78
Hallucinogens	7	0	7
Heroin	2,519	1,049	3,568
Methadone	164	106	270
Other Drugs	31	24	55
Other Opiates	177	108	285
Poly use; no details	19	7	26
Solvents	30	10	40
Steroids	80	0	80
Unknown	1,621	928	2,549
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>13,451</b>	<b>6,486</b>	<b>19,937</b>

**Table 3: Number of clients treated by sex, age and source of referral, 2005-06.**

Referral source	Age group							Unknown	Total
	Under 12	12-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+		
<b>Males</b>									
Arrest referral	4	102	162	124	65	14	4	7	482
Community Care Assessment	0	0	1	3	1	2	1	0	8
CPN <sup>(a)</sup> /Community Mental Health	2	16	93	89	69	38	14	5	326
DIP previously CARAT <sup>(b)</sup>	1	15	104	77	19	5	0	5	226
DTTO <sup>(c)</sup>	1	11	93	56	11	1	0	0	173
Educational establishment	0	76	3	0	2	0	0	10	91
Family/friends	4	82	124	125	51	37	15	7	445
General Practitioner (GP)	11	113	644	647	394	221	78	9	2,117
Job Centre	0	4	27	16	6	2	0	2	57
Needle/Syringe Exchange Schem	0	5	52	21	9	1	0	1	89
NHS A&E	3	40	49	86	64	48	41	1	332
Non-Statutory Drug Service	3	31	169	222	133	62	17	2	639
Police	0	23	65	43	22	9	0	0	162
Probation Service	5	98	522	347	132	46	9	4	1,163
Psychiatry	1	25	43	70	35	24	7	0	205
Self	16	180	1,198	1,193	809	323	105	45	3,869
Social Services	6	72	48	72	42	22	24	11	297
Solicitor	1	2	6	10	2	3	0	0	24
Statutory Drug Service	4	27	195	213	138	59	14	0	650
Support Agencies	5	46	90	90	65	28	7	2	333
Youth Offending Team	4	654	10	1	0	1	1	1	672
Other	5	110	272	292	165	73	29	24	970
Unknown	0	2	58	41	14	4	2	0	121
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>1,734</b>	<b>4,028</b>	<b>3,838</b>	<b>2,248</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>13,451</b>
<b>Females</b>									
Arrest referral	1	30	26	20	14	5	0	0	96
Community Care Assessment	1	0	5	2	1	2	3	0	14
CPN <sup>(a)</sup> /Community Mental Health	1	18	42	58	64	28	14	2	227
DIP previously CARAT <sup>(b)</sup>	0	8	32	14	2	0	1	1	58
DTTO <sup>(c)</sup>	0	4	23	15	2	0	0	0	44
Educational establishment	0	69	3	0	1	0	0	2	75
Family/friends	3	48	33	38	32	21	15	14	204
General Practitioner (GP)	3	90	250	243	248	156	69	5	1,064
Job Centre	0	5	0	3	0	1	0	1	10
Needle/Syringe Exchange Schem	0	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	9
NHS A&E	0	52	55	56	51	17	19	4	254
Non-Statutory Drug Service	2	32	114	103	106	52	26	9	444
Police	0	14	10	14	12	2	0	1	53
Probation Service	0	27	107	72	38	10	3	0	257
Psychiatry	0	16	26	27	19	17	6	0	111
Self	5	123	526	549	448	199	71	53	1,974
Social Services	1	92	95	99	50	9	12	10	368
Solicitor	0	1	1	3	2	1	0	0	8
Statutory Drug Service	6	17	107	104	69	45	13	2	363
Support Agencies	2	39	33	36	45	12	3	1	171
Youth Offending Team	1	146	1	2	0	0	0	0	150
Other	5	77	110	113	81	60	25	14	485
Unknown	0	1	19	18	9	0	0	0	47
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>1,592</b>	<b>1,294</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>6,486</b>

(a) CPN - Community Psychiatric Nurse.

(b) DIP - Drug Intervention Project, CARAT - Care and Rehabilitation Thoughtcare Aftercare

(c) DTTO - Drug Teating Treatment Order



**Table 4: Number of clients treated by sex, age and main problem substance, 2005-06**

Main problem substance	Age group							Unknown	Total
	Under 12	12-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+		
<b>Males</b>									
Alcohol	38	634	1,469	1,887	1,507	857	320	26	<b>6,738</b>
Amphetamines	2	63	147	154	121	12	0	3	<b>502</b>
Anti-depressants	0	0	7	3	1	0	0	0	<b>11</b>
Barbiturates	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Benzodiazepines	1	16	50	34	15	8	2	2	<b>128</b>
Cannabis	13	598	251	132	56	16	8	7	<b>1,081</b>
Cocaine	1	20	91	52	12	2	0	0	<b>178</b>
Crack	0	15	44	26	25	1	0	0	<b>111</b>
Ecstasy	1	23	19	8	2	0	0	0	<b>53</b>
Hallucinogens	0	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	<b>7</b>
Heroin	8	108	1,182	933	260	25	2	1	<b>2,519</b>
Methadone	0	1	61	79	22	1	0	0	<b>164</b>
Other Drugs	0	2	6	20	2	0	1	0	<b>31</b>
Other Opiates	1	5	66	72	21	11	1	0	<b>177</b>
Poly use; no details	0	3	11	4	1	0	0	0	<b>19</b>
Solvents	1	25	1	2	0	0	0	1	<b>30</b>
Steroids	0	10	51	17	1	0	0	1	<b>80</b>
Unknown	9	207	569	415	202	90	34	95	<b>1,621</b>
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>1,734</b>	<b>4,028</b>	<b>3,838</b>	<b>2,248</b>	<b>1,023</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>13,451</b>
<b>Females</b>									
Alcohol	17	393	539	858	942	485	223	26	<b>3,483</b>
Amphetamines	2	42	85	75	19	1	0	1	<b>225</b>
Anti-depressants	0	1	2	1	1	1	3	0	<b>9</b>
Barbiturates	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Benzodiazepines	0	6	28	20	12	8	5	3	<b>82</b>
Cannabis	0	158	95	54	14	5	0	6	<b>332</b>
Cocaine	0	11	23	14	2	0	1	0	<b>51</b>
Crack	1	3	24	16	3	0	0	0	<b>47</b>
Ecstasy	0	21	3	0	1	0	0	0	<b>25</b>
Hallucinogens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Heroin	7	108	507	294	118	15	0	0	<b>1,049</b>
Methadone	0	2	56	39	8	1	0	0	<b>106</b>
Other Drugs	1	0	7	7	3	5	1	0	<b>24</b>
Other Opiates	1	8	38	38	16	5	2	0	<b>108</b>
Poly use; no details	0	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	<b>7</b>
Solvents	0	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	<b>10</b>
Steroids	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Unknown	2	145	214	174	155	111	44	83	<b>928</b>
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>909</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>1,592</b>	<b>1,294</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>6,486</b>

**Table 5: Number of clients treated by sex, age and problem substance, 2005-06 (a)**

<b>Problem substance</b>	<b>Age group</b>							<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Under 12</b>	<b>12-19</b>	<b>20-29</b>	<b>30-39</b>	<b>40-49</b>	<b>50-59</b>	<b>60+</b>		
<b>Males</b>									
Alcohol	42	770	1,630	2,007	1,558	862	320	27	<b>7,216</b>
Amphetamines	7	129	291	277	153	17	0	7	<b>881</b>
Anti-depressants	0	2	22	28	20	20	1	0	<b>93</b>
Barbiturates	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	<b>3</b>
Benzodiazepines	3	79	217	178	67	28	2	4	<b>578</b>
Cannabis	23	791	610	419	154	39	12	8	<b>2,056</b>
Cocaine	2	46	163	115	37	4	0	1	<b>368</b>
Crack	4	27	160	120	43	4	0	0	<b>358</b>
Ecstasy	2	99	97	44	15	4	0	1	<b>262</b>
Hallucinogens	0	12	11	9	2	0	0	0	<b>34</b>
Heroin	9	118	1,263	1,018	297	27	2	1	<b>2,735</b>
Methadone	0	4	92	121	35	2	0	0	<b>254</b>
Other Drugs	0	5	20	42	7	9	1	0	<b>84</b>
Other Opiates	1	8	132	112	35	21	1	0	<b>310</b>
Poly use; no details	0	3	11	5	1	0	0	0	<b>20</b>
Solvents	1	33	2	6	0	0	0	1	<b>43</b>
Steroids	0	11	55	23	2	0	0	1	<b>92</b>
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>2,137</b>	<b>4,777</b>	<b>4,525</b>	<b>2,426</b>	<b>1,037</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>15,387</b>
<b>Females</b>									
Alcohol	17	449	584	890	956	491	223	28	<b>3,638</b>
Amphetamines	2	96	144	118	38	4	0	1	<b>403</b>
Anti-depressants	0	3	15	14	18	12	6	0	<b>68</b>
Barbiturates	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Benzodiazepines	1	43	126	79	42	21	8	3	<b>323</b>
Cannabis	2	291	199	116	56	14	1	9	<b>688</b>
Cocaine	0	30	44	31	5	1	1	0	<b>112</b>
Crack	1	14	72	42	8	1	0	0	<b>138</b>
Ecstasy	0	60	26	3	6	0	0	1	<b>96</b>
Hallucinogens	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	<b>6</b>
Heroin	8	114	534	316	126	15	0	0	<b>1,113</b>
Methadone	1	8	80	56	13	2	0	0	<b>160</b>
Other Drugs	1	3	12	17	11	17	1	0	<b>62</b>
Other Opiates	2	22	67	59	20	6	3	0	<b>179</b>
Poly use; no details	0	2	4	2	0	0	1	0	<b>9</b>
Solvents	0	17	0	3	0	0	0	0	<b>20</b>
Steroids	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	<b>2</b>
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>1,153</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>1,749</b>	<b>1,301</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>7,018</b>

(a) Clients may have more than one problem substance, each substance is included.

**Table 6: Number of clients treated by 'ever treated before'.**

	<b><u>April-June</u></b>	<b><u>July-September</u></b>	<b><u>October-December</u></b>	<b><u>January-March</u></b>	
	<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2006</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Never treated before	1,070	1,047	984	1,096	4,197
Not known	2,946	3,043	2,750	3,165	11,904
Treated before, different agency	302	322	348	318	1,290
Treated before, same agency	620	634	518	556	2,328
Treated before, same & different agencies	63	43	52	60	218
<b>All Cases</b>	<b>5,001</b>	<b>5,089</b>	<b>4,652</b>	<b>5,195</b>	<b>19,937</b>

**Table 7: Waiting time between referral and treatment, 2005-06 (a)**

	<b><u>Alcohol</u></b>	<b><u>Drugs</u></b>	<b><u>Unspecified</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Less than 4 weeks	3,461	1,877	142	5,480
4-8 weeks	624	246	15	885
8-12 weeks	362	99	4	465
12-16 weeks	199	61	3	263
More than 16 weeks	148	77	4	229
Total	4,794	2,360	168	7,322

(a) The relates to only those clients who have received treatment and where the agency has submitted a treatment date (37% of clients seen)

**Table 8: Clients treated by main problem substance and Unitary Authority of residence, 2005-06**

<b>Area of residence</b>	<b>Alcohol</b>		<b>Drugs</b>		<b>All patients seen (a)</b>		<b>% postcode unknown (c)</b>
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rate (b)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rate (b)</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Rate (b)</b>	
Isle of Anglesey/Gwynedd (d)	344	201	250	158	602	364	73.4
Conwy	426	435	187	217	615	655	0.0
Denbighshire	454	506	249	317	703	823	0.3
Flintshire	583	395	199	146	782	540	0.1
Wrexham	565	440	304	251	871	692	0.1
Powys	359	312	209	202	661	597	1.8
Ceredigion	285	400	176	267	632	854	0.2
Pembrokeshire	406	382	207	228	757	714	0.4
Carmarthenshire	498	311	420	295	1,179	751	0.2
Swansea	833	389	922	441	2,350	1,105	22.7
Neath, Port Talbot	289	226	230	202	667	552	4.8
Bridgend	724	603	216	189	1,070	902	40.6
The Vale of Glamorgan	620	543	387	377	1,016	928	0.0
Cardiff	1,122	352	1,152	336	2,308	698	2.0
Rhondda, Cynon, Taff	515	228	235	223	1,233	554	19.1
Merthyr Tydfil	242	462	173	356	559	1,055	0.0
Caerphilly	541	331	347	227	1,176	734	0.0
Blaenau Gwent	215	343	188	332	439	731	0.0
Torfaen	270	312	152	193	468	562	5.8
Monmouthshire	174	219	171	267	412	589	4.1
Newport	678	508	529	424	1,293	998	2.4
Outside Wales	78	.	47	.	144	.	.
Wales	10,221	361	6,950	270	19,937	716	9.1

(a) Includes unspecified main problem substance.

(b) European standardised rate per 100,000 population using 2005 mid year estimates of population.

European standardised death rates are a way of comparing death rates for populations whose age and sex distribution vary. It eliminates from the trends the increase or decrease that may be due to changes in the age/sex structure of the population.

(c) The residential postcode not known, therefore postcode of the treatment agency has been used.

(d) No disaggregation for these two Unitary Authorities was possible