

Indicator 5: Improved outcomes for those receiving treatment for drug or alcohol dependency

Rationale

People with a drug or alcohol dependency are one of the key disadvantaged groups considered in *Social Justice: transforming lives*.

Social Justice: transforming lives, and the 2010 Drug Strategy, set out the Government's belief that the support provided to individuals should ultimately be geared to achieving a number of outcomes: Recovery from dependence; improved mental and physical health; sustained employment; a reduction in offending; and improved relationships with family members, partners and friends.

This indicator is designed to reflect progress in these areas.

The Prime Minister has committed to publishing a Life Chances Strategy setting out a comprehensive plan to fight disadvantage and extend opportunity. This will be published later this year, and will include a set of non-statutory measures on root causes of child poverty such as family breakdown, problem debt, and drug and alcohol dependency.

Definition

Of those who first presented for drug [or alcohol] treatment during the course of a three year period:

- a) The proportion who had exited successfully and not returned by the end of that period;
- b) The proportion who had achieved employment by the date that period ended;
- c) The proportion who had not been convicted of a criminal offence by the date that period ended;
- d) The proportion who achieved all three of the above.

The wording of this indicator was changed in 2013 to make clear the time frame over which the indicator is measured. The indicator also focuses on clients presenting for treatment for the first time.

The first sub-indicator is live in England.

Data to present on the second and third sub-indicators is not currently available. The second sub-indicator requires HMRC employment data to be matched to treatment records and the third sub-indicator requires data on criminal offences to be matched to Public Health England (PHE) data. Officials are reviewing the need for such data shares as part of the development of measures supporting the Governments Life Chances Strategy.

Revisions

Following consultation, it was decided the 2014-15 reporting of adult substance misuse statistics for drug and alcohol treatment should be combined.

Previously, statistics were published separately according to whether the primary substance recorded in NDTMS was alcohol or a drug. Therefore, the same individual could have appeared both in drug statistics and alcohol statistics if they had separate treatment episodes with different primary substances. Under the new methodology such individuals will be counted just once with precedence being for drug treatment. Full details on this change can be found in section 2 of the latest annual statistics: <http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/adult-statistics-from-the-national-drug-treatment-monitoring-system-2014-2015.pdf>

Indicator 5 has now been refreshed and backdated to bring it into line with this current reporting methodology for NDTMS. Previous results can be found in annex 1.

Effect of this change

Figures for alcohol treatment experience a much greater degree of change than those for drug treatment. The number of alcohol clients considered in the analysis will be substantially reduced for two reasons:

- 1) Where a person could previously be counted both as a drug and alcohol client, they are now counted once, as a drug client;
- 2) Primary alcohol users reporting adjunctive drug use are now counted as drug clients.

As the alcohol component of the indicator will now refer to clients whose only problematic substance is alcohol, and they are more likely to complete treatment than alcohol users who also report adjunctive drug use, there will be a rise in the proportion of alcohol clients reported as successfully completing treatment.

The impact on the drug component of the indicator is more complex:

- 1) A high proportion of alcohol users with adjunctive drug use are not opiate users, and therefore the proportion of drug users who use opiates is decreased. Opiate users are less likely to complete treatment, so this decrease in the proportion who are opiate users would suggest a likely increase in the completion rate;
- 2) However, non-opiate users who also report alcohol use are also less likely to complete treatment than those who only report non-opiate use (i.e. without alcohol). There will be a higher proportion of non-opiate users who report alcohol due to the changed methodology, which means the completion rate among non-opiate users will decrease.

The net effect appears to be a slight reduction in the completion rate for drug clients.

Latest results

Of the 80,000 individuals who first presented for drug treatment in the three year period between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2015, 34,000 people had successfully completed treatment and had not re-presented by 31st March 2015. This represents **43 per cent** of all starts during that period.

Of the 90,000 individuals who first presented for alcohol treatment in the three year period between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2015, 46,000 people had successfully completed treatment and had not re-presented by 31st March 2015. This represents **51 per cent** of all starts during that period.

The chart below shows the available time series for the indicator. Note that these figures will differ from previous releases of this indicator due to the revisions described above. Previous results without these revisions can be found in annex 1.

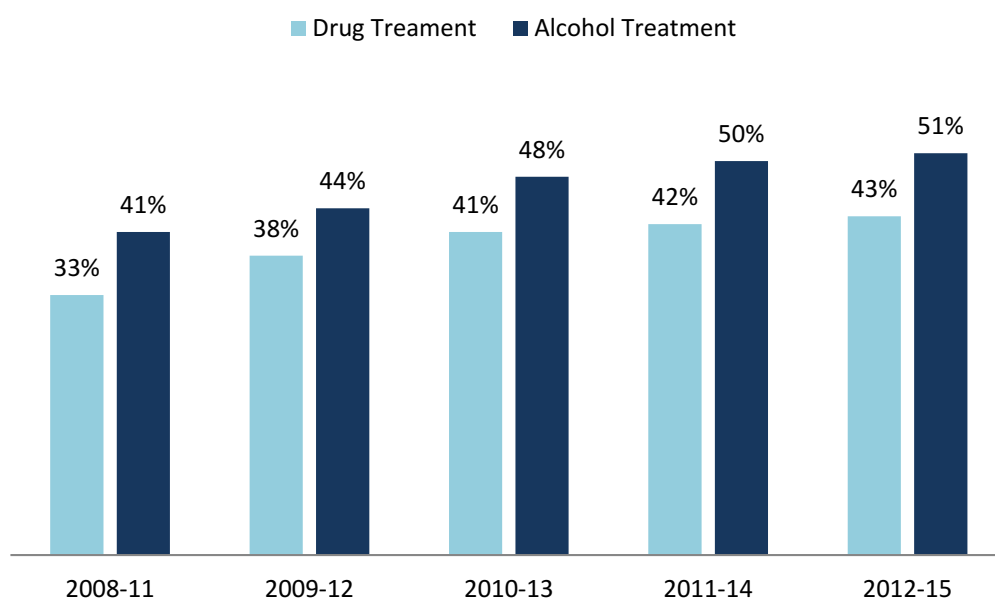


Figure 1: This shows the proportion of those presenting for drug or alcohol treatment for the first time over a three year period that successfully exited treatment and had not returned by the end of that period.

Over time, a higher proportion of first-time clients have successfully completed treatment, and have not subsequently returned. This suggests that better outcomes are now being achieved for these clients than in the past.

Notes

1. For the live indicator, data is drawn from the National Drugs Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS) for England.

Annex 1: Previous Results

The chart below shows the results under the previous NDTMS methodology prior to the revisions described above. The data is not available for 2012 – 2015 due to changes in how the NDTMS records whether an individual is in drug or alcohol treatment. Similarly data prior to 2008 – 11 has not been revised due to changes around NDTMS reporting.

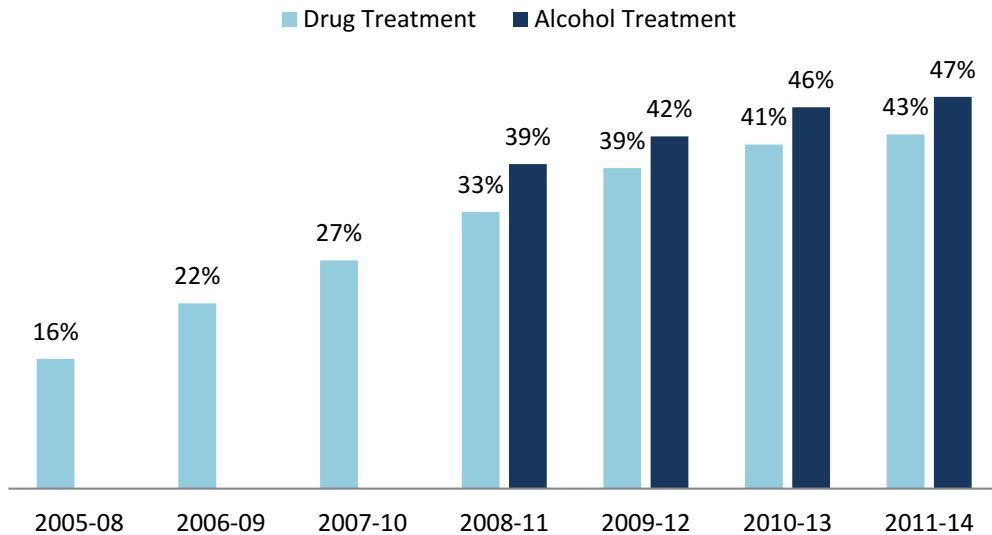


Figure 2: This shows the proportion of those presenting for drug or alcohol treatment for the first time over a three year period that successfully exited treatment and had not returned by the end of that period. Note that an individual may appear both in drug statistics and alcohol statistics if they had separate treatment episodes with different primary substances.