



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

SUBSTANCE MISUSE PROGRAMME

Harm Reduction Database Wales: Needle and syringe provision

2017-18

About Public Health Wales

Public Health Wales exists to protect and improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities for people in Wales. We work locally, nationally and internationally, with our partners and communities.

The Substance Misuse Programme works to address both the current and emerging public health threats in Wales and in line with the overarching strategic objective to '**reduce health inequalities, and prevent or reduce communicable and non-communicable disease, wider harms and premature death related to drugs and alcohol**'.

Substance Misuse Programme

Public Health Wales

Capital Quarter 2

Tyndall Street

Cardiff

CF10 4BZ

Tel: 02920104499

www.publichealthwales.org/substancemisuse

Public Health Wales would like to thank all those that contributed to the Harm Reduction Database Wales: NSP service users, NSP staff and all provider organisations including specialist substance misuse services, Criminal Justice services including DIP and IOIS and specialist housing and hostel/homelessness service providers.

Published: July 2018

Authors: Drew Turner, Gareth Morgan and Josie Smith, Substance Misuse Programme, Health Protection Division, Public Health Wales

Contents

1. Executive summary	5
Summary of findings	5
2. Definitions and notes on data interpretation	7
3. Location of NSP services in Wales	9
4. Profile of unique individuals accessing NSP services	11
5. Individuals reporting opioid use	12
5.1 Age and gender	12
5.2 Employment status	13
5.3 Housing status	13
5.4 Ethnicity	13
5.5 Injecting practises	13
5.6 NSP activity	14
6. Individuals reporting stimulant use	16
6.1 Age and Gender	17
6.2 Employment status	17
6.3 Housing status	17
6.4 Ethnicity	18
6.5 Injecting practises	18
6.6 NSP activity	19
7. People who reported IPED use	20
7.1 Age and Gender	20
7.2 Employment status	21
7.3 Housing status	22
7.4 Ethnicity	22
7.5 Injecting practises	22
8. Comparison between different substance groups	24
8.1 Aging population accessing NSP services	24
8.2 Increases in high risk injecting practises	24
8.3 Decreases in the number of syringes and interactions	25
8.4 Employment status and housing	25
9. Geographic profile of individuals accessing NSP services in Wales 2017-18	27
9.1 Individuals by health board	30

10.	Pharmacy and voluntary/statutory organisations	32
11.	Secondary substances.....	33
12.	Equipment.....	34
13.	Data quality.....	35
Appendices.....		37
Appendix 1 – Profile of non-regular users		37
Appendix 2 - Drug Classifications.....		37
Appendix 3 - Health Board Area Infographics.....		37

Abbreviations

ABMUHB	Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board
ABUHB	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
BCU	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
CTUHB	Cwm Taf University Health Board
CVUHB	Cardiff & Vale University Health Board
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
HDUHB	Hywel Dda University Health Board
HRD	Harm Reduction Database Wales
IPED	Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs
NFA	No fixed address
NSP	Needle and Syringe Programme
PTHB	Powys Teaching Health Board
PWIDs	People Who Inject Drugs

1. Executive summary

Needle and Syringe Programmes (NSPs) provide a well-evidenced, effective and cost-effective means of reducing bacterial infections and transmission of blood borne virus (BBV) infection (including hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV).¹

The Harm Reduction Database Wales - NSP module (HRD-NSP) has been available in all statutory and voluntary NSP sites since 2010 and in all pharmacy based NSP sites since April 2014. In 2017-18 the HRD was live in 42 specialist sites, 13 mobile units and 215 pharmacy sites across Wales, providing comprehensive data on activity in all NSP sites across Wales.

Summary of findings

For the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018:

- 25,190 unique individuals accessed needle and syringe programmes, a 0.4 per cent decrease from the previous year. A total of 14,000 (55.6 per cent) were classified as regular users²
- A total of 131,008 interactions (previously referred to as transactions, see section 2.4) were recorded on the HRD-NSP, a 0.2 per cent increase compared to the previous year
- There were 2,630,382 syringes issued compared to 3,078,264 in the previous year, a reduction of 14.6 per cent. Following a national commissioning process in 2016-17, the new NSP framework was initiated in July 2017, leading to introduction of 'single injection kits' in all NSPs and a resultant reduction in issuing of unwanted injecting equipment. (For further information see Section 12)
- The most common substance group recorded was Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs (IPEDs), reported by 54 per cent of individuals. Opioids were reported by 48 per cent of individuals and 15 per cent reported stimulant use. These proportions varied between health board areas.
- The median age of individuals accessing NSP has increased in all three substance groups (IPEDs, opioids and stimulants) compared to 2014-15
- Individuals who reported using IPEDs were more likely to be younger, male and less likely to attend a specialist (statutory or voluntary based NSP) than those injecting psychoactive substances
- The re-use of injecting equipment including needles and syringes remains common amongst opioid and stimulant users with just under 50 per cent reporting re-use in 2017-18

1 NICE. Needle and Syringe Programmes Guidance 2014. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph52>

2 A regular user is defined as any unique individual reporting psychoactive drug injection and who accessed NSP services two or more times in a given year or any unique individual reporting injection of IPEDs and attended at least once in the current and once in the previous year.

Table 1 summarises demographics reported by individuals accessing NSP services in Wales in 2017-18.

Table 1 – Demographics for regular NSP users, by substance group in 2017-18

	All Clients	Stimulants	Opioid	IPED
Number of Regular Clients	14000	2122	6717	7638
Minimum Age	16	16	18	17
Median Age	35	38	38	32
Percentage under 25	8.7%	2.7%	2.7%	13.7%
Percentage over 50	6.6%	8.7%	8.7%	4.0%
New registrations	17.1%	9.3%	16.5%	14.1%
Attended only pharmacies	56.4%	48.3%	46.6%	66.7%
Median transaction per year	3	6	5	2
Median syringes per year	50	94	73	40
Median length of injecting career ³	7.6	12.2	11.2	5.8
Percentage new initiates ³	15.6%	5.2%	5.5%	21.9%
Percentage reporting direct sharing ³	3.2%	7.3%	6.4%	0.6%
Percentage reporting indirect sharing ³	7.7%	16.6%	15.9%	1.5%
Percentage re-use ³	24.5%	46.2%	48.8%	7.4%
Percentage in non-stable housing ³	20.5%	32.1%	34.4%	7.7%
Percentage employed ³	44.4%	15.7%	16.7%	69.7%
Percentage unemployed ³	52.8%	81.0%	79.3%	29.0%

³ Data relates to the percentage of individuals for whom this information was requested, supplied and recorded, not all individuals present on the HRD-NSP system. See section 13 for a summary of data completeness.

2. Definitions and notes on data interpretation

2.1 Regular NSP service users

A regular NSP service user is defined as an individual who has attended NSP services on at least two occasions within a given financial year or reported IPED injecting and attending an NSP service at least once in the current and once in the previous financial year.

Non-regular individuals have been excluded when presenting key demographics. Records with only one transaction in a given period for non-IPED users may be indicative of individuals using different unique identifier details when presenting for injecting equipment or data entry errors. As such, and to ensure as robust analysis as is possible, these records have been excluded from the main analysis and details for this sub-group are presented in Appendix 1.

2.2 Substance groups

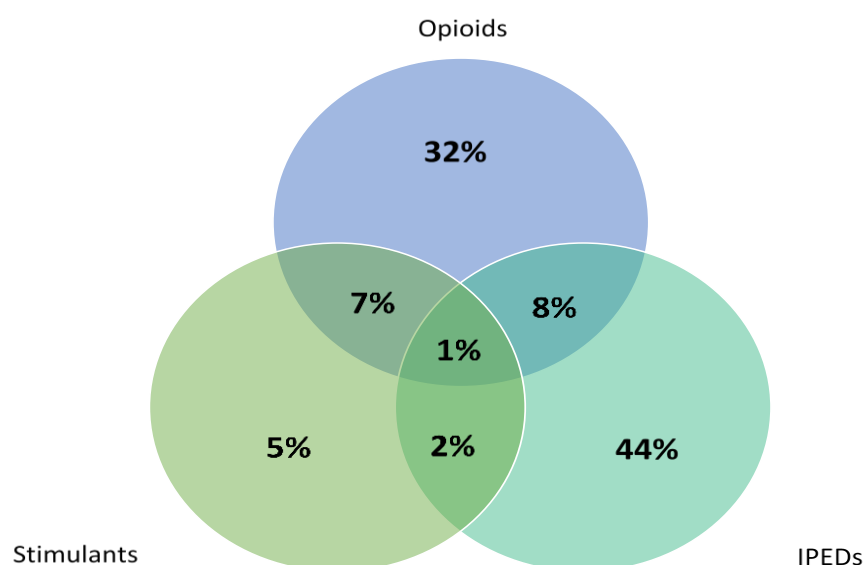
This report focuses on three main substance groups.

IPED individuals - Individuals who have reported using/injecting image and performance enhancing drugs, for example, steroids, human growth hormone and peptides.

Opioid individuals - Individuals who have reported using/injecting opioids, for example, heroin and methadone.

Stimulant individuals – Individuals who have reported using/injecting stimulants, for example, amphetamine, cocaine (crack and powder) and mephedrone.

Figure 1 - Venn diagram detailing the profile of self-reported substance use by individuals accessing NSPs in 2017-18.



Individuals who have reported using multiple substances may be included in multiple groups where appropriate. Figure 1 details the cross over between the different substance groups for individuals in 2017-18. A full list of which substances were defined as an IPED, opioid or stimulant can be found in Appendix 2.

2.3 Health Boards and Local Authorities

When referring to a local authority or a health board, an individual was included in **every** geographical region where they had at least one NSP interaction. This was to ensure that individuals were all allocated using a single method.

Individuals accessing NSP services solely through mobile NSP units in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board area (BCUHB) were assigned to Wrexham (East), Denbighshire (Central) and Gwynedd (West). Consequently, the numbers of unique individuals injecting drugs in Anglesey, Conwy and Flintshire may be under-reported.

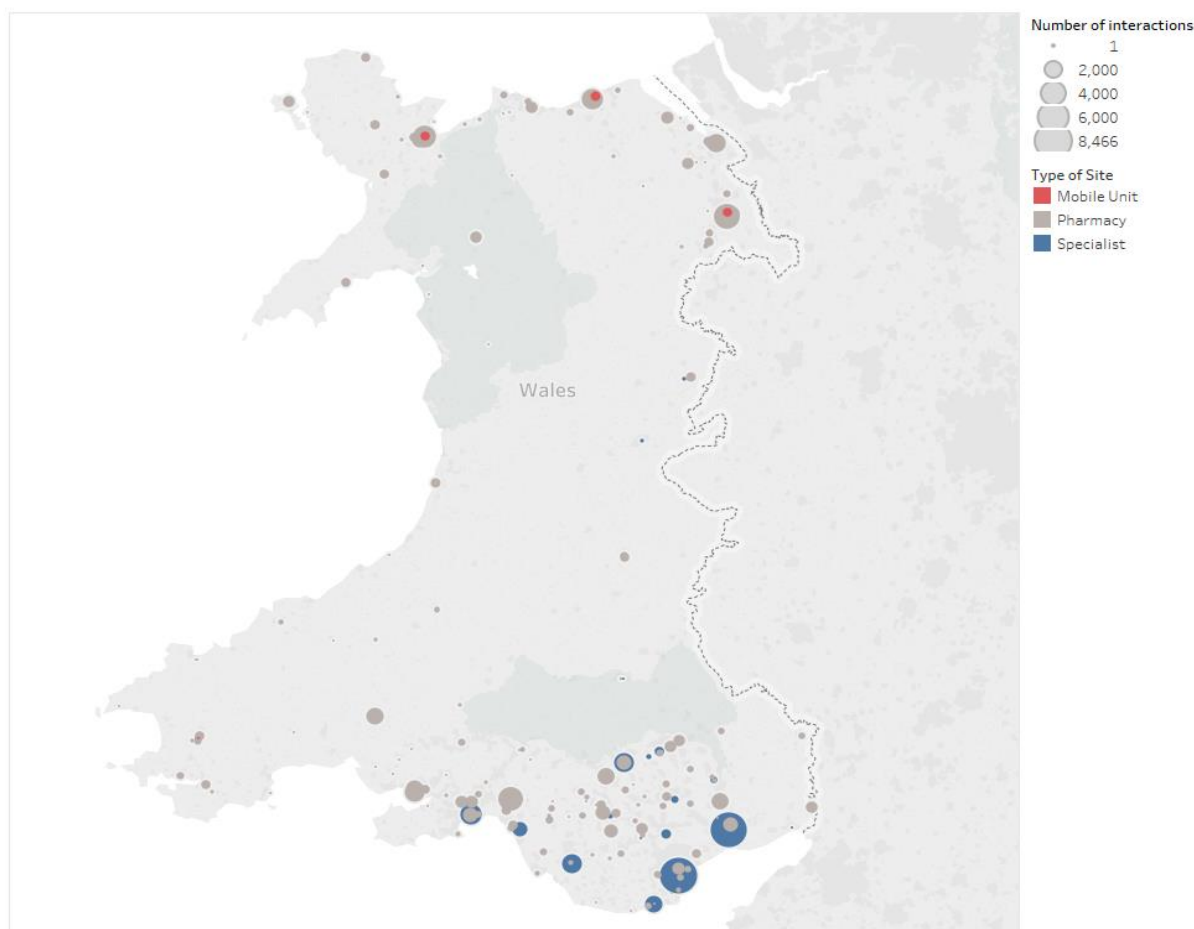
2.4 Interactions not transactions

Whilst in previous years the term 'transaction' has been used to describe the provision of injecting equipment within NSP services, we have moved to use the term 'interaction'. This has been done to better describe what should occur when an individual attends NSP services to access sterile injecting equipment. During the interaction, discussion and provision of sterile injecting equipment that is suitable for their needs in terms of the type of drug/s being injected, route and frequency of injecting, should be ensured, including assessment of equipment for secondary distribution to reduce potential direct and indirect sharing of injecting equipment by others. In addition, provision of tailored and well evidenced harm reduction information and advice and signposting to relevant services as required should be undertaken and recorded.

3. Location of NSP services in Wales

NSPs operate in 55 statutory or voluntary organisations and 215 community pharmacies. In 2017-18, 82 per cent of statutory or voluntary sites and 89 per cent of pharmacies recorded at least one interaction. Figure 2 shows the locations of NSP sites in Wales.

Figure 2 - Location of NSP site in Wales by site type and number of interactions in 2017-18⁴



In total, 131,008 interactions occurred across all NSP sites in 2017-18, a less than 1 per cent increase on the previous year (130,816 transactions in 2016-17). Around a third of interactions (33.6 per cent) in 2017-18 occurred in a statutory/voluntary organisation whilst two thirds (66.4 per cent) occurred in community pharmacy NSP services.

Whilst the highest number of interactions was recorded in BCUHB (38,968 interactions), the activity by site type varied between health boards. For example, in Cardiff and the Vale, 83.9 per cent of all interactions occurred in a statutory or voluntary organisation. In comparison, 93.9 per cent of interactions in BCU occurred in a community pharmacy NSP services.

⁴ Mobile Sites operate across Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). The mobile NSP units have been plotted in the county where they have been assigned as being based or centrally active.

Table 2 – Number of interactions and unique individuals accessing NSP by health board area 2017-18

Health Board	Sites	Interactions	Unique individuals
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	36	23941	5369
Aneurin Bevan	24	18659	4082
Betsi Cadwaladr	79	38968	7215
Cardiff and Vale	19	19447	3727
Cwm Taf	24	13751	3654
Hywel Dda	42	13969	2202
Powys Teaching	13	2273	434
Total	237	131008	25190

Table 3 – Number of interactions and unique individuals accessing NSP by health board area and site type 2017-18

Health Board	Statutory or voluntary sites					Pharmacy sites				
	Number of Sites	Interactions	% of total	Unique individuals	% of total	Number of Sites	Interactions	% of total	Unique individuals	% of total
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	7	10492	44%	2557	48%	29	13449	56%	3553	66%
Aneurin Bevan	8	9976	53%	1882	46%	16	8683	47%	2546	62%
Betsi Cadwaladr	9	2365	6%	698	10%	70	36603	94%	6892	96%
Cardiff and Vale	6	16324	84%	2940	79%	13	3123	16%	1052	28%
Cwm Taf	5	3702	27%	914	25%	19	10049	73%	3012	82%
Hywel Dda	5	802	6%	284	13%	37	13167	94%	2033	92%
Powys Teaching	5	354	16%	112	26%	8	1919	84%	365	84%
Total	45	44015	34%	9205	37%	192	86993	66%	18593	74%

4. Profile of unique individuals accessing NSP services

In 2017-18, a total of 25,190 unique individuals accessed NSP services. This number has remained stable over the last four years (see table 4). 55.6 per cent (14,000) of all individuals were defined as regular NSP service users.

Table 4 – Percentage of regular individuals accessing NSP in Wales by substance group and year 2014-15 to 2017-18

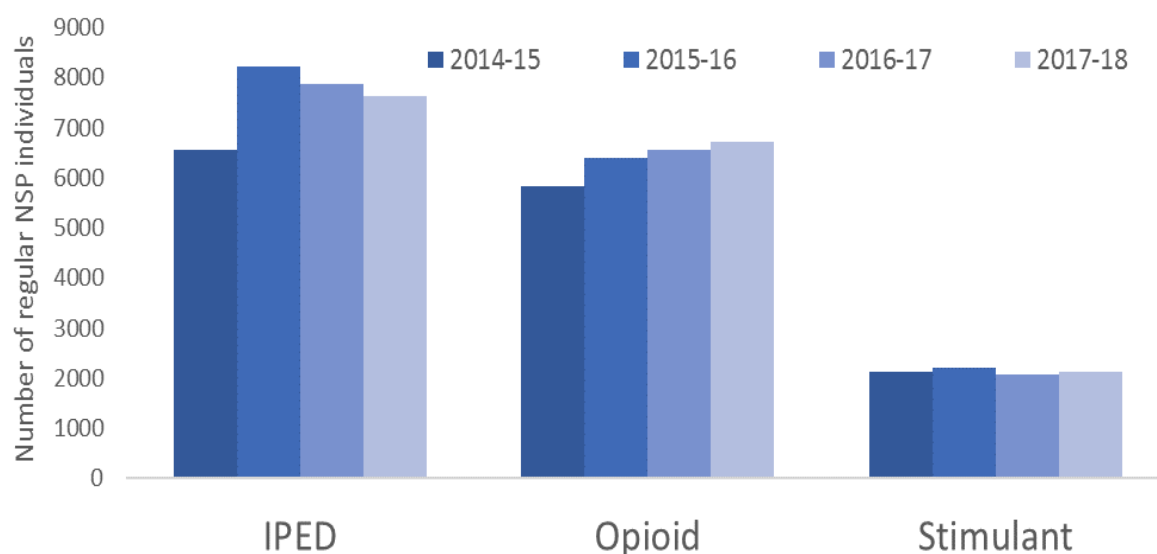
Year	All Clients	Regular Clients	IPEDs	Opioids	Stimulants
2014-15	25815	13721	47.8%	42.5%	15.4%
2015-16	25636	15157	54.3%	42.2%	14.5%
2016-17	25298	14306	55.1%	45.8%	14.4%
2017-18	25190	14000	54.6%	48.0%	15.2%

The most common substance group was IPEDs reported by 7,638 individuals, representing 54.6 per cent of all regular NSP individuals, an increase of 16.5 per cent since 2014-15. However, there has been little change in the proportion of individuals reporting IPEDs since 2015-16.

In 2017- 18, opioid use was reported by 6721 individuals, representing 48.0 per cent of all regular NSP individuals. The percentage of individuals reporting opioids has increased from 42 per cent in 2014-15 to 48 per cent in 2017-18. In this period, the number of unique opioid NSP individuals has increased by 15 per cent, from 5838 in 2014-15.

The smallest substance group reported was stimulants, reported by 2122 individuals. There has been little change in the proportion of individuals who reported stimulant injection over the four years, which remains at around 15 per cent, but may well be under-reported.

Figure 3 – Number of individuals who regularly access needle and syringe programmes by substance group and year 2014-15 to 2017-18.



5. Individuals reporting opioid use

In 2017-18, 48.0 per cent (n=6,717) of regular individuals recorded using an opioid, increasing from 42.5 per cent (n= 5,832) in 2014-15. Table 5 compares demographics of opioid NSP individuals by year from 2014-15 to 2017-18.

Table 5 – Demographics for NSP individuals who reported using an opioid, by year 2014-15 to 2017-18

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of regular clients	5832	6395	6541	6717
Percentage male	80.6%	81.4%	82.2%	81.6%
Minimum age (years)	16	17	17	18
Median Age (years)	36	37	38	38
Age Interquartile range	31-42	32 - 43	32 - 43	33-44
Percentage under 25	5.5%	4.5%	3.5%	2.7%
Percentage over 50	6.5%	7.6%	8.8%	10.4%
Median number of interactions per year	6	6	5	5
Median number of syringes per year	95	100	95	73
Percentage who only attend a pharmacy	45.5%	45.5%	45.3%	46.6%
Percentage of new registration	N/A ⁵	19.7%	16.7%	16.5%
Percentage of groin injectors⁶	16.1%	17.0%	19.0%	19.4%
Percentage of new initiates (< 36 months)⁶	12.5%	10.9%	8.3%	5.5%
Median Length of injecting career (years)⁶	10.1	10.2	10.8	11.2
Percentage reporting direct sharing⁶	4.7%	5.3%	5.8%	6.4%
Percentage reporting indirect sharing⁶	9.4%	13.3%	15.2%	15.9%
Percentage re-use⁶	48.0%	48.4%	49.2%	48.8%

5.1 Age and gender

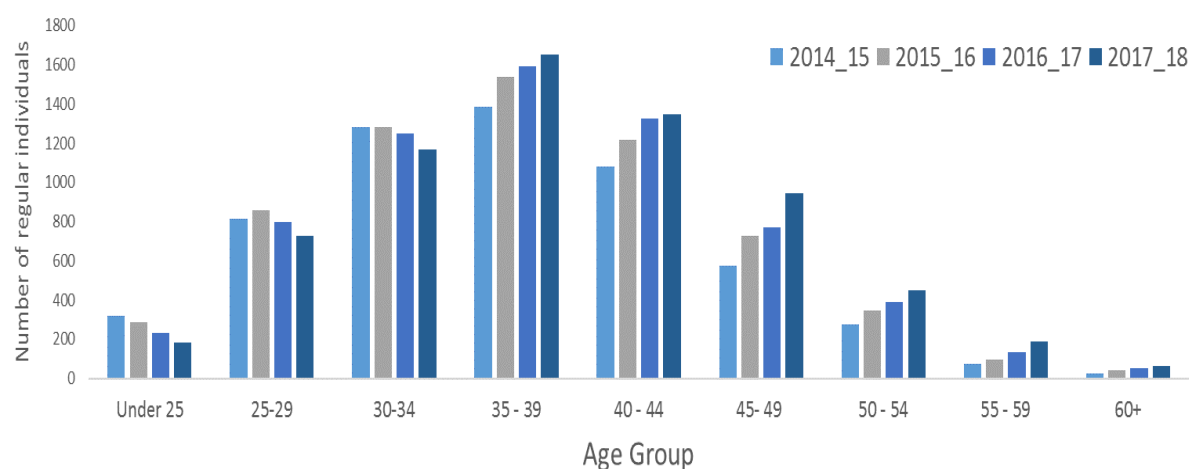
In 2017-18 opioid individuals had a median age of 38 and 81 per cent were male. The proportion of individuals who are male has remained consistent over the last four years.

The changes in the age distribution of opioid individuals (shown in figure 4) may suggest an aging population. The most frequent age band recorded was 35-39-year olds, representing 24 per cent of individuals. The proportion of individuals under 25 has dropped from 5.5 per cent in 2014-15 to 2.7 per cent in 2017-18, whilst the proportion over 50 has risen from 6.5 per cent to 10.4 per cent.

⁵ New registrations in 2014-15 have not been reported due to the increase in the number of individuals accessing services after the roll of out NSP to community pharmacies

⁶ Data relates to the percentage of individuals for whom this information was requested, supplied and recorded, not all individuals present on the HRD-NSP system. See section 13 for a summary of data completeness.

Figure 4 – Number of regular NSP individuals who reported using an opioid, by age group and year 2014-15 to 2017-18



5.2 Employment status

Where reported (N=3,735), 79 per cent (n=2961) of opioid NSP individuals reported being unemployed. This compares to 17 per cent (n=622) who reported being in full or part time employment. Of the remaining 152 individuals, 2 per cent reported being sex workers, 1 per cent reported being either unable to work or a student.

5.3 Housing status

Of the 3,678 individuals who reported housing status, 34 per cent reported being in either non-secure housing or having no fixed abode. Although this has increased since 2014-15 (30.2 per cent in 2014-15) it has remained stable over the last 3 years.

5.4 Ethnicity

Where recorded (N=2,678), the percentage of clients who reported being white Welsh or white British has remained stable over the last four years at 93 per cent. For the remaining 7 per cent, the most commonly reported ethnicities were white other (3 per cent up from 0.4 per cent in 2014-15), white eastern European (0.8 per cent) and other Asian (0.5 per cent).

5.5 Injecting practises

5.5.1 Length of injecting career

Where reported (N=2,276), the median length of injecting career for opioid individuals in 2017-18 was 11.2 years. This has been increasing since 2014-15 where the median length career was 10.1 years. The proportion of new initiates, individuals injecting for less than 36 months, accessing NSP services and reporting opioid use has declined from 12.5 per cent to 5.5 per cent.

5.5.2 Site of injecting

Of those who reported sites of injection (N=3896), 88 per cent had at least one report of injecting though the arm or leg, 19.4 per cent though the arm and 1.6 per cent though the neck. The proportion of individuals injecting though the arm or leg and neck have remained constant since 2014-15. However, there has been an increase in the proportion of individuals who are injecting

through the groin, rising from 16 per cent in 2014-15 to 19 per cent in 2017-18. Injecting through the groin can lead to serious bacterial infection that can result in amputation or death.

Evidence indicates that individuals may move to groin injecting later in their injecting careers, as other sites become unusable. However, anecdotal evidence indicates a more rapid transition or even use of groin as primary site. Further research is required to establish, with greater accuracy, the nature of the increases observed in groin injecting.

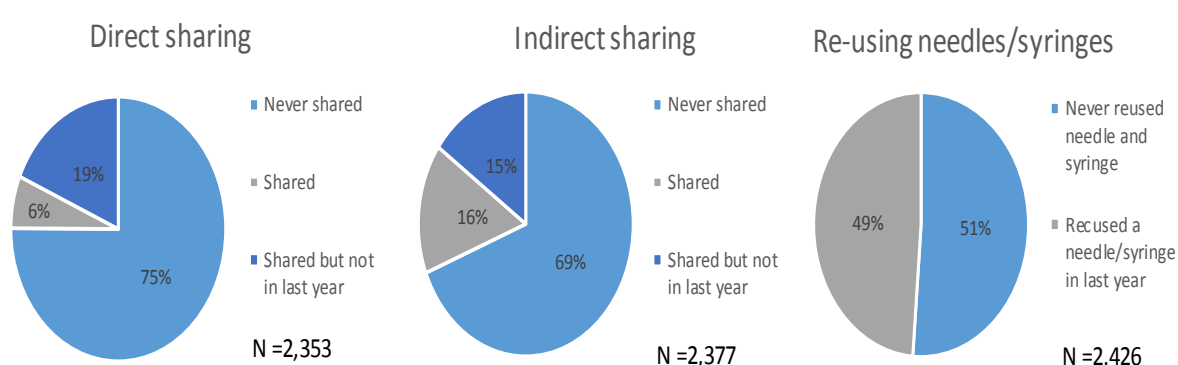
5.5.3 Frequency of injecting

Frequency of injecting was recorded for 3,294 individuals. Of these, 72.5 per cent reported injecting more than once a day (up from 68.3 per cent in 2014-15), 22.1 per cent reported injecting between 1-6 times a week and 5.5 per cent reported monthly. It is vital that services understand and record the injecting practices of an individual so that sufficient equipment is provided to limit the requirement for re-use and sharing of equipment.

5.5.4 Sharing and re-use

In 2017-18, 6.4 per cent of opioid individuals providing details, reported direct sharing (needle or syringes) and 15.9 per cent reported indirect sharing (spoons, filters, water etc.). This is lower than the 1 in 6 PWIDs who reported sharing needles and syringes in the “Shooting up” report⁷ and could be a result of under-reporting. The re-use of syringes amongst opioid injectors remains common with almost half (49 per cent) reporting re-use. The sharing and re-using of injecting paraphernalia increases the risks of contracting or spreading blood born viruses (such as Hepatitis C and HIV) and bacterial infections.

Figure 5 – Pie Charts showing proportion of sharing and re-use status amongst opioid injectors in 2017-18



5.6 NSP activity

For 2017-18, the median number of reported NSP interactions with opioid NSP individuals was 5 (range 1 –327) and a median of 73 syringes a year were issued. Although the median number of transactions has not changed compared to 2016-17, the number of syringes per year has decreased

7 Public Health England, Health Protection Scotland, Public Health Wales, and Public Health Agency Northern Ireland. Shooting Up: Infections among people who inject drugs in the UK, 2016. London: Public Health England, November 2017. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663003/Shooting_Up_2017_report.pdf

by 23 per cent (from 95 to 73 syringes). An explanation could be the introduction of single syringe packs in June 2017 (see section 12).

The proportion of individuals only attending community pharmacy NSP services has remained at around 46 per cent over the last four years. Statutory and voluntary organisations are able to provide other enhanced harm reduction interventions such as the availability of take home naloxone which can be used to prevent fatal overdoses amongst opioid users.⁸

⁸ Public Health Wales. Harm Reduction Database Wales – Take-Home Naloxone Annual Report 2016/17. Available at: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/FINAL%20Naloxone%20HRD%20report%202016-17.pdf>

6. Individuals reporting stimulant use

In 2017-18, 15.2 per cent (2,122) of individuals reported using a stimulant, the smallest of the three substance groups. The stimulant group includes substances such as crack/powder cocaine, MDMA, and amphetamines.⁹

Whilst reported stimulant use has remained relatively consistent over the last four years, in 2017-18 it rose by 3 per cent from the previous year. Table 6 compares demographics of stimulant individuals by year from 2014-15 to 2017-18.

Table 6 – Demographics for NSP individuals who reported using a stimulant, by year 2014-15 to 2017-18

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of regular clients	2112	2194	2060	2122
Percentage male	80.6%	80.7%	81.3%	82.5%
Minimum age (years)	15	18	19	16
Median Age (years)	36	37	37	38
Age Interquartile range	30-42	31 - 42	32 - 43	33 - 44
Percentage under 25	7.3%	6.2%	4.4%	2.7%
Percentage over 50	6.2%	7.3%	9.1%	10.0%
Median number of interactions per year	7	6	6	6
Median number of syringes per year	130	123	120	94
Percentage who only attend a pharmacy	48.0%	49.4%	46.1%	48.3%
Percentage of new registration	N/A ¹⁰	15.3%	11.0%	9.3%
Percentage of groin injectors¹¹	10.7%	12.9%	15.6%	17.2%
Percentage of new initiates (< 36 months)¹¹	15.0%	12.3%	9.8%	5.2%
Median Length of injecting career (years)¹¹	10.9	11.2	11.2	12.2
Percentage reporting direct sharing¹¹	5.5%	5.9%	7.6%	7.3%
Percentage reporting indirect sharing¹¹	9.1%	11.8%	16.5%	16.6%
Percentage re-use¹¹	46.8%	46.7%	48.7%	46.2%

9 A full list of substances in all groups can be found in Appendix 2

10 New registrations in 2014-15 have not been reported due to the increase in the number of individuals accessing services due to the roll out of NSP to community pharmacies

11 Data relates to the percentage of individuals for whom this information was requested, supplied and recorded, not all individuals present on the HRD-NSP system. See section 13 for a summary of data completeness.

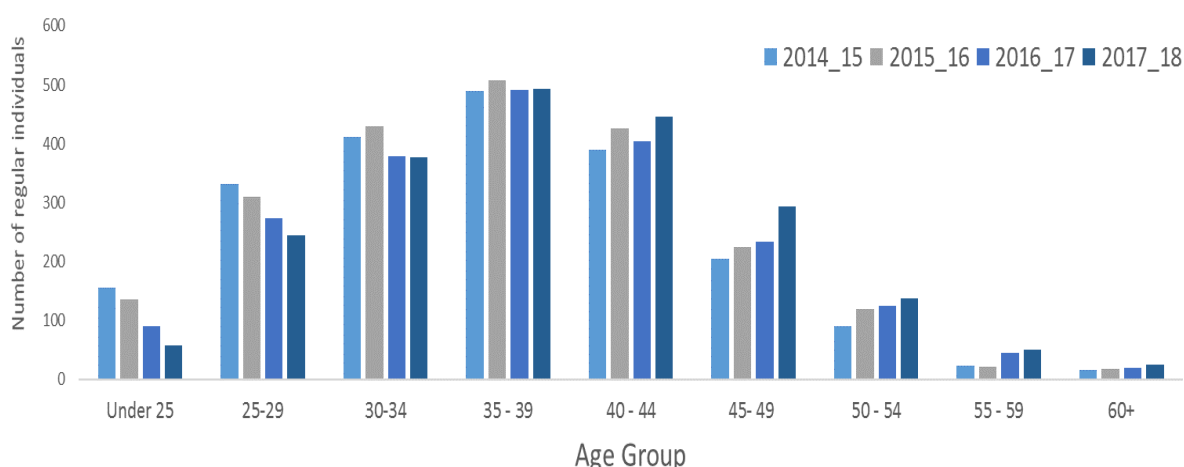
6.1 Age and Gender

The median age of an individual reporting stimulant use was 38 years and 82.4 per cent were male. The proportion of individuals who are male has increased slightly year on year since 2014-15, rising from 80.6 per cent to 82.5 per cent in 2017-18.

As with individuals reporting use of opioids, the changes in the age distribution of stimulant individuals, shown in figure 6, suggest an aging population presenting to NSP services. The most commonly reported age group was 35-39, representing 23.5 per cent of all stimulant individuals. A higher proportion of stimulant individuals are aged above fifty (6.2 per cent in 2014-15 compared to 10.0 per cent in 2017-18) whilst a lower proportion are below 25 years (7.3 per cent compared to 2.6 per cent).

Traditionally, a higher proportion of individuals who use stimulants were under the age of 25 compared to those who use opioids (8.7 per cent for stimulants and 7.3 per cent for opioids in 2014-15). However, in 2017-18 the proportion of individuals under 25 was identical in both groups (2.7 per cent).

Figure 6 - Number of regular NSP individuals who reported using a stimulant, by age group and year 2014-15 to 2017-18



6.2 Employment status

Where reported (N=1,372), 81 per cent (n=1,112) of stimulant individuals reported being unemployed. This compares to 16 per cent (n=216) who reported being in full or part time employment. For the remaining 44 individuals, 27 (2 per cent) reported being sex workers and 17 (1 per cent) reported being unable to work.

6.3 Housing status

Of the 1,332 individuals who reported housing status, 32.1 per cent reported being in either non-secure housing or having no fixed abode. Although the proportion of individuals who use stimulants living in non-stable housing has slightly decreased compared to 2016-17 (33.6 per cent), it has increased by 4 per cent over since 2014-15 (28.3 per cent). The approximately 4 per cent increase has also been observed in the population who reported opioid use.

6.4 Ethnicity

Ethnicity was reported for 1,467 individuals reporting stimulant use. Of these, 93.3 per cent reported being either white Welsh or white British, a similar proportion for the individuals who reported opioid use. This has dropped slightly from the 95.5 per cent reported in 2014-15.

In the remaining 6.7 per cent of individuals reporting stimulants, 3.3 per cent reported being white other. As with opioid NSP individuals, this has increased over the last four years from 0.41 per cent in 2014-15. Further investigation is required to determine if this increase is due to changes within the population accessing NSP or due to changes in reporting.

6.5 Injecting practises

6.5.1 Length of injecting career

Where reported, the median length of injecting career for stimulant individuals in 2017-18 was 12.2 years (N= 2,276). This has been increasing since 2014-15 where the median length career was 10.9 years. The number of new initiates¹² has also decreased from 15.0 per cent to 5.2 per cent.

6.5.2 Site of injection

Of those who reported sites of injection (N=1453), 90.6 per cent reported injecting though the arm or leg, 17.2 per cent reported groin injecting and 2.2 per cent neck injecting. There has been an increase in the proportion of individuals who are injecting in the groin, rising from 10.7 per cent in 2014-15 to 17.2 per cent in 2017-18. The groin and neck are very high-risk injection sites due to the proximity of key arteries and nerves and increased risk of serious infection. It is a possible concern that an increasing proportion of both stimulant and opioid individuals are injecting through these sites.

6.5.3 Frequency of injection

A frequency of injection was provided for 1,110 individuals. Of these, 55.2 per cent reported injecting more than once a day (a figure which has remained stable since 2014-15.), 34.1 per cent reported injecting between 1-6 times a week and 10.6 per cent reported injecting monthly. As with individuals reporting opioids use, it is vital that services discuss and record the injecting related information for all substances reported by an individual, so that correct and sufficient equipment is provided at all interactions to meet the individual's needs and to limit re-use and sharing.

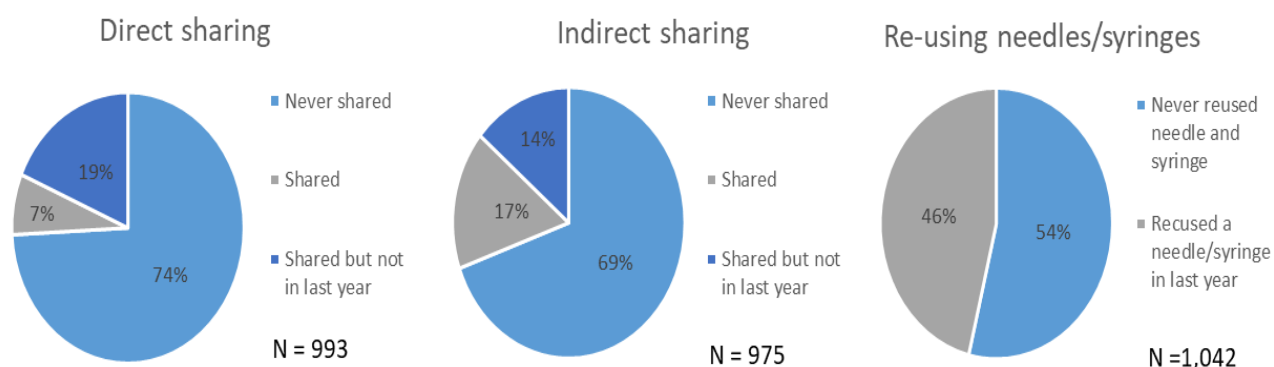
6.5.4 Sharing and the re-use of equipment.

In 2017-18, 7.3 per cent of stimulant individuals providing details reported sharing either needles or syringes and 16.6 per cent shared other paraphernalia. Again, this is lower than in the "Shooting up" report¹³ and is likely to be under reported. The re-use of syringes amongst stimulant injectors remains high with 46 per cent reporting re-use. The sharing and re-using of injecting paraphernalia increases the risks of contracting and spreading blood born viruses (such as Hepatitis C and HIV) and bacterial infections.

¹² Individuals reporting injecting for less than 36 months

¹³Public Health England, Health Protection Scotland, Public Health Wales, and Public Health Agency Northern Ireland. Shooting Up: Infections among people who inject drugs in the UK, 2016. London: Public Health England, November 2017. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663003/Shooting_Up_2017_report.pdf

Figure 7 – Pie Charts showing proportion of sharing and re-use amongst stimulant injectors in 2017-18



6.6 NSP activity

For 2017-18, the median number of reported interactions with stimulant individuals was 6 (range 1 – 303) providing a median of 94 syringes a year. This is slightly higher than the 73 syringes reported by opioid individuals, possibly due to the increased frequency of injecting amongst stimulant users. Although the median number of transactions has not changed compared to 2016-17, the number of syringes per year has decreased by 21.7 per cent (120 to 94 syringes). An explanation could be the introduction of single syringe packs in June 2017 (see section 12).

The proportion of individuals only attending pharmacy sites has remained around 48 per cent over the last four years. Individuals are encouraged to attend needle and syringe programmes in statutory and voluntary organisations to be able to receive enhanced harm reduction interventions and advice, for example testing for blood born viruses such as Hepatitis C and HIV.

7. People who reported IPED use

In 2017-18, 54.6 per cent (7,638) individuals reported using an IPED, the most commonly reported substance group. The proportion of individuals using an IPED has remained consistent since 2015-16.

Table 7 – Demographics for NSP individuals who reported using an IPED¹⁴, by year 2014-15 to 2017-18

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Number of regular clients	6559	8225	7881	7638
Percentage male	96.2%	95.7%	95.6%	95.7%
Minimum age (years)	16	16	17	17
Median Age (years)	29	30	31	32
Age Interquartile range	25-35	25-36	26-38	27-39
Percentage under 25	24.6%	19.8%	16.3%	13.7%
Percentage over 50	2.6%	3.2%	3.7%	4.8%
Median number of interactions per year	2	2	2	2
Median number of syringes per year	60	50	46	40
Percentage who only attend a pharmacy	55.8%	63.8%	65.2%	66.7%
Percentage of new registration	N/A ¹⁵	21.4%	16.5%	14.1%
Percentage reporting subcutaneous injecting¹⁶	18.3%	18.7%	19.7%	20.0%
Percentage reporting intramuscular injecting¹⁶	93.1%	93.2%	93.4%	93.1%
Percentage of new initiates (< 36 months)¹⁶	42.2%	36.8%	28.5%	21.9%
Median Length of injecting career (years)¹⁶	3.8	4.3	5.2	5.8
Percentage reporting direct sharing¹⁶	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%
Percentage reporting indirect sharing¹⁶	0.8%	1.0%	1.3%	1.5%
Percentage re-use¹⁶	5.8%	6.4%	7.1%	7.4%

7.1 Age and Gender

Compared to opioids and stimulants, IPED individuals tend to be younger. In 2017-18 IPED individuals had a median age of 32, compared to 38 years in the other substance groups. A higher proportion of IPED individuals are male, 95.7 per cent compared to around 81 per cent for the psychoactive substance groups. There has been little change in the proportion of male to female IPED individuals since 2014-15.

¹⁴ Image and performance enhancing drugs

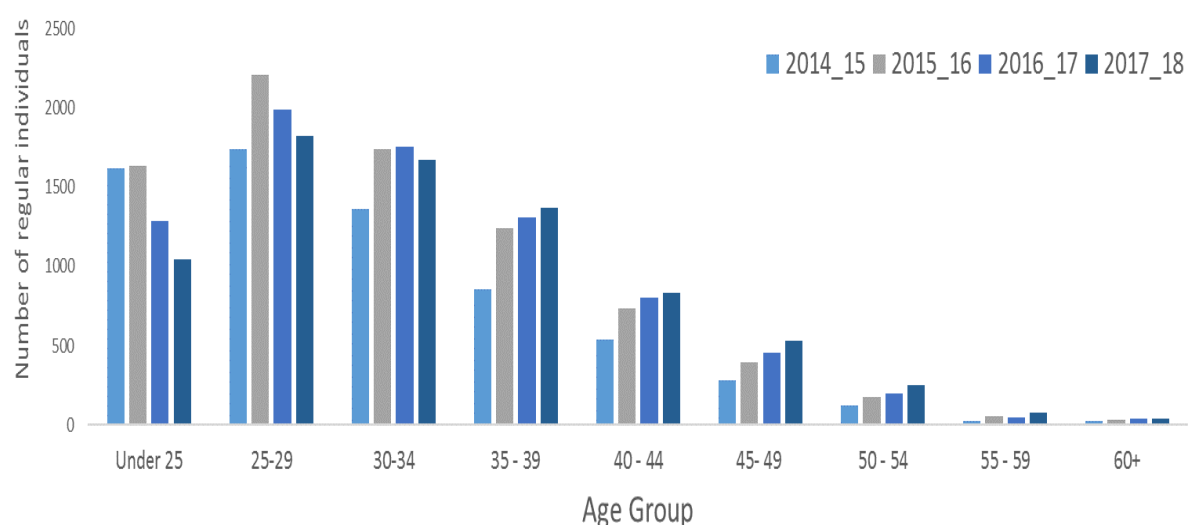
¹⁵ New registrations in 2014-15 have not been reported due to the increase in the number of individuals accessing services due to the roll out of NSP to community pharmacies

¹⁶ Data relates to the percentage of individuals for whom this information was requested, supplied and recorded, not all individuals present on the HRD-NSP system. See section 13 for a summary of data completeness.

The changes in the age distribution of IPED individuals (shown in figure 8) may again suggest an aging population who are accessing NSP services. The most frequent age group recorded was 25-29 years, representing 23.9 per cent of individuals. The percentage of individuals under the age of 25 has dropped from 24.7 per cent in 2014-15 to 13.7 per cent in 2017-18, whilst the proportion above 50 has increased slightly from 2.5 per cent to 4.8 per cent. It is possible that fewer new initiates and younger users of IPEDs are interacting with NSP services and may possibly be more likely to access their equipment through other sources, for example online or through secondary distribution. Further research is required to evidence this trend.

Individuals who reported using IPEDs were the youngest population with a median age of 32 years and 13.7 per cent under 25 years. This compares to a median age of 38 and around 2.5 per cent under 25 reported for opioid and stimulant individuals. IPED individuals were more likely to be male than other substance groups (95.7 per cent compared to around 82 per cent).

Figure 8 - Number of regular NSP individuals who reported using an IPED, by age group and year 2014-15 to 2017-18



7.2 Employment status

Where reported (N=4,255), 29.0 per cent of IPED individuals reported being unemployed and 69.7 per cent reported being in full or part time employment. The remaining 1.3 per cent reported being either unable to work, being students or sex working. There have been increases in the number of individuals reporting being students (23 in 2017-18 compared to 4 in 2016-17) and unable to work (16 individuals in 2017-18 compared to 4 individuals the previous year). Although these are small numbers, 2017-18 is the first year that an increase has been observed. Services should ensure that an employment status is recorded for each individual accessing NSP to help monitor any trends and ensure appropriate opening times for working people.

7.3 Housing status

Of the 3,953 individuals who reported housing status, 7.7 per cent reported being in either non-secure housing or having no fixed abode, having changed little since 2016-17 (7.0 per cent).

7.4 Ethnicity

Ethnicity was reported for 4,026 individuals reporting IPED use. Of these, 92.7 per cent reported being either white Welsh or white British. This has dropped slightly from 94.5 per cent reported in 2014-15.

In the remaining 6.7 per cent of individuals reporting stimulants, 3.6 per cent reported being white other. As with the other substance groups, this has increased over the last four years from 0.41 per cent in 2014-15. Further investigation is required to determine if this increase is due to changes within the population accessing NSP or due to changes in reporting.

7.5 Injecting practises

7.5.1 Length of injecting career

Where reported, IPED individuals have the shortest length of injecting career of the three substance groups, with median length of injecting career in 2017-18 of 5.8 years (N= 3,000) compared to the 11-12 years reported by stimulant and opioid individuals. The injecting career of IPED individuals has been increasing since 2014-15 where the median length career was 3.8 years. The number of new initiates ¹⁷ has also dropped from 42.2 per cent to 21.9 per cent.

7.5.2 Method of injecting

Where reported (N= 5,542), 95.7 per cent of IPED individuals reported intramuscular injecting, which is consistent with previous years. 20.1 per cent reported subcutaneous injecting which has increased from 18.3 per cent in 2016-17.

7.5.4 Sharing and re-use of equipment

In 2017-18, 0.6 per cent of 3,499 IPED individuals providing details reported direct sharing (needles or syringes) and 1.5 per cent of 3,438 shared other paraphernalia. 4.6 per cent of 3,574 IPED individuals reported re-using syringes.

7.5.5 NSP activity

For 2017-18, the median number of reported interactions with IPED individuals was 2 (range 1 – 303) providing a median of 40 syringes a year (range 0 – 11,700). As IPED users often inject in cycles and may be less likely to be injecting throughout the year, any interactions between IPED users and NSPs need to be seen as limited but important opportunities to engage with individuals, provide harm reduction advice, signpost and implement harm reduction interventions.

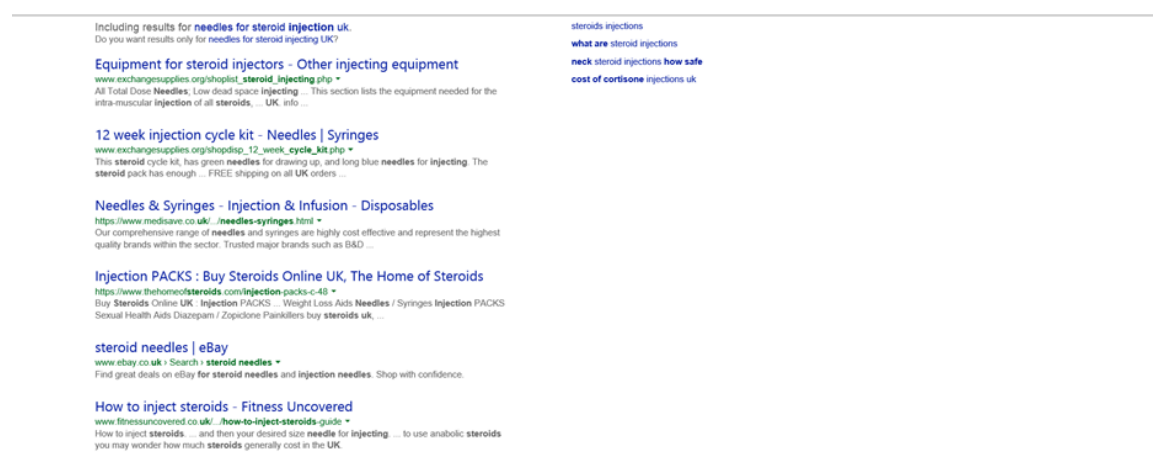
Although the median number of interactions has not changed compared to 2016-17, the number of syringes per year has decreased by 13.0 per cent (46 to 40 syringes). Unlike other substance groups,

¹⁷ Individuals who report injecting less than 36 months

the median number of syringes individuals have been receiving has reduced year on year since 2014-15.

One explanation could be the possibility of an increasing population of IPED users who are procuring injecting equipment online rather than accessing NSPs. For example, equipment provided at NSPs is available online (see figure 9). All health and related professionals and services are encouraged to signpost people who use IPEDs to an NSP service in order to access appropriate equipment and appropriate harm reduction advice and information.

Figure 9 – A screen shot of internet search for ‘needles for steroid injection UK’ taken on the 27th of July 2018



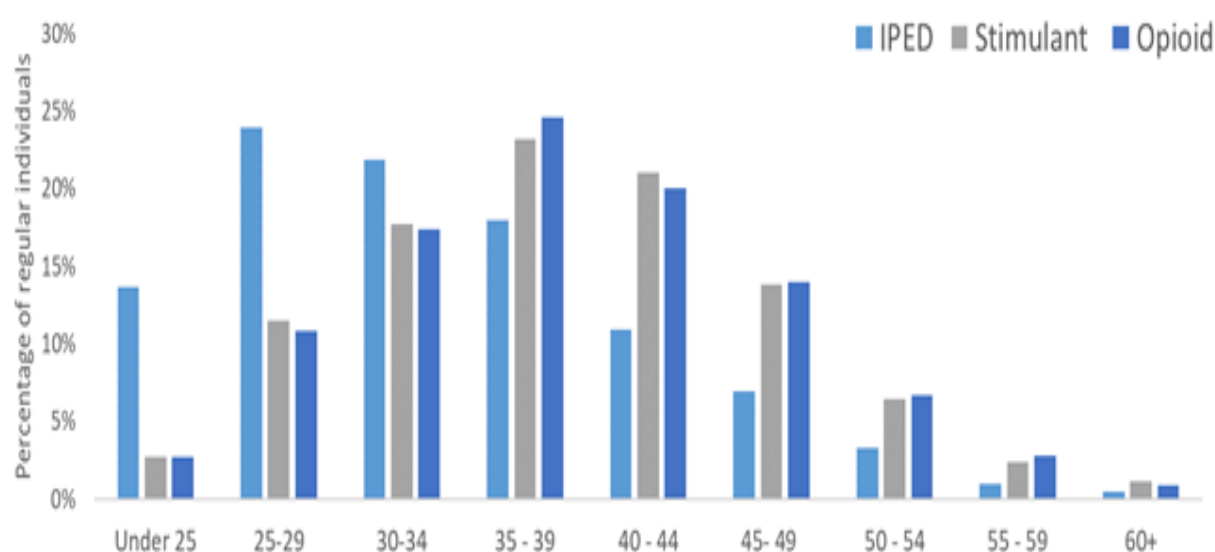
The percentage of individuals who only access pharmacies rather than specialist sites has increased from 55.7 per cent in 2014-15 to 66.7 per cent in 2017-18. IPEDs are the only substance group where this figure is increasing. One factor contributing to this rise since 2015-16 is that around 75 per cent of new registrations only attended pharmacy NSP services. This lack of engagement with specialist organisations mean that an individual may have limited access to specialist support and advice about IPEDs, harm reduction and safer injecting practises.

8. Comparison between different substance groups

8.1 Aging population accessing NSP services

Figure 10 shows the age distribution of individuals in each substance group, highlighting that individuals who reported IPED use were younger than the other two groups injecting psychoactive substances specifically opioids and stimulants.

Figure 10 – Age distribution of individuals accessing NSP services in 2017-18, by substance group



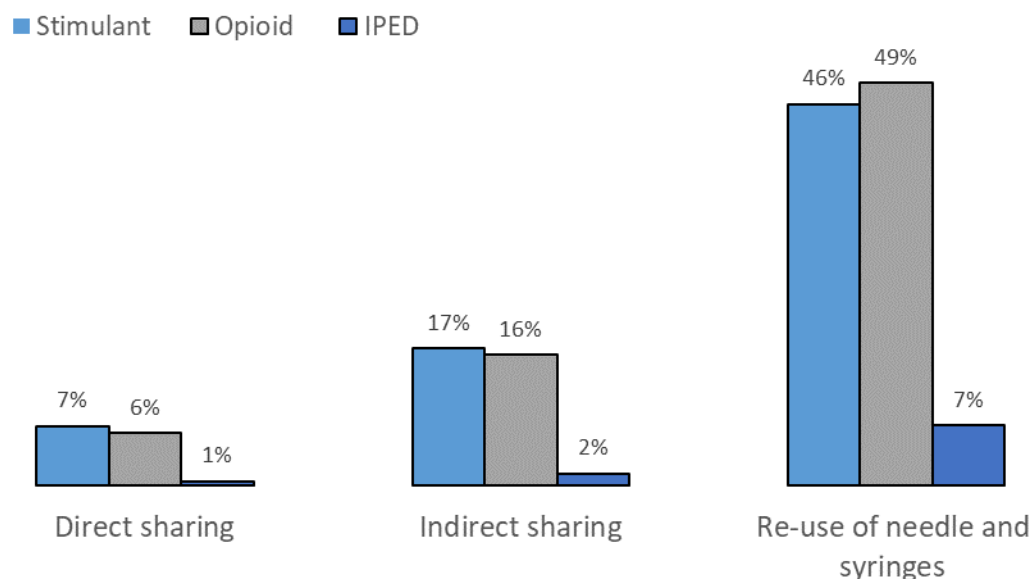
The median age of all three substance groups has been increasing steadily each year since the harm reduction database for NSP was rolled out in community pharmacy services in 2014-15. Whilst this could suggest that the population injecting IPEDs, stimulants and opioids is an aging population, it could also suggest that younger people who inject are not accessing NSP services for sterile injecting equipment. Further research to assess this trend is currently underway by Public Health Wales and colleagues.

8.2 Increases in high risk injecting practises

Groin injecting, sharing or re-use of injecting equipment are high risk practises due to the higher likelihood of contracting blood borne viruses, bacterial infection or serious vein or nerve damage. It is important to note therefore that for increases in high risk practices have been recorded across all substance groups.

Within the population reporting stimulant or opioid use, high risk practises remain common, with year on year increases. Further work is required to evidence whether the increase is genuine or due to improvements in recording high risk injecting practices for the different groups.

Figure 11 – Percentage of individuals reporting direct and indirect sharing and the re-use of injecting equipment by substance group 2017-18



Although reported less frequently compared to other groups (see figure 11), individuals who report IPEDs are reporting re-use (7 per cent), sharing needles (1 per cent) and sharing other injecting equipment (2 per cent). The data represented in figure 12 could also be under reported as they are also lower than those published in the 2016 IPED national survey¹⁸, which reported 15% of the IPED individuals surveyed shared a multi-dose vial and 18% reported re-using their own injecting equipment.

It is vital that services regularly, on at least a 6- monthly basis, review and update individual's records so that appropriate equipment can be provided and local and national changes in injecting practises can be monitored and services developed accordingly.

8.3 Decreases in the number of syringes and interactions

Over the last four years, there has been a slight reduction in the median number of interactions per year for individuals reporting stimulant and opioid use. The median number of syringes has also decreased for all substance groups. However, there has not been a decrease in the number of clients accessing NSP or the reported frequency of injecting. Whilst this could be due to the changes in the equipment provided (single injecting kits rather than a multipack), further work needs to be carried out to confirm this.

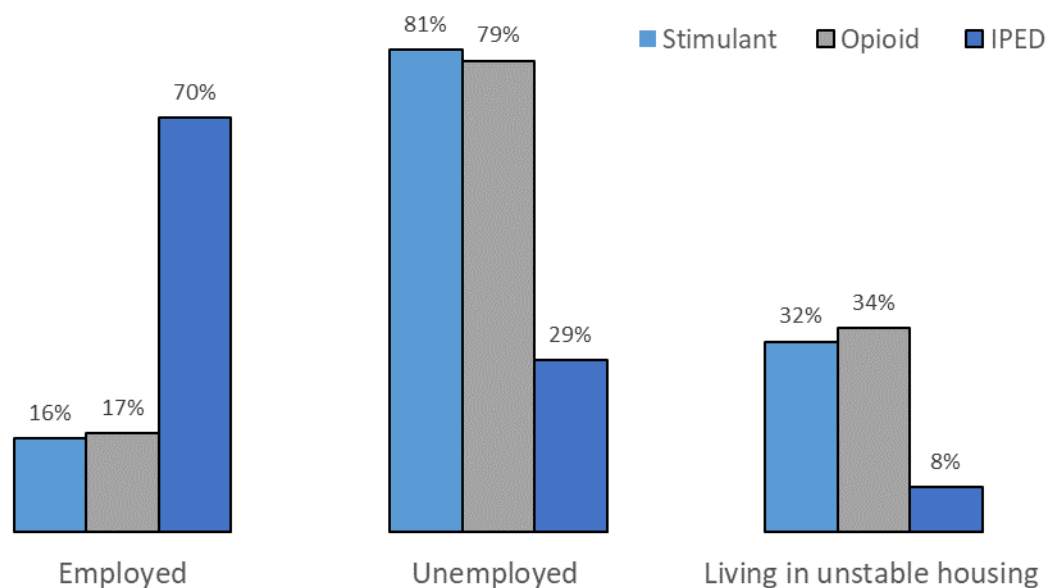
8.4 Employment status and housing

Substantial difference in the employment status are evident between psychoactive and IPED NSP individuals as shown in figure 12, with 81 per cent and 79 per cent of opioid and

¹⁸ Public Health Institute. Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs 2016 national survey results. 2017. Available at: <http://www.ipedinfo.co.uk/resources/downloads/2016%20National%20IPED%20Info%20Survey%20report%20FINAL.pdf>

stimulant NSP attendees reporting being unemployed compared to 29 per cent of IPED NSP individuals. In terms of harm reduction and injecting risk behaviour, unstable housing represents additional challenges. 34 per cent of opioid individuals reported unstable housing in 2017-18, an increase of 4 percentage points since 2014-15. A comparable increase is also observed for stimulant NSP individuals with an increase from 28 per cent to 32 per cent over the same period. Psychoactive NSP individuals are more than four times more likely to report unstable housing than IPED individuals.

Figure 12 – Percentage of individuals employed, unemployed and living in non-stable housing by substance group in 2017-18



9. Geographic profile of individuals accessing NSP services in Wales 2017-18

In Wales in 2017-18, amongst regular NSP individuals, there were 343.5 individuals per 100,000 population aged 15-64 years reporting opioid use. The local authorities with the highest individuals per 100,000 population were Wrexham (1167.2) and Gwynedd (708.2). The lowest number of individuals was reported in Caerphilly with 118.9 individuals per 100,000 population.

The equivalent proportion for stimulant NSP individuals was 108.5 individuals per 100,000 population across Wales. The local authorities with the highest individuals per 100,000 population was Rhondda Cynon Taf (1167.2) and Merthyr Tydfil (304.0). The lowest number of individuals was reported in Powys with 33.4 individuals per 100,000 population. Rhondda Cynon Taf was the only local authority where there was a higher number of individuals who reported using stimulants than opioids.

For IPED individuals, there were 390.6 individuals per 100,000 population. The local authorities with the highest individuals per 100,000 population were Wrexham (1054.0) and Neath Port Talbot (714.66). The lowest rate was recorded in Monmouthshire.

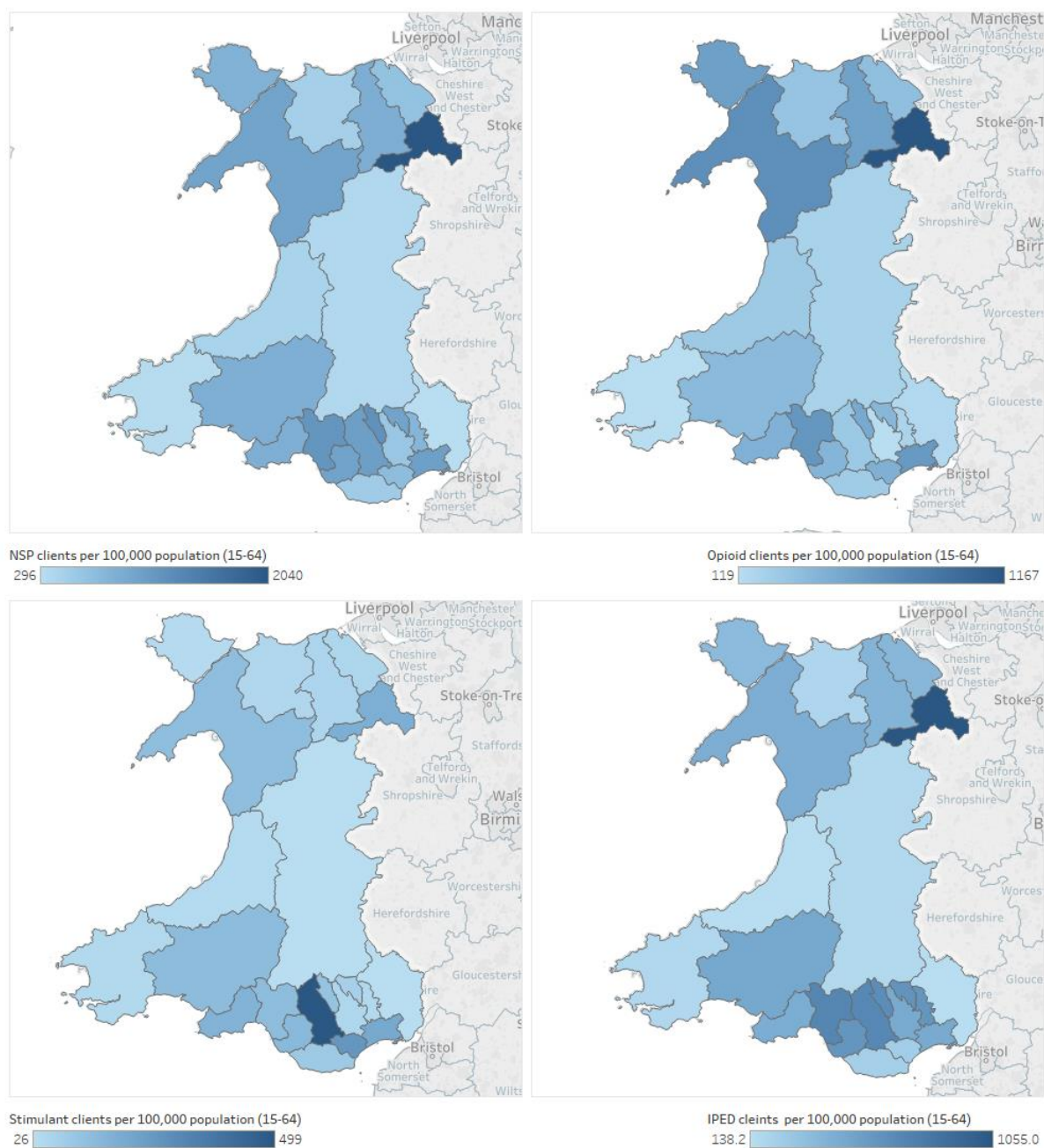
It is worth noting that due to the mobile NSP services across BCUHB, these figures could be over reported in Denbighshire, Gwynedd and Wrexham and under reported in Anglesey, Conwy and Flintshire.

Table 8 – Number of individuals regularly accessing NSP per 100,000 population (aged 15-64 years) by local authority¹⁹

Local authority	Number of UI	Individuals reporting opioids	Individuals per 100,000 population	Individuals reporting stimulants	Individuals per 100,000 population	Individuals reporting IPEDS.	Individuals per 100,000 population
Blaenau Gwent	455	182	408.5	71	159.4	278	624.0
Caerphilly	677	136	118.9	51	44.6	549	480.1
Monmouthshire	167	89	157.6	27	47.8	78	138.2
Newport	1026	602	633.1	206	216.6	454	477.5
Torfaen	456	112	194.4	42	72.9	352	610.9
Bridgend	939	387	426.1	152	167.4	556	612.2
Neath Port Talbot	1081	586	653.3	139	155.0	641	714.7
Swansea	1383	710	449.7	170	107.7	725	459.2
Conwy	323	215	317.3	50	73.8	129	190.4
Denbighshire	502	323	571.8	56	99.1	232	410.7
Flintshire	626	342	355.6	54	56.1	375	389.9
Gwynedd	776	538	708.2	134	176.4	341	448.9
Isle of Anglesey	341	239	585.3	35	85.7	149	364.9
Wrexham	1727	988	1167.2	185	218.6	893	1055.0
Cardiff	1758	1146	462.4	267	107.7	612	246.9
Vale of Glamorgan	423	209	260.8	95	118.5	187	233.3
Carmarthenshire	985	437	388.9	140	124.6	559	497.5
Ceredigion	199	125	272.6	36	78.5	64	139.6
Pembrokeshire	236	88	119.9	42	57.2	129	175.8
Merthyr Tydfil	477	196	513.6	116	304.0	255	668.2
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1640	428	282.6	499	329.5	1054	695.9
Powys	287	163	209.6	26	33.4	131	168.5
Wales	14000	6717	343.5	2122	108.5	7638	390.6

¹⁹ Mid-year population estimates for 2017 and restricted to those aged 15-64 years. Available at: Stats Wales <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/mid-year-estimates-population/?lang=en>

Figure 13 – Maps of number of individuals accessing NSP services per 100,000 population in 2017-18 by substance group



9.1 Individuals by health board

Table 9 - Demographics of all regular NSP attending individuals in 2017-18 by Health Board area

	Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	Aneurin Bevan	Betsi Cadwaladr	Cwm Taf	Cardiff and Vale	Hywel Dda	Powys Teaching
Number of regular clients	3297	2591	3826	2077	2132	1379	303
Clients who report opioid use	48.9%	37.8%	59.2%	28.8%	61.9%	45.3%	56.8%
Clients who report stimulant use	13.4%	13.6%	11.4%	27.9%	16.3%	14.8%	8.9%
Clients who report IPED use	56.7%	63.7%	51.2%	62.3%	37.0%	54.1%	45.5%
Percentage male	87.9%	90.2%	89.9%	88.9%	84.9%	86.9%	85.5%
Median age of clients	35	33	38	35	36	35	35
Percentage under 25	8.6%	11.3%	6.4%	10.3%	6.8%	9.3%	12.2%
Percentage over 50	5.7%	3.7%	9.4%	5.2%	7.3%	4.1%	3.3%
Median syringe per year	58	60	45	50	70	46	43
Median transactions per year	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Percentage new registrations	16.0%	14.2%	20.6%	16.5%	16.5%	20.7%	18.2%
Percentage only attend pharmacy	41.3%	46.9%	79.1%	63.1%	18.0%	79.1%	61.4%
Percentage who inject through the groin	20.9%	21.1%	21.5%	11.7%	12.0%	10.4%	8.9%
Percentage of new initiates (<36 months)	10.1%	19.7%	12.5%	16.7%	13.1%	23.8%	18.1%
Median length of injecting career (years)	9.17	6.17	10.17	7.75	8.17	5.92	6.08
Percentage reporting direct sharing	2.3%	5.6%	3.0%	2.6%	1.1%	1.7%	6.5%
Percentage reporting indirect sharing	4.6%	18.5%	3.6%	3.9%	3.7%	3.1%	6.6%
Percentage reporting reusing equipment.	27.8%	30.6%	18.1%	18.5%	24.7%	17.3%	20.4%
Percentage of clients who were unemployed	51.1%	42.0%	63.5%	48.3%	64.6%	50.3%	53.3%
Percentage of clients who were employed	46.7%	54.9%	34.2%	49.8%	30.0%	46.6%	44.2%
Percentage living in unstable housing	14.1%	14.7%	23.3%	12.4%	53.7%	16.4%	16.0%

9.1.1 Proportion of substance group reported

There was variation between the health boards regarding the proportion of individuals using different substances. Nationally, there are more individuals reporting IPED use than opioids or stimulants. However, in Cardiff and the Vale, Powys and Betsi Cadwaladr, this pattern was reversed. Likewise, 15 per cent of NSP individuals in Wales reported using a stimulant, however, in Cwm Taf health board this proportion was almost double at 27.9 per cent.

9.1.2 Demographics of individuals

Nationally the median age of an individual was 35 years. Aneurin Bevan Health Board (ABUHB) reported a median age lower than 35 years. This could be due to the high proportion of IPED individuals in the health board (63.7 per cent compared to 54.65 nationally), as IPED individuals tend to be younger than other groups who access NSP.

9.1.3 Injecting practices

Differences in the median length of injecting career may also be explained due to the proportion of reported use of the different substance groups. Of the three health boards with the longest median injecting career, CVUHB and BCUHB had the highest proportion of opioid and stimulant individuals with longer injecting careers than IPED NSP individuals. The exception to this is ABMU who have 56.7 per cent IPED use but the second highest median length of injecting career at 9.2 years.

ABUHB had the higher proportion of individuals reporting both direct (5.6 per cent compared to 3.2 per cent nationally) and indirect (18.5 per cent compared to 7.7 per cent nationally) sharing and re-use of needles (30.6 per cent compared to 24.5 per cent nationally). This is unexpected as ABUHB had a high proportion of IPED individuals, a population group who tend to report lower rates of sharing and re-using equipment. This may be as a result of higher quality data reporting by services within ABUHB (see Table 11). Further work is required to investigate this finding locally.

9.1.4 NSP activity

The median number of interactions in a year is 3 for each local authority. However, the median number of syringes per interaction ranges from 43 a year in Powys to 70 in Cardiff. There is also variation in the percentage of individuals who are only accessing needle exchange in pharmacies rather than specialist NSP sites. In Hywel Dda and BCUHB, 79.1 per cent of individuals did not attend a specialist NSP service, primarily due to rurality and reliance on pharmacy NSP provision to ensure geographic coverage. The lowest proportion of individuals only attending pharmacies was found in Cardiff and the Vale where 18 per cent only attended a pharmacy.

10. Pharmacy and voluntary/statutory organisations

In 2017-18, 73 per cent of regular NSP attending individuals utilised a pharmacy NSP services whilst 43.6 per cent attended a voluntary/statutory organisation. Across all three substance groups, a higher proportion of individuals accessed NSP from a pharmacy than a voluntary/statutory organisation.

Table 10 – Demographics of all regular individuals who access NSP in 2017-18 by site type

	Pharmacy	Specialist
Number of Clients	10541	6099
Proportion of all clients	75.3%	43.6%
Median age	35	36
Percentage male	88.8%	85.0%
Percentage under 25	9.2%	6.1%
Percentage over 50	6.2%	6.8%
Median number of transaction per year	3	4
Median number of syringes per year	48	100
Percentage new registrations	18.6%	12.7%
Percentage new injectors	16.3%	12.3%
Median length of injecting career (years)	7.5	8.2
Percentage Unemployed	56.0%	57.3%
Percentage in non stable housing	18.5%	25.9%
Percentage reporting reuse of needles	23.7%	33.3%
Percentage reporting direct sharing	3.0%	4.4%
Percentage reporting indirect sharing	6.0%	11.8%

Individuals who attended pharmacies are generally younger and more likely to be male. Although there are few differences in the employment status of individuals who attend different sites, a higher proportion of individuals who attend specialist sites have no stable housing or NFA compared to pharmacy sites.

Individuals who attend statutory/voluntary sites attend NSPs more regularly and are issued with more needles throughout the year. Whilst this does provide additional opportunities to offer harm reduction advice, individuals who attend specialist sites are more likely to report high risk injecting practises, for example re-using and sharing equipment. This is especially true for individuals who use psychoactive substances, where individuals who use specialist sites are over 10 per cent more likely to re-use syringes.

11. Secondary substances

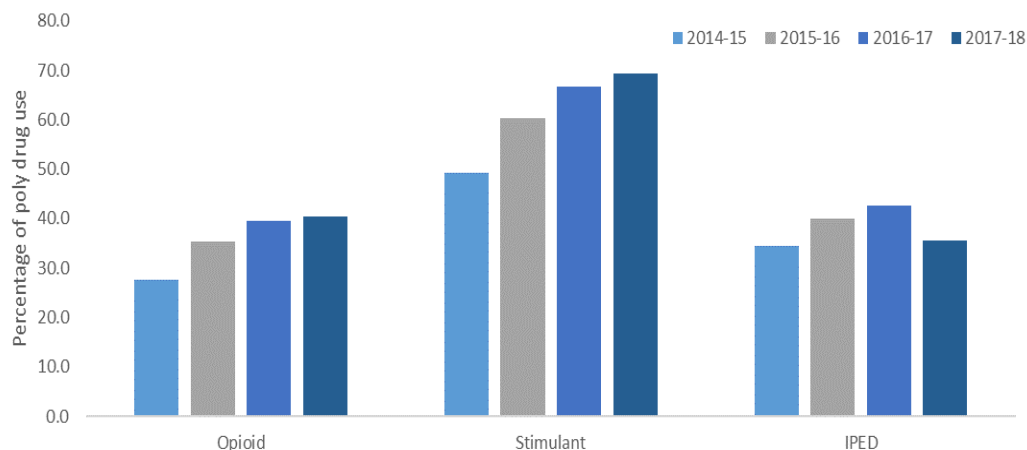
In 2017-18, poly-drug use was reported for:

- 40.4 per cent of opioid individuals
- 69.3 per cent of stimulant individuals
- 35.6 per cent IPED individuals

Between 2014-15 and 2017-18 there has been an increase in the number of individuals reporting poly-drug use amongst psychoactive substances clients (see figure 12). It is likely that this is in part due to data collection improvements in reporting of additional substances. To help identify trends in poly-drug use and provide individuals with the most relevant advice for their situation, services are encouraged to ask and report all substances and methods of consumption, both injecting and non-injecting.

The number of IPED individuals reporting poly-drug use has dropped from 42.5 per cent in 2016-17 to 35.6 per cent in 2017-18. It is likely that this figure is under reported as it is lower than the 47 per cent reported in the IPED national survey,²⁰ a figure which did not include alcohol, over the counter/prescribed painkillers or other IPEDs.

Figure 14 – Percentage of individuals reporting more than one substance, by reported substance and year 2014-15 to 2017-18



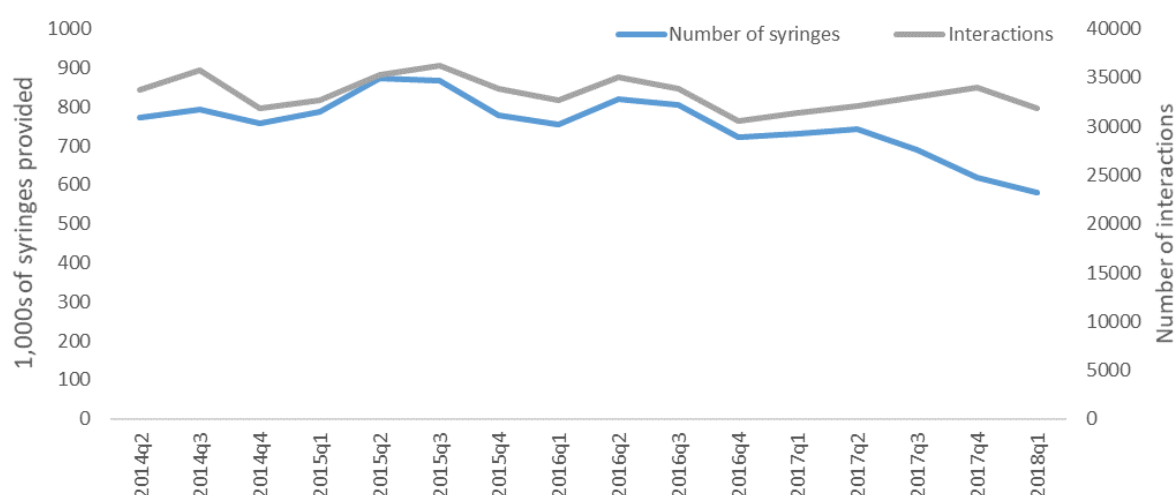
²⁰ Public Health Institute. Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs 2016 national survey results. 2017. Available at: <http://www.ipedinfo.co.uk/resources/downloads/2016%20National%20IPED%20Info%20Survey%20report%20FINAL.pdf>

²¹ Under investigation as of 3th July 2018.

12. Equipment

In 2017-18 there was a 14.5 per cent decrease in the number of syringes issued to individuals, from 3,078,264 in 2016-17 to 2,630,382 in 2017-18. Each of the three substance groups observed a reduction in the median number of syringes issued per individual. However, in this time the number of transactions has remained consistent with previous years (130,816 in 2016-17 compared to 131,008 in 2017-18). This is highlighted by figure 15 which shows the number of transactions and syringes provided each quarter for the last four years.

Figure 15 – Number of interactions and syringes issued, by quarter 2014-15 to 2017-18



A likely explanation was the implementation of the national centralised procurement contract on July 8th 2017. As part of the contract, single injection kits were introduced across pharmacy-based services as a means of replacing all larger locally-configured injection packs provided in such settings.

The introduction of the single injection kits ensures both consistency and equitable provision in the specification and availability of NSP equipment throughout pharmacy-based services in Wales. In addition, the system allows individuals to receive the exact volume of paraphernalia required, thus minimising wastage related to discarded unused injecting equipment. Ongoing work is currently being completed to evaluate the impact this change has had on provision throughout Wales.

13. Data quality

In 2017-18, only 23.1 per cent of individuals had a completed record.²² Data completeness ranged between health boards from 42 per cent in ABUHB to 7 per cent in BCUHB. Figure 16 provides a summary of the completion for each indicator by health board area.

The HRD enables and actively promotes continuity of high quality harm reduction care and advice but is limited only by incomplete data records which may lead to missed opportunities for services to provide possibly life saving interventions including early identification of injecting site infections, signposting for wound management and blood borne virus testing. In addition, high quality accurate data enables all service providers to ensure the correct injecting equipment is being provided at every visit.

²² A complete record constitutes the following data records: at least one substance recorded along with route and frequency of injection, housing and employment status, a date of first injection, sharing (direct and indirect) details and re-use status.

Figure 16 – Percentage of data completion by Health Board 2017-18, with the Welsh average shown.

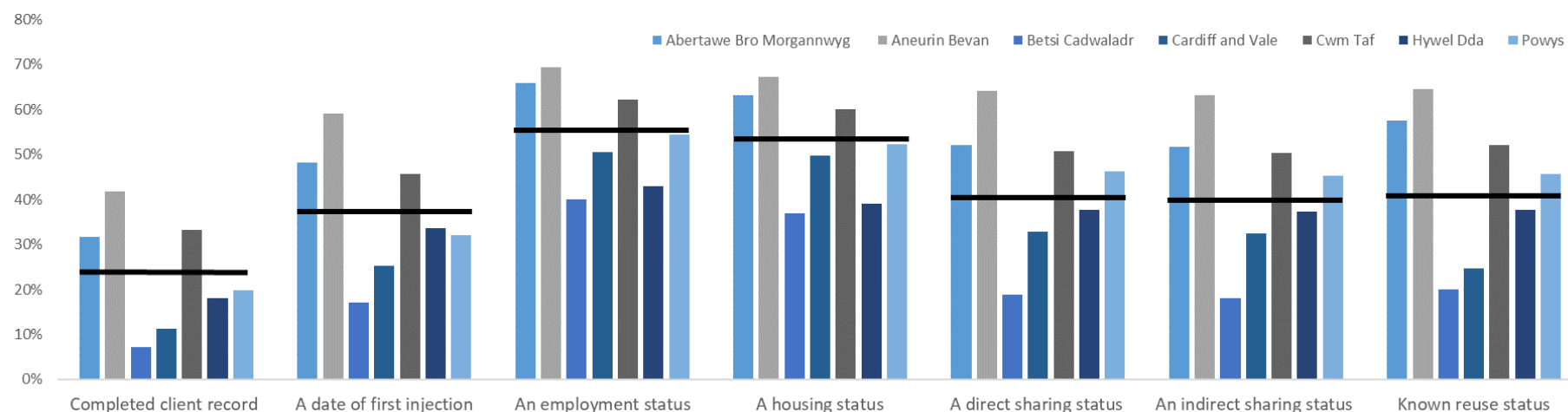


Table 11 - Percentage completion of required fields on the harm reduction database by Health Board area 2017-18

	Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	Aneurin Bevan	Betsi Cadwaladr	Cardiff and Vale	Cwm Taf	Hywel Dda	Powys	All Wales
Number of regular clients	3297	2591	3826	2132	2077	1379	303	14000
Completed client record	32%	42%	7%	11%	33%	18%	20%	23%
A date of first injection	48%	59%	17%	25%	46%	34%	32%	37%
An employment status	66%	69%	40%	51%	62%	43%	54%	55%
A housing status	63%	67%	37%	50%	60%	39%	52%	53%
A direct sharing status	52%	64%	19%	33%	51%	38%	46%	41%
An indirect sharing status	52%	63%	18%	33%	50%	37%	45%	41%
Known re-use status	58%	65%	20%	25%	52%	38%	46%	42%

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Profile of non-regular users

Table 13 – Summary of non-regular individuals accessing NSP services

	All individuals	Stimulants	Opioid	IPED
Number of non - regular clients	11190	1154	5096	5129
Minimum Age	12	17	12	14
Median Age	36	38	38	32
Percentage under 25	10.87%	5.81%	4.22%	16.73%
Percentage over 50	7.69%	11.44%	9.44%	4.87%
New registrations	57.15%	40.64%	49.86%	60.66%
Attended only pharmacies	72.10%	73.31%	71.11%	74.15%
Median syringes per year	15	10	10	15
Median length of injecting career	5.8	8.7	9.2	4.3
Percentage new injections	29.4%	13.5%	9.9%	37.6%
Percentage reporting direct sharing	2.9%	8.9%	6.9%	0.3%
Percentage reporting indirect sharing	6.6%	18.7%	16.5%	1.2%
Percentage reuse	18.4%	41.4%	47.1%	3.4%
Percentage in non-stable housing	17.8%	25.8%	36.1%	4.5%
Percentage employed	51.0%	17.1%	16.1%	78.4%
Percentage unemployed	44.3%	77.7%	78.5%	19.6%

Appendix 2 - Drug Classifications

Table 14 – Harm reduction database drug classifications

IPEDs	Opioids	Stimulant
Anabolic Steroids - Injectable	Codeine Based Painkiller - Other	Amphetamine
Anabolic Steroids - Oral	Codeine Phosphate	Cocaine Powder
Growth Hormone	Diamorphine - Prescribed	Crack Cocaine
Igf	Dihydrocodeine / Df118	Ecstasy / MDMA
Insulin	Heroin	M-CAT / Mephedrone
Melanotan	Methadone (Street)	Methamphetamine
Prohormones/Designer Supplements	Methadone (prescribed)	Stimulants Other MPA, BZP, NRG-1, MDAI
Steroid -Other	Physeptone	
	Subutex	

Appendix 3 - Health Board Area Infographics



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES | Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

SUMMARY



36% Psychoactive substances only

56% Use IPEDs only

6% Use IPEDs & psychoactive substances

1% Non injectable drug recorded

4,082 Individuals visited a NSP

Down 5%*



47% In a pharmacy

53% By a specialist

18,659 Unique interactions

Down 4%*



449,411 Syringes issued

Down 2%*

Aneurin Bevan – NSP Summary 2017/18



----- Psychoactive Substances¹ – 1,128 Regular Clients (65%)

AB

CLIENTS UNDER 25

3%

Under
25

CLIENTS OVER 50

6%

Over
50

CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE

84%



LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING²

27%



CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE

87%



CLIENTS REPORTING
STIMULANT USE

31%



CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED
FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS²

8%



REPORTED INJECTING
THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA²

23%



ALL WALES

CLIENTS UNDER 25

3%

CLIENTS OVER 50

9%

CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE

82%

LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING

33%

CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE

87%

CLIENTS REPORTING
STIMULANT USE

27%

CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED
FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS

6%

REPORTED INJECTING
THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA

19%

* Compared to previous year (2016/17).

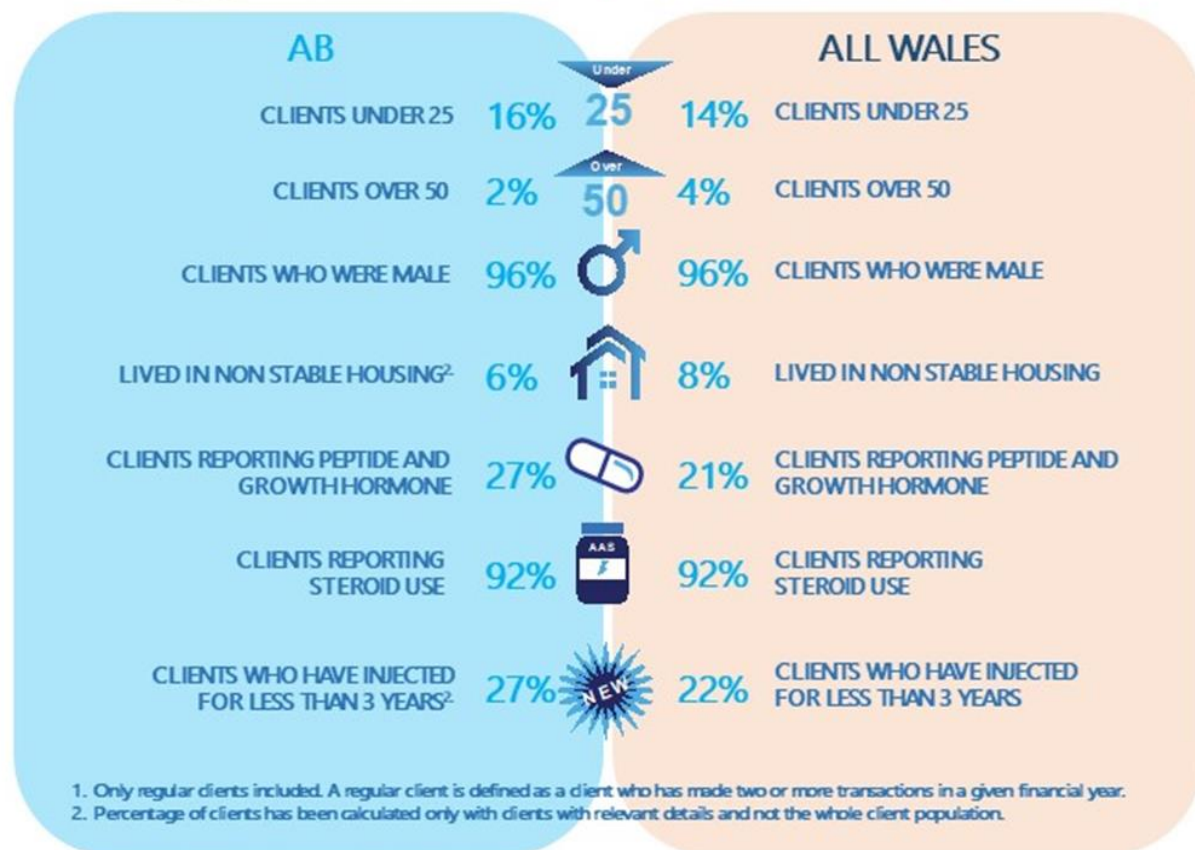
1. Only regular clients included. A regular client is defined as a client who has made two or more transactions in a given financial year.

2. Percentage of clients has been calculated only with clients with relevant details and not the whole client population.

Aneurin Bevan – NSP Summary 2017/18



IPED Substances – 1,650 Regular Clients¹ (64%)



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES | Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

DATA COMPLETION

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES – 1,128

ROUTE OF
INJECTING
74%

HOUSING
STATUS
71%

DATE OF FIRST
INJECTION
63%

FULL RECORD
46%

IPEDs – 1,650

ROUTE OF
INJECTING
81%

HOUSING
STATUS
65%

DATE OF FIRST
INJECTION
56%

FULL RECORD
38%

SUMMARY



44% Psychoactive substances only

47% Use IPEDs only

8% Use IPEDs & psychoactive substances

0% Non injectable drug recorded

5,369 Individuals visited a NSP

Up 1%*



56% In a pharmacy

44% By a specialist

23,941 Unique interactions

Down 4%*



568,845 Syringes issued

Down 9%*

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg - NSP Summary 2017/18



----- Psychoactive Substances¹ – 1,612 Regular Clients (58%)

ABM

CLIENTS UNDER 25

2%

Under 25

CLIENTS OVER 50

7%

Over 50

CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE

80%



LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING²

24%



CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE

91%



CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE

25%



CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS²

2%



REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA²

24%



ALL WALES

3%

CLIENTS UNDER 25

9%

CLIENTS OVER 50

82%

CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE

33%

LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING

87%

CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE

27%

CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE

6%

CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS

19%

REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA

* Compared to previous year (2016/17).

1. Only regular clients included. A regular client is defined as a client who has made two or more transactions in a given financial year.

2. Percentage of clients has been calculated only with clients with relevant details and not the whole client population.

Abertawe Bro Morgannwg – NSP Summary 2017/18



IPED Substances – 1,868 Regular Clients¹ (63%)

ABM

CLIENTS UNDER 25	14%	Under 25	14%	CLIENTS UNDER 25
CLIENTS OVER 50	4%	Over 50	4%	CLIENTS OVER 50
CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE	96%	♂	96%	CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE
LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING ²	6%	🏠	8%	LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING
CLIENTS REPORTING PEPTIDE AND GROWTH HORMONE	22%	💊	21%	CLIENTS REPORTING PEPTIDE AND GROWTH HORMONE
CLIENTS REPORTING STEROID USE	94%	💊	92%	CLIENTS REPORTING STEROID USE
CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS ²	16%	NEW	22%	CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS

1. Only regular clients included. A regular client is defined as a client who has made two or more transactions in a given financial year.
2. Percentage of clients has been calculated only with clients with relevant details and not the whole client population.



GIG Cymru NHS Wales
Iechyd Cyhoeddus Cymru
Public Health Wales

DATA COMPLETION

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES – 1,612

ROUTE OF INJECTING
68%

HOUSING STATUS
62%

DATE OF FIRST INJECTION
48%

FULL RECORD
29%

IPEDs – 1,868

ROUTE OF INJECTING
32%

HOUSING STATUS
64%

DATE OF FIRST INJECTION
47%

FULL RECORD
32%

SUMMARY



52% Psychoactive substances only
37% Use IPEDs only
9% Use IPEDs & psychoactive substances
1% Non injectable drug recorded

7,215 Individuals visited a NSP

Up 2%*



94% In a pharmacy
6% By a specialist



38,968 Unique interactions

Down 1%*



657,453 Syringes issued

Down 29%*

Betsi Cadwaldr – NSP Summary 2017/18



.....Psychoactive Substances¹ – 2,408 Regular Clients (58%)

BC

CLIENTS UNDER 25 **2%**
 CLIENTS OVER 50 **12%**
 CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE **87%**
 LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING² **30%**
 CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE **94%**
 CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE **18%**
 CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS² **7%**
 REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA² **25%**

ALL WALES

CLIENTS UNDER 25 **3%**
 CLIENTS OVER 50 **9%**
 CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE **82%**
 LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING **33%**
 CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE **87%**
 CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE **27%**
 CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS **6%**
 REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA **19%**

* Compared to previous year (2016/17).

1. Only regular clients included. A regular client is defined as a client who has made two or more transactions in a given financial year.
 2. Percentage of clients has been calculated only with clients with relevant details and not the whole client population.

Betsi Cadwaladr – NSP Summary 2017/18



IPED Substances – 1,958 Regular Clients¹ (63%)



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

DATA COMPLETION

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES – 2,048

ROUTE OF
INJECTING
37%

HOUSING
STATUS
43%

DATE OF FIRST
INJECTION
18%

FULL RECORD
6%

IPEDs – 1,958

ROUTE OF
INJECTING
62%

HOUSING
STATUS
33%

DATE OF FIRST
INJECTION
18%

FULL RECORD
9%

SUMMARY



63% Psychoactive substances only
30% Use IPEDs only
5% Use IPEDs & psychoactive substances
3% Non injectable drug recorded

3,727 Individuals visited a NSP

Down 8%*



16% In a pharmacy
84% By a specialist



19,447 Unique interactions

Down 13%*



452,472 Syringes issued

Down 10%*

Cardiff & Vale(CV) – NSP Summary 2017/18



.....Psychoactive Substances¹ – 1,469 Regular Clients (58%)

CV

CLIENTS UNDER 25 **3%**

CLIENTS OVER 50 **9%**

CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE **80%**

LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING² **66%**

CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE **90%**

CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE **24%**

CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS² **4%**

REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA² **13%**

Under

25

Over

50



NEW



ALL WALES

CLIENTS UNDER 25 **3%**

CLIENTS OVER 50 **9%**

CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE **82%**

LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING **33%**

CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE **87%**

CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE **27%**

CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS **6%**

REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA **19%**

* Compared to previous year (2016/17).

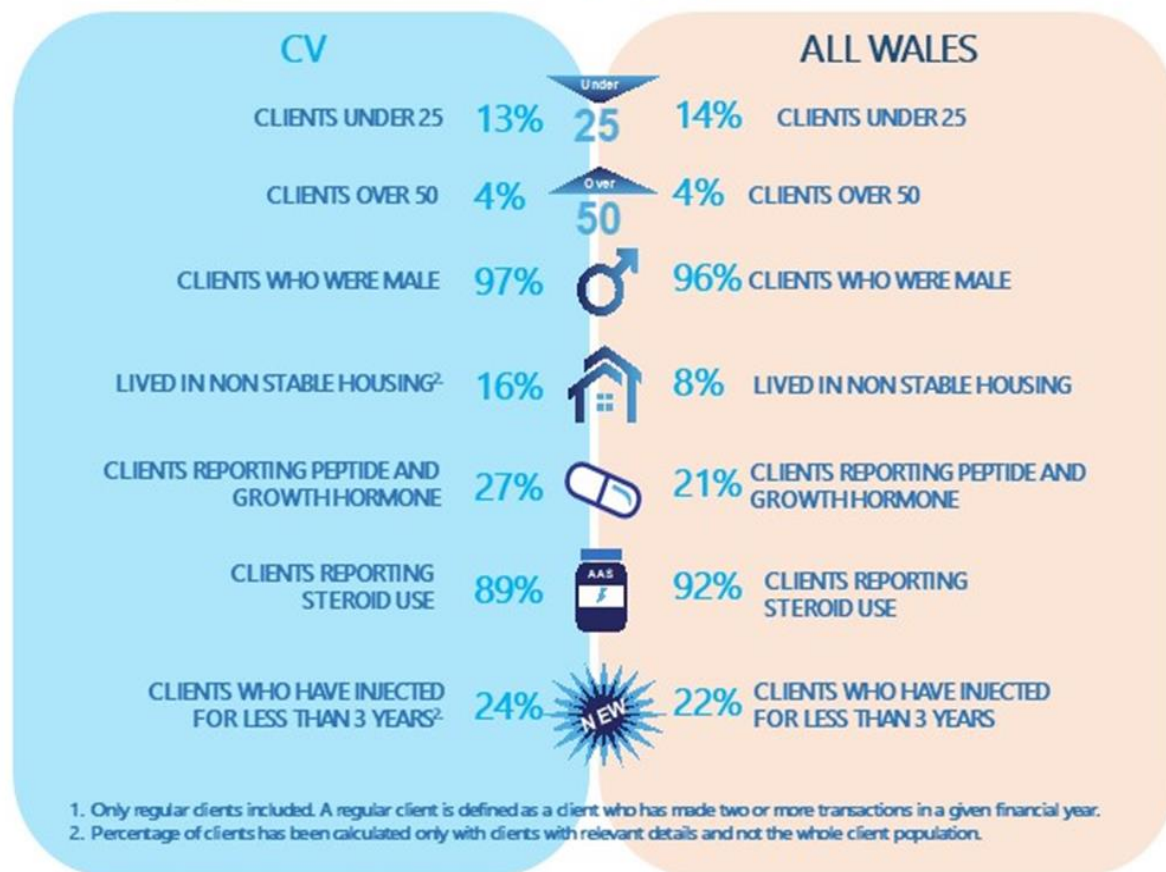
1. Only regular clients included. A regular client is defined as a client who has made two or more transactions in a given financial year.

2. Percentage of clients has been calculated only with clients with relevant details and not the whole client population.

Cardiff & Vale – NSP Summary 2017/18



IPED Substances – 7,88 Regular Clients¹ (61%)



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

DATA COMPLETION

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES – 1,469



IPEDs – 7,88



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

SUMMARY



41% Psychoactive substances only

51% Use IPEDs only

7% Use IPEDs & psychoactive substances

1% Non injectable drug recorded

3,654 Individuals visited a NSP

Down 1%*



73% In a pharmacy

27% By a specialist



13,751 Unique interactions

Up 3%*



288,611 Syringes issued

Down 17%*

Cwm Taf (CT) – NSP Summary 2017/18



.....Psychoactive Substances¹ – 1,008 Regular Clients (57%)

CT		Under 25	ALL WALES
CLIENTS UNDER 25	4%	25	3% CLIENTS UNDER 25
CLIENTS OVER 50	7%	50	9% CLIENTS OVER 50
CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE	80%	♂	82% CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE
LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING ²	24%	🏠	33% LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING
CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE	59%	💊	87% CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE
CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE	58%	💊	27% CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE
CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS ²	7%	NEW	6% CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS
REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA ²	16%	💉	19% REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA

* Compared to previous year (2016/17).

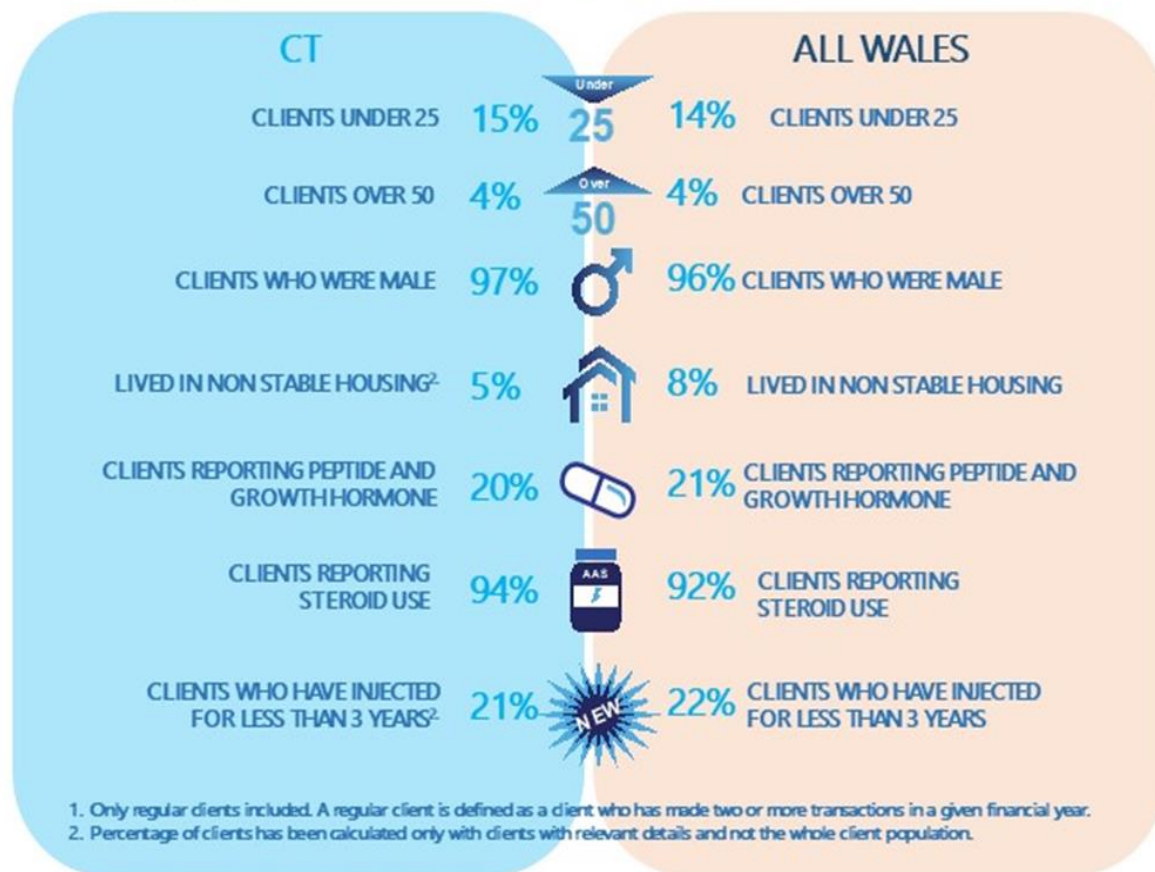
1. Only regular clients included. A regular client is defined as a client who has made two or more transactions in a given financial year.

2. Percentage of clients has been calculated only with clients with relevant details and not the whole client population.

Cwm Taf(CT) – NSP Summary 2017/18



IPED Substances – 1,295 Regular Clients¹ (61%)



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

DATA COMPLETION

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES – 1,008

ROUTE OF
INJECTING
61%

HOUSING
STATUS
64%

DATE OF FIRST
INJECTION
47%

FULL RECORD
34%

IPEDs – 1,295

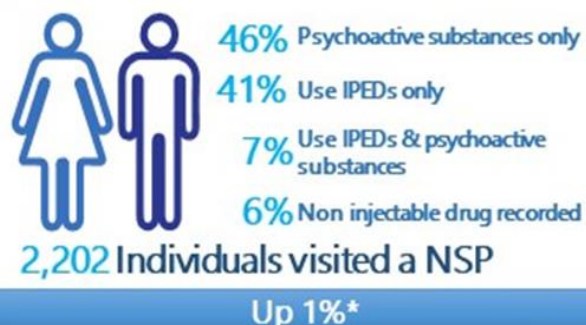
ROUTE OF
INJECTING
70%

HOUSING
STATUS
34%

DATE OF FIRST
INJECTION
47%

FULL RECORD
47%

SUMMARY



Hywel Dda (HD) – NSP Summary 2017/18



.....Psychoactive Substances¹ – 738 Regular Clients (63%)

HD

CLIENTS UNDER 25	4%
CLIENTS OVER 50	7%
CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE	80%
LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING ²	28%
CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE	85%
CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE	28%
CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS ²	12%
REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA ²	12%

Under

25

Over

50

♂

🏠

💊

💊

NEW

💉

ALL WALES

CLIENTS UNDER 25	3%
CLIENTS OVER 50	9%
CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE	82%
LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING	33%
CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE	87%
CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE	27%
CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS	6%
REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA	19%

* Compared to previous year (2016/17).

1. Only regular clients included. A regular client is defined as a client who has made two or more transactions in a given financial year.

2. Percentage of clients has been calculated only with clients with relevant details and not the whole client population.

Hywel Dda (HD) – NSP Summary 2017/18



IPED Substances – 746 Regular Clients¹ (70%)



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

DATA COMPLETION

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES – 738



SUMMARY



49% Psychoactive substances only

45% Use IPEDs only

5% Use IPEDs & psychoactive substances

1% Non injectable drug recorded

434 Individuals visited a NSP

Up 13%*



84% In a pharmacy

16% By a specialist



2,273 Unique interactions

Up 12%*



27,574 Syringes issued

Down 14%*

Powys Teaching (PT) – NSP Summary



.....Psychoactive Substances¹ – 180 Regular Clients (74%)

PT		ALL WALES
CLIENTS UNDER 25	6%	3%
CLIENTS OVER 50	4%	9%
CLIENTS WHO WERE MALE	77%	82%
LIVED IN NON STABLE HOUSING ²	25%	33%
CLIENTS REPORTING OPIOID USE	96%	87%
CLIENTS REPORTING STIMULANT USE	15%	27%
CLIENTS WHO HAVE INJECTED FOR LESS THAN 3 YEARS ²	12%	6%
REPORTED INJECTING THROUGH A HIGH RISK AREA ²	9%	19%

* Compared to previous year (2016/17).

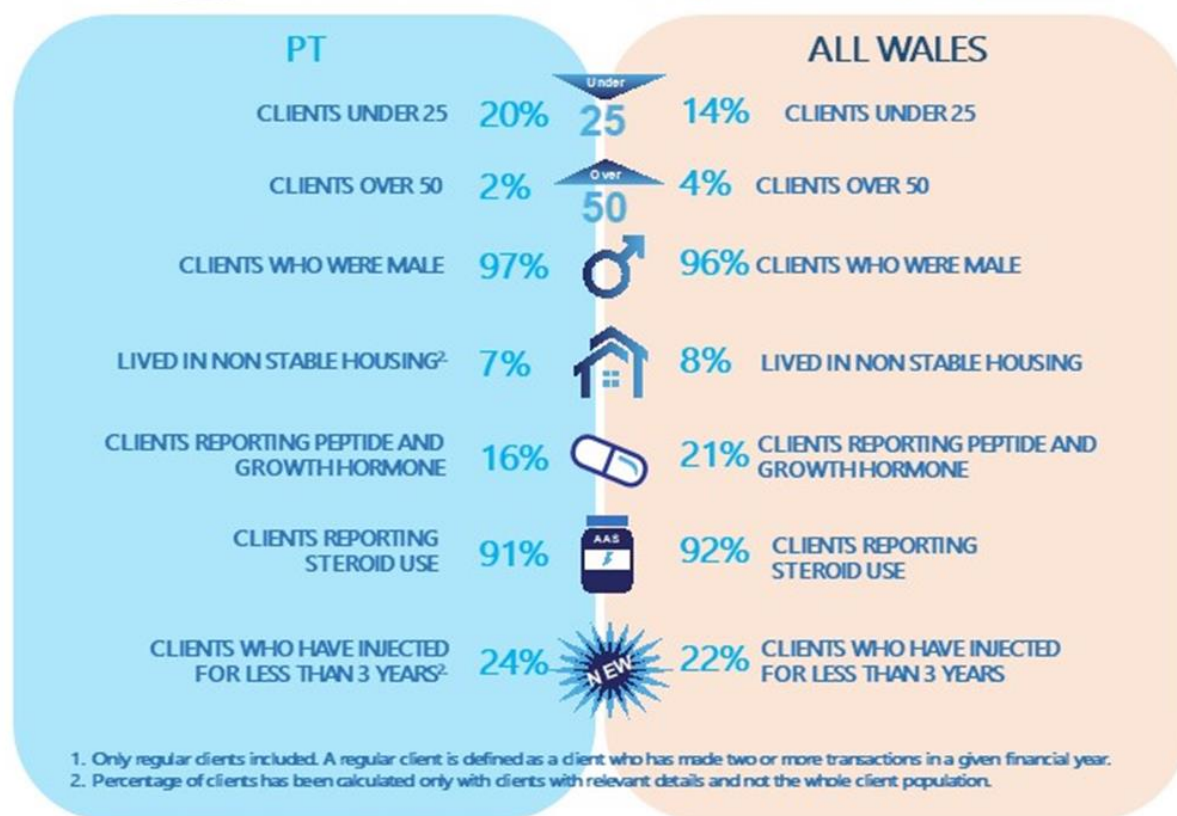
1. Only regular clients included. A regular client is defined as a client who has made two or more transactions in a given financial year.

2. Percentage of clients has been calculated only with clients with relevant details and not the whole client population.

Powys Teaching (PT) – NSP Summary



IPED Substances – 138 Regular Clients¹ (70%)



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES
Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

DATA COMPLETION

PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES – 180

ROUTE OF
INJECTING
53%

HOUSING
STATUS
56%

DATE OF FIRST
INJECTION
13%

FULL RECORD
13%

IPEDs – 138

ROUTE OF
INJECTING
53%

HOUSING
STATUS
56%

DATE OF FIRST
INJECTION
13%

FULL RECORD
26%