

**Northern Ireland Substitute
Prescribing Database Report**

31st March 2013

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Statistics from the Northern Ireland Substitute Prescribing Database: 31 March 2013

This bulletin summarises information on individuals referred to the Northern Ireland Substitute Prescribing Scheme (SPS). It relates to those referred up to and including the 31 March 2013 and focuses on those patients in contact with Substitute Prescribing treatment services during 2012/13. The figures produced in this report are extracted from the Substitute Prescribing Database held by the Health & Social Care Board (HSCB), Performance Management & Service Improvement Directorate in County Hall, Ballymena. It collects detailed data, including information on drugs misused and injecting behaviour on these individuals at various stages throughout their course of Substitute Prescribing treatment. This is the sixth such report produced since 2004, and the first produced since responsibility for managing the database was delegated to the HSCB from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2010.

The Database relies on the timely and accurate submission of forms from the Community Addiction Agencies. Each Health & Social Care Trust provides a Substitute Prescribing Treatment Service and the location of each Agency can be seen in Figure 1 below:



To maintain confidentiality the figures in this report are based on the Health & Social Care Trust area where people presented for treatment, not their place of residence.

Standards and Guidelines:

Future reports will reflect the requirements of the Northern Ireland Primary and Secondary Care Opioid Substitute Treatment Guidelines (2013) and NICE Quality standard for Drug Use Disorders (QS23). This will require some alteration to the current reporting forms. Two examples of future statistics are:

- The NI Primary and Secondary Care Opioid Substitute Treatment Guidelines (2013) recommend a minimum of four drug screens per year. 75% of patients in NI received salivary or urinalysis at last recorded review in 2012/13 period.
- The NI guidelines recommend patients continuing to engage in risk behaviour should be offered blood borne virus testing annually. The database records that 71% had been offered HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C testing at some point in treatment and 45% of patients took up the offer of testing. Future reports will assess this on an annual basis.

Note: this report concerns a period of time prior to the publication of either the NI Guidelines or the NICE guidance and the above are provided as examples only.

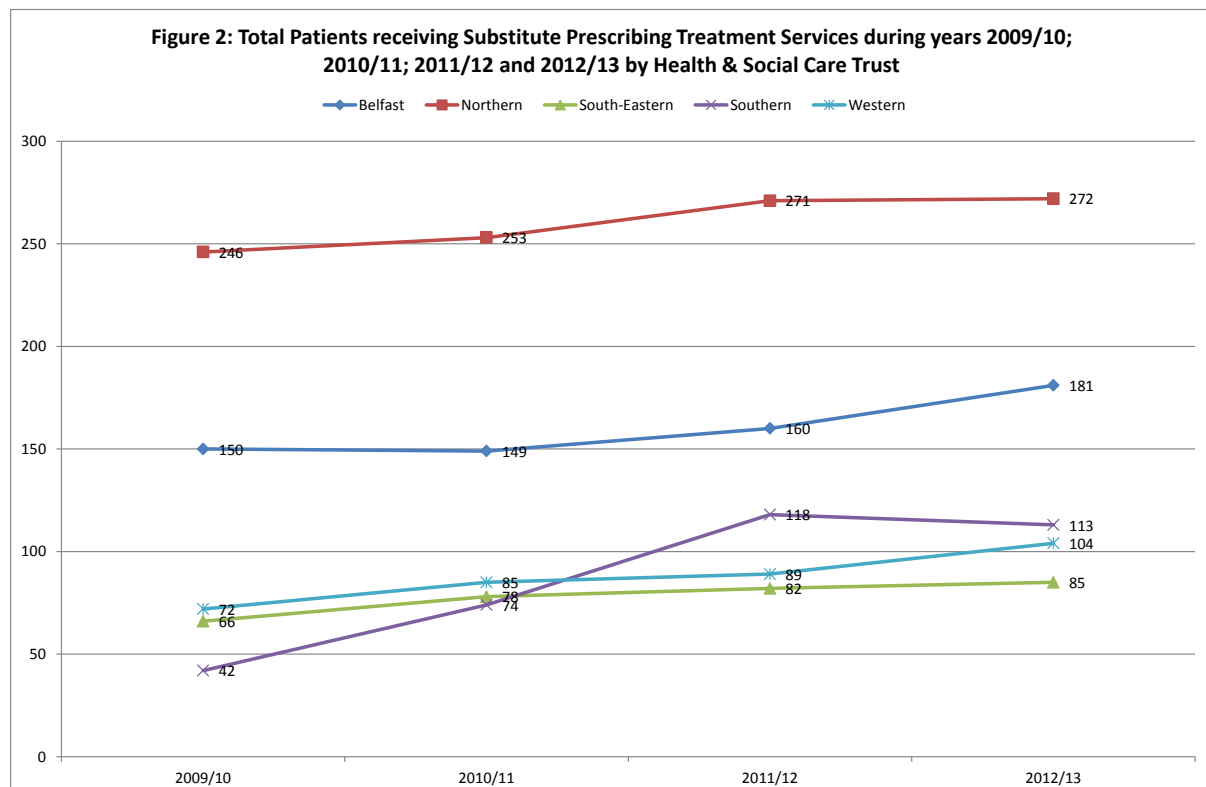
Summary of Activity 2010-2012

The most recent report produced by the DHSSPS was published in 2010. There has not been a detailed report produced in the intervening period. Table 1 below summarises total activity and patient numbers for this time period.

Table 1: Total Activity and Patient Numbers for the years between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2012

	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
Total patients 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011	149	253	78	74	85	639
Patients in treatment on 31st March 2011	123	222	65	72	70	552
Total patients 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012	160	271	82	118	89	720
Patients in treatment on 31st March 2012	142	236	66	111	72	627

Figure 2 shows that over the past four years each Health & Social Care Trust has reported an increasing number of patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment.



The remainder of the report concerns Substitute Prescribing Treatment services during the financial year from 1st April 2012 to 31st March 2013.

All activity during 2012/13:

A total of 755 individuals were in contact with Substitute Prescribing treatment services. There were 175 new initiations during the time period.

119 patients discontinued from the scheme. Managed discontinuation accounted for 20 patients leaving the scheme, with “failing to present for SP” and “unmanaged discontinuation of SP” accounting for a further 21 and 16 patients respectively.

35 patients transferred between NI trusts in 2012/13 and 8 continued their treatment outside NI.

5 patients were recorded as deceased during the reporting period.

Census as of 31 March 2013:

On the 31st March 2013 in total 648 individuals were receiving substitute medication. 567 (88%) of those patients were reported as stabilised. 240 (37%) of patients were in treatment for 5 or more years.

48% of patients were in receipt of methadone and 46% buprenorphine, the remainder classed as “other” or “unknown”. There is considerable variation between Trusts with 76% of patients receiving methadone in BHSCT area compared to 12% in WHSCT area.

Table 2 shows that during the year between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013 the five Health & Social Care Trusts treated 755 patients in Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services.

Table 2: Total patients who received Substitute Prescribing Treatment by Trust between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013

Health & Social Care Trust	Patients in SP treatment	Percentage	Trust Population	Patients per 100,000 population
Belfast	181	24%	348,300	52
Northern	272	36%	465,500	58
South-Eastern	85	11%	350,100	24
Southern	113	15%	363,100	31
Western	104	14%	296,600	35
Total	755	100%	1,823,600	41

Population Source: (NISRA, MYE 30 June 2013).

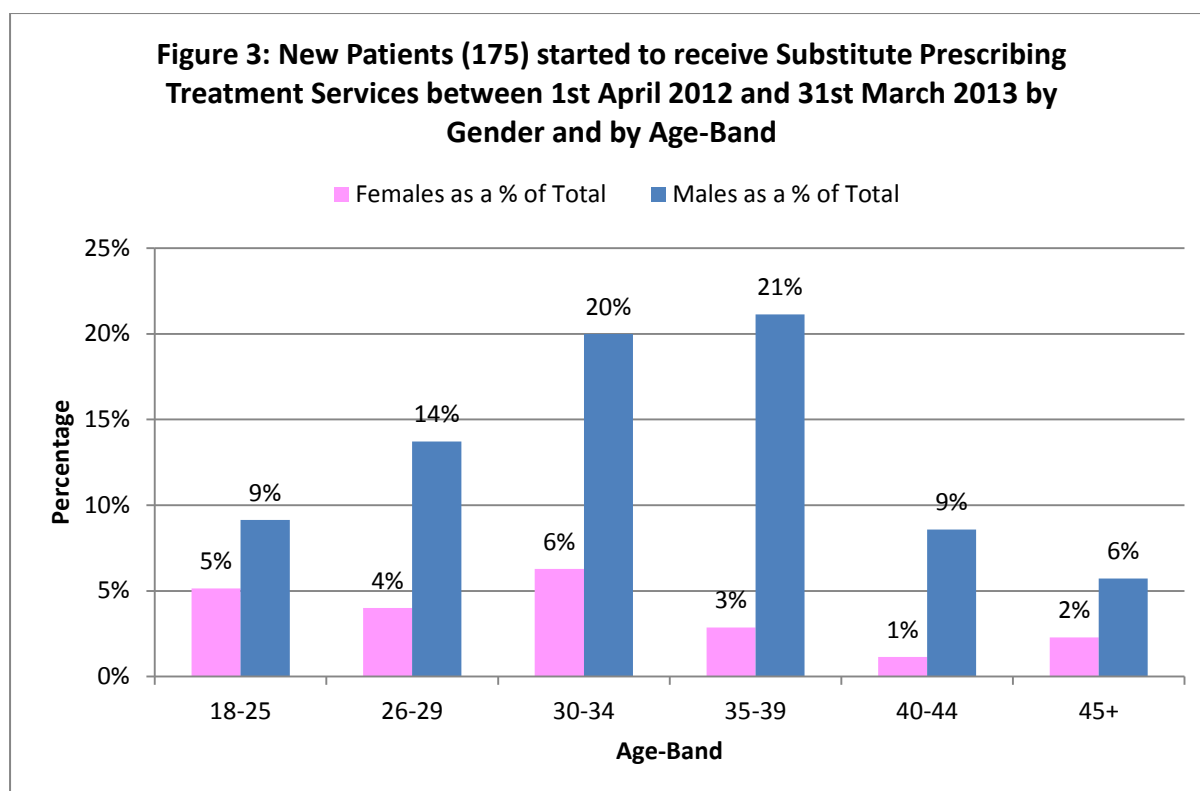
The figures are based on where people presented for treatment not their place of residence and are calculated as the incidence of treatment per 100,000 HSCT population, the figures range from 58 patients per 100,000 population (Northern Trust) to South Eastern Trust (24 patients per 100,000 population).

Table 3 below shows the number of patients who commenced Substitute Prescribing treatment between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013 and also the number who discontinued during the year. It also shows the number of patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment as at 31st March 2013.

Table 3: Number of New Initiations and Discontinuations between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013. Also Number in Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services at 31st March 2013

Patients	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
New Initiations during year	52	48	19	24	32	175
Discontinued treatment under Trust during year	35	33	10	18	23	119
In treatment as at 31/3/2013	150	244	75	96	83	648

Figure 3 shows the breakdown by gender and age-band, the 175 new patients who started to receive Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013. The highest percentage (26%) was in the 30-34 age-band and the lowest percentage was in the 45+ age-band (8%).

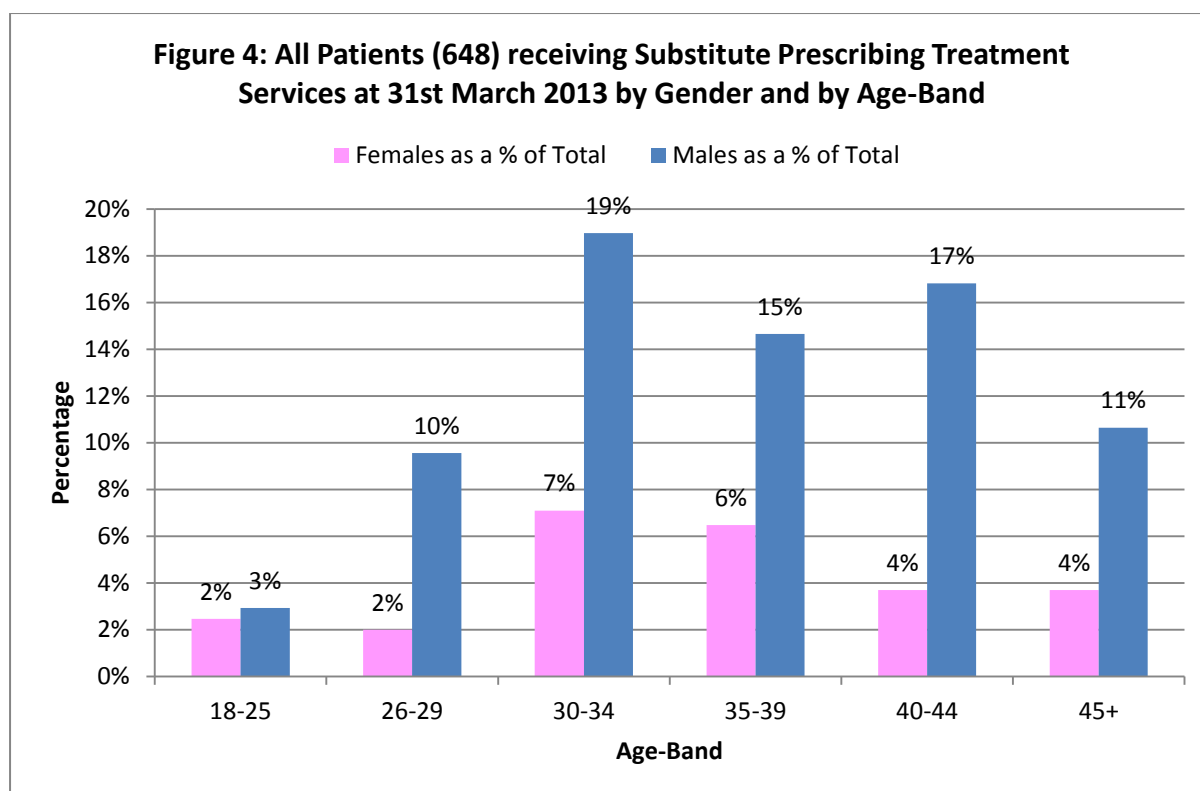


At 31st March 2013, 648 people were receiving Substitute Prescribing treatment services. Table 4 below shows the split by Trust and by Gender. The proportion of females and males is shown with the highest percentage being males (74%). The highest percentage of males is within Southern Trust (78%) and the highest percentage of females accessing the service is in the Western Trust (41%).

Table 4: All Patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services at 31st March 2013 by Gender

Gender	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
Female	36 (24%)	57 (23%)	23 (31%)	21 (22%)	34 (41%)	171 (26%)
Male	114 (76%)	187 (77%)	52 (69%)	75 (78%)	49 (59%)	477 (74%)
Total	150 (100%)	244 (100%)	75 (100%)	96 (100%)	83 (100%)	648 (100%)

Figure 4 below shows the 648 patients by age-band. The majority of patients both male and female receiving the service (26%) are in the 30-34 age-band. The lowest percentage of patients (5%) was in the youngest age-band, 18-25. The youngest person accessing the service at 31st March 2013 was 18 and the oldest was 65.



Time in Treatment

Table 5 shows, in time bands, the length of time the 648 patients have been in treatment. At 31st March 2013 data showed:

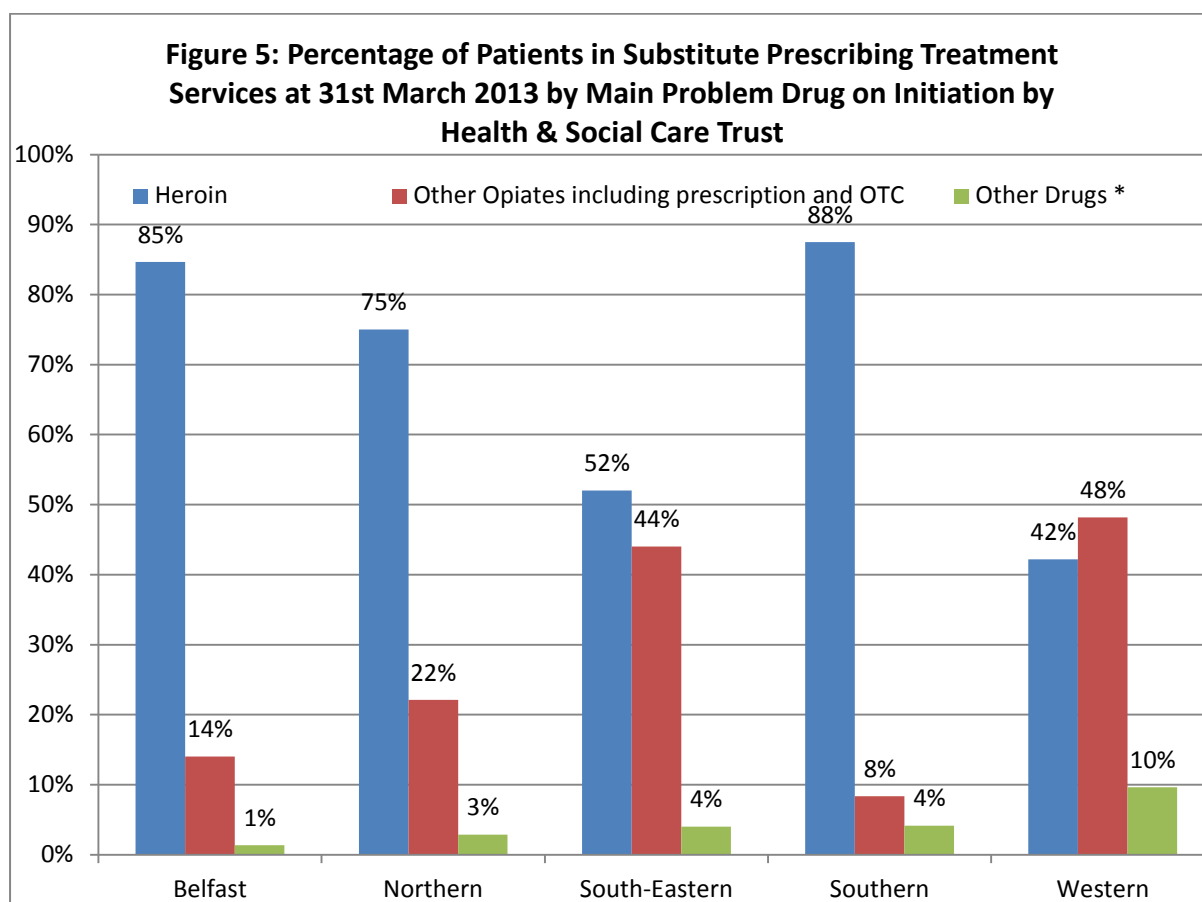
- 37% of patients had received Substitute Prescribing Treatment for more than five years.
- 18% of patients had received Substitute Prescribing Treatment between 3 and 5 years
- 11% of patients had received Substitute Prescribing Treatment between 2 and 3 years

Table 5: All Patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment services at 31st March 2013 by Length of Time in Treatment (Time Band) by Health & Social Care Trust

Trust	0-6 mths	6-12 mths	12-18 mths	18-24 mths	2-3 yrs	3-5 yrs	>5 yrs	Total
Belfast	17	19	11	8	9	27	59	150
Northern	16	18	15	13	18	56	108	244
South-Eastern	6	8	3	5	8	7	38	75
Southern	4	13	11	14	26	17	11	96
Western	15	12	4	6	10	12	24	83
Total	58	70	44	46	71	119	240	648
Percentage of Total	9%	11%	7%	7%	11%	18%	37%	100%

Main Problem Drug

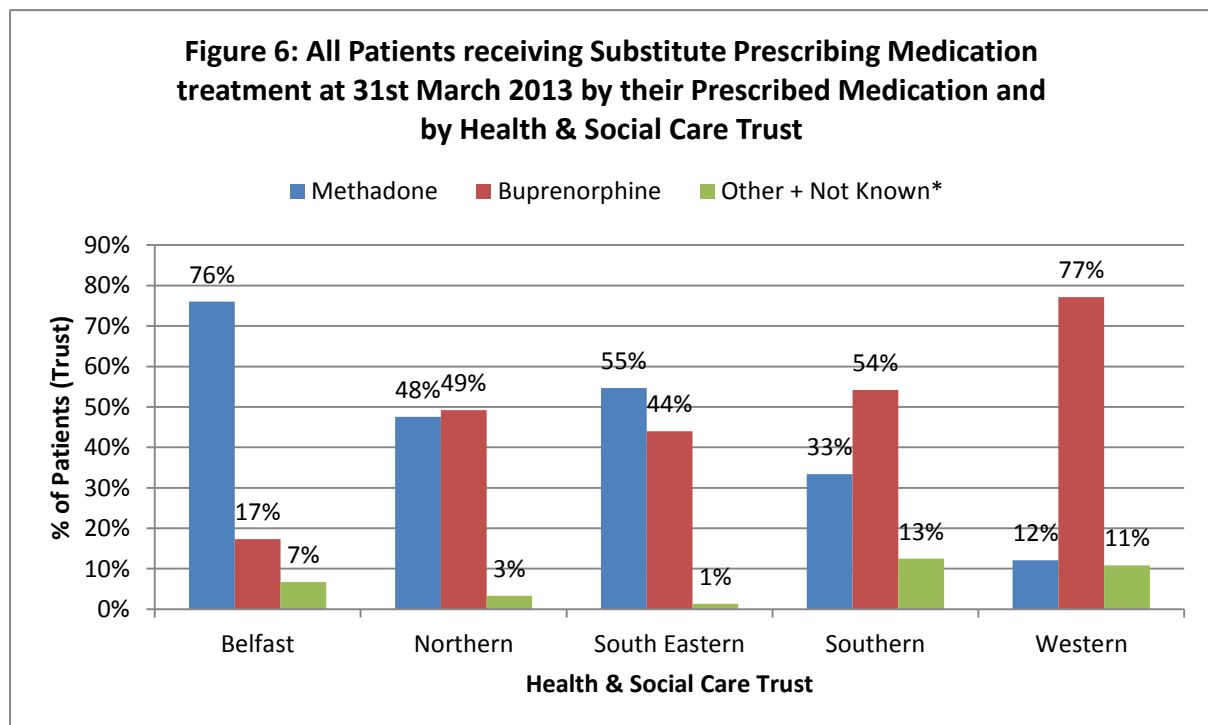
Eligibility for Substitute Prescribing is based on the presence of opiate dependency, although Substitute Prescribing treatment may be deemed suitable in some cases where there is a problem of non-opiates. The database records information on the main problem drug for the patient and up to four other drugs that the patient may be using; these drugs do not have to be opiates. Figure 5 shows all patients that were receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services at 31st March 2013 by their Main Problem Drug at Initiation of Treatment.



“Other Drugs” include (in decreasing order of popularity): Diazepam, Cannabis, Cocaine, Mephedrone, Methamphetamine, Temazepam). There were a total of 7 blank forms and these are included in the “Other Drugs” category.

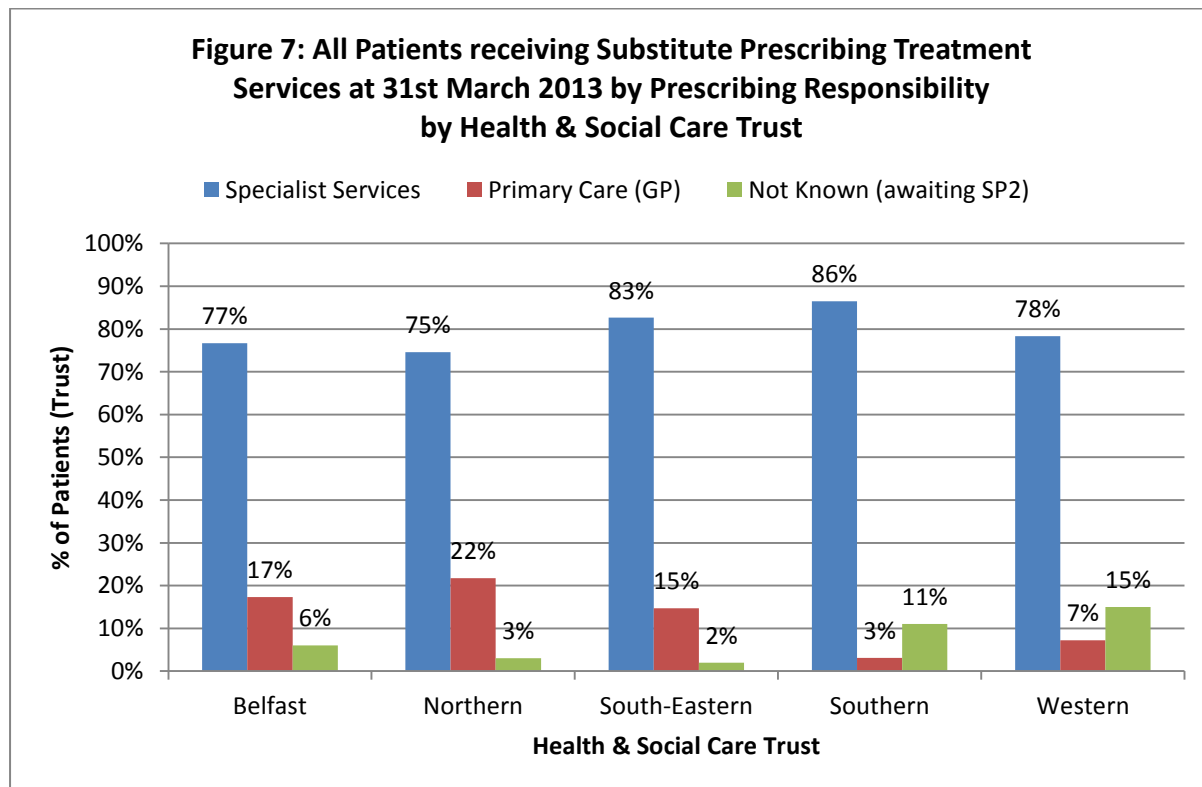
Substitute Medication

Figure 6 shows the Substitute Medication prescribed to the 648 patients who were in receipt of treatment (whether they had stabilised or not) as at 31st March 2013. A slightly higher proportion of patients were in receipt of methadone (48%) than buprenorphine (46%). Proportions in receipt of methadone ranged from 76% of patients in Belfast Health & Social Care Trust to 12% in Western HSCT. The proportions within Northern Health & Social Care Trust show a fairly even split between methadone and buprenorphine. Overall, 2% of patients received Substitute Medication recorded as “Other” and this included Suboxone and Dihydrocodeine. This information relies on the submission of SP2 forms and in this instance 4% of SP2 forms were not submitted although some data was obtainable from the SP3 forms.



Prescribing Responsibility

Figure 7 illustrates that the majority, (78%), of prescribing responsibility remains with Specialist Services, however in the Southern Trust this rises to 86% and South-Eastern Trust 83%. Northern Trust has the highest percentage of patients whose prescribing responsibility is with/shared with Primary Care (GP) (22%).



Patient Improvement

Stabilisation

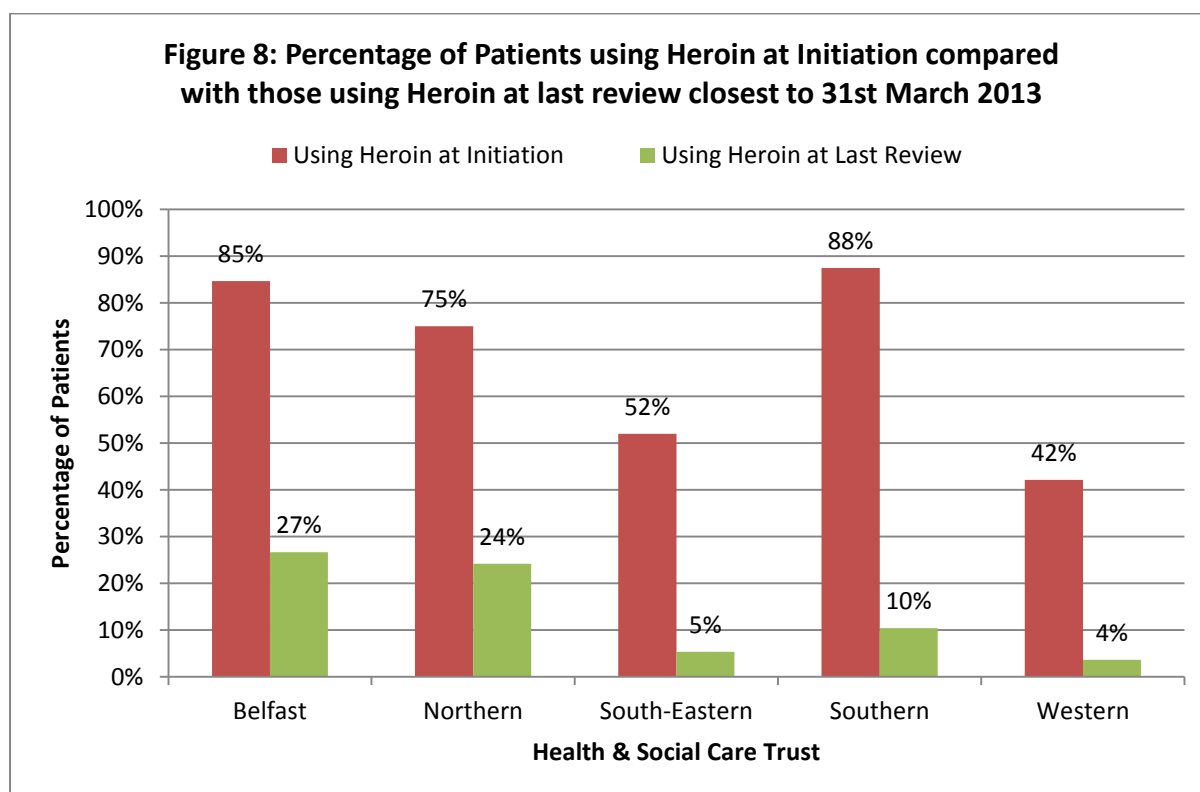
Table 6 shows that of the 648 patients receiving substitute medication 88% were reported as being stabilised. This data is only available on the SP2 form and a degree of inaccuracy exists with this.

Table 6: Patients stabilised receiving Substitute Prescribing Medication at 31st March 2013 by Health & Social Care Trust

Stabilisation	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
Not Known	10 (6%)	10 (4%)	3 (4%)	17 (18%)	13 (16%)	53 (8%)
No	7 (5%)	11 (5%)	3 (4%)	5 (5%)	2 (2%)	28 (4%)
Yes	133 (89%)	223 (91%)	69 (92%)	74 (77%)	68 (82%)	567 (88%)
Total	150 (100%)	244 (100%)	75 (100%)	96 (100%)	83 (100%)	648 (100%)

Heroin usage at Initiation of Treatment and at Review closest to 31st March 2013

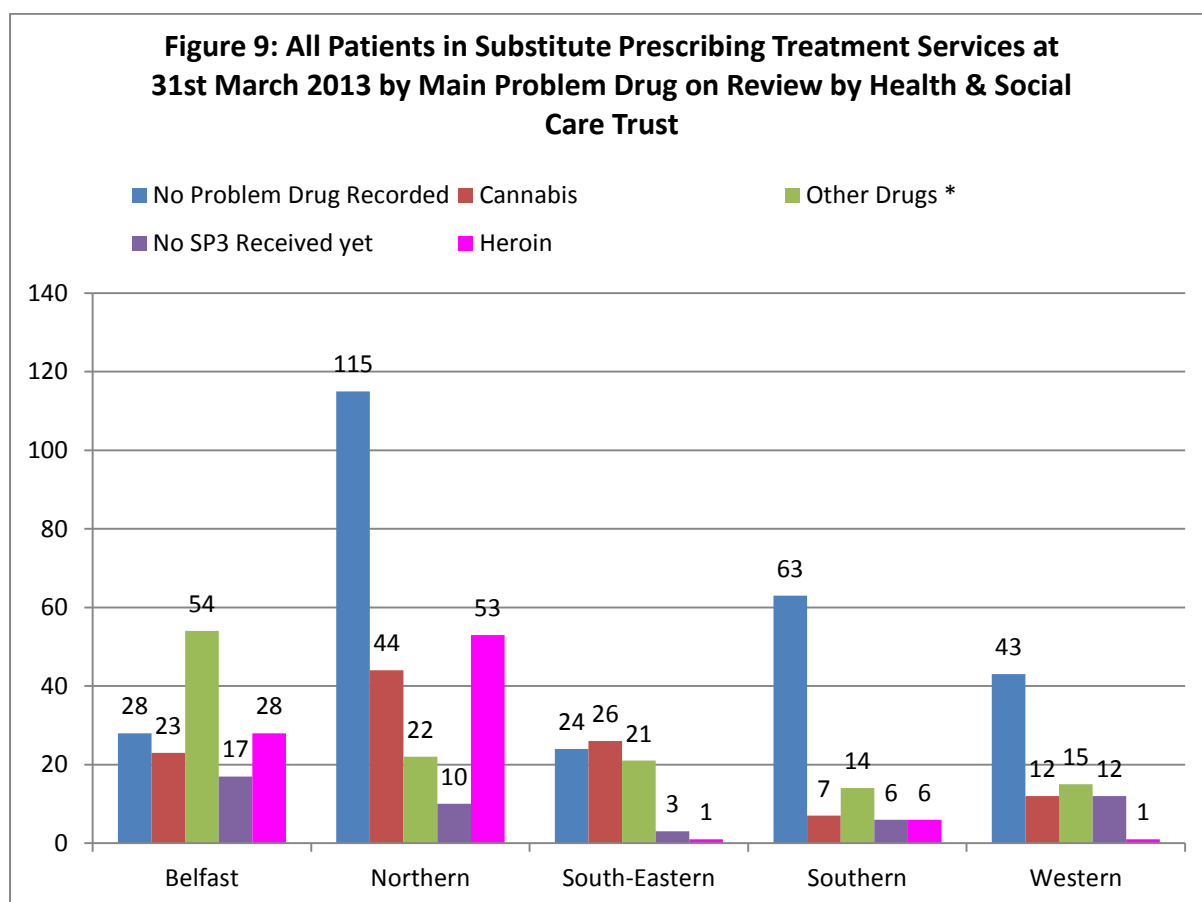
Figure 8 shows the comparison of the use of Heroin as a main problem drug at the start of treatment and at latest review closest to 31st March 2013. The percentages take into account that 6% of SP3 forms were not submitted. Overall 72% of patients used heroin at the start of treatment and at last review closest to 31st March, 14% were using heroin.



Continuing Drug Usage

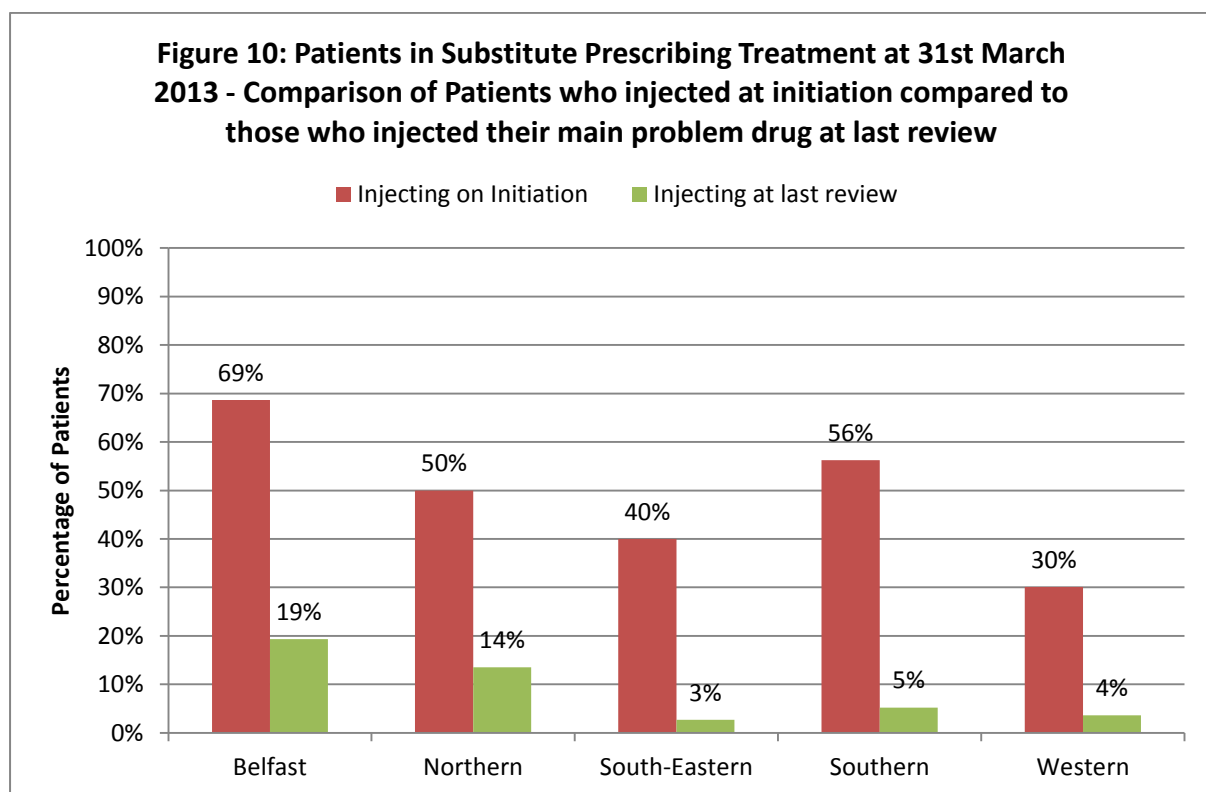
Figure 9 gives a more detailed breakdown of the continued drug use by patients, 50% of patients reported no problem drug at last review, 14% reported heroin, 17% cannabis and 19% other (which includes), as shown in Figure 9.

Drugs other than Cannabis and Heroin have been categorised as “Other Drugs” and these include other opiates/Class A drugs, Class B and C drugs, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS, commonly referred to as “legal highs”), prescription drugs, OTC drugs and (in decreasing order of popularity): *Diazepam, Mephedrone, Dihydrocodeine, Codeine, Benzodiazepines, Amphetamines, Cocaine, Codeine & paracetamol, Other Drugs, Morphine, Opiates – Others, Temazepam, Methedrone, Nalbuphine, Speed (amphetamine sulphate) and Tramadol.



Injecting Behaviour at Initiation of Treatment and at Review closest to 31st March 2013

A measure of patient improvement is comparing the injecting behaviour of patients at initiation of treatment and at their latest review closest to 31st March 2013. Of the patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services at 31st March 2013 334 patients injected at initiation of treatment. Figure 10 compares this with their injecting behaviour at last review closest to 31st March 2013. Overall there was a 78% reduction in the number who were injecting at start of treatment with Substitute Prescribing Services. This figure takes into account that 6% of SP3 forms were not submitted. In the South-Eastern Trust 93% of patients who had injected at initiation stopped injecting, while those patients being treated at the Southern Trust 91% stopped. Western Trust saw a decrease of 87%, while Northern and Belfast Trust each saw a decrease of 72%.



Homelessness

The “Living With” status of patients is recorded on initiation of treatment and at each review. Of the patients receiving treatment at 31st March 2013, at initiation of Substitute Prescribing Treatment 2% of them were recorded as homeless. Continuing to look at those patients, at their last review no patients were homeless.

Missed Appointments

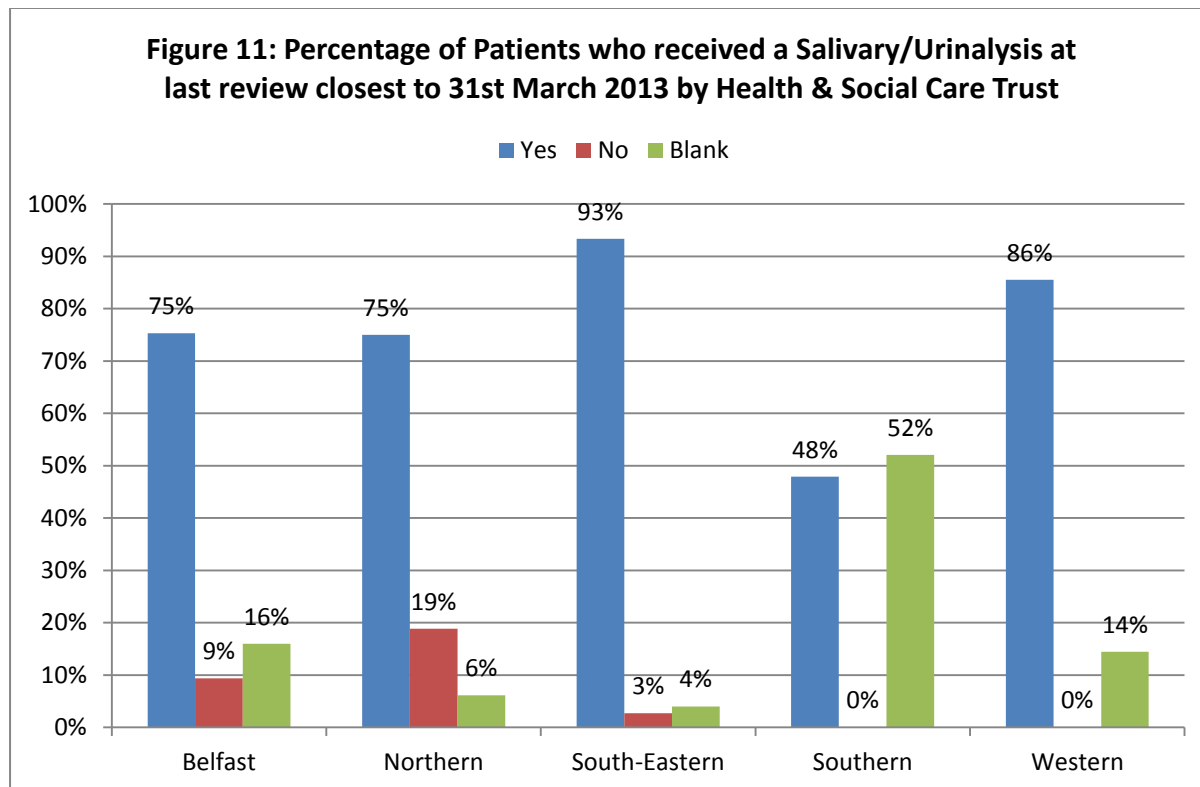
Of the 648 patients receiving Substitute Prescribing Treatment at 31st March 2013 it was recorded on their last review that 10% of them missed appointments. Table 7 illustrates this by Health & Social Care Trust.

Table 7: Number & Percentage of Patients who missed appointments, as recorded on their last Review closest to the 31st March 2013

Missed Appointments	Belfast	Northern	South-Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
Total Patients	150	244	75	96	83	648
No. of Missed Appointments	26 (17%)	14 (6%)	11 (15%)	5 (5%)	8 (10%)	64 (10%)

Salivary/Urinalysis Testing by Health & Social Care Trust

Figure 11 shows the percentage of patients tested at their last review closest to 31st March 2013. South-Eastern Trust had the highest percentage of tested patients (93%).



Viral Testing during Treatment

The SP2 form records if, during the treatment episode, the patient has been offered a test for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C and if offered, whether they took the tests. In some cases no SP2 form was submitted by the Agencies. Figure 12 shows the percentage of patients who were offered testing for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. On average 71% of patients were offered the tests.

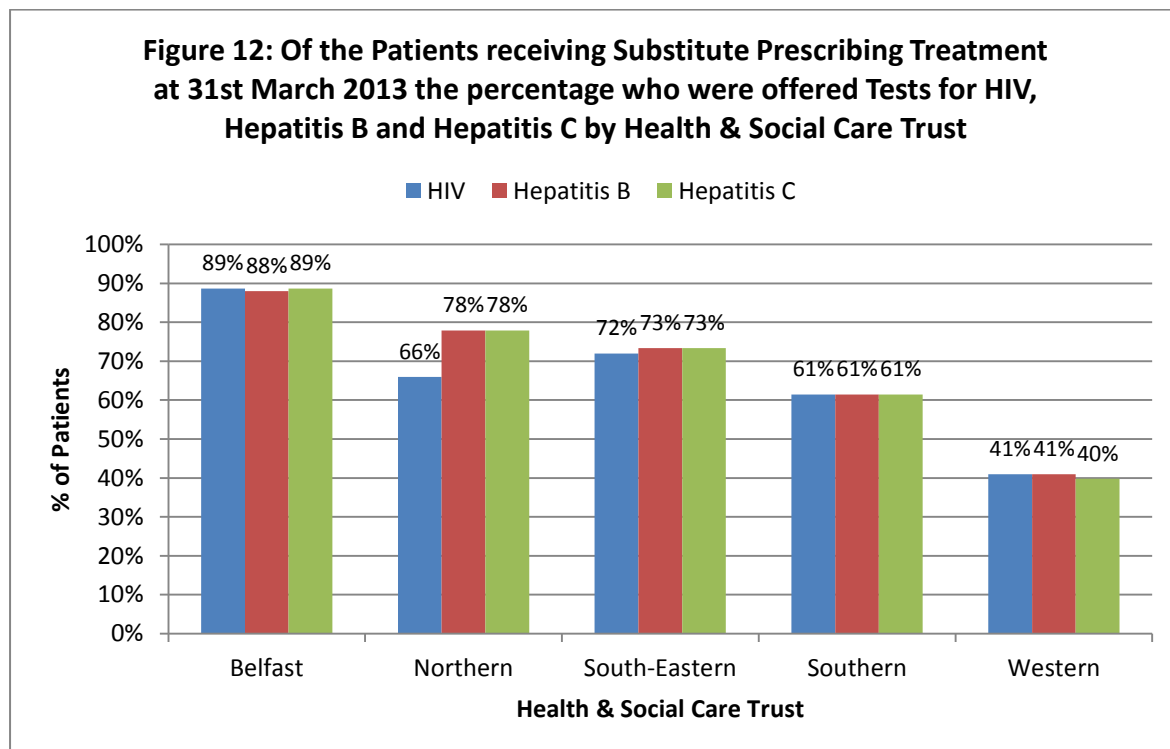
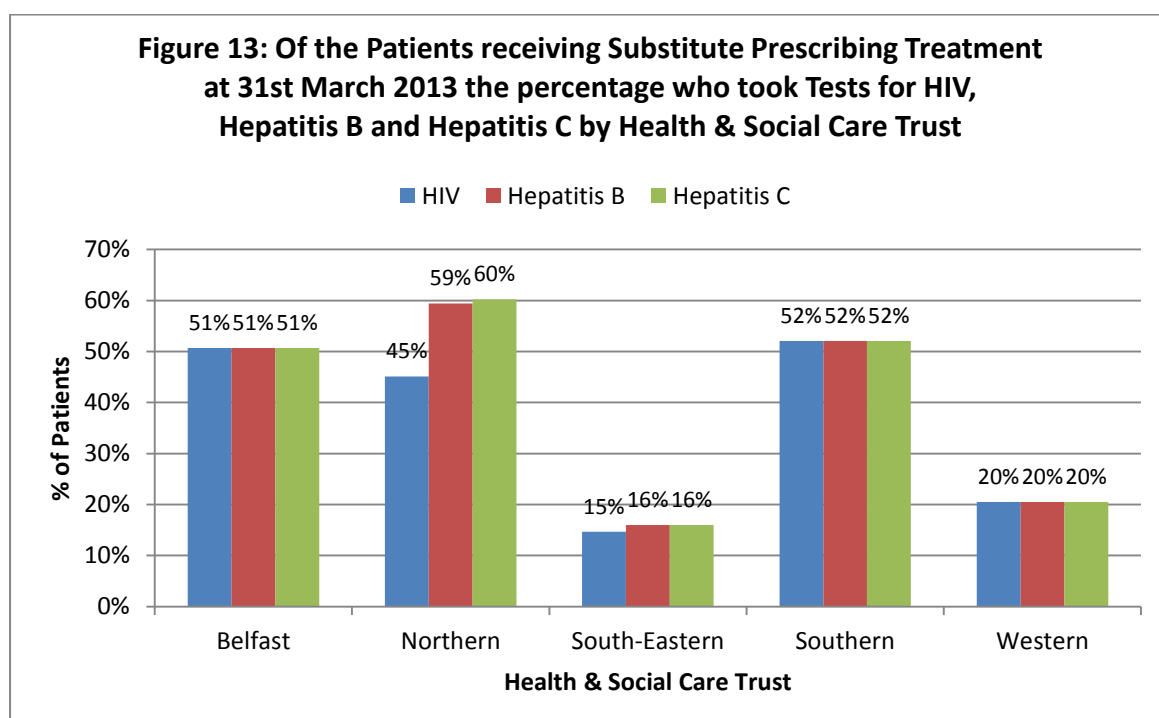


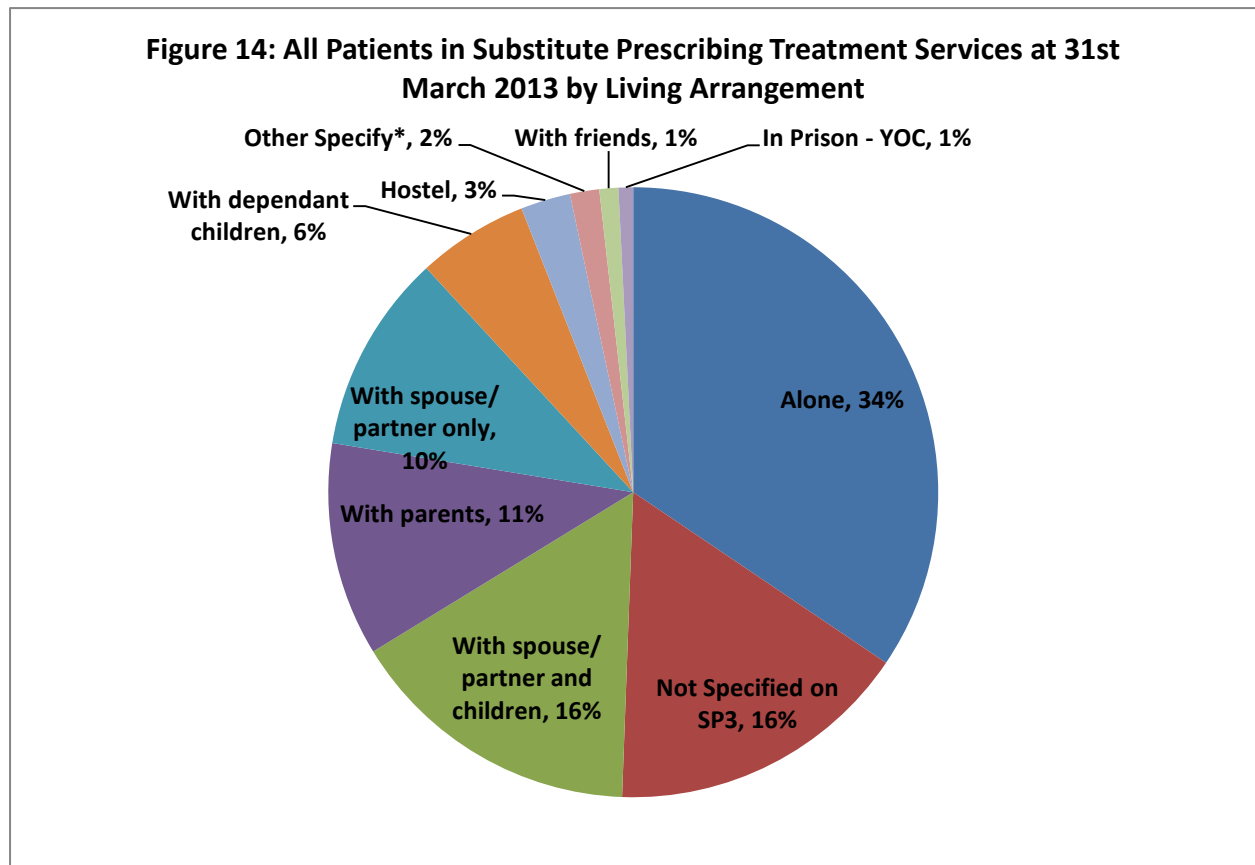
Figure 13 shows the percentage who took the tests. On average 45% took tests.



Personal Living Arrangements

With data taken from their last review Figure 14 shows that 34% of patients reported that they were living alone, 16% lived with their spouse, partner and children and 11% lived with their parents. 16% of forms did not specify the living circumstances of the patients.

Where the *"Other Specify" option was included it showed that the patients lived with: Adult child; Parent/Child; Grandmother; Father & Brother, Mother & Dependent child; Daughter; Aunt; Adult Family; Parents & Children and Sister.



Discontinuation from Substitute Prescribing Services

119 patients discontinued from Substitute Prescribing Treatment Services during 2012/13. Figure 15 shows their reason for leaving with the main reason being “Continuing Substitute Prescribing elsewhere in NI” (29%) and “Failed to present for Substitute Prescribing” (18%).

