

# Alcohol Statistics – Northern Ireland

Last updated January 2021

## Alcohol and death

The number of alcohol-specific deaths in Northern Ireland during 2018 fell for the first time since 2013, but remains the third highest on record. In 2018, 284 of the 15,922 deaths registered in Northern Ireland were due to alcohol-specific causes. This is 16.9% more than was recorded a decade previously (243) but 6.3% lower than the 2017 total of 303, which was the highest on record. Alcohol-specific deaths continue to account for less than 2% of all deaths registered each year. Males typically account for around two-thirds of such deaths in Northern Ireland.

(Alcohol in Northern Ireland, 2020)

## How much do people drink?

Overall, 73% of adults in Northern Ireland drank alcohol, similar to proportions in previous years. Over three-quarters of males (76%) and two-thirds of females (70%) drank alcohol. These proportions are similar to those reported for males 75% and females (67%) in 1999.

Around two-thirds of respondents (65%) with annual household incomes of under £10,400 drank alcohol compared with four-fifths (83%) for respondents with household incomes of £12,000 and above. Higher proportions of male and female respondents in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations (NS-SEC) drank alcohol (84% and 81% respectively) than in routine and manual occupations (74% and 66%). Similarly, more than four-fifths of those with A-Levels and above (82%) drank which compared with 55% of adults with no qualifications. (75%) and females (67%) in 1999.

Between 1999 and 2013, the most noticeable increase in alcohol consumption occurred among respondents in the 60-75 age group (from 49% to 58%).

Almost a third of respondents (31%) had stated that they had engaged in at least one binge drinking session in the week prior to the survey. This was true for over a third of males (35%) and more than a quarter of females (27%). The level of binge drinking was similar to that reported in 2011 (30%) and in 2008 (32%)

(Adult drinking patterns in Northern Ireland, 2013)

## Young people and alcohol

Since 2000, there has been a decline in both the proportion of young people ever having drunk alcohol and the proportion of those who drank that report having been drunk.

Half as many young people reported ever having a drink in 2019 (29%) than in 2000 (59%); boys were more likely to report having taken a drink (32%) than girls (26%) and those in Year 12 (56%) were more likely to have done so than those in Year 8 (9%).

(Department of Health NI, Young Person's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2019)

### Alcohol and the family

Overall, 2% of all respondents to the survey were problem drinkers with dependent children, while 6% of respondents to the survey were binge drinkers with dependent children.

Respondents with dependent children (34%) were more likely to binge drink than those without (30%).

13% of respondents without children and almost one in ten with children (9%) were classed as problem drinkers.

(Adult Drinking Patterns in Northern Ireland, 2013)

### Alcohol and Hospital

There has been a steady increase in the numbers of people being admitted to hospital for alcohol-only related conditions in Northern Ireland. In 2010/11, 8,652 people were admitted and in 2014/15, the figure was 11,420.

(NICVA, 2020)

For the last five years Northern Ireland has had the highest net ingredient cost per head of population in the United Kingdom—in 2018 it was £226.32 per head, 43 per cent higher than in England.

(Parliament.uk, Community Pharmacy in Northern Ireland, 2020)

### Effects on Others

In Northern Ireland, the government calculates the cost of alcohol to be £679.8 million annually, although the base range is from £501-£881 million, with charities and the government often citing £900 million. These figures equate to 2.2% of Northern Ireland's GDP.

The cost to healthcare is estimated at £122.2million, social work at £48.5million, fire and police at £223.6million, courts and prisons at £83.8million and wider economic costs at £201.7million.

(Institute for Alcohol Studies, 2020  
Social Costs of Alcohol Misuse in Northern Ireland for 2008/9)

# **Tobacco Statistics - Northern Ireland**

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## Smoking and death

In Northern Ireland, around 2,300 people die from smoking-related illnesses each year. Over the past decade smoking-related illnesses have caused between 2,300-2,400 deaths a year.

(NI Direct, 2020; Tobacco Control Northern Ireland, 2015)

## How much do people smoke?

In 2019/20, 18% of adult men said they smoked, down from 25% in 2010/11. 16% of adult females said they smoked, which is also down from 23% in 2010/11.

The median number of cigarettes smoked was 70 in 2019/20.

(Health Survey (NI) 2019/20)

## Smoking and money

In Northern Ireland it has been estimated the costs of treating smoking-related illness in hospitals alone is around £164m a year.

It is estimated that smoking costs the Northern Ireland economy around £450million per year. This figure takes into consideration health care, premature death, excess sickness absence, smoke breaks, second-hand smoke (early deaths), smoking-related litter and fire in the business place or home.

(Tobacco Control Northern Ireland, 2015)

## Smoking and cancer

Smoking contributed to 86% of all deaths in Northern Ireland from lung cancer and was the cause of 1 in 4 cancer deaths.

(Tobacco Control Northern Ireland, 2015)

## Smoking and pregnancy

15% of pregnant women self-reported being a smoker at the time of their first antenatal appointment during 2014/15, a fall from the 16% level observed in 2013/14.

Pregnant women who smoke are more likely to have a baby of low birth weight.

(Tobacco Control Northern Ireland, 2015)

### Young people and smoking

The average age for starting smoking is 12 and children who grow up with a parent or family member who smokes are three times more likely to start themselves.

(Cancer Focus, NI, 2020)

In 2019, one-in-ten young people reported ever having smoked (10%) with 4% indicating that they currently smoked. This represents a decrease since 2000, when two-fifths (37%) reported ever having smoked and 15% were current smokers.

Boys (11%) were more likely to report ever having smoked than girls (8%). Young people living in the most deprived quintile were more likely to report ever having smoked (13%) than those in the least deprived quintile (7%) though the rate of current smoking was similar (5% and 3% respectively).

(Department of Health NI, Young Person's Behaviour and Attitudes Survey, 2019)

## Illegal Drugs Statistics – Northern Ireland

Last updated January 2021

More than one in four people surveyed (27%) reported having ever used any illegal drug; 7% reported using any illegal drug in the year prior to the survey; and less than one in twenty (3%) respondents reported using any illegal drug in the month prior to the survey.

Cannabis was the most commonly reported illegal drug used with 24% of respondents reporting having ever used it; one in twenty (5%) respondents reported cannabis use in the last year and 3% of respondents reported use in the last month.

After cannabis, the most commonly reported illegal drugs ever used were: poppers and ecstasy (each 9%); cocaine powder (6%); amphetamines and magic mushrooms (each 6%); LSD (5%); solvents (4%); crack (0.9%); and heroin (0.4%).

Around one in three males (32%) and one in five females (22%) had ever used any illegal drug. Similar results were found for cannabis use, 29% of males and 19% of females had ever used cannabis.

Nearly two fifths of young adults (15-34 years) had ever used any illegal drugs compared with one fifth (20%) of older adults (35-64 years). The lifetime prevalence rates for any illegal drug ranged from 8% of those aged 55-64 to 43% of those aged 25-34.

Over one fifth of respondents reported having ever used sedatives and tranquillisers (21%) and anti-depressants (22%). Nearly one quarter (24%) of females reported lifetime use of sedatives and tranquillisers compared with 17% of males, and nearly three in ten (28%) females reported lifetime use of anti-depressants compared with 15% of males.

In Northern Ireland, lifetime use and last month use of any illegal drug among all adults remained fairly similar between 2006/7 and 2010/11, while the last year use of any illegal drugs decreased from 9% in 2006/7 to 7% in 2010/11.

Since 2006/7 there was a decrease in last year use of cannabis from 7% in 2006/7 to 5% in 2010/11 and a decrease in the lifetime and last year use of other opiates. The use of anti-depressants in the last year and last month has increased and the lifetime and last year use of methadone has increased.

(Department of Health NI, 2010/11 Drug Prevalence Survey)

There are no more up-to-date data for illegal drug use in Northern Ireland. Below is a table showing the percentage of people who said they had ever used drug in their lifetime from the Department of Health NI, 2010/11 Drug Prevalence Survey.

<b>Drug</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2006/7</b>
Solvents	3.9%	3.5%
Cannabis	24%	24.7%
LSD	5.1%	6.6%
Magic Mushrooms	5.8%	6.7%
Amphetamines	6.3%	5.8%

<b>Drug</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2006/7</b>
Ecstasy	8.8%	7.7%
Cocaine	6.5%	5.1%
Crack	0.9%	0.4%
Heroin	0.4%	0.5%
Tranx and barbs	20.7%	20.2%
Steroids	n/a	n/a
GHB	n/a	n/a
Alkyl nitrates	8.8%	7.8%
Khat	n/a	n/a
Ketamine	n/a	n/a