



Northern Ireland HIV data tables

Published 28th November 2022

Interpreting trends over time

In these data tables, trends over time must be interpreted with care, as each data source is subject to reporting delay. This means that numbers, particularly for recent years, may rise as a result of receiving further reports.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic changed patterns of sexual behaviour, HIV testing and access to sexual health and HIV services in 2020 and in 2021. Differences between 2019 and 2020, and between 2020 and 2021, should be interpreted with caution.

Figures may be different to those published previously due to improvements in the data.

Table 1: All new HIV diagnoses in Northern Ireland by demographics and probable route of exposure, all years to 2021

Table 1a: New HIV diagnoses in Northern Ireland, AIDS at diagnosis and deaths by gender												
New diagnoses and deaths	Gender	Pre 2012	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
HIV diagnoses	Men	627	68	87	70	81	59	67	59	46	50	54
	Women	191	16	13	21	20	15	16	20	17	18	22
	Subtotal	818	84	100	91	101	74	83	79	63	68	76
AIDS at HIV diagnoses	Men	87	0	<5	<15	<10	6	<10	<5	<10	<10	6
	Women	23	0	<5	<5	<5	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	0
	Subtotal	110	0	<5	<15	8	6	7	5	10	6	6
Deaths	Men	93	<5	<10	<5	6	<10	<5	<5	<10	<10	0
	Women	16	0	<5	<5	0	<5	0	<5	<5	<5	<5
	Subtotal	109	<5	9	<5	6	6	<5	<5	8	7	<5

Table 1b: New HIV diagnoses in Northern Ireland by age at diagnosis												
Age at diagnosis	Gender	Pre 2012	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Under 15	All	10	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	0	0	0
15 - 24	All	112	10	<10	<15	9	11	10	<10	<10	<10	9
25 - 34	All	300	34	29	25	37	22	26	24	14	12	28
35 - 49	All	317	22	38	40	42	27	28	31	24	32	31
50 - 64	All	69	18	23	14	13	<15	16	15	16	17	8
65 and over	All	9	0	<5	<5	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	0

Table 1c: New HIV diagnoses in Northern Ireland by probable exposure category and gender												
Probable exposure category	Gender	Pre 2012	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Sex between men	Men	416	52	52	45	61	40	38	40	24	28	31
Heterosexual contact	Men	172	13	24	<20	<20	<15	19	13	16	11	9
	Women	176	16	12	18	20	14	11	16	13	10	12
	Subtotal	348	29	36	<40	<40	<30	30	29	29	21	21
Injecting drug use	Men	<15	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	<5	<5	<10
	Women	<10	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	<5	<5	<10
	Subtotal	17	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	<5	5	14
Mother to child	Men	<5	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	0	0	0
	Women	<10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	0
	Subtotal	8	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	<5	0	0
Other	Men	<25	<5	<5	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	0
	Women	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Subtotal	25	<5	<5	0	0	0	0	0	<5	0	0

Table 1d: New HIV diagnoses in Northern Ireland by ethnicity and gender												
Ethnicity	Gender	Pre 2012	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
White	Men	545	65	75	66	75	55	57	48	36	45	38
	Women	94	9	6	11	11	8	10	12	9	10	11
	Subtotal	639	74	81	77	86	63	67	60	45	55	49
Black African	Men	55	<5	6	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	6	<5	<5
	Women	70	<10	7	<10	<10	<10	<5	<5	8	<5	<15
	Subtotal	125	8	13	13	<10	8	<5	6	14	<10	15
Black Caribbean	All	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other/mixed	All	34	<5	5	<5	8	<5	7	6	<5	<5	9

Table 1e: New HIV diagnoses in Northern Ireland by region of birth												
Region of birth	Gender	Pre 2012	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
UK	All	378	63	57	60	58	48	48	38	26	32	39
Europe	All	92	10	8	15	16	12	16	11	9	7	9
Africa	All	113	7	13	10	10	8	7	13	18	9	14
Asia	All	17	0	5	<5	5	<5	<5	6	<5	<5	<5
Other	All	8	<5	6	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	0	<5	5

Table 1f: Late HIV diagnosis												
CD4 at diagnosis	Gender	Pre 2012	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number with a CD4 count within 91 days of diagnosis	All	563	77	77	84	83	63	70	65	58	55	60
Late diagnosis (CD4 count <350)	All	264	34	37	40	24	23	31	25	22	24	20
Percentage of late diagnosis	All	47%	44%	48%	48%	29%	37%	44%	38%	38%	44%	33%
Median CD4	All	360	350	320	330	520	390	410	440	495	370	485

Notes:

Subtotals includes individuals with incomplete or not reported demographic data.

For gender, subtotals from 2015 also include people who identified as gender diverse (genderqueer, non-binary, other gender and prefer not to say).

Region of birth information has been updated for 2021 so figures will be different from those published by UKHSA.

Table 2: All people in Northern Ireland seen for HIV care, receiving treatment and viral load suppression, 2012 to 2021											
Table 2a: People in Northern Ireland seen for HIV care by age and gender											
Age and gender	Gender	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All	Men	508	590	633	732	786	857	892	912	970	1,040
All	Women	160	180	182	209	221	225	238	246	265	285
Total	Subtotal	668	770	815	941	1,007	1,082	1,130	1,158	1,235	1,325
Under 15	Boys	0	0	0	0	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	0
	Girls	0	0	<5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Subtotal	0	0	<5	0	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	0
15 - 24	Men	21	17	<20	18	25	<35	<25	<25	<20	<20
	Women	8	6	<5	5	6	<10	<10	<10	<5	<5
	Subtotal	29	23	22	23	31	<40	<30	<30	<25	<20
25 - 34	Men	118	124	126	153	159	161	156	147	149	<165
	Women	53	53	52	55	45	46	44	33	28	<35
	Subtotal	171	177	178	208	204	207	200	180	177	<195
35 - 49	Men	245	280	285	323	332	365	374	369	383	401
	Women	72	83	84	96	115	113	118	125	139	146
	Subtotal	317	363	369	419	447	478	492	494	522	547
50 - 64	Men	110	149	179	208	239	264	292	317	351	377
	Women	27	38	39	47	50	53	61	67	80	89
	Subtotal	137	187	218	255	289	317	353	384	431	466
65 and over	Men	14	20	<30	30	31	36	45	57	67	85
	Women	0	0	<5	6	5	7	10	15	14	16
	Subtotal	14	20	27	36	36	43	55	72	81	101

Table 2b. People in Northern Ireland seen for HIV care by probable exposure category											
Probable exposure category	Gender	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Sex between men	All	364	418	453	533	583	635	634	625	635	665
Heterosexual contact	All	282	323	328	369	380	395	378	374	390	407
Injecting drug use	All	6	<10	<15	<10	10	14	13	10	13	15
Vertical transmission	All	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<10	<5	<5	<5
Other	All	<5	0	0	0	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5

Table 2c. People in Northern Ireland seen for HIV care by ethnicity											
Ethnic group	Gender	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
White	All	563	638	691	803	860	935	973	994	1,051	1,115
Black African	All	86	105	97	104	113	111	117	119	126	141
Black Caribbean	All	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<5	<5	<5
Black other	All	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5	5	5	5	<5	<5
Asian	All	9	12	12	16	16	17	21	21	23	25
Other/mixed	All	<10	<15	<15	<15	<20	14	10	<10	27	34

Table 2d: People receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) by CD4 count											
ART status	CD4 count	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Receiving ART	<350	87	126	123	122	120	122	121	110	105	99
	350-499	128	148	149	164	156	174	169	133	119	132
	≥500	340	378	460	597	684	778	797	611	382	473
	Subtotal	558	654	733	888	978	1,080	1,094	1,158	1,235	1,325
Not receiving ART	<350	9	22	5	<5	<5	<5	0	0	0	0
	350-499	31	32	24	<15	<5	0	<5	0	0	0
	≥500	67	56	52	35	19	<5	<5	0	0	0
	Subtotal	110	116	82	53	29	<5	36	0	0	0
Percentage receiving ART	<350	91%	85%	96%	97%	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	350-499	81%	82%	86%	93%	98%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%
	≥500	84%	87%	90%	94%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Subtotal	84%	85%	90%	94%	97%	100%	97%	100%	100%	100%
Total	<350	96	148	128	126	121	123	121	110	105	99
	350-499	159	180	173	176	160	174	171	133	119	132
	≥500	407	434	512	632	703	779	798	611	382	473
	Subtotal	668	770	815	941	1007	1,082	1,130	1,158	1,235	1,325

Table 2e: Viral load suppression											
ART status	Viral load information	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
All receiving ART	Number in care with a viral load	555	652	733	873	963	1074	1,090	1,143	1,187	1,262
	% with a reported viral load	99%	100%	100%	98%	98%	99%	100%	99%	96%	95%
	% of reported viral load ≤50	64%	69%	71%	84%	94%	78%	80%	75%	85%	87%
	% of reported viral load ≤200	91%	92%	95%	96%	97%	96%	98%	97%	97%	97%

Notes:
Subtotals includes individuals with incomplete or not reported demographic data.
For gender, subtotals from 2015 also include people who identified as gender diverse (genderqueer, non-binary, other gender and prefer not to say).

HIV surveillance in Northern Ireland

Summary points 2021:

- During 2021, 79,571 HIV tests were performed in Northern Ireland. This represents an increase of 21% compared with 2020 (65,906).
- There were 76 new HIV diagnoses made in Northern Ireland (54 men and 22 women) in 2021; a 12% increase from 68 in 2020.
- The largest route of transmission for new HIV diagnoses (41%, 31/76) occurred through gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM); a slight increase from 28 new diagnoses in 2020.
- Twenty-one (28%, 21/76) new HIV diagnoses occurred through heterosexual transmission; the same number reported in 2020.
- Fourteen (18%) new HIV diagnoses occurred through injecting drug use; an increase from 5 in 2020. This is a significant new risk group in Northern Ireland which has contributed to the increase in new HIV diagnoses seen in 2021.
- Transmission route was unknown for 10 of the new diagnoses.
- The majority (78%, 59/76) of people newly diagnosed in 2021 were aged between 25 and 49 years, with the 25-34 years age group seeing over twice as many new diagnoses (28) compared to 2020 (12). The proportion of people diagnosed aged 50 years or over decreased to 11% in 2021 compared to 26% in 2020. Diagnoses in those aged over 65 remains low with only 17 new diagnoses reported over the past ten years.
- One third (33%, 20/60) of new HIV diagnoses were made at a late stage (i.e. cases had a CD4 count within 91 days of diagnosis, and the CD4 count was <350 cells/mm³).
- Of those newly diagnosed, six were also diagnosed with AIDS at their HIV diagnosis i.e. reported AIDS defining illness within three months of HIV diagnosis.
- In 2021, 1,325 People living with HIV (PWHIV) resident in Northern Ireland received medical HIV-related care. Of these, there were 1,040 men and 285 women.
- Almost all of those receiving medical HIV-related care (98%, 1,072/1,091) and where route of transmission was known, acquired their infection through sexual contact. Of these, 61% (665/1,091) acquired their infection through sexual contact involving gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM) and 37% (407/1,091) through heterosexual contact. Only 2% (19/1,091) acquired their infection through non-sexual contact i.e. via injecting drug use, or vertical transmission.
- The greatest number of people who received HIV-related care in 2021 were in the 35-64 year age group (76%, 1,013/1,325). Of those that received HIV-related care during 2021, 84% were white ethnicity, 11% were black-African and 5% were classified in other ethnic groups or not reported.
- Everyone in care received antiretroviral therapy, and 97% of those on treatment had viral suppression as defined by ≤ 200 copies/ml (where a viral load was reported). This is referred to as an undetectable viral load, and at this level an HIV person has effectively zero risk of sexually transmitting the virus to an HIV-negative partner. Undetectable=Untransmissible (U=U).
- Estimates of prevalence show that Belfast Local Government District (LGD) area has the highest rate in Northern Ireland at 2.01/1,000 population aged 15-59 years. Belfast (LGD) area has now reached the 2.0/1,000 population threshold at which expanded testing is recommended. The overall prevalence for the Northern Ireland population is 1.02/1,000 population aged 15-59 years.
- There were less than five deaths reported in 2021.

Note: The Northern Ireland HIV Surveillance slide deck will be available on 1st December 2022.