



GOVERNMENT OF MALTA  
MINISTRY FOR SOCIAL POLICY  
AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

# KEY ISSUES DRUG SITUATION IN MALTA 2022



**KEY ISSUES  
DRUG SITUATION  
IN MALTA  
2022**

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National Focal Point for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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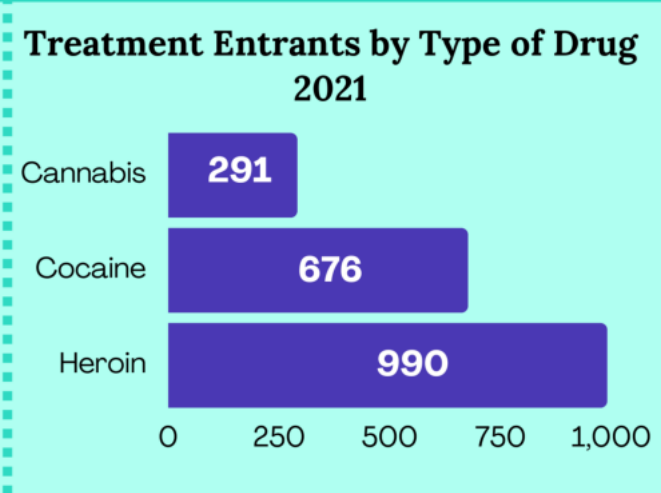
# The Drug Situation in Malta

## The Drug Situation in Malta 2021

### Treatment

**1,990**  
Total number of cases treated for PROBLEM DRUG USE

**796**  
Individuals in OAT



### Harm Reduction



**106,276**  
Syringe Distribution

### Overdose Deaths

**5**  
Drug Related Deaths

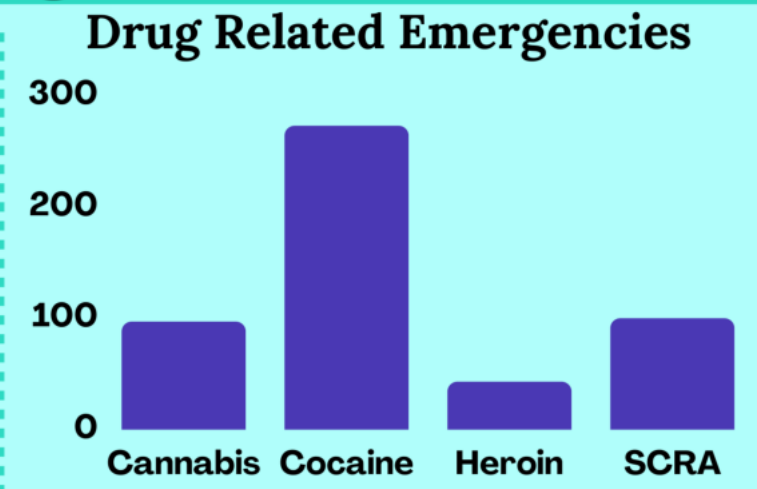


### Drug Harms



Drug Related Infections Diseases

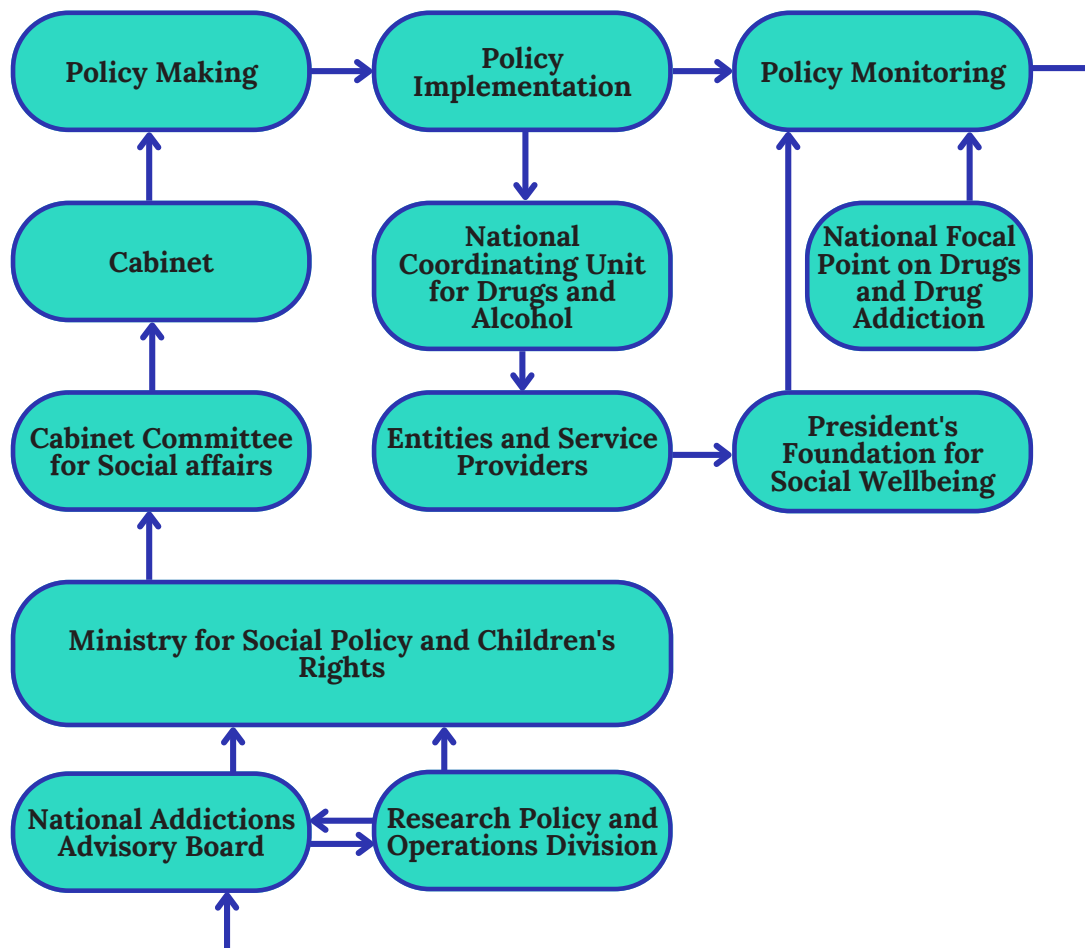
- HIV 1 Positive Case
- HBV 3 Positive Cases
- HCV 36 Positive Cases



# The Policy Process

The main body responsible for drug policy matters in Malta is the National Addictions Advisory Board. The Advisory Board is an integral structure within the Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights. The Advisory Board comprises ten independent experts appointed by the Minister, from fields such as law, youth studies, education, clinical psychology, psychiatry, epidemiology and neuroscience.

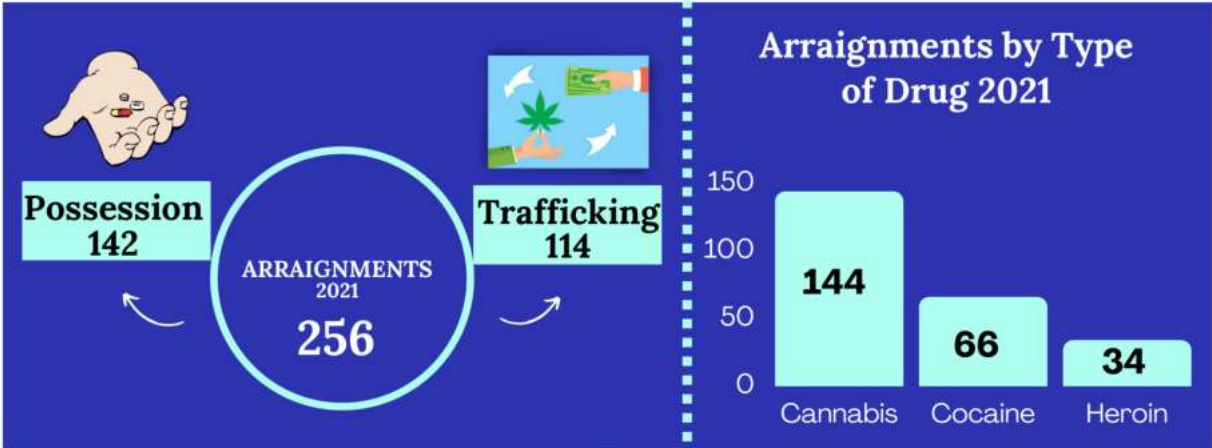
The National Coordinating Unit for Drugs and Alcohol, (MSPC), is responsible for the implementation of the National Drugs Policy, while the main remit of the National Focal Point for Drugs and Drug Addiction is that of monitoring the situation and the responses, including the effectiveness of the actions put in place as a result of the National Drugs Policy. It is also required to report to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on a yearly basis on the drug situation and drug responses put in place by Malta.





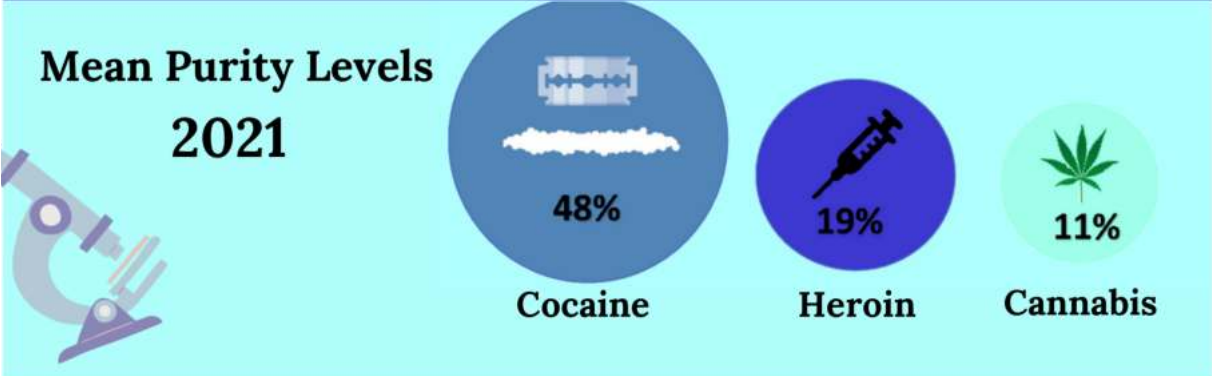
# Drug Law Offences

## Drug Law Offences 2021



**Tribunal Cases 2021**

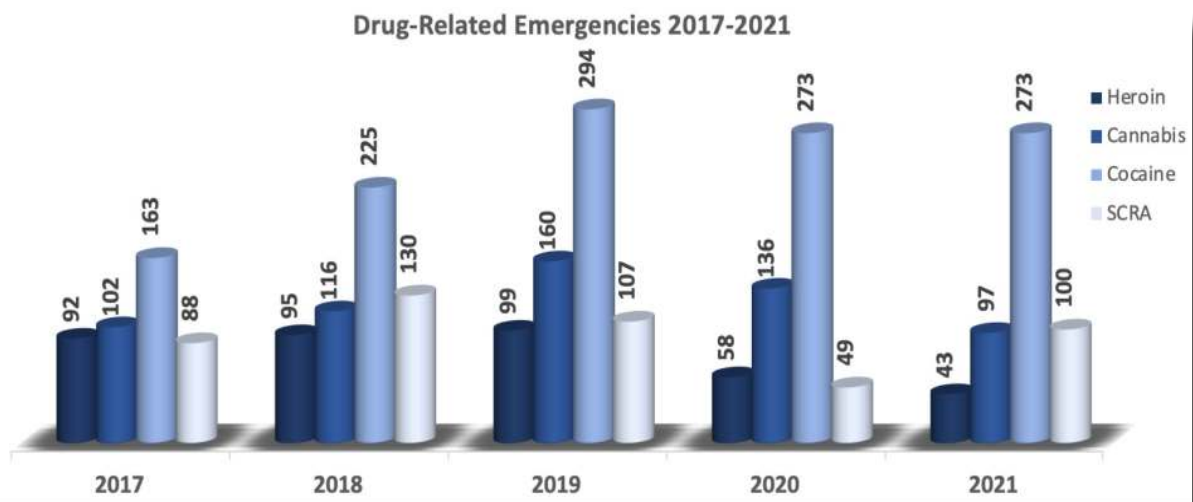
Penali	2021
Paid	193
Tribunal Pending Payments	116
Cases Judged Not Guilty (Not Due)	2
Cases Pending Judgement	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>351</b>



# Problem Drug Use

## DRUG-RELATED EMERGENCIES

A clinical toxicology unit at Mater Dei Hospital participates in the European Drug Emergencies Network (Euro-DEN Plus) project, which was established in 2013 to monitor acute drug toxicity in sentinel centres across Europe. The figures below show a steady increase of drug-related emergencies during the last 5 reporting years, with cocaine and cannabis being the main drugs leading individuals to seek medical assistance due to intoxication. What is worthy of note is the figures for the Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists (SCRA) in which close to some 500 individuals have sought medical assistance over the last 5 years. Though there is limited information on synthetic cannabinoids, it appears that these substances are highly available locally. Synthetic cannabinoids cause adverse health effects to people using these substances to the effect that reports have appeared in Europe in which deaths have resulted following the use of such synthetic cannabinoids.



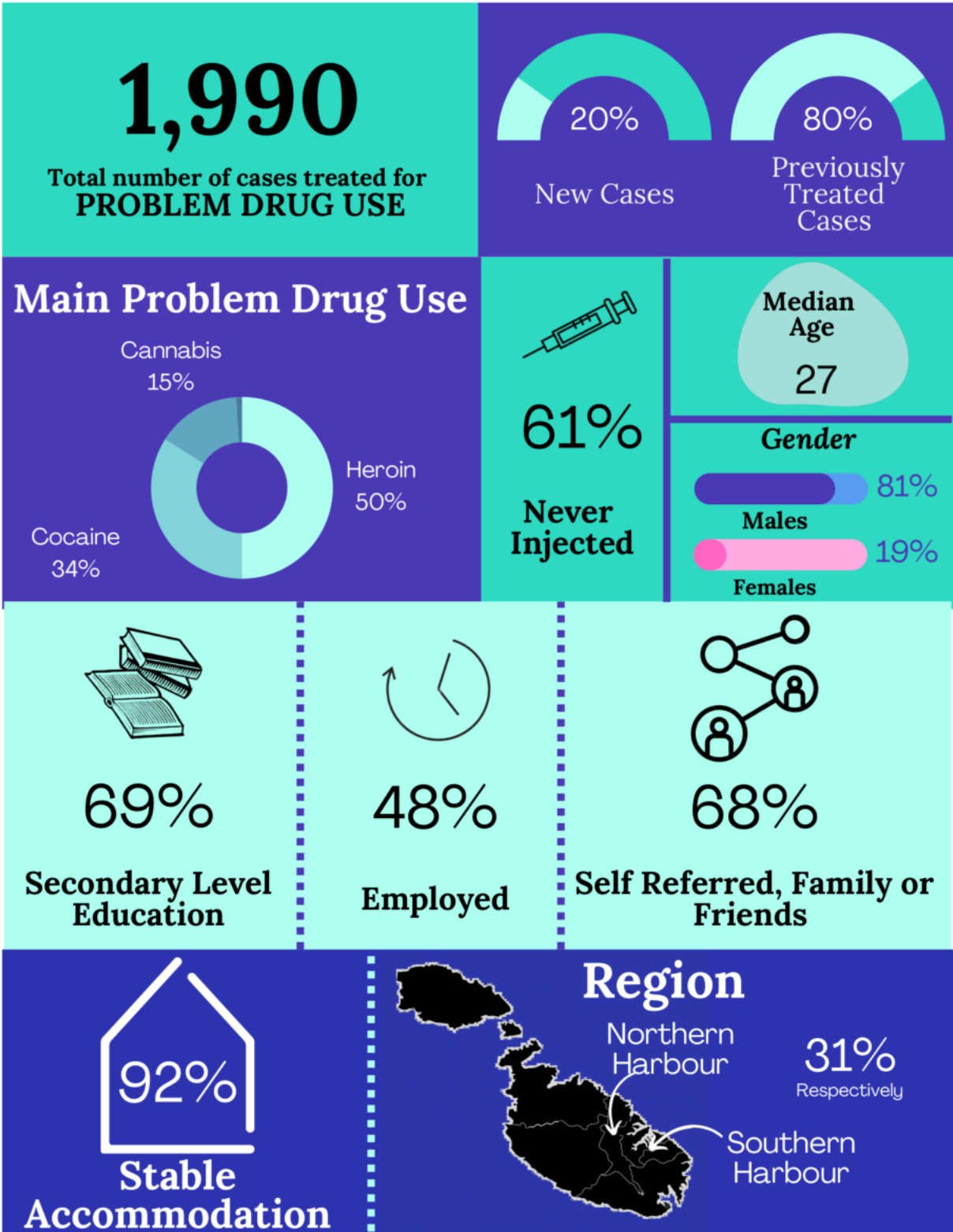
Drug-related emergencies by type of drug 2017-2021

## DRUG-INDUCED DEATHS AND MORTALITY

Drug-induced deaths refer to deaths that can be attributed directly to the use of illicit drugs (i.e., poisonings and overdoses). In 2021, the Police Special Registry registered five drug-induced deaths. In 2021, deaths reported were all male.

# Individuals in Treatment

## Individuals in Treatment 2021



# Characteristics of Heroin Users

## Characteristics of Heroin Users

**990**  
Total number of individuals who primarily use Heroin

**7%**  
New Cases

**GENDER**  
80% Male  
20% Female

**MEDIAN AGE**  
41

Median age first use  
18 years old

Median years of using before seeking treatment  
6 years

42% Currently Injecting

65% Self Referred, Family or Friends

70% Opioid Agonist Treatment

94% Stable Accommodation

75% Completed Secondary Level Education

7% Completed Higher Education

41% Regularly Employed

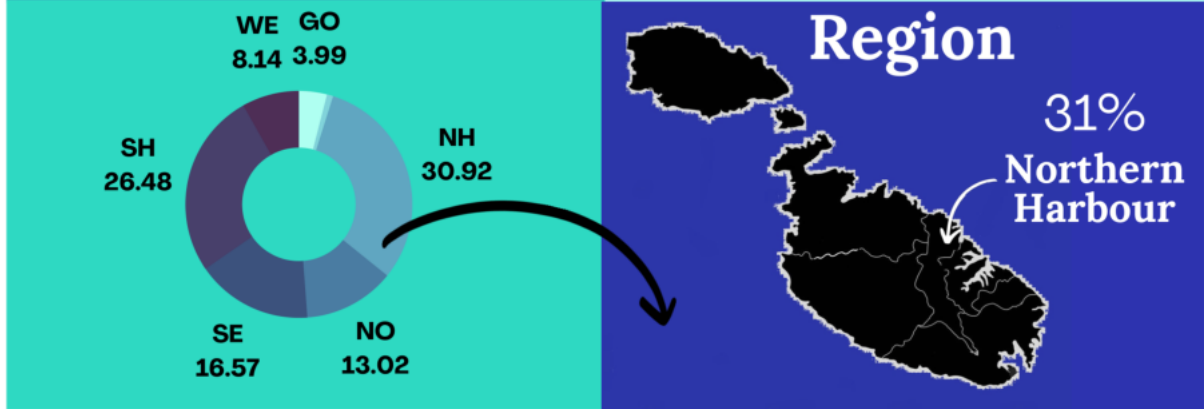
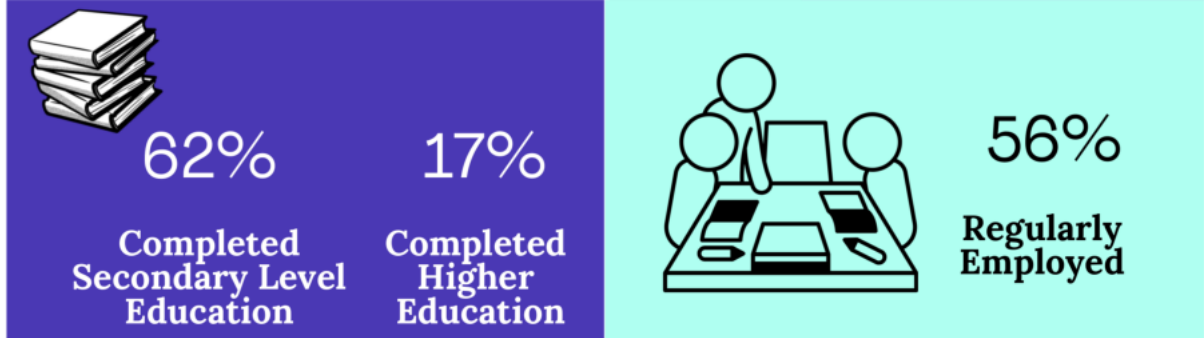
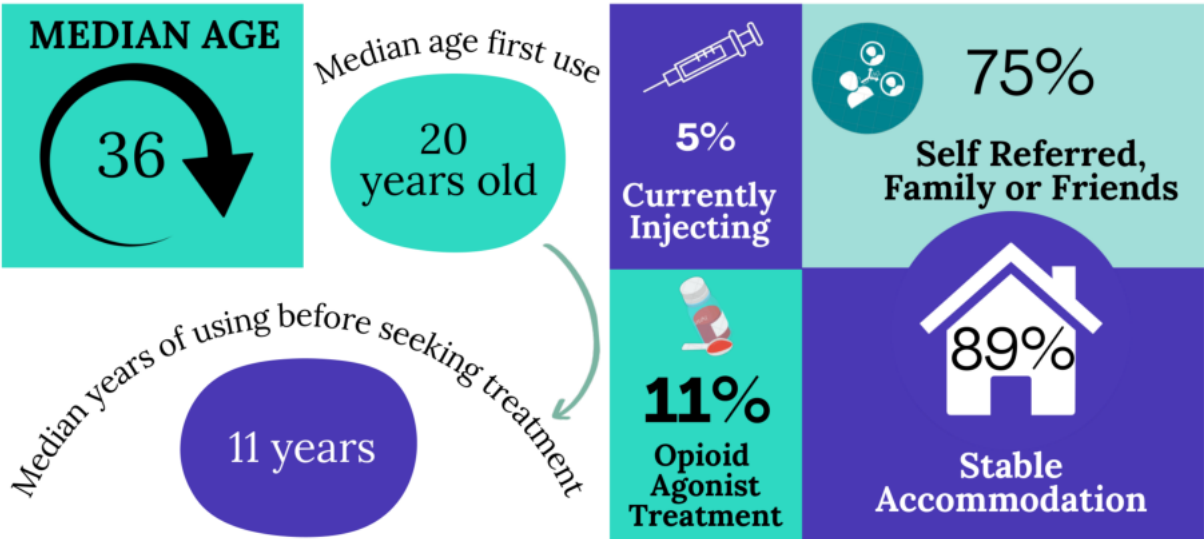
**Region**

36% Southern Harbour

WE 7.27%  
NH 31.01%  
SE 12.73%  
NO 11.01%  
SH 36.26%

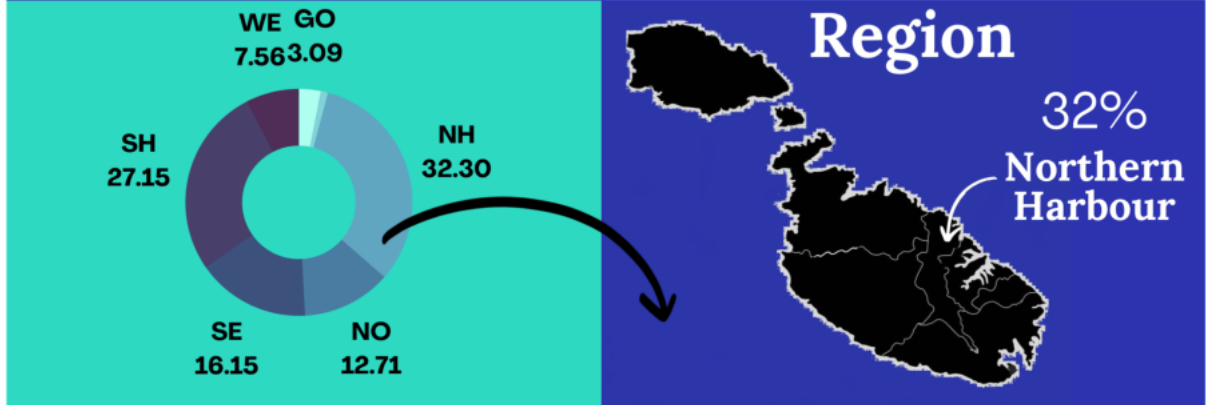
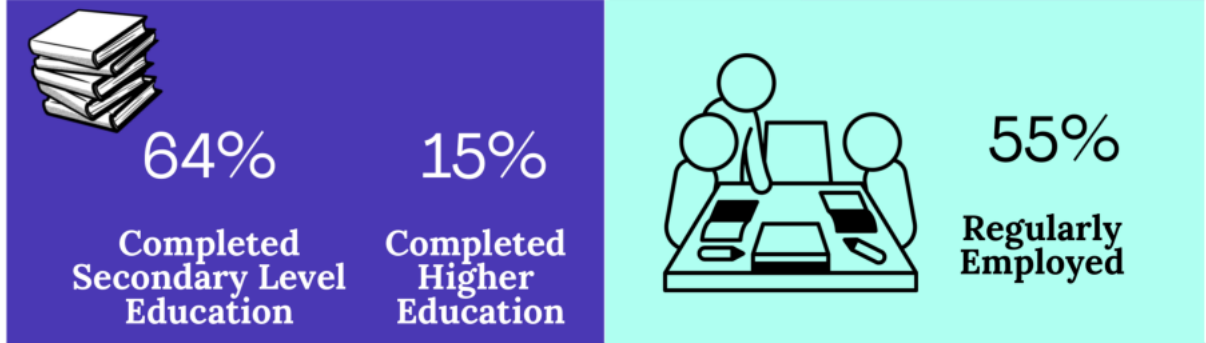
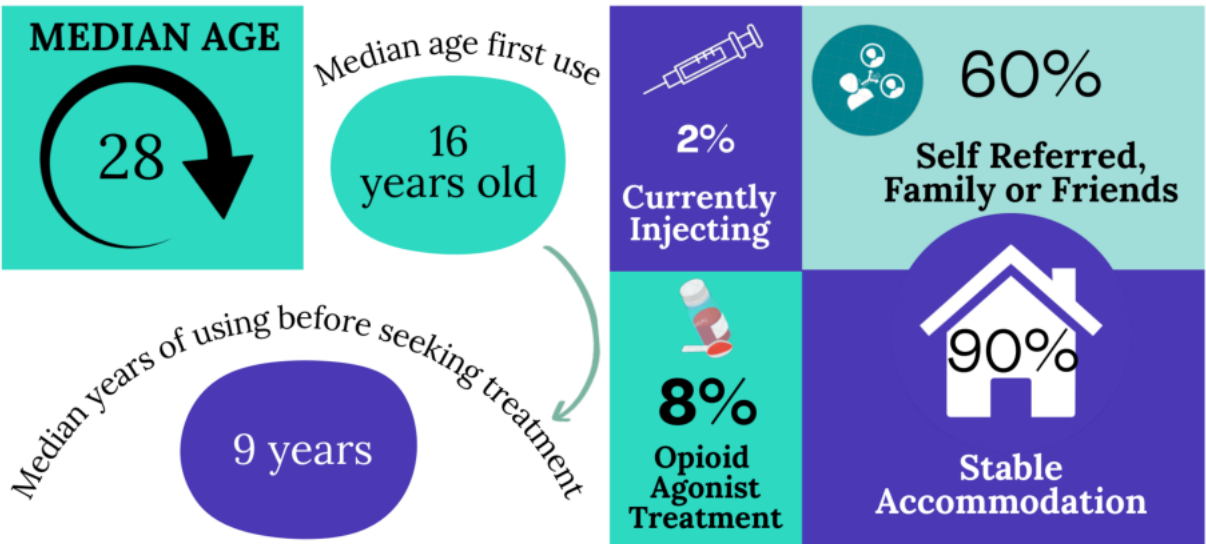
# Characteristics of Cocaine Users

## Characteristics of Cocaine Users



# Characteristics of Cannabis Users

## Characteristics of Cannabis Users



# Females Seeking Treatment

## CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALES SEEKING TREATMENT



Females seeking treatment, accounted for **19%** of the data

### MEDIAN AGE FIRST USE

18  
years old

### MEDIAN YEARS USING BEFORE SEEKING TREATMENT

8 years



### PRIMARY DRUG

Heroin is the most prevalent drug of choice among female individuals, accounting for **53%**, followed by cocaine with **34%**.

### CHILDREN

**42%** Female individuals seeking treatment reported having children, **87%** of these females reported that they live with their children.



### EDUCATION

**70%** of females stated to have completed secondary-level education, while **14%** have completed higher-level education.

### EMPLOYMENT

Of the **70%** who completed secondary-level education:

- **34%** were regularly employed;
- **45%** were unemployed.

Of the **14%** who reported having a higher-level education:

- **57%** were regularly employed;
- **22%** were unemployed.



