

# Barbados Drug Information Network Report

**2022**



**Prepared by:**



The National Council on  
Substance Abuse

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# 1. Key Findings

## 1.1 National Council on Substance Abuse: Drug Prevention Programming

- The National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) is the lead agency responsible for drug education across the island.
- During 2022, persons age 5 and up participated in NCSA's programmes.
- The Secondary School interventions accounted for the largest proportion of persons reached by the NCSA, followed by the Community, Primary School, Counselling and Tertiary School interventions respectively.
- The Counselling Programme continues to have a notably smaller reach as it primarily involves the provision of counselling services to individual clients as opposed to group or family therapy which would serve multiple persons in a single session.

## 1.2 Edna Nicholls Centre

- Eighty-five students were admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2022.
- Males accounted for approximately eight out of every 10 students (82%) admitted to the Centre during the year.
- Just over one-third (36%) of the students admitted to the Centre tested positive for marijuana use or had trace amounts of the drug within their system.
- Students testing positive for marijuana use were primarily males between the ages of 13 and 15 years.

## 1.3 Treatment

### ***Psychiatric Hospital***

- Just over one-third (38%) of persons admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital in 2022 received drug-related treatment.
- Nine out of every 10 persons (90%) admitted for drug treatment were male.
- The majority of persons seeking drug treatment were between the ages of 21 and 45.
- Co-morbid diagnoses<sup>1</sup> which included substance use disorders were more common among males.
- Forty-seven of the 244 persons assessed by the Hospital's Drug Rehabilitation Unit (DRU) were admitted to the Hospital's Day Programme for drug treatment.
- The majority of persons admitted to the Day Programme were males, 40 years of age and younger.
- Just over one third (38%) of those receiving treatment in the Day Programme were treated for poly drug use.
- Marijuana was the most common primary drug among Day Programme clients, distantly followed by alcohol and crack cocaine.

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<sup>1</sup> Co-morbid diagnoses refers to the occurrence of 2 or more disorders or illnesses in the same person (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2018).

- Marijuana, alcohol, crack cocaine and tobacco were the four substances used by Day Programme clients in the 12 months and 30 days preceding treatment entry.
- Sixty-four youth were admitted to the Thrive Family Centre in 2022, with males and females being equally represented among the admissions for the year.
- Five of the persons admitted to the Thrive Family Centre received drug-related diagnoses – three males and two females, the majority of whom were in the 14 to 17 age category.
- Marijuana was the primary substance for four of the five young people with drug-related diagnoses at the Thrive Family Centre, while alcohol was the primary drug for the remaining individual.

### ***Substance Abuse Foundation***

- One hundred and twenty-seven persons were treated at the Substance Abuse Foundation (SAF) in 2022, 75% of whom were males.
- Approximately half (48.7%) of the persons treated at the SAF were 40 years of age or younger.
- Most clients (83.5%) sought treatment for poly drug use.
- Crack cocaine was the most common primary drug for which treatment was sought at the SAF, distantly followed by alcohol, marijuana and cocaine powder.
- The majority (66.9%) of persons treated at the SAF in 2022 were self-referred.

### ***Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives***

- Twenty persons were treated at the Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives (CASA) in 2022, three quarters (75%) of whom were males.
- Most persons (60%) were age 30 and under.
- The criminal justice system/police department (40%) and encouragement from family and friends (15%) were the two largest referral sources for CASA in 2022. There was also a large proportion (30%) of persons who sought treatment of their own volition.
- Most clients (80%) received treatment for single drug use.
- Marijuana was the most common primary drug for which treatment was sought at CASA, distantly followed by alcohol and cocaine powder.

### ***National Council on Substance Abuse***

- Fifty persons received counselling at the NCSA in 2022 – 48 for drug-related issues and two for non-drug-related issues.
- Of the 48 persons receiving substance abuse treatment, the majority were males, 20 years of age and younger.
- The justice system/police department was the single largest referral source for persons receiving substance abuse treatment at the NCSA in 2022.
- While most persons were treated for single drug use at the NCSA, there was a small percentage (10.4%) of clients who were treated for poly drug use.
- Marijuana was the most common primary drug for which treatment was sought at the NCSA, distantly followed by alcohol and tobacco.

- Marijuana, alcohol and fanta were the drugs most commonly used by the NCSA's clients during the 12 months and 30 days prior to entering treatment.

#### 1.4 Supply Control

##### ***The Barbados Police Service***

- Drug offences accounted for 21% of all offences recorded by The Barbados Police Service (TBPS) during 2022.
- Most persons (74.8%) charged with drug offences were males under the age of 40.
- Approximately nine out of every 10 persons (87.2%) charged with drug offences were Barbadian.
- The majority (90.8%) of drug offences were cannabis-related.
- The remaining drug offences involved cocaine (8.8%) and ecstasy/methamphetamine (0.4%).
- The most common cannabis-related offences were "Possession" (29.3%), "Trafficking" (28.3%) and "Intent to Supply" (27.3%).
- Cannabis, in plant, compressed and loose forms, was the primary drug seized by TBPS.
- The majority of cannabis plant seizures took place in the parish of St. John.
- Ten of the thirty deportees returned to Barbados in 2022 were deported for drug-related offences, the majority (8) of whom were male.
- Seven of the ten drug-related deportees were deported from extra-regional countries, namely: Canada, England, Belgium and the United States of America.
- There were no arrests for money laundering recorded in 2022.

##### ***Barbados Prison Service (Incarcerations)***

- Drug offences accounted for 11% of the incarcerations at Dodds Prison in 2022.
- The majority of persons incarcerated for drug offences were males (79%) and persons under the age of 40 (61.1%).
- "Drug Possession" was the most common drug-related offence for which persons were incarcerated.
- Persons were also incarcerated for "Drug Importation", "Drug Trafficking", "Possession of Drug Apparatus" and "Drug Cultivation".
- Males and persons under the age of 45 accounted for the majority of those incarcerated for "Drug Possession".
- Persons incarcerated for "Possession of Drug Apparatus" were all male, with the majority being between the ages of 25 and 34.
- Most persons incarcerated for "Drug Trafficking" were males between the ages of 25 and 50.
- Males and persons under the age of 40 accounted for the majority of individuals incarcerated for "Drug Importation".
- Only one individual – a male in the 30 to 34 age category - was incarcerated for "Drug Cultivation".

### ***Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit***

- Data compiled by the Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit (CJRPU) revealed that, during 2022, 313 persons were tried and sentenced for drug-related offences in the island's Supreme and Magistrates' Courts.
- The majority of drug-related cases involved cannabis offences.
- "Possession", "Trafficking" and "Intent to Supply" were the most common cannabis offences tried.
- "Reprimanded and Discharged" (R&D), "Convicted, Reprimanded and Discharged" (CRD) and "Fine" were the most common sentence outcomes for cannabis-related offences.
- "Possession", "Trafficking" and "Intent to Supply" were the top three cocaine-related charges adjudicated in 2022.
- "R&D", "CRD" and "Bond" were the three most common sentence outcomes for cocaine-related offences.
- There were three methamphetamine-related offences tried, all of which were "Possession" – one resulted in a "Fine" and two were "Dismissed".
- One individual was tried on two heroin-related charges: "Possession" and "Trafficking". They received a "R&D" for the "Possession" charge and a "Fine" for "Trafficking".
- There were six offences involving unspecified controlled drugs. These offences included "Possession", "Trafficking", and "Importation". All of the "Trafficking" and "Importation" cases were "Dismissed". Of the three "Possession" cases, one resulted in a "CRD", another was "Dismissed" and the individual in the remaining case was found "Not Guilty".

### ***Government Industrial School***

- Of the 53 wards committed/remanded to the Government Industrial School in 2022, two were committed for drug-related offences, both of which were "Possession of a Controlled Substance". In each case, the controlled substance was marijuana.
- "Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm" and "Theft" were the two most common offences among males.
- For females, "Assaulting an Officer" was the most common.
- Of the drug tests conducted in 2022, only one ward - a 15 year old male - tested positive for marijuana use. No wards tested positive for cocaine use.

### ***Financial Intelligence Unit***

- Of the 233 Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) received in 2022, 3.0% were drug-related.
- A predicate offence<sup>2</sup> could not be easily identified for 72.5% of the STRs received and attention should be paid to these as law enforcement investigations may later reveal a drug-related link.

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<sup>2</sup> A predicate offence is a crime that is a component of a more serious crime (Low, 2020).

## 1.5 Trend Analysis

- The NCSA saw an increase in the number of persons reached by its interventions in 2022 which suggests some level of recovery since the decline that resulted from the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Despite the increase in persons reached by the NCSA, the proportion of persons reached within the primary schools remained notably low and is likely due to the 2020 decommissioning of the Life Education Centre (LEC) and the cessation of LEC programmes. The LEC was previously responsible for the majority of persons reached by the Council.
- The Edna Nicholls Centre saw a similar increase in the number of admissions in 2022, also suggesting a post-pandemic recovery, though the number of admissions has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- The percentage of students testing positive for marijuana use at the ENC declined in 2022, which is notable as 2021 saw a marked increase. The decline may be due in part to the increased number of admissions, and by extension the increased number on which the percentage was calculated.
- The number of persons seeking drug treatment increased in 2022, after the two years of declining admissions which ensued following the onset of the pandemic. The number of admissions for 2022 approached the pre-pandemic level.
- Males and persons age 40 and under accounted for the majority of persons receiving drug-related treatment in Barbados between 2019 and 2022.
- Despite the continued male/female disparity in treatment admissions, there has been a steady increase in the number of women seeking treatment since 2019.
- The percentage of persons seeking treatment for poly drug use has steadily increased from 2020 onwards.
- Between one-fifth and one-third of patients admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital during the period 2018-2022 received co-morbid diagnoses which included a substance use disorder. There has been a steady increase in these cases since 2020.
- Males under the age of 40 accounted for the majority of persons charged with drug offences between 2018 and 2022.
- Cannabis-related offences far outranked all other drug offences between 2018 and 2022.
- “Possession”, “Trafficking” and “Intent to Supply” were the top three cannabis offences during the period 2018 through 2022.
- While “Possession of Cannabis” was the single most common cannabis offence each year, there has been a continuous decline in “Possession” charges from 2019 onwards. This coincides with the recent relaxation of cannabis-related legislation.
- There has also been a sharp decline in the number of cannabis possession cases tried in the island’s Courts since the aforementioned legislative changes.

## 1.6 Recommendations to Improve National Response to Drug Situation

1. To reduce the continued male/female disparity in treatment admissions, the full suite of policy and programming recommendations set out in the Council’s Barriers to Treatment report should be considered and implemented with immediacy where appropriate. Consideration should also be given to designing and implementing gender-responsive treatment programmes which cater to the needs and life circumstances of



women. Treatment Improvement Protocol 51 (*“Substance Abuse Treatment: Addressing the Specific Needs of Women”*) of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) can be used as a starting point, and efforts should be supported by the conduct of a needs assessment to ensure the development of culturally appropriate programmes.

2. Women with substance use disorders typically have psychosocial characteristics that increase the likelihood of poor parenting or family disruption<sup>3</sup>, including adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)<sup>4</sup>. Research has shown that ACEs are a risk factor for substance use disorders and that children whose mothers have substance use disorders and have experienced ACEs are more likely to experience ACEs themselves and go on to develop a substance use disorder. Efforts should therefore be made to curb the intergenerational continuity of ACEs. As such, trauma-informed approaches should be implemented at treatment centres across Barbados, and expanded to include the offspring of mothers in treatment.
3. In an attempt to address the parenting deficits among mothers with substance use disorders, interventions designed to enhance parenting skills and promote securely attached relationships between mother and child should be included in the treatment plans for mothers entering substance abuse treatment.
4. Employment is a key factor in the success of treatment and recovery, and therefore efforts should be made to increase employment among those in recovery. These can include interventions within treatment centres (e.g. opportunities for education and skill development, partnering with corporate Barbados to secure jobs/internships/apprenticeships for clients). At the national level, an employment assistance programme can be implemented under a public/private partnership involving the Ministry of Labour and the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This programme can be responsible for facilitating job placements, recruiting companies to participate, and helping workplaces to become recovery-friendly organizations.
5. Workplace drug policies are needed to ensure that organizations can effectively respond to the issue of drugs and remove any fears which employees may have surrounding the future of their employment if they seek treatment. Workplace drug policies are not common in Barbados. As such, a national campaign designed to educate the public about such policies and promote their implementation should be enacted and coordinated by the NCSA.
6. A harm reduction approach should be used to address the continuing predominance of marijuana use in Barbados and its associated negative effects. Such an approach should target the physical and health harms associated with the use of the drug and can be buttressed with the promotion of protective strategies.
7. The apparent prevalence of marijuana use, and the relaxed marijuana laws increase the likelihood that medical practitioners will encounter patients who use marijuana recreationally or for medicinal purposes. Given the drug’s potential for interacting with

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<sup>3</sup> The term ‘family disruption’ refers to any disruption of the family structure, including children being removed from the home. Family disruption can have long-term consequences on children’s mental health and well-being, placing them at higher risk for depression, anxiety and academic failure (Stanick, Crosby & McDonald, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events experienced before the age of 18 and include being exposed to emotional, physical or sexual abuse, neglect or household dysfunction (Smith et al, 2021).

prescription drugs and affecting existing medical conditions, doctors should be trained about the possible effects of marijuana use in their clinical practice and encouraged to routinely ask patients about their use of marijuana and other drugs.

8. Research is needed to provide current data for policy making and programming. Recommended studies include:
  - a. A general population survey to estimate the current prevalence of marijuana (and other drug) use
  - b. A mixed methods study to investigate the impact of the relaxed marijuana legislation
  - c. Wastewater analysis to identify any new and emerging drugs being used in Barbados
9. To identify the use of emerging drugs on island and obtain more comprehensive insight into the drug use history of individuals, it is recommended that the Edna Nicholls Centre and local drug treatment centres use extended drug test panels when testing their students/clients. This recommendation is particularly relevant for those institutions which currently only test for traditional substances i.e. marijuana, cocaine and alcohol.

## 2. Introduction

The Barbados Drug Information Network (BARDIN) is the tool used by the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) and policy makers to monitor and respond to the local drug situation. To this end, BARDIN seeks to:

- Strengthen the capacity of Barbados to respond to changing drug use trends
- Provide current epidemiological and other information on substance abuse and regularly update this information
- Identify trends in drug consumption and offences related to illicit drugs
- Provide relevant information for the planning, evaluation and management of drug control programmes

The NCSA is responsible for coordinating and managing BARDIN. This includes collecting data and preparing and disseminating annual reports detailing the activities in the demand reduction and supply control sectors within a given a calendar. It should be noted that the reports are based on secondary data<sup>5</sup> collected from stakeholder agencies.

The current report covers the period January 1 to December 31, 2022, and includes data from: The NCSA, the Edna Nicholls Centre, the Psychiatric Hospital, the Substance Abuse Foundation, the Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives (CASA), the Barbados Police Service, the Barbados Prison Service, the Government Industrial School, the Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit, and the Financial Intelligence Unit.

The Inmate Drug Rehabilitation Counselling Programme is not represented within the current report as the Programme remained on hiatus during 2022 due to protocols aimed at controlling the spread of the COVID-19 virus among the Prison population. These protocols restricted the conduct of individual and group sessions with inmates throughout the target period.

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<sup>5</sup> Secondary data is data that was collected by an individual or agency other than the user.

### 3. Prevention and Drug Education

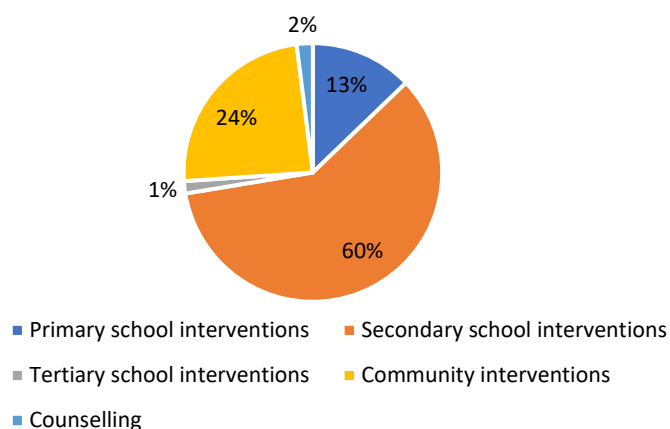
#### 3.1 National Council on Substance Abuse

As the government agency with lead responsibility for drug prevention programming, the National Council on Substance Abuse (NCSA) is charged with conducting interventions at the school and community levels, in conjunction with providing counselling services and investigating the local drug situation.

Table 1 provides an overview of the persons reached by the Council's interventions during the period January 1 to December 31, 2022. The data is disaggregated by the category of intervention i.e. primary school, secondary school, tertiary school, community and counselling. Age and gender breakdowns are provided based on data availability. It should be noted that mass-based interventions are not included in the totals given their ability to artificially inflate the number of persons taking part in the NCSA's activities.

From the Table it can be seen that that males and females ages 5 and over participated in the Council's interventions during the target period. The Table also shows that the Secondary School interventions reached the greatest number of persons, distantly followed by the community, primary school, counselling and tertiary school activities respectively. This interpretation is supported by Figure 1 which presents the distribution of persons reached by NCSA's interventions in 2022.

Figure 1: Distribution of Persons Reached by NCSA's Interventions in 2022



*Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse*

It should be noted that the Counselling programme continues to have a notably smaller reach as it primarily involves the provision of counselling services to individual clients as opposed to group or family therapy which would service multiple persons in a single session.

**Table 1: Distribution of Persons Reached by NCSA's Drug Education Initiatives in 2022**

<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Age Range/ Population Targeted</b>	<b>No. of Males Targeted</b>	<b>No. of Females Targeted</b>	<b>Total no. of Persons Targeted</b>
<b><u>Primary School Interventions</u></b>				
Safe or Unsafe	5-7 years	-	-	235
Barbados Substance Abuse Awareness Badge	7-11 years	-	44	44
Choices	9-11 years	-	-	40
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>319</b>
<b><u>Secondary School Interventions</u></b>				
Drugs & Life Skills Awareness Programme	11-16 years	423	546	969
Adhoc drug education sessions with secondary school students	11-16 years	-	-	515
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1484</b>
<b><u>Tertiary School Interventions</u></b>				
Drug Education Through technology for Tertiary Students	16+ years			<b>38</b>
<b><u>Community Interventions</u></b>				
Edna Nicholls Centre	11-16 years	70	15	85
New Horizon Substance Abuse Prevention Class Students	11-16 years	7	2	9
New Horizon Substance Abuse Prevention Class Teachers	Various ages	1	3	4
Project SOFT Transitional Camp	11-12 years	12	15	27
Prevention 1 <sup>st</sup> Club Parents Webinar	Various ages	-	-	172
Prevention 1 <sup>st</sup> Club Children	11-12 years	12	15	27
Government Industrial School	11-15 years	7	6	13
Drug Education Sessions	Various ages	-	-	144
Social Work Interns	Various ages	-	2	2
SPORTS – Not Drugs Programme	13-16 years	-	-	50
Polyclinic Ante & Postnatal Programme	Various ages	-	-	67
Mass-based Events (Radio, TV, Social Media Interviews)	Various ages	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>600</b>
<b><u>Counselling Programme</u></b>				
Counselling	11-55 years	44	6	50
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>50</b>

### 3.2 Edna Nicholls Centre

Eighty-five students were admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre<sup>6</sup> during the 2022 calendar year (See Table 2). This reflects an increase over the numbers recorded for 2021 which were significantly lower than average due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this increase, the numbers recorded for 2022 have not yet returned to pre-COVID levels.

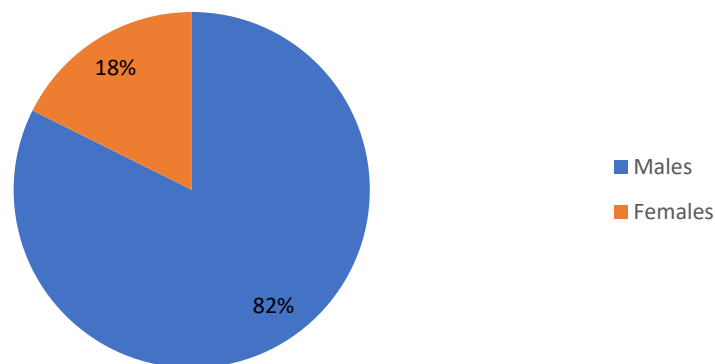
**Table 2: Distribution of Students Admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2022 by Term of Admission**

Term	Academic Year	Number of Students
Term II January to March 2022	2021/22	12
Term III May to July 2022	2021/22	33
Term I September to December 2022	2022/23	40
<b>Total</b>		<b>85</b>

*Source: Edna Nicholls Centre*

In 2022, the majority of students admitted to the Centre continued to be males between the ages of 13 and 15 years (See Figures 2 and 3). This is the typical trend observed each year.

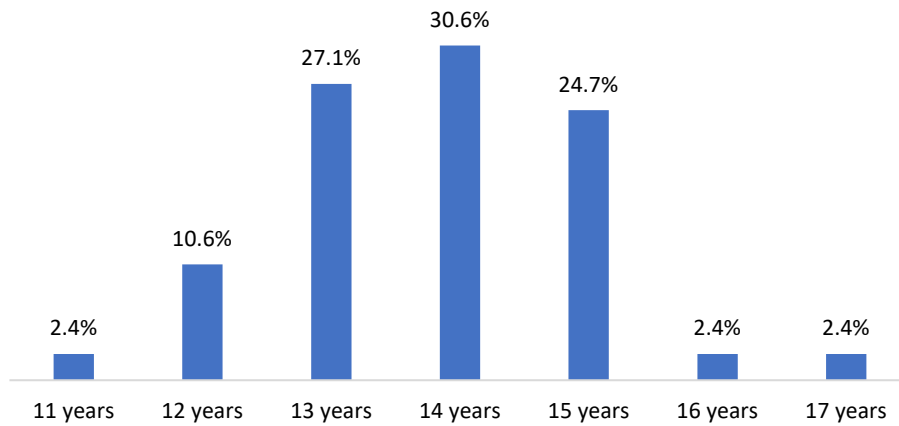
**Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Students Admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2022**



*Source: Edna Nicholls Centre*

<sup>6</sup> The aim of the Edna Nicholls Out-of-School Programme is to provide rehabilitative programmes for secondary school students who have been suspended, referred or expelled from school.

Figure 3: Age Distribution of Students Admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2022

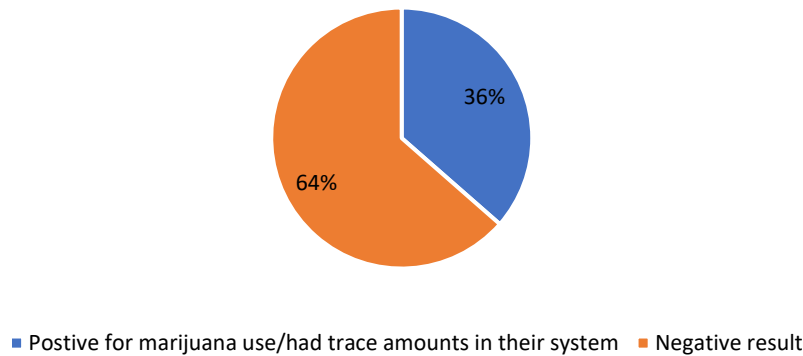


Source: Edna Nicholls Centre

### Drug Testing

As is typically done, all 85 students were drug-test on admission to the Centre. They were tested for marijuana and cocaine use. While no students tested positive for cocaine use, just over one-third tested positive for marijuana use, or had trace amounts of the drug in their system (a result of less than 50 ng/ml)<sup>7</sup> (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Distribution of Students Testing Positive vs. Negative for Marijuana Use

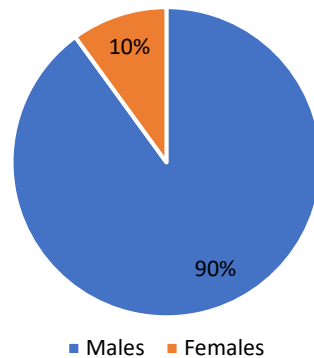


Source: Edna Nicholls Centre

<sup>7</sup> Ng/ml refers to nanograms per milliliter. This is a clinical indicator of the level of THC found within a sample of urine. THC is the main psychoactive chemical found in marijuana. A reading of 50 ng/ml or over is considered to be a *positive test* result while more than 0 but less 50 ng/ml suggests *trace amounts* of the drug within an individual's system. Test results are indicative of recency and level of use. Higher levels typically correspond with heavy and/or frequent/regular use.

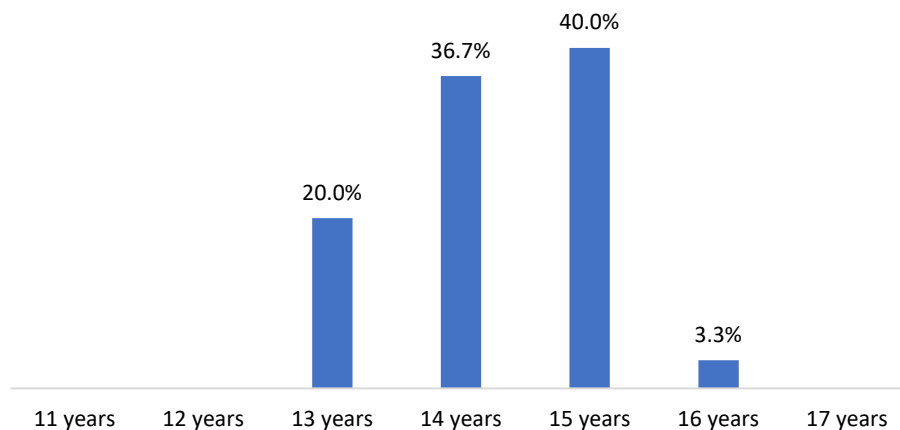
Much like the profile of students admitted to the Centre in 2022, the vast majority of those testing positive for marijuana use were also males between the ages of 13 and 15 years (See Figure 5 and 6). Figure 6 also shows that the percentage of students testing positive for marijuana use steadily increased with age, peaking among 15 year olds.

Figure 5: Gender Distribution of Students Testing Positive for Marijuana Use on Admission to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2022



Source: Edna Nicholls Centre

Figure 6: Age Distribution of Students Testing Positive for Marijuana Use on Admission to the Edna Nicholls Centre

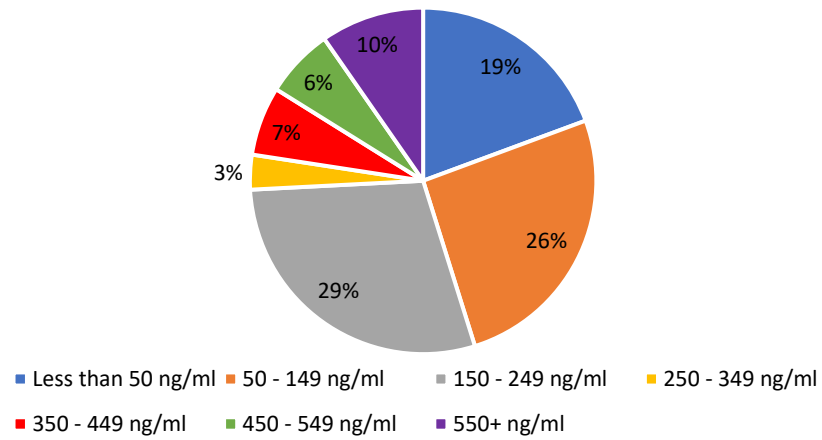


Source: Edna Nicholls Centre

The quantitative marijuana test results are presented in Figure 7. The Chart shows that 19% of the students had trace amounts of the drug in their system while just over half had readings between 50 and 249 ng/ml (See Figure 7). Notably fewer (26%) had results of 250 ng/ml and over (See Figure 7).



Figure 7: Distribution of Positive Marijuana Test Results for Students Admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre in 2022



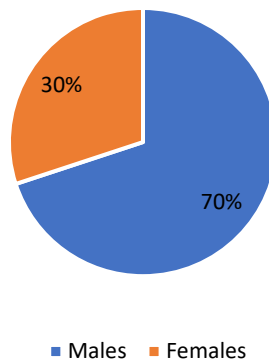
Source: Edna Nicholls Centre

## 4. Treatment and Rehabilitation

### 4.1 The Psychiatric Hospital

Nine hundred and two persons were admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital during the 2022 calendar year, the majority of whom were males (See Figure 8).

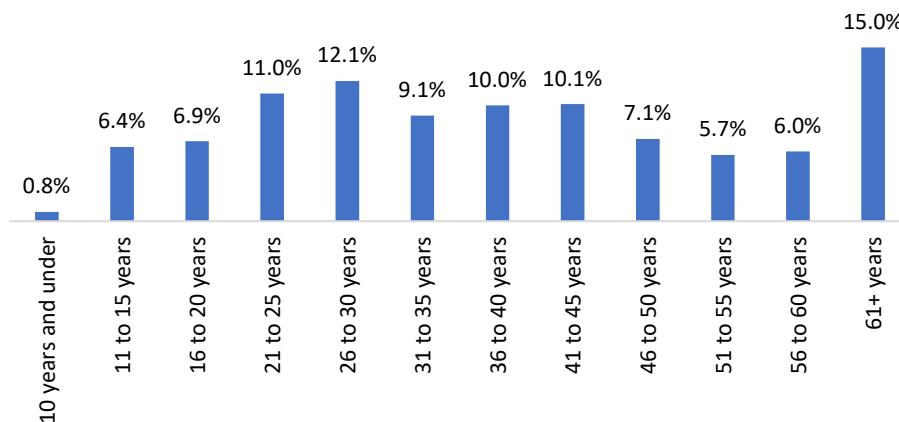
Figure 8: Gender Distribution of Patients Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital during the period January 1 to December 31, 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 9 shows that persons of all ages were admitted to the Hospital during the target period, ranging from 10 and under to 61 and over. The Chart also shows that of all the age categories, '61 and over' was the single largest (See Figure 9).

Figure 9: Age Distribution of Patients Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital during the period January 1 to December 31, 2022

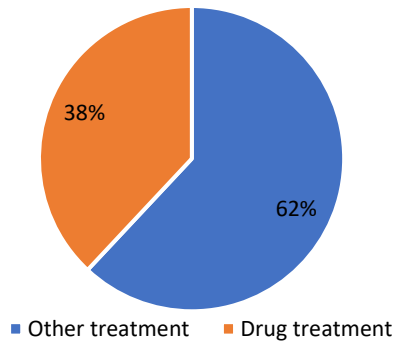


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

### ***Admissions Related to Drug Use***

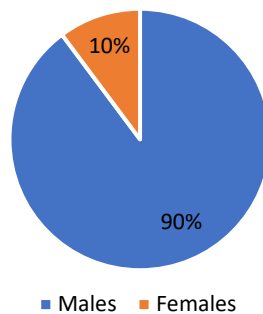
Approximately four out of every 10 persons (38%) admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital during the target period were treated for substance use disorders (See Figure 10). Figure 11 shows that males accounted for 90% of the drug-related admissions.

Figure 10: Distribution of Patients Seeking Drug Treatment vs. All Other Treatment at the Psychiatric Hospital - January 1 to December 31, 2022



*Source: The Psychiatric Hospital*

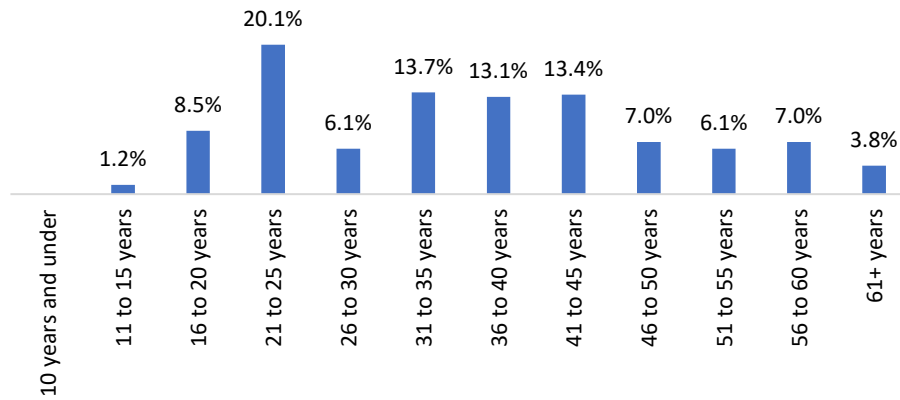
Figure 11: Gender Distribution of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the Psychiatric Hospital: January 1 to December 31, 2022



*Source: The Psychiatric Hospital*

While persons of all ages sought drug treatment at the Hospital in 2022, Figure 12 reveals that just under two thirds (62.7%) of the drug-related admissions involved persons ages 40 and under.

Figure 12: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital for Drug Treatment: January 1 to December 31, 2023

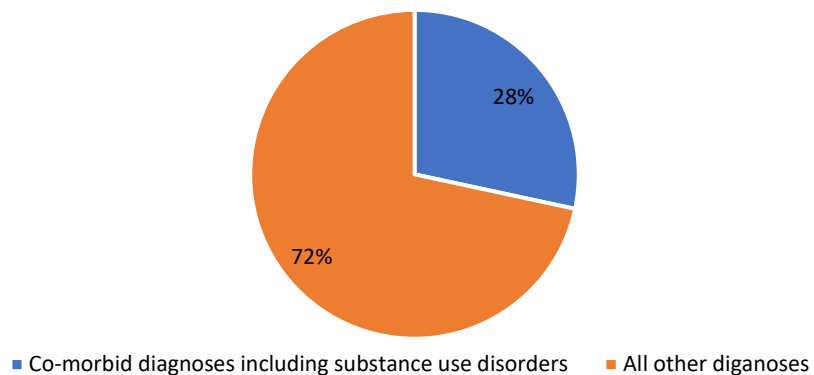


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

#### ***Comorbid Diagnoses Involving Substance Use Disorders***

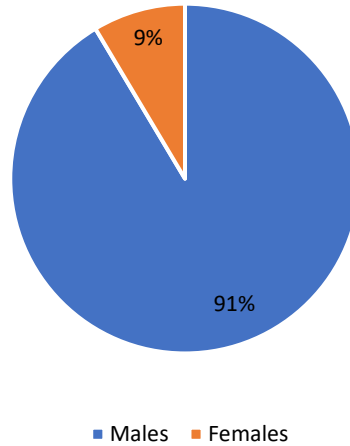
Figure 13 highlights the fact that 28% of the patients admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital in 2022 were admitted for co-morbid diagnoses which included a substance use disorder. Figures 14 and 15 show that the majority of these cases involved males and persons ages 40 and under. This is likely a reflection of the fact that most patients receiving drug treatment fell into one or both of these categories.

Figure 13: Co-morbid diagnoses vs. All other Diagnoses at the Psychiatric Hospital: January 1 to December 31, 2022



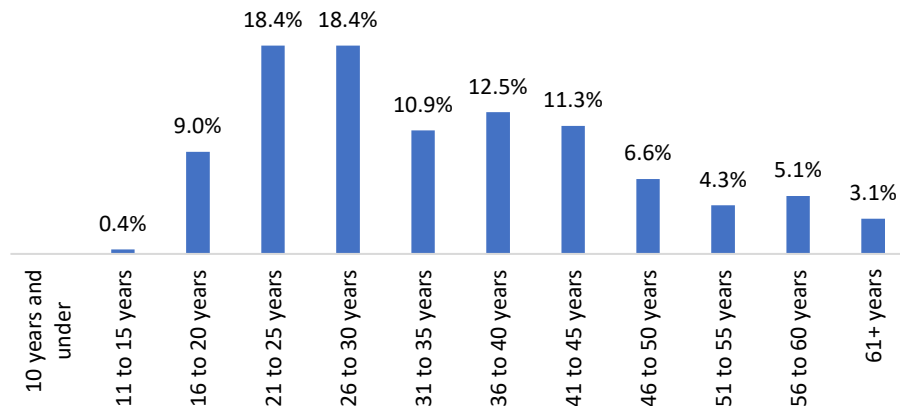
Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 14: Gender Distribution of Patients with Co-morbid Diagnoses including Substance Use Disorders at the Psychiatric Hospital: January 1 to December 31, 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 15: Age Distribution of Patients with Co-morbid Diagnoses at the Psychiatric Hospital: January 1 to December 31, 2022



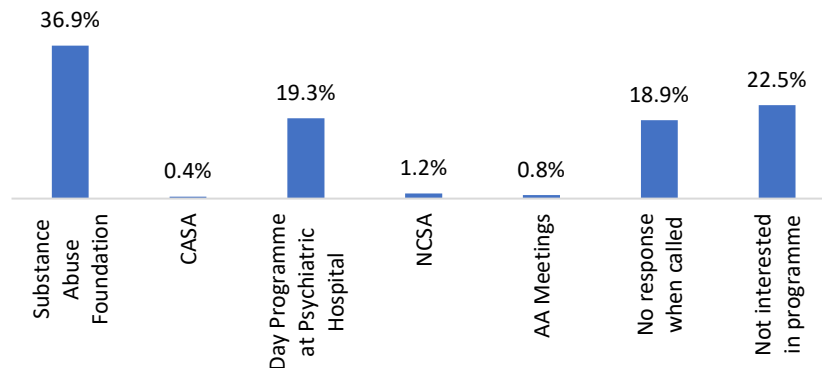
Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

### Drug Rehabilitation Unit

Two hundred and forty-four persons were assessed by the Hospital's Drug Rehabilitation Unit (DRU) in 2022. Following assessment, persons were referred to a number of programmes/organizations for treatment. Figure 16 presents the distribution of referrals made by the DRU during the year. From the

Chart it can be seen that the Substance Abuse Foundation (SAF) and the DRU's day programme received the majority of the referrals, though a small percentage of persons were also referred for treatment at the NCSA, the Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives (CASA) and Alcoholics Anonymous (See Figure 16). Also noteworthy is the large proportion of persons who were not interested in initiating a treatment programme (22.5%) and those who could not be reached by the DRU staff during a follow-up call to discuss treatment referrals/recommendations (18.9%)<sup>8</sup>.

Figure 16: Distribution of Treatment Referrals Made by the Drug Rehabilitation Unit: January 1 to December 31, 2023



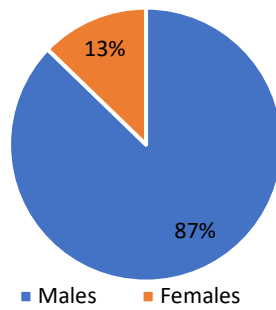
Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

#### *Demographic Profile of Persons Receiving Drug Treatment from the DRU*

Forty-seven of the 244 persons assessed by the DRU were admitted to the DRU's day programme. The gender and age profile of these individuals corresponds with the previously presented gender and age data whereby most of the DRU clients were males and persons ages 40 and under (See Figures 17 through 19).

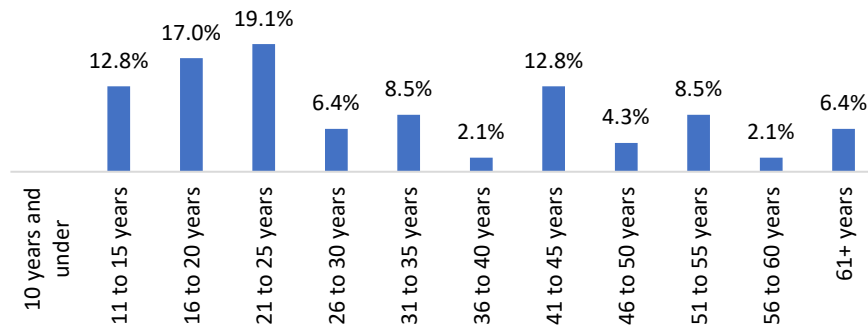
<sup>8</sup> Following the onset of COVID-19, the Drug Rehabilitation Unit ceased in-person counselling and transitioned to telephone counselling in an effort to reduce the number of persons entering the Hospital compound. In order to receive drug counselling, persons must provide a valid telephone number where they can be reached. The Drug Rehabilitation Unit attempts to reach persons three times to initiate counselling sessions following assessment. If they cannot be reached within these three tries, no further attempts are made.

Figure 17: Gender Distribution of Clients Admitted the Psychiatric Hospital's Day Programme: January 1 to December 31, 2022



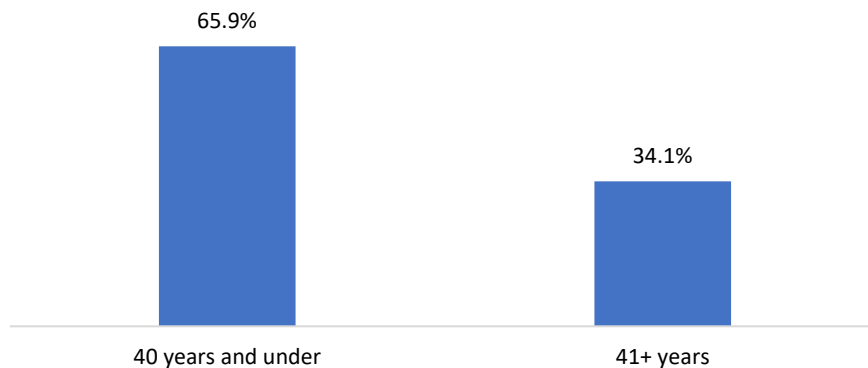
Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 18: Age Distribution of Clients Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital's Day Programme: January 1 to December 31, 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 19: Age Distribution of Clients Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital's Day Programme: January 1 to December 31, 2022

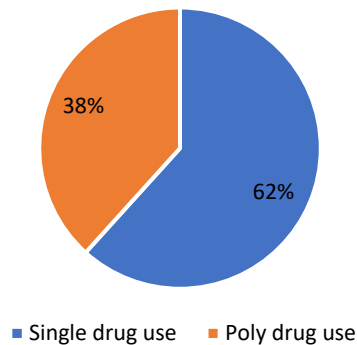


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

### Drug Use Profile

Figures 20 through 24 present the drug use profile for the clients treated by the DRU in 2022. From Figure 20 it can be seen that approximately two-thirds (62%) of the clients were treated for single drug use while 38% were treated for the use of multiple substances i.e. poly drug use.

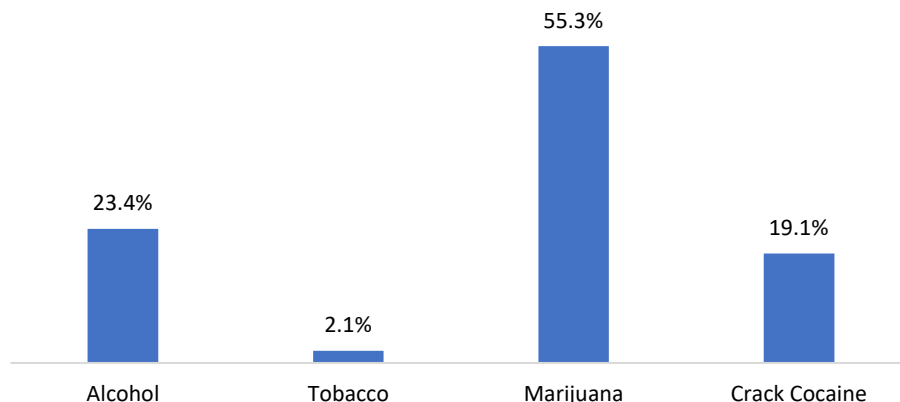
Figure 20: Clients Seeking Treatment for Single Drug vs Polydrug Use from the Psychiatric Hospital's Day Programme: January 1 to December 31, 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

With regards to the primary drugs for which treatment was sought, Figure 21 reveals that marijuana was the main drug motivating the need for treatment among the clients during the period under review. Notably fewer persons were treated for their use of alcohol, crack cocaine and tobacco (See Figure 21).

Figure 21: Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought from the Psychiatric Hospital's Day Programme: January 1 to December 31, 2022

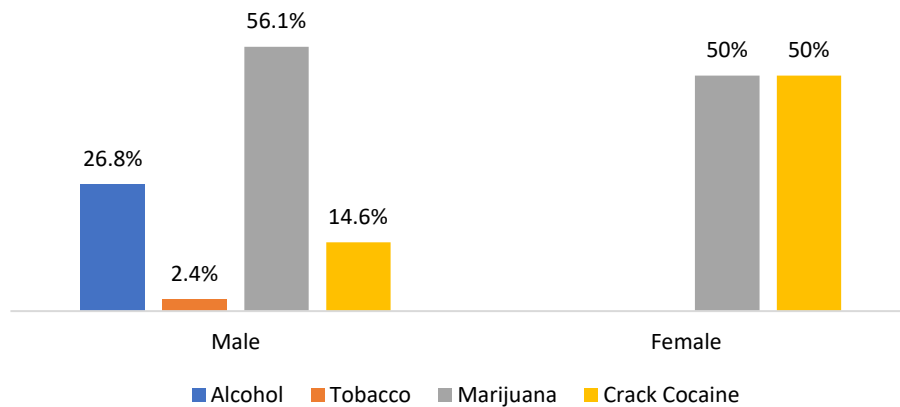


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital



When gender was considered, marijuana remained the most common primary drug for males, distantly followed by alcohol, crack cocaine and tobacco (See Figure 22). In contrast, females only sought treatment for one of two substances - marijuana or crack cocaine – and these were reported with equal frequency (See Figure 22)

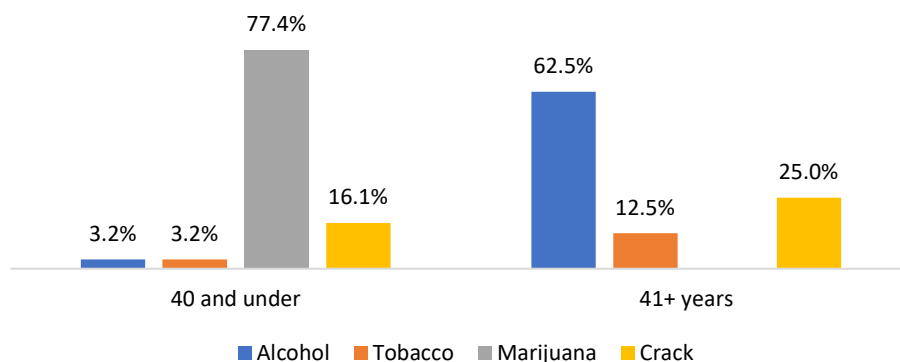
Figure 22: Primary Drug for which Treatment was Sought from the Psychiatric Hospital's Day Programme by Gender: January 1 to December 31, 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

With regards to age, Figure 23 shows that marijuana was the most common primary drug for those ages 40 and under while alcohol was most common among those 41 and up. Also apparent from the Chart is the fact that no-one in the 41 and over age category sought treatment for marijuana use.

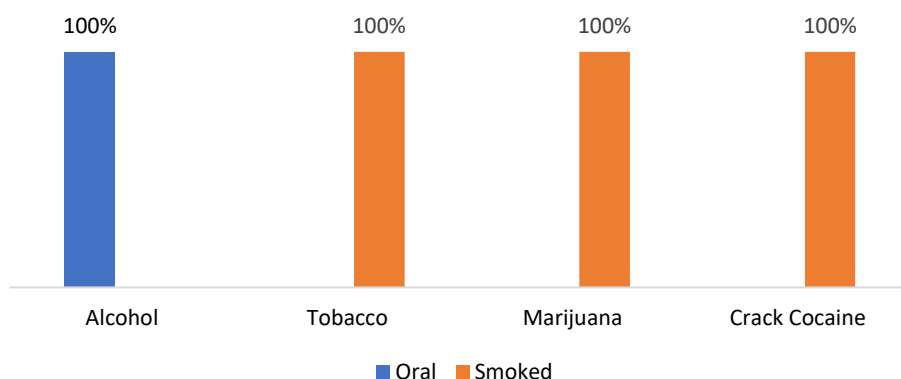
Figure 23: Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought from the Psychiatric Hospital's Day Programme by Age: January 1 to December 31, 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 24 presents the most frequent method of administration for all of the primary drugs identified. It shows that all persons treated for alcohol use consumed the substance orally while “smoked” was the only method of administration used for tobacco, marijuana and crack cocaine (See Figure 24).

Figure 24: Most Frequent Method of Administration for Primary Drug among Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehab Unit in 2022

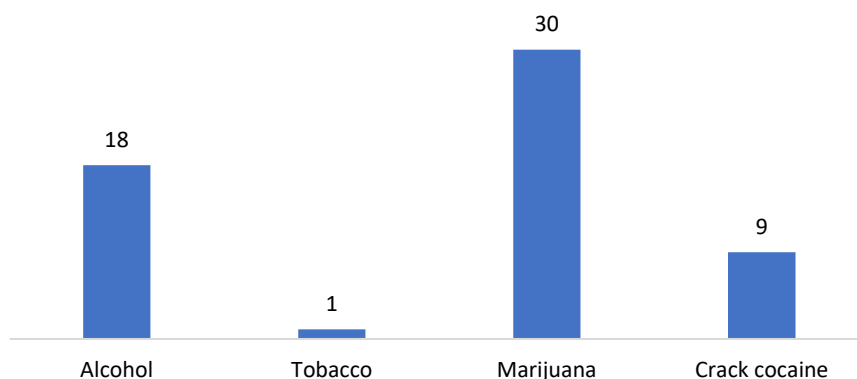


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

#### Recent Drug Use History

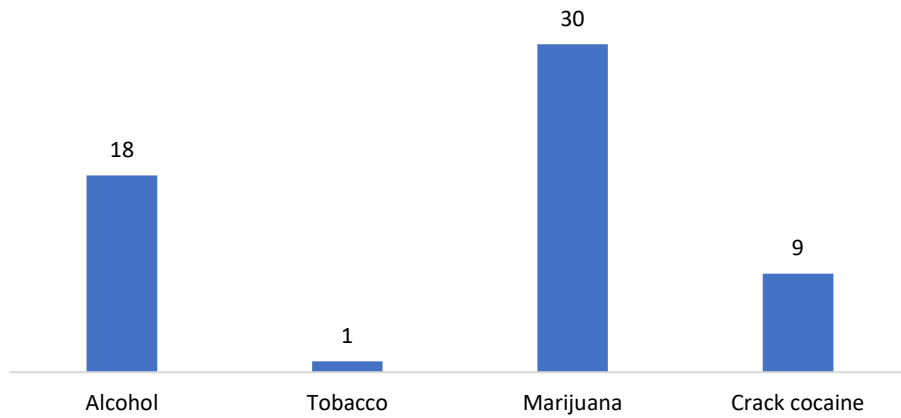
Figures 25 through 30 present data on the clients' drug use in the 12 months and 30 days leading up to treatment entry. An initial assessment of the Charts reveals that the data for both periods is identical. As such, marijuana was the most commonly use substance in both the year and month prior to admission (See Figures 25 and 26). Other substances used during these time periods included alcohol, crack cocaine and tobacco (See Figures 25 and 26).

Figure 25: Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehab Unit in 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

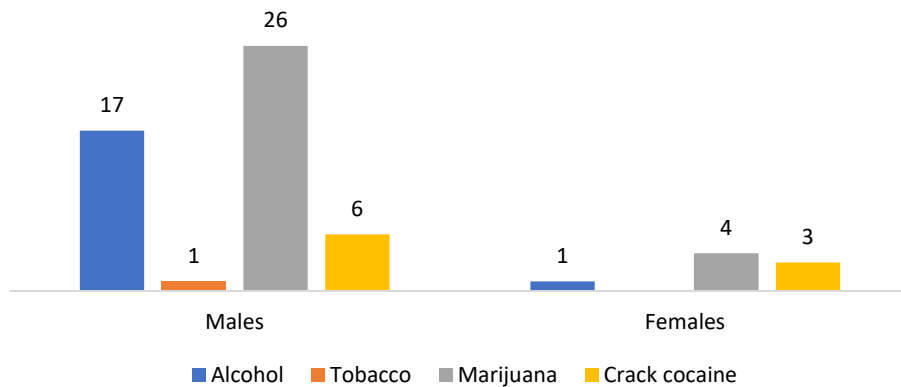
Figure 26: Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehab Unit in 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

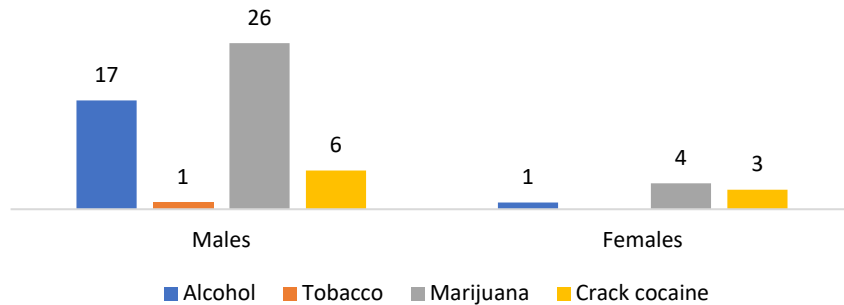
With regards to gender, Figures 27 and 28 show that during the 12 month and 30 day lead up, males primarily used marijuana and alcohol while females typically used marijuana and crack cocaine.

Figure 27: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehab Unit in 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

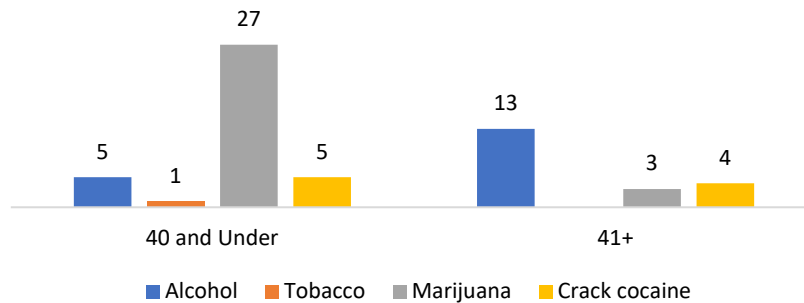
Figure 28: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehab Unit in 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

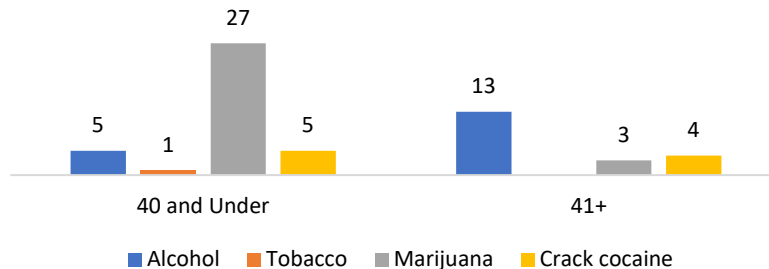
When age was considered, Figures 29 and 30 show that during the preceding year and month, marijuana was the most commonly used substance among those ages 40 and under while alcohol was the most popular substance for those 41 years and over.

Figure 29: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehab Unit in 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 30: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Admitted to the Drug Rehab Unit in 2022

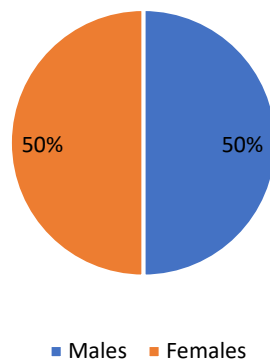


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

### **Thrive Family Centre**

Sixty-four persons (ages 17 and under) were admitted to the Thrive Family Centre in 2022 where they received treatment for behavioural problems. Figure 31 shows that males and females were equally represented among the admissions for the year.

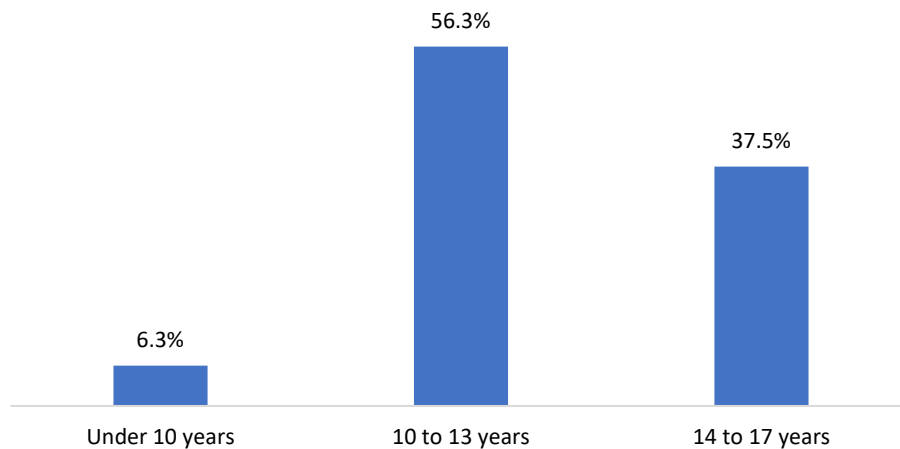
Figure 31: Gender Distribution of Patients Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre: January 1 to December 31, 2022



*Source: The Psychiatric Hospital*

With regards to age, more than half of those admitted to the Centre were in the 10 to 13 age category while just over one third were between the ages of 14 and 17 (See Figure 32). There were notably fewer admissions involving persons under the age of 10 (See Figure 32).

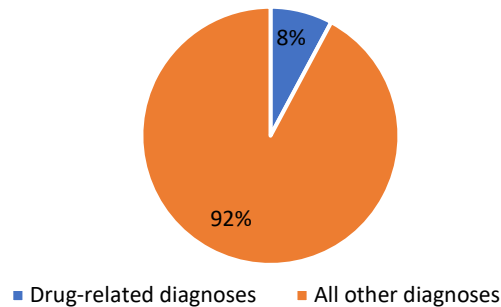
Figure 32: Age Distribution of Patients Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre: January 1 to December 31, 2022



*Source: The Psychiatric Hospital*

Five (8%) of the 64 persons admitted to the Thrive Family Centre received drug-related diagnoses (See Figure 33), the majority of whom were males in the 14 to 17 age category (See Figures 34 and 35). Marijuana was the primary drug for four out of the five persons with drug-related diagnoses, while alcohol was the primary drug for the remaining individual.

Figure 33: Drug-related Diagnoses vs All other Diagnoses among Patients Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre: January 1 to December 31, 2022



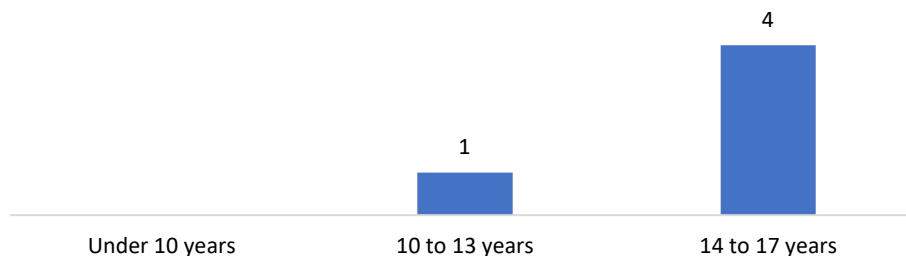
Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 34: Gender Distribution of Patients Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre for Drug-related Diagnoses: January 1 to December 31, 2022



Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

Figure 35: Age Distribution of Patients Admitted to the Thrive Family Centre for Drug-related Diagnoses: January 1 to December 31, 2022

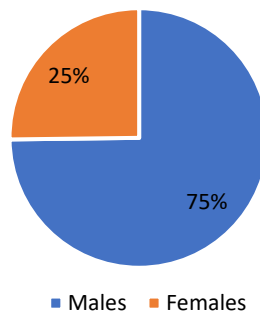


Source: The Psychiatric Hospital

## 4.2 Substance Abuse Foundation

One hundred and twenty-seven clients sought treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation (SAF)<sup>9</sup> in 2022, with males accounting for three quarters of the admissions during the year (See Figure 36).

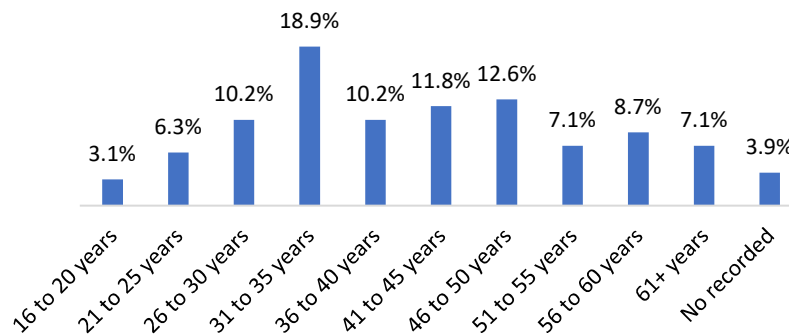
Figure 36: Gender Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 37 shows that persons across the lifespan sought treatment from SAF during the target period. From the Chart it can be seen that approximately six out of every 10 persons (60.5%) were 45 years of age or younger.

Figure 37: Age Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022



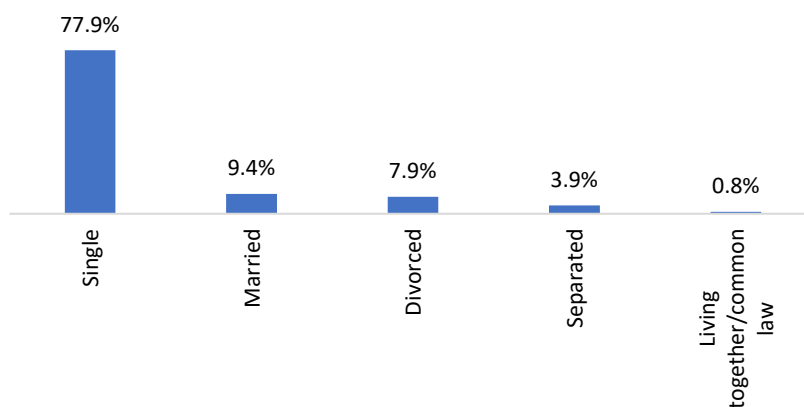
Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

<sup>9</sup> The Substance Abuse Foundation Inc. comprises of 2 treatment facilities: Verdun House and Marina House. Verdun House caters to males 18 years of age and older while Marina House caters to females 18 years and over.

From Figures 38 through 42 present additional demographic information on the Foundation’s 2022 clients. These Charts show that their clients were primarily single individuals with no dependents who lived in their family home (See Figures 38 through 40). The latter should be interpreted with some level of caution, for while it is typical to find that most persons in treatment live within their family home, Figure 40 also highlights the fact that the living arrangements were not known for approximately one-third of the clients. This is a substantial proportion which therefore introduces the possibility that the distribution could be different if their living arrangements were known.

In terms of education and employment, most persons had completed secondary school and approximately two-thirds were unemployed at the time of admission (See Figures 41 and 42).

Figure 38: Relationship Status of Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

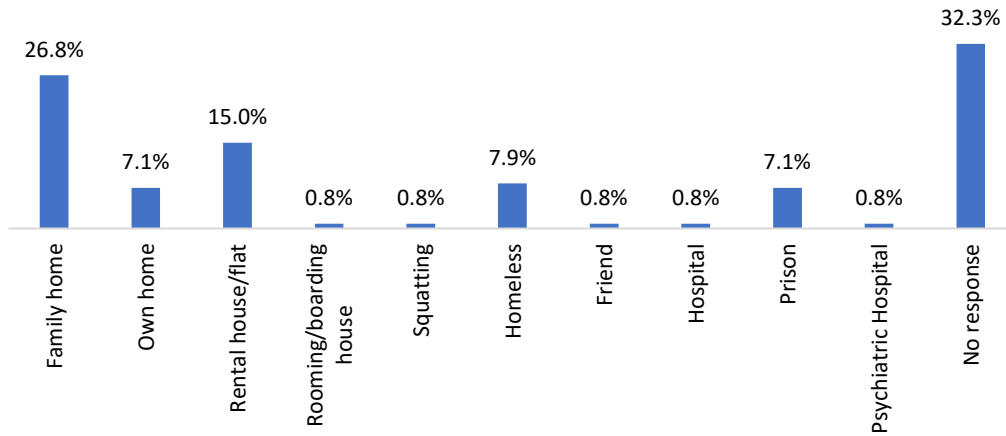
Figure 39: Distribution of Persons With and Without Dependents Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

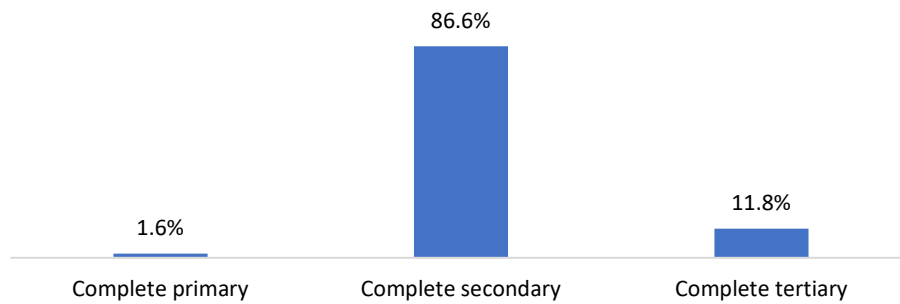


Figure 40: Living Arrangements of Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022



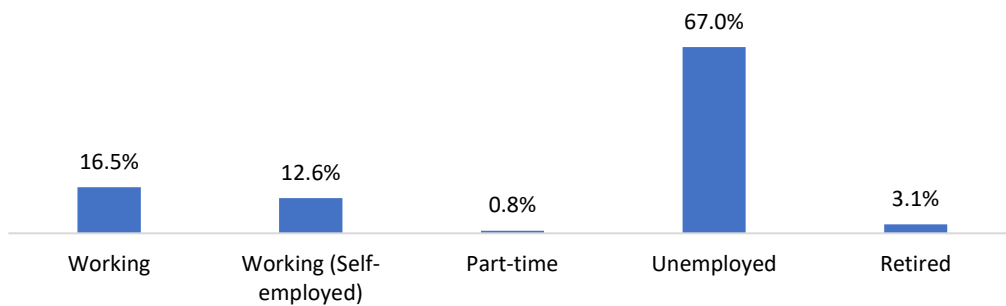
Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 41: Highest Level of Education Attained by Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 42: Employment Status of Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022

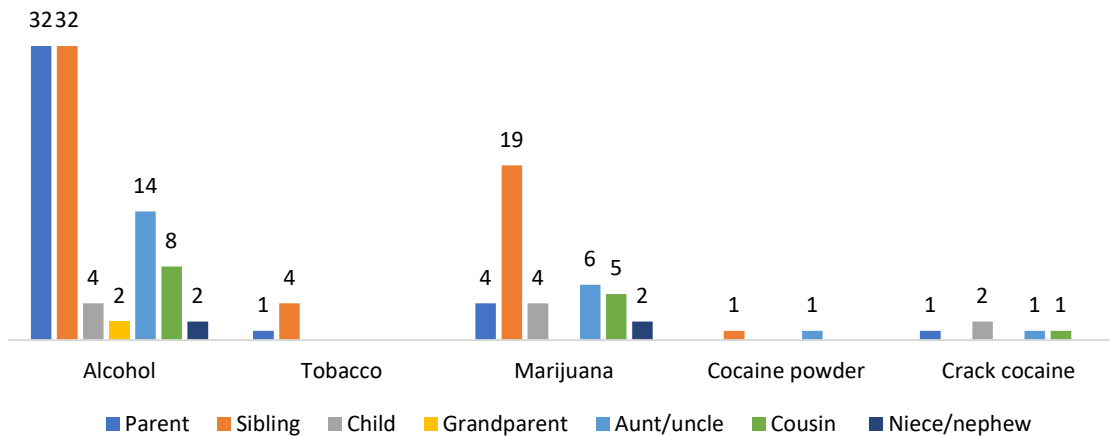


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### Family History of Drug Use

Figure 43 presents the family history of drug use among the clients admitted to the SAF in 2022. From the Chart it can be seen that alcohol and marijuana were the two substances most commonly used by family members. It also shows that clients were more likely to report drug use by immediate family members e.g. parents, siblings and children.

Figure 43: Family History of Drug Use among Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022

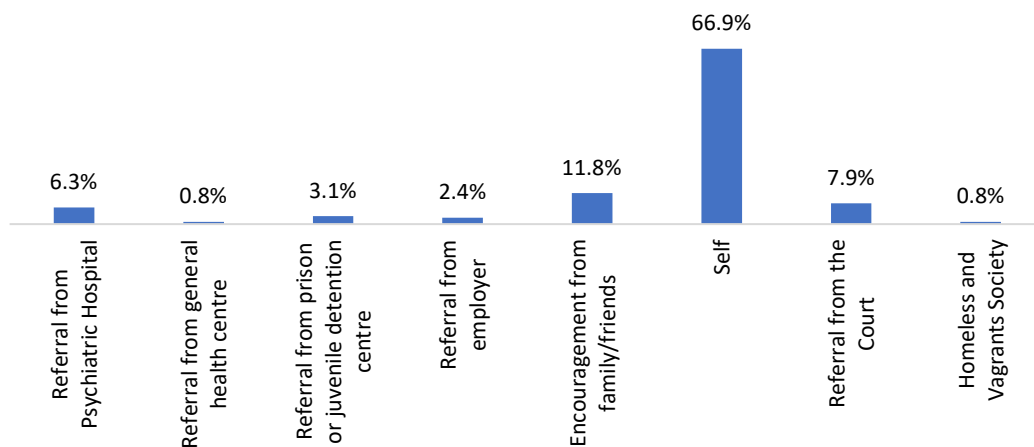


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### Treatment Referral

Figure 44 reveals that two-thirds of the Foundation's clients during the target period sought treatment of their own volition i.e. they were self-referred. This was distantly followed by persons who sought treatment as a result of encouragement from their family and friends (See Figure 44). There were also a small number of referrals from the Psychiatric Hospital, the Court system, the prison/juvenile detention centre, employers, the Homeless and Vagrants Society and general health centres (See Figure 44).

Figure 44: Source of Referral for Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022

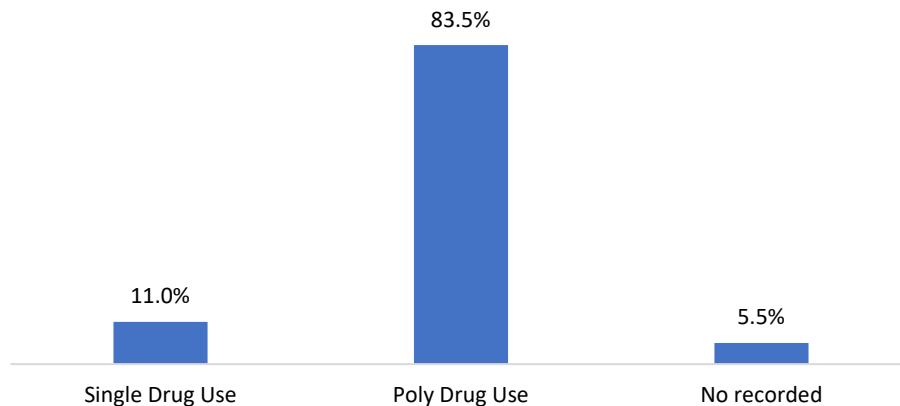


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### Drug Treatment Profile

Approximately eight out of every 10 persons (83.5%) treated at the SAF in 2022 were treated for poly drug use (See Figure 45).

Figure 45: Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment for Single Drug Use vs Poly Drug Use at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022

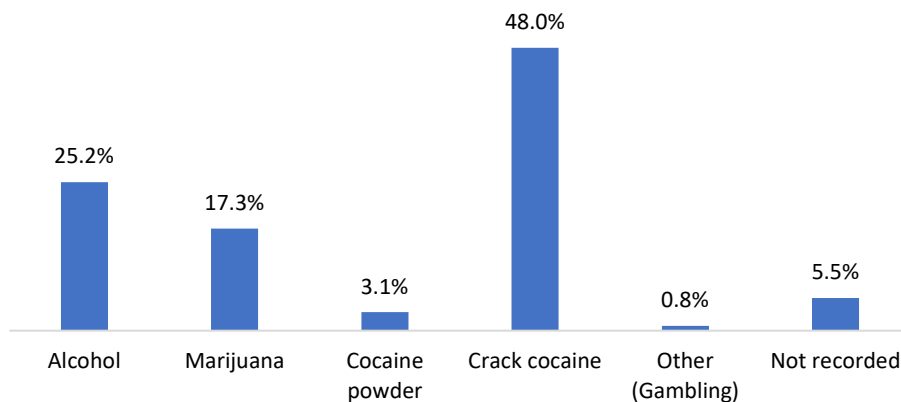


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Much like persons treated for single drug use, poly drug users also typically have a primary drug of choice. As such, Figure 46 presents the primary drugs motivating the need for treatment among *all* clients at the SAF during the year. From the Chart it can be seen that crack cocaine, alcohol and

marijuana were the most common primary drugs for this cohort. This corresponds with findings from previous years.

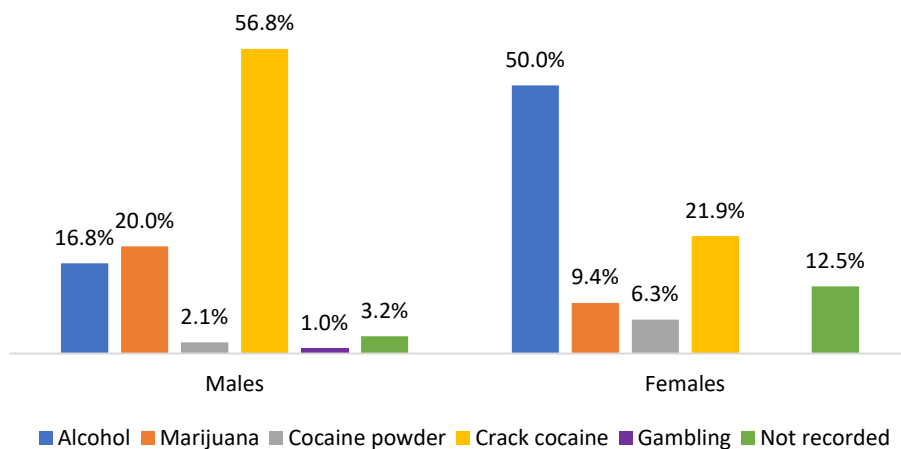
Figure 46: Primary Drugs for which Persons Sought Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

When gender was taken into account, crack cocaine remained the most common primary drug for men, while alcohol was found to be the most common for women (See Figure 47).

Figure 47: Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022 by Gender

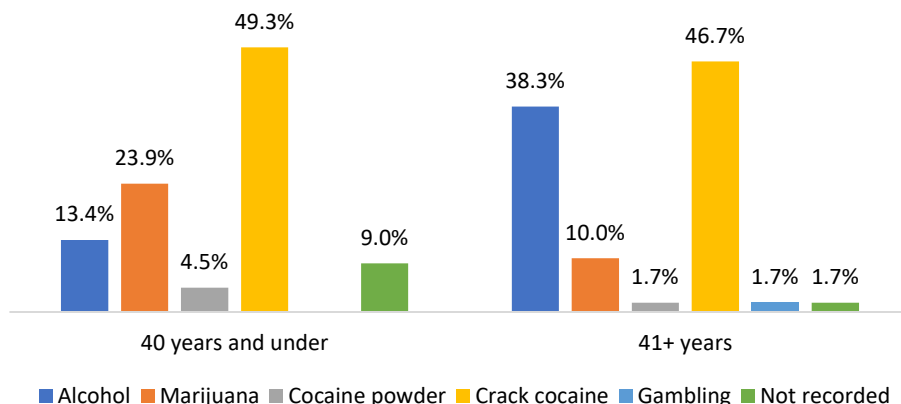


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

With regards to age, Figure 48 shows that crack cocaine was the most common primary drug for both the 40 and under and 41 and over age groups. The Chart also shows that persons 41 and over were more likely to seek treatment for alcohol use whereas those 40 and under were more likely to be

treated for marijuana use (See Figure 48). While very few persons sought treatment at the SAF for cocaine powder, the majority of those who did were in the 40 and under age category (See Figure 48).

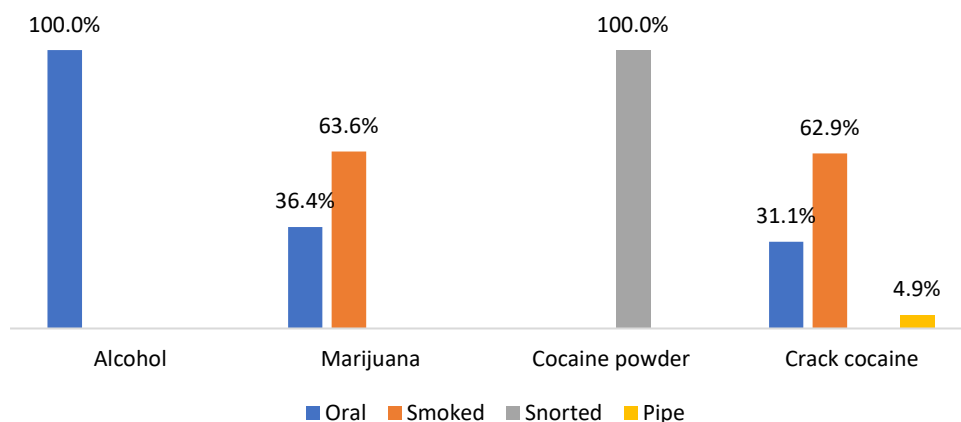
Figure 48: Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022 by Age



Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

Figure 49 presents the most frequent methods of administration for the primary drugs as reported by the clients. The Chart shows that all persons treated for alcohol use consumed the substance orally. Approximately two-thirds of those treated for marijuana use smoked the drug while approximately one-third reported oral consumption (See Figure 49). For cocaine powder, snorting was the only method of administration identified (See Figure 49). In contrast, more diverse methods were reported for crack cocaine, which included smoking, oral consumption and the use of a pipe (See Figure 49).

Figure 49: Most Frequent Method of Drug Administration for Primary Drugs Among Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022

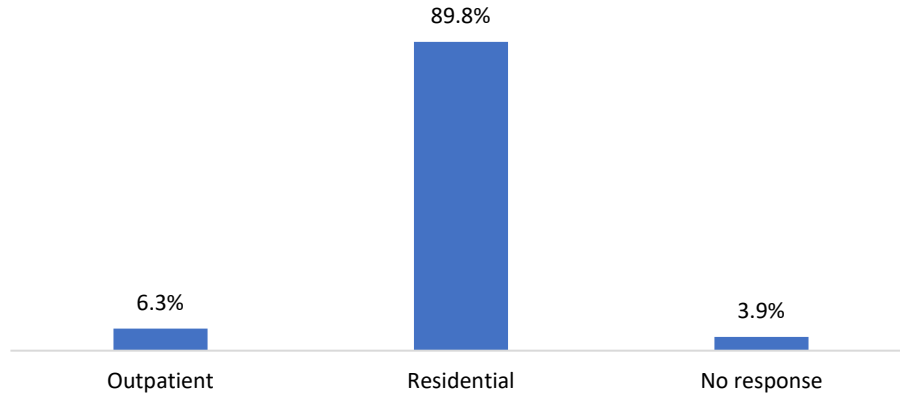


Source: Substance Abuse Foundation

### ***Most Recent Treatment Prior to Admission***

Most clients had received previous treatment for their drug use, with residential treatment being the most recent type prior to current enrollment for approximately nine out of every 10 clients (89.8%) (See Figure 50).

Figure 50: Most Recent Type of Drug Treatment Before Current Enrollment Among Persons Seeking Treatment at the Substance Abuse Foundation in 2022

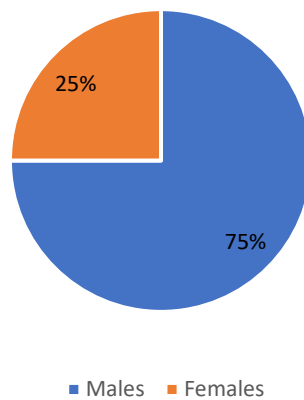


*Source: Substance Abuse Foundation*

### 4.3 Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

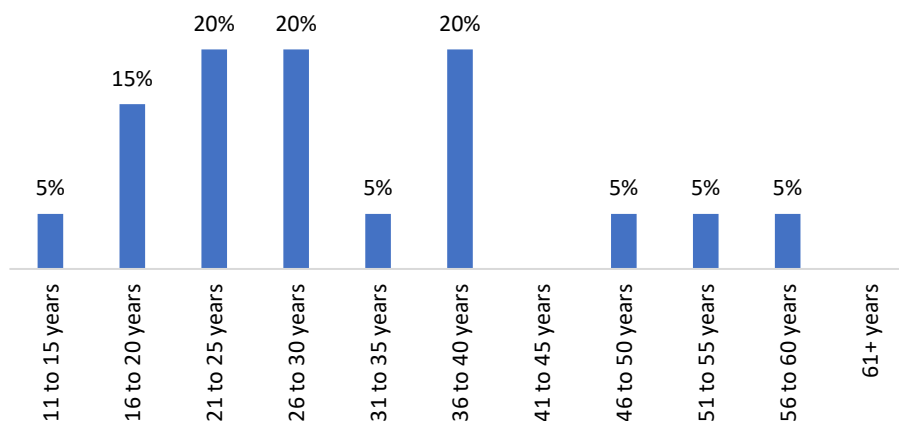
During the period January 1 to December 31, 2022, a total of 20 persons sought treatment at the Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives (CASA). Three quarters of the clients during that year were male (See Figure 51) while 85% were aged 40 and under (See Figure 52).

Figure 51: Gender Distribution of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

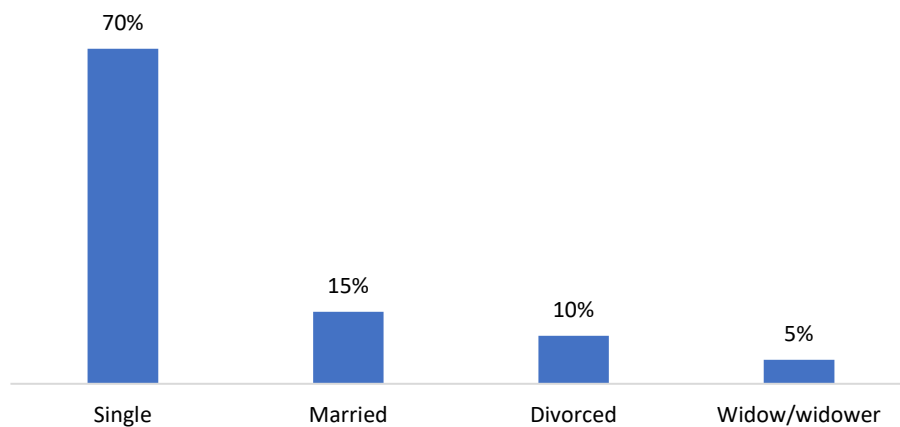
Figure 52: Age Distribution of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

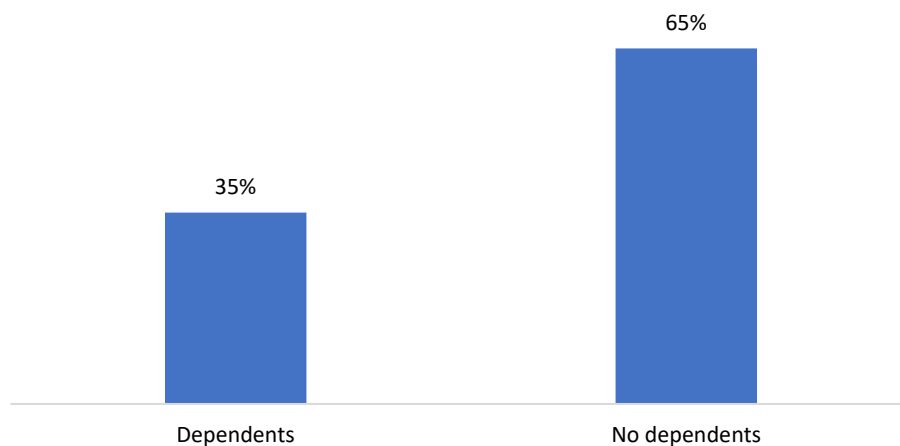
Additional demographic data for the clients is presented in Figures 53 through 57. From the Charts it can be seen that CASA's 2022 client population primarily consisted of single individuals who lived in their family home and had no dependents (See Figures 53 through 55). With respect to education and employment, most persons had completed secondary school (55%) and were employed (65%) (See Figures 56 and 57).

Figure 53: Relationship Status of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

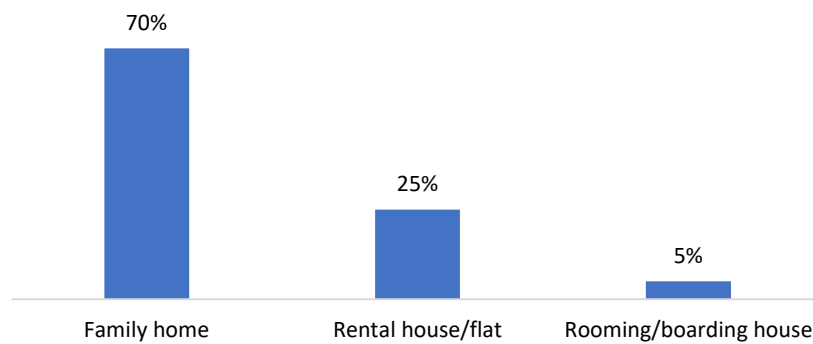
Figure 54: Distribution of Persons With and Without Dependents Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

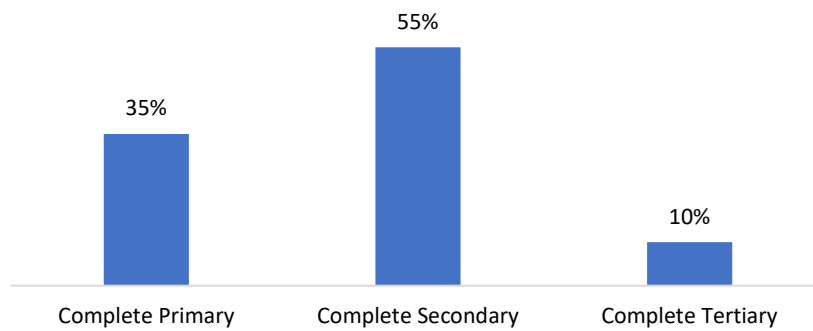


Figure 55: Living Arrangements of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



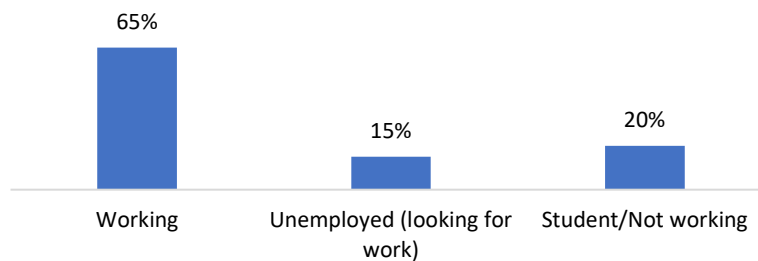
Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 56: Highest Level of Education Attained by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 57: Employment Status of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022

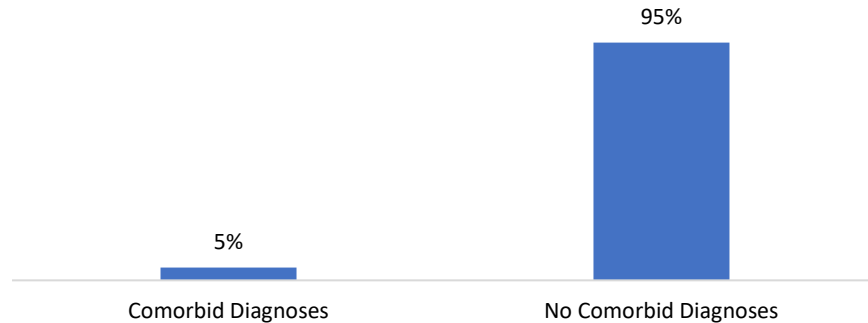


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

### Psychiatric History

One out of the 20 clients (5%) seeking treatment at CASA in 2022 reported having a comorbid mental health and substance use disorder (See Figure 58).

Figure 58: Distribution of Personw with Comorbid Diagnoses vs Those Without Who Sought DrugTreatment at CASA in 2022

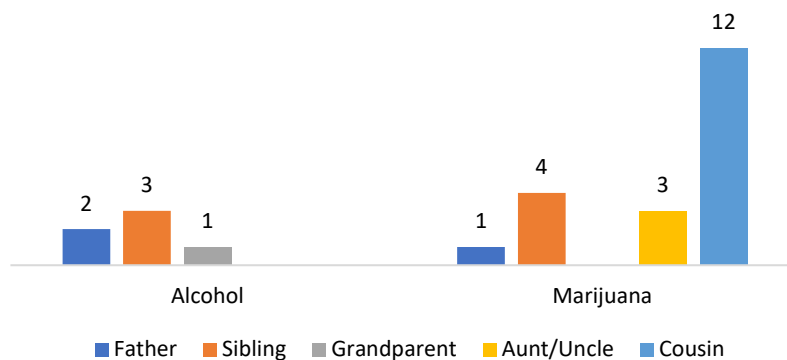


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

### Family History of Drug Use

With regards to a family history of drug use, Figure 59 shows that clients reported the use of two substances by family members, namely alcohol and marijuana. Of these, marijuana use was more common (See Figure 59). The Chart also reveals the use of marijuana by both immediate and extended family members, while alcohol use was more common among immediate family members (See Figure 59).

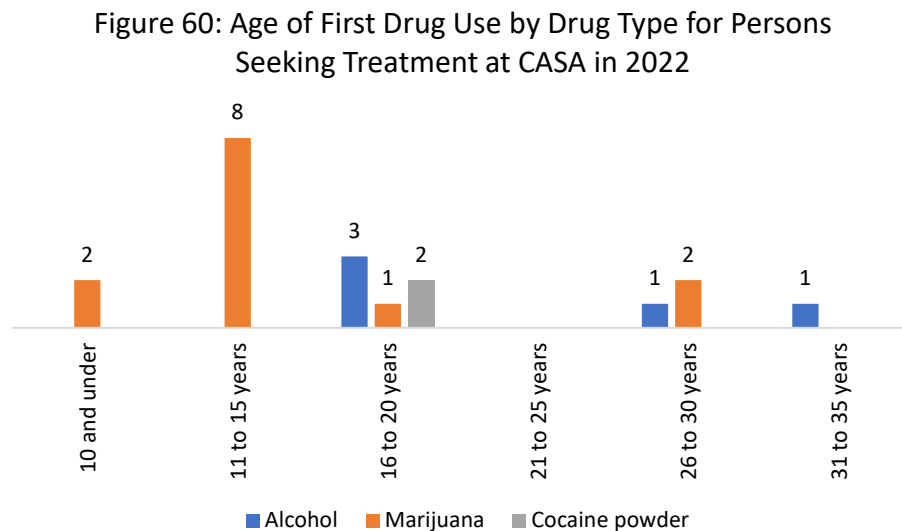
Figure 59: Family History of Drug Use Among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

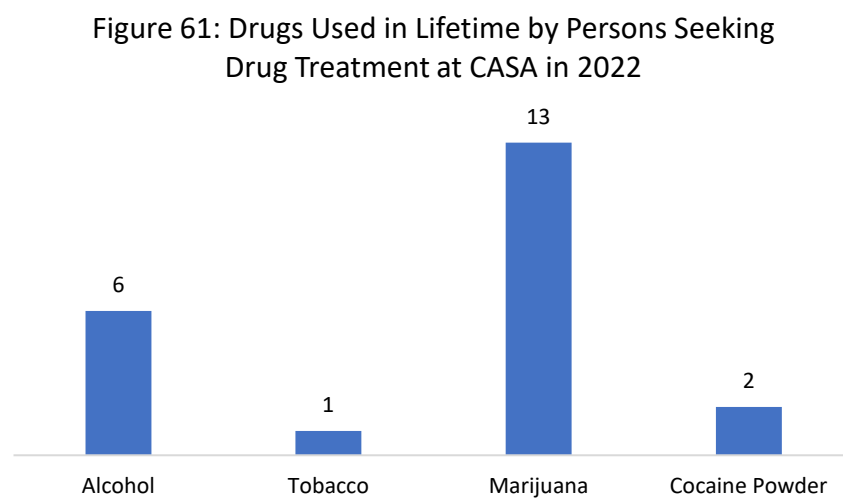
### Client History of Drug Use

Figure 60 presents clients' first drug use by age and drug type. From the Chart it can be seen that marijuana was the most common drug of first use and use of this substance typically occurred by age 15 (See Figure 60). Persons who reported alcohol and cocaine powder as their drugs of first use were more likely to have initiated drug use at a later age (See Figure 60).



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Data regarding the clients' lifetime drug use is presented in Figure 61. The Chart shows that marijuana, alcohol, cocaine powder and tobacco were the only four substances reportedly used by the clients during their lifetime (See Figure 61). Of these, marijuana was the most common (See Figure 61).

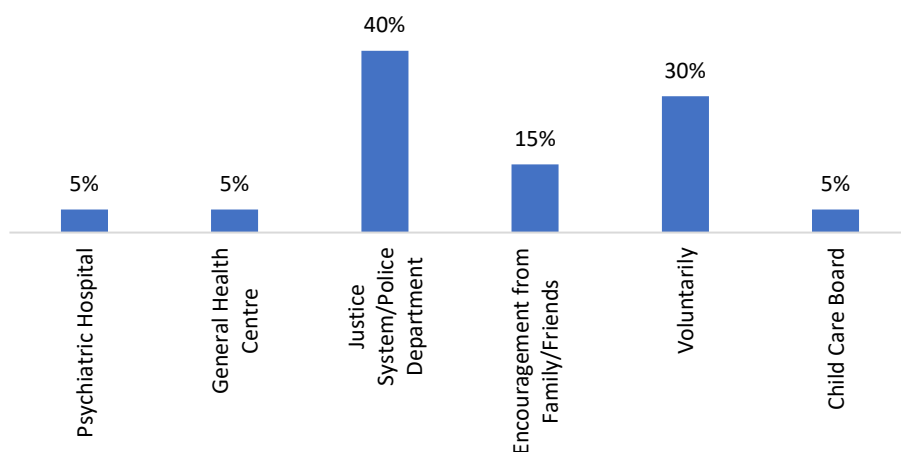


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

### ***Treatment Referral***

Four out of every 10 persons seeking treatment at CASA in 2022 were referred by the Justice System/Police Department while three out of every 10 did so of their own volition (See Figure 62). Notably fewer sought treatment as a result of encouragement from family and friends or through referrals from a health facility (See Figure 62). There was also one case involving a referral from the Child Care Board (See Figure 62).

Figure 62: Sources of Referral for Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022

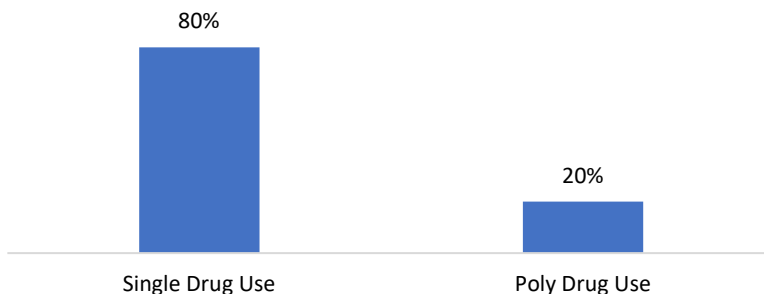


*Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives*

### ***Drug Treatment Profile***

The majority (80%) of persons seeking treatment at CASA in 2022 were treated for single drug use, while 20% were treated for the use of two or more substances i.e. poly drug use (See Figure 63).

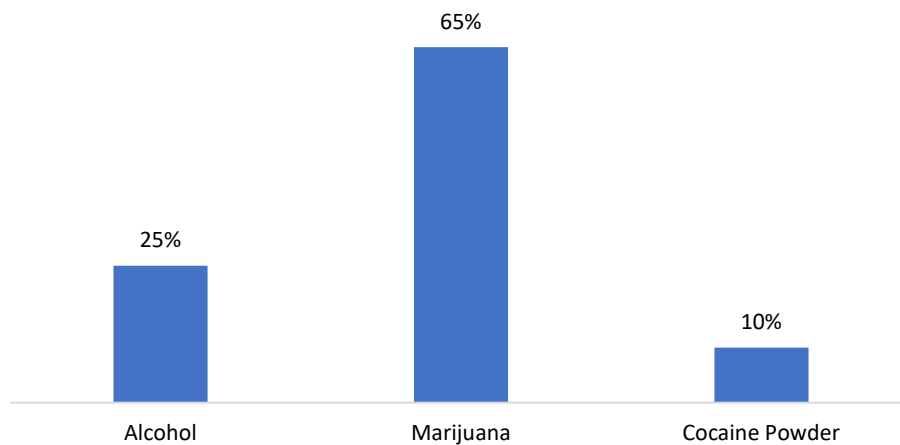
Figure 63: Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment for Single Drug Use vs. Poly Drug Use at CASA in 2022



*Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives*

Figure 64 reveals that there were three drugs for which treatment was sought at CASA in 2022, namely: marijuana, alcohol and cocaine powder. Marijuana accounted for 65% of the admissions during the target period (See Figure 64).

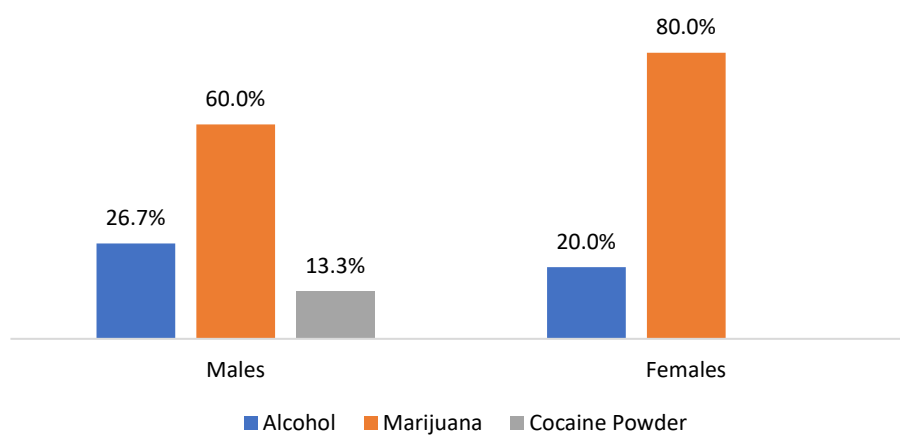
Figure 64: Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

When gender was considered, marijuana remained the most common primary drug for males and females (See Figure 65). Additionally, Figure 65 shows that while both males and females sought treatment for marijuana and alcohol use, only males sought treatment for the use of cocaine powder.

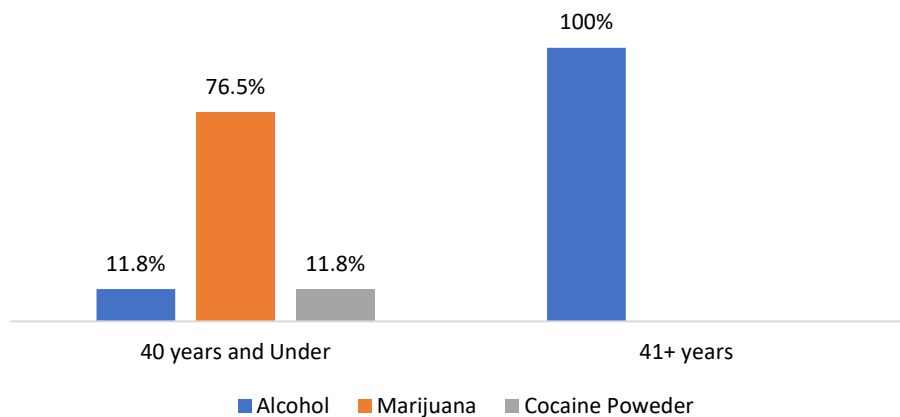
Figure 65: Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought at CASA in 2022 by Gender



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

With regards to age, Figure 66 reveals that alcohol was the only substance for which treatment was sought by persons ages 41 and over while those 40 and under were most likely to seek treatment for marijuana use.

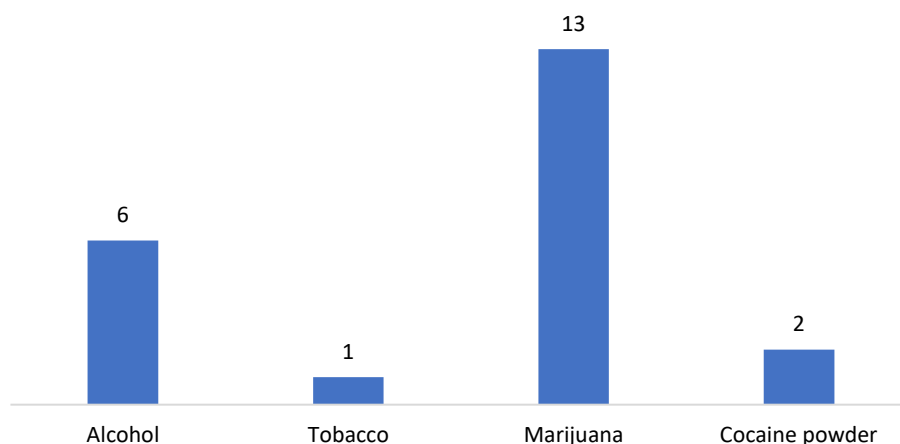
Figure 66: Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought at CASA in 2022 by Age



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 67 presents the substances used by CASA clients in the 12 months prior to treatment admission. From the Chart it can be seen that clients were most likely report marijuana use during the 12-month period. However, some persons also reported the use of alcohol, cocaine powder and tobacco during that time (See Figure 67).

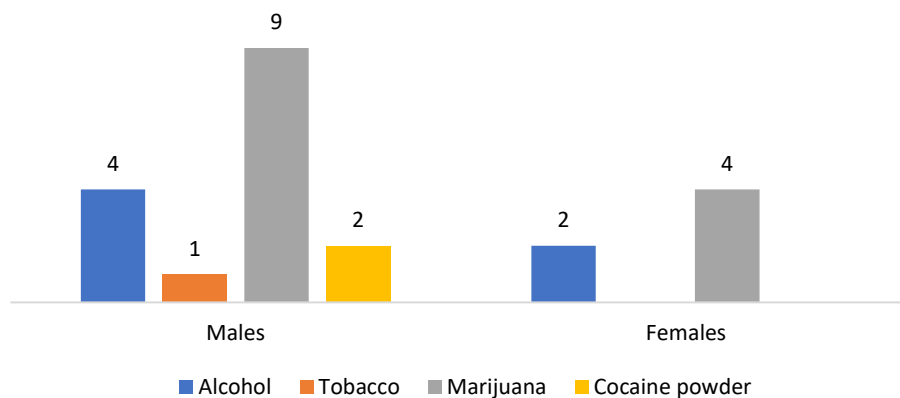
Figure 67: Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

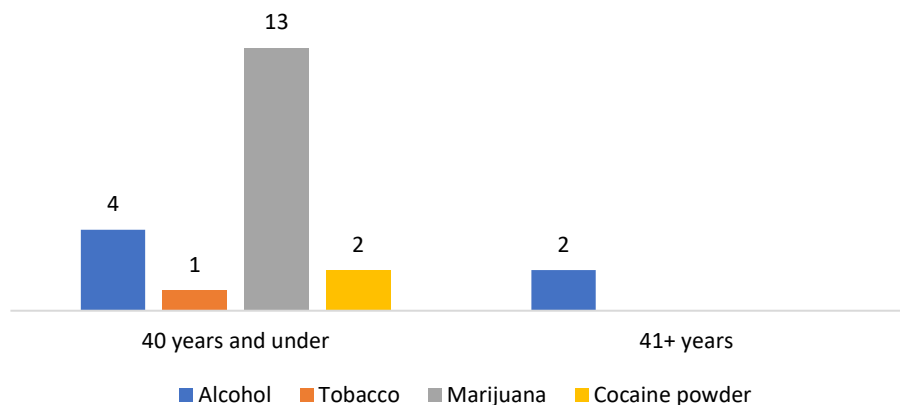
With regards to gender and age, males and persons age 40 and under were more likely to report the use of a variety of substances during the one-year lead up than females and persons in the 41 and over age category (See Figures 68 and 69).

Figure 68: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 69: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022

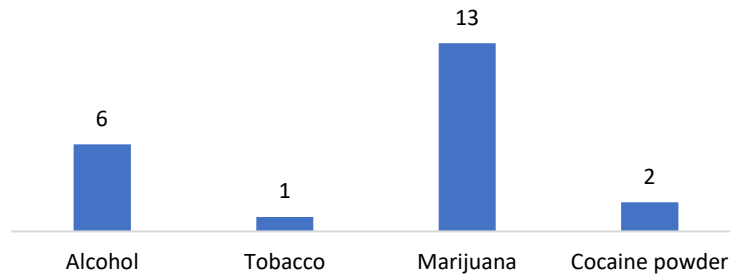


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

The data regarding clients' drug use in the 30 days prior to treatment entry is presented in Figures 70 through 72. The Charts reveal identical patterns to those for the past 12 month use. As such, during the

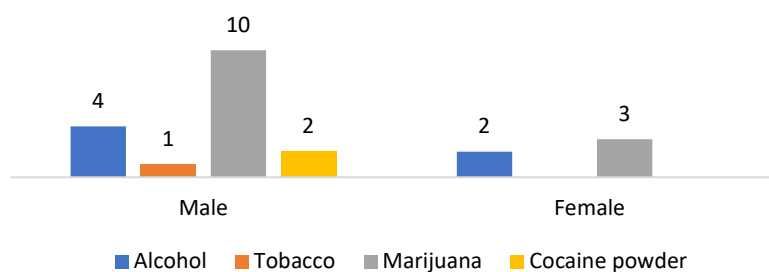
30-day lead up, persons only reported the use of marijuana, alcohol, cocaine powder and tobacco with males and persons ages 40 and under being more likely to report the use of all four substances.

Figure 70: Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



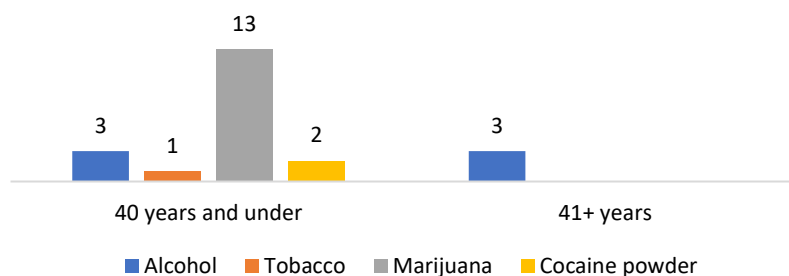
Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 71: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022



Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

Figure 72: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022

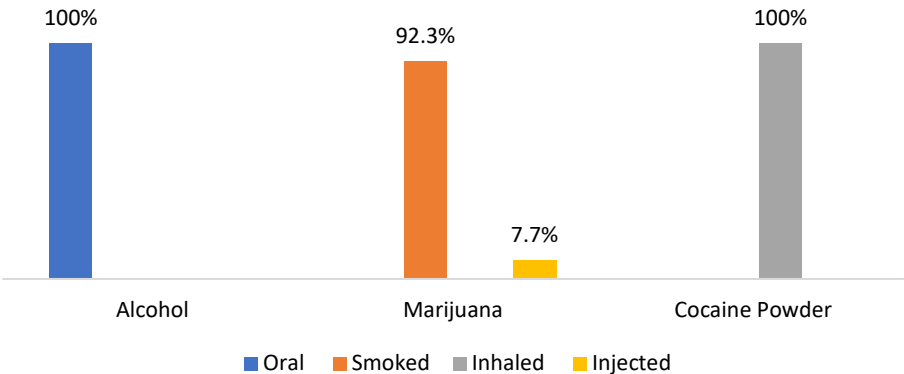


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives



When asked about the most frequent method of administration for their primary drugs, all persons seeking treatment for alcohol reported “oral” consumption (See Figure 73). While the majority of marijuana-clients indicated that they smoked the substance, there was a small percentage who revealed that they injected it (See Figure 73). This is notable as it is not usual to receive reports of injecting drug use in Barbados – particularly the injection of marijuana. Lastly, all persons seeking treatment for cocaine powder cited inhalation as the most frequent method of administration for this substance (See Figure 73).

Figure 73: Most Frequent Method of Administration for Primary Drugs Used by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022

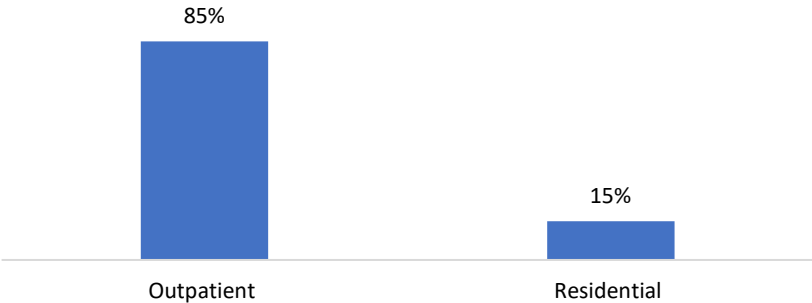


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

**Most Recent Treatment**

All 20 of the clients who were treated at CASA in 2022 had received treatment prior to their current enrollment. Figure 74 reveals that the majority (85%) of the clients had received outpatient treatment, while 15% had received residential treatment.

Figure 74: Most Recent Type of Drug Treatment Prior to Current Enrollment among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at CASA in 2022

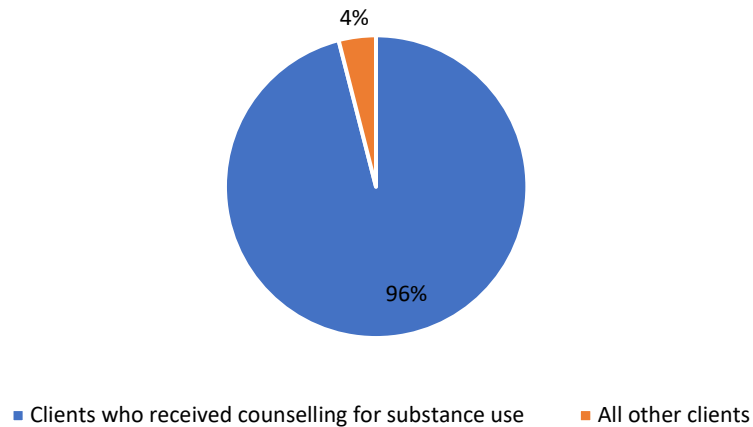


Source: Centre for Counselling Addiction Support Alternatives

#### 4.4 National Council on Substance Abuse

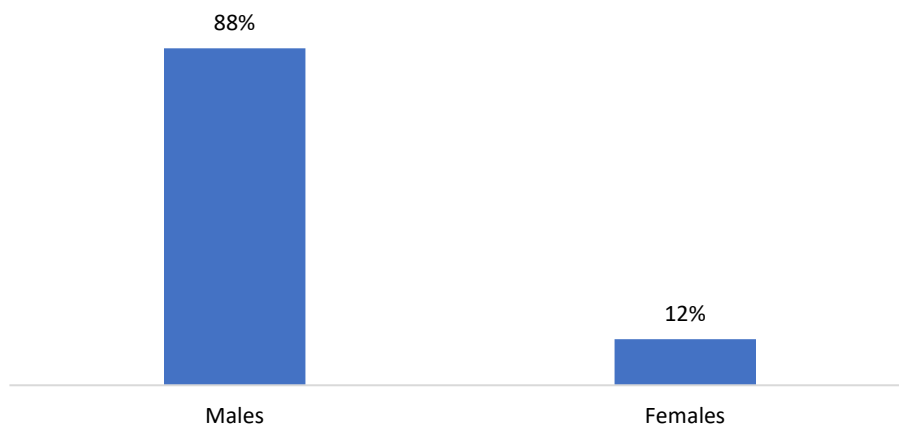
Fifty clients were admitted to the counselling programme at the NCSA in 2022, 48 (96%) of whom were treated for substance use issues (See Figure 75). Figures 76 and 77 show that males and persons ages 20 and under accounted for the majority of the Council's counselling clients during the year.

Figure 75: Distribution of Clients Seeking Drug Treatment vs. All Other Clients



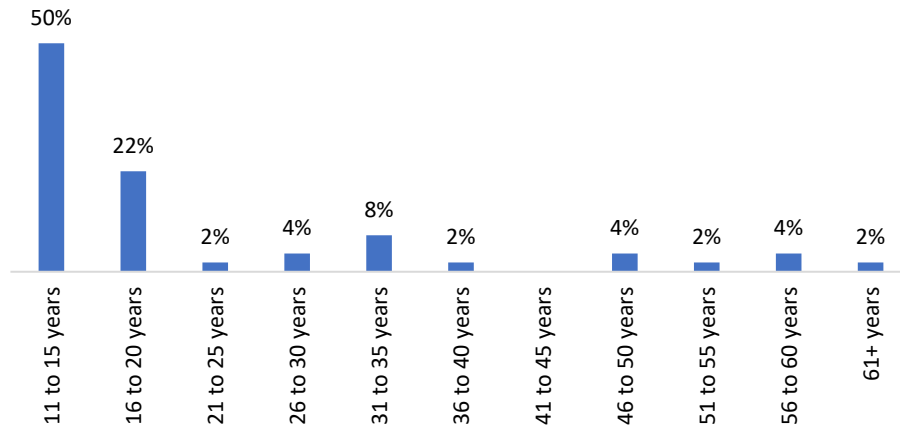
Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 76: Gender Distribution of All Clients Seeking Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 77: Age Distribution of All Clients Seeking Treatment at the NCSA in 2022

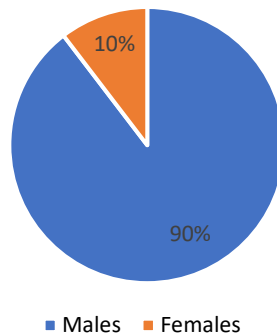


Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

### Demographic Profile of Treatment Clients

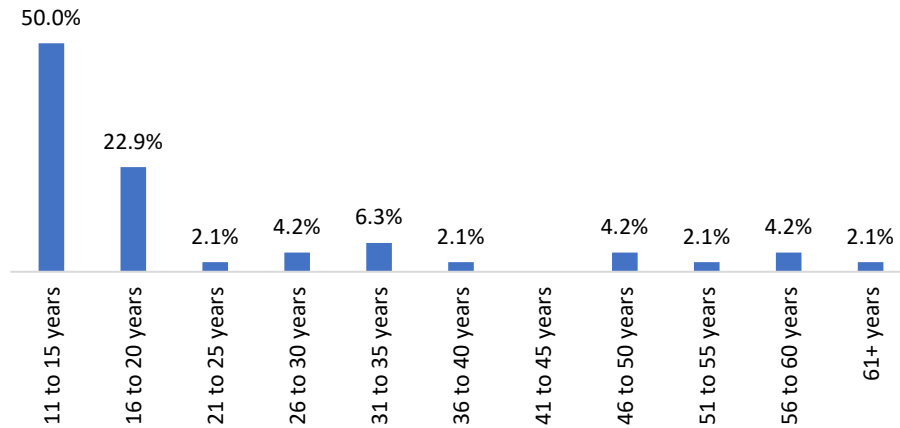
The demographic profile of the drug treatment clients was very similar to that of the wider treatment group for the year. This can be seen from Figures 78 and 79 which show that males and persons 20 and under also accounted for the majority of persons seeking treatment for drug use issues.

Figure 78: Gender Distribution of Persons Receiving Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

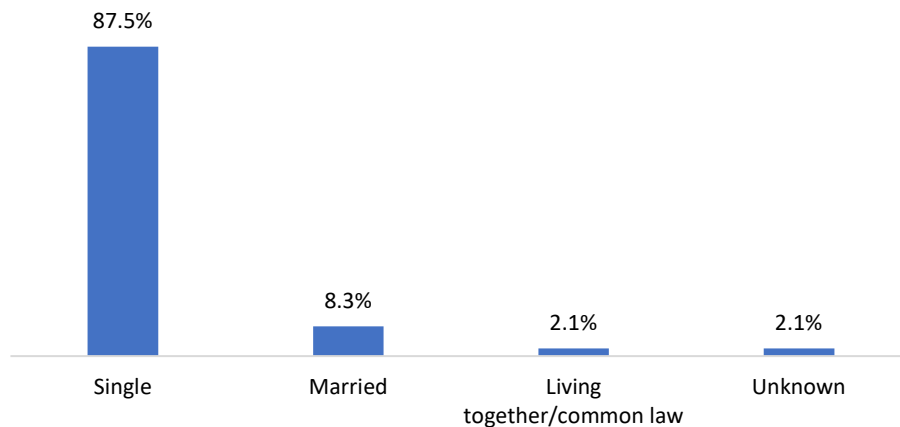
Figure 79: Age Distribution of Persons Receiving Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

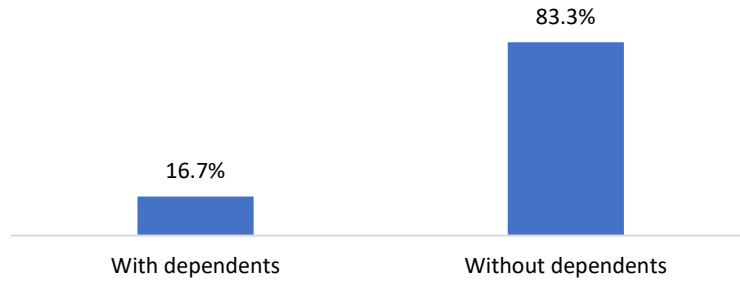
In terms of other demographic variables, Figures 80 through 82 show that most persons seeking drug treatment at the NCSA during the year were single, without dependents and lived in their family home. With regards to education, Figure 83 shows that “complete primary” was the highest level attained by almost two thirds of the clients while Figure 84 shows that the employment status of just over half of the clients was “not working/student”. The latter two findings correspond with the fact that the population served by the Council’s Counselling Department primarily comprises of secondary school students.

Figure 80: Relationship Status of Persons Receiving Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



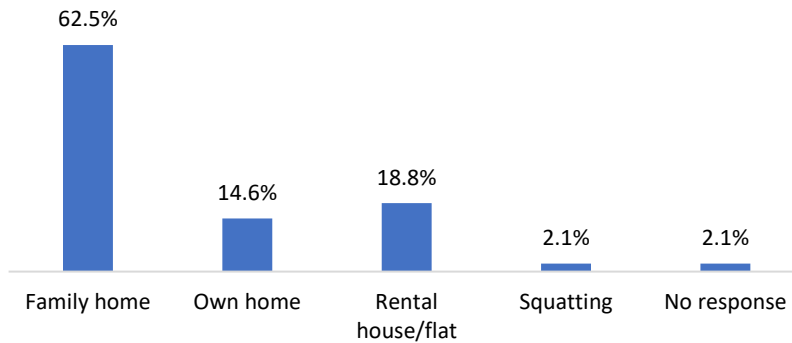
Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 81: Distribution of Persons With vs Without Dependents Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



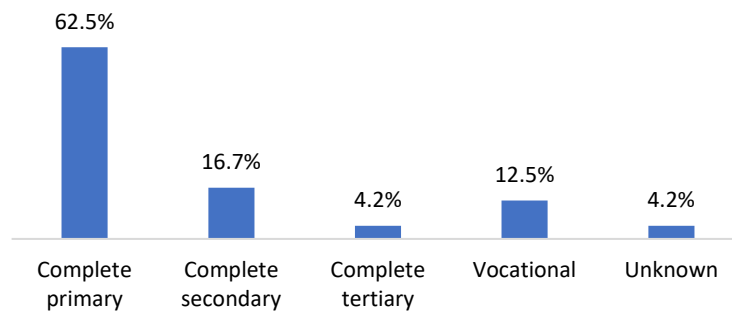
Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 82: Living Arrangements of Persons Receiving Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



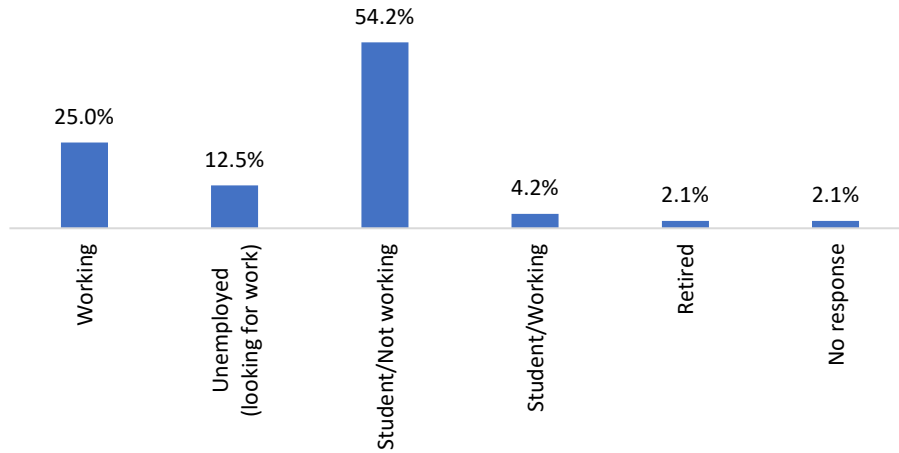
Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 83: Highest Level of Education Achieved by Persons Receiving Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 84: Employment Status of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at NCSA in 2022

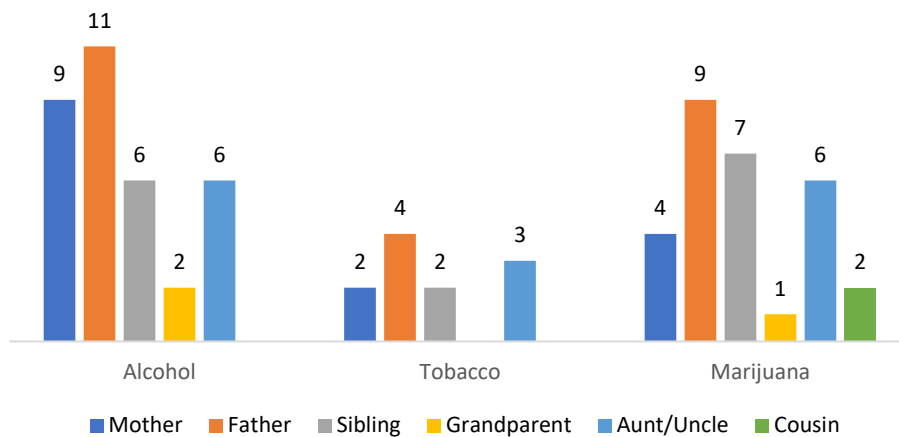


Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

### Family History of Drug Use

When asked about their family history of drug use, clients only identified the use of three substances by family members: alcohol, marijuana and tobacco (See Figure 85). Of these, alcohol and marijuana were the most common. Additionally, Figure 85 shows that clients were more likely to report drug use by immediate family members i.e. parents and siblings.

Figure 85: Family History of Drug Use among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022

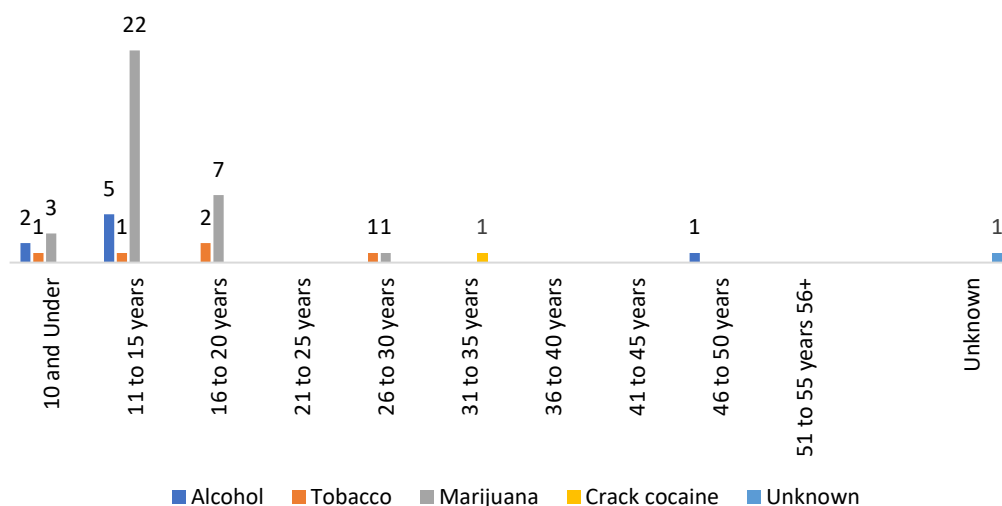


Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

### Clients' Drug Use History

Figure 86 presents data regarding the clients' first drug use by both age and drug type. From the Chart it can be seen that most persons had initiated drug use by the age of 15, with marijuana being the most common drug of first use.

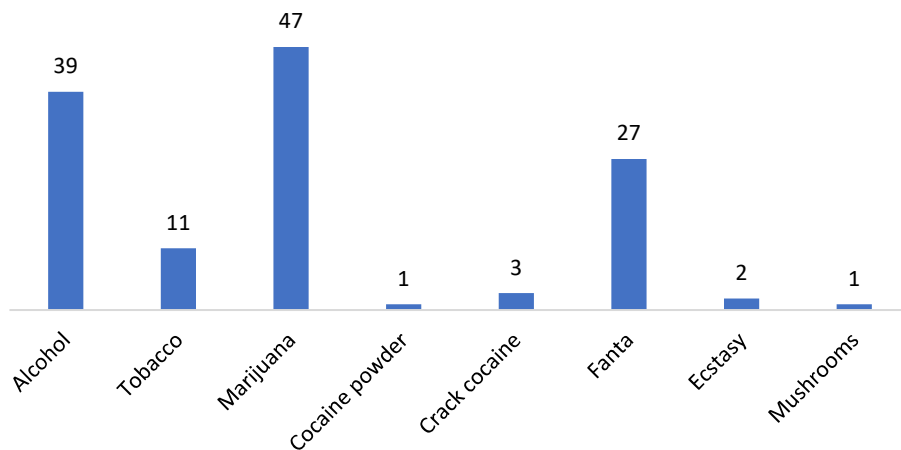
Figure 86: First Drug Use by Drug Type and Age among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Clients were also asked to identify any substances they have used during their lifetime. Figure 87 shows that marijuana, alcohol and fanta were the three most commonly used substances. The Chart also reveals small-scale use of tobacco, cocaine (crack and powdered), ecstasy and mushrooms.

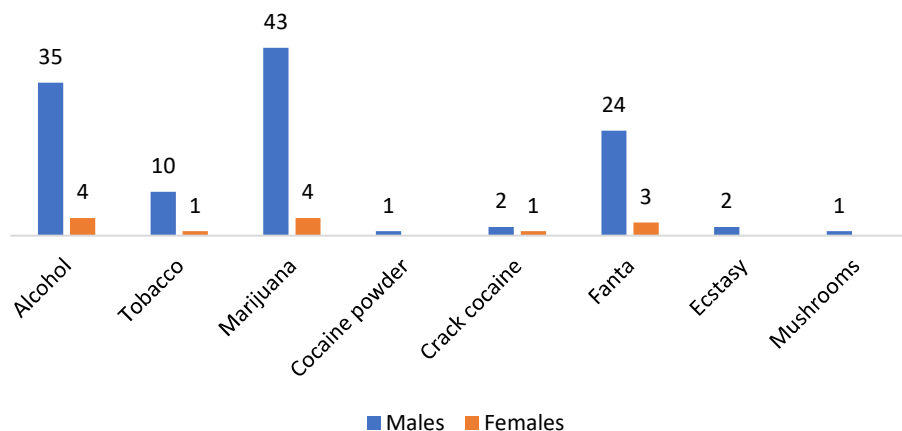
Figure 87: Drugs Used in the Lifetime by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

When gender was considered, marijuana, alcohol and fanta remained the top three substances used by both males and females during their lifetime (See Figure 88).

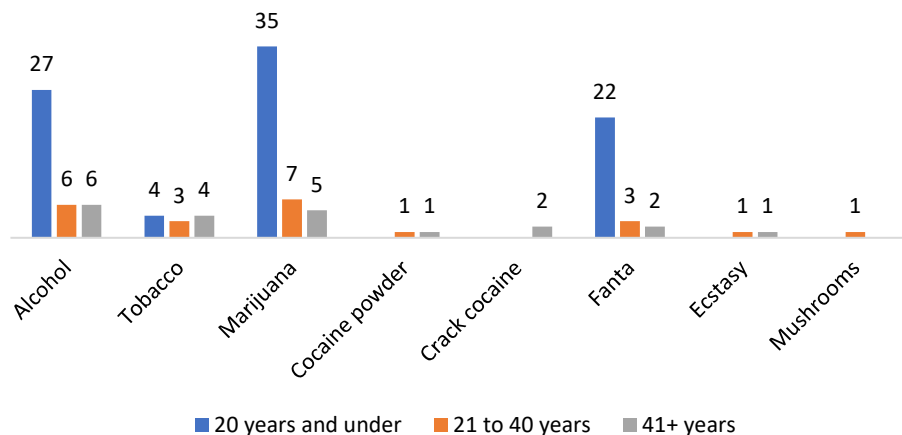
Figure 88: Gender Distribution of Drugs Used in Lifetime by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Similarly, when the data was considered in relation to age, marijuana, alcohol and fanta were also the top three lifetime drugs for persons in the 20 and under and 21 to 40 age groups (See Figure 89). However, for the latter, it should be noted that tobacco was also cited with equal frequency to fanta. Some variation was also noted for those in the 41 and over age category. For this group, alcohol was the most commonly used substance, followed closely by marijuana and tobacco (See Figure 89). Figure 89 also shows that less commonly used substances such as cocaine, ecstasy and mushrooms were only reported by those 21 and over.

Figure 89: Age Distribution of Drugs Used in Lifetime by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022

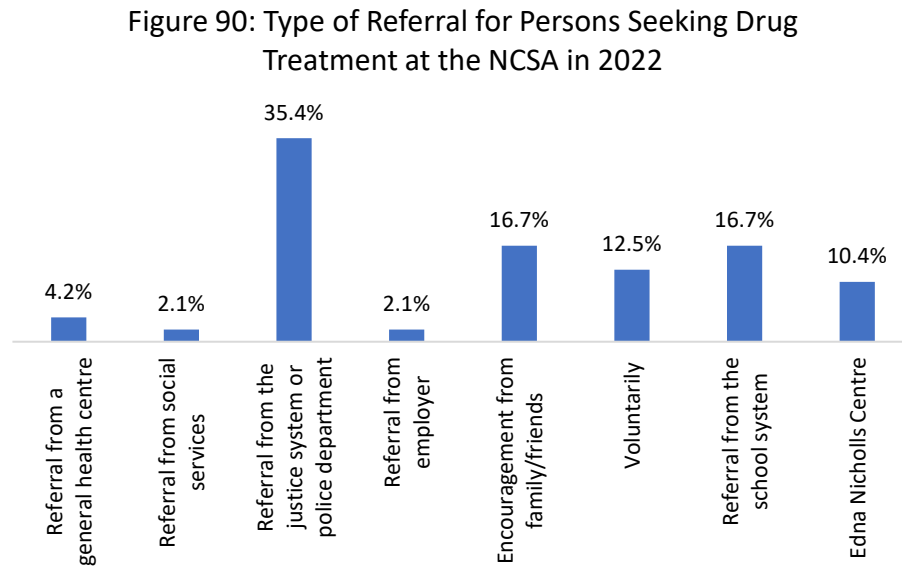


Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse



### ***Treatment Referral***

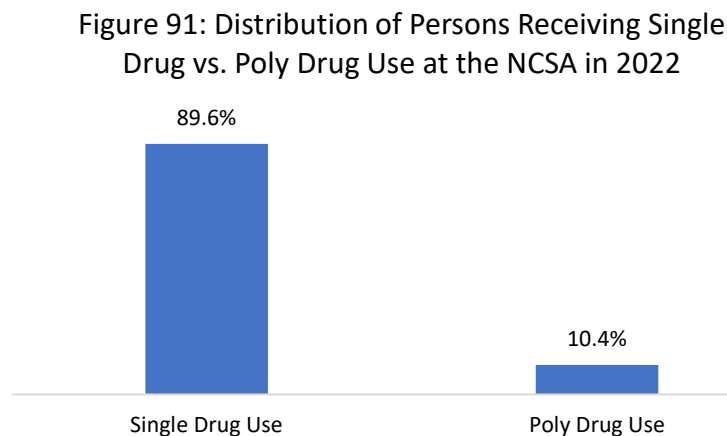
Figure 90 presents the sources of referral for persons receiving drug treatment at the NCSA in 2022. The justice system/police department was the single largest referral source for this group, far outranking all others (See Figure 90).



*Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse*

### ***Drug Treatment Profile***

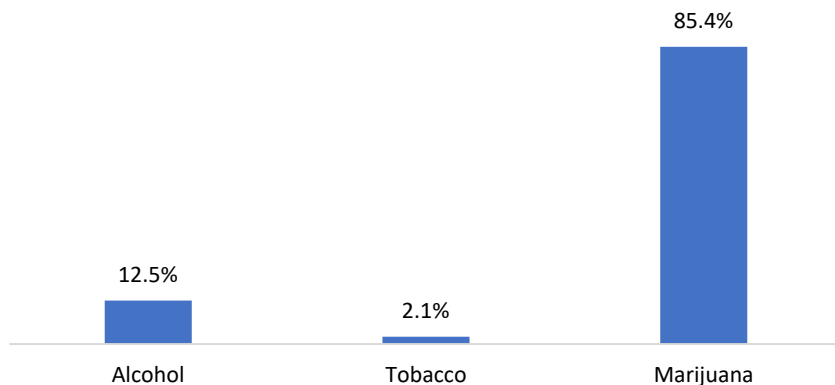
Approximately nine out of every 10 persons (89.6%) seeking drug treatment at the NCSA in 2022 were treated for single drug use (See Figure 91).



*Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse*

Marijuana (85.4%) was the most common drug motivating the need for treatment among the Council's clients during the target period (See Figure 92). Notably fewer persons sought treatment for alcohol (12.5%) and tobacco (2.1%) use (See Figure 92).

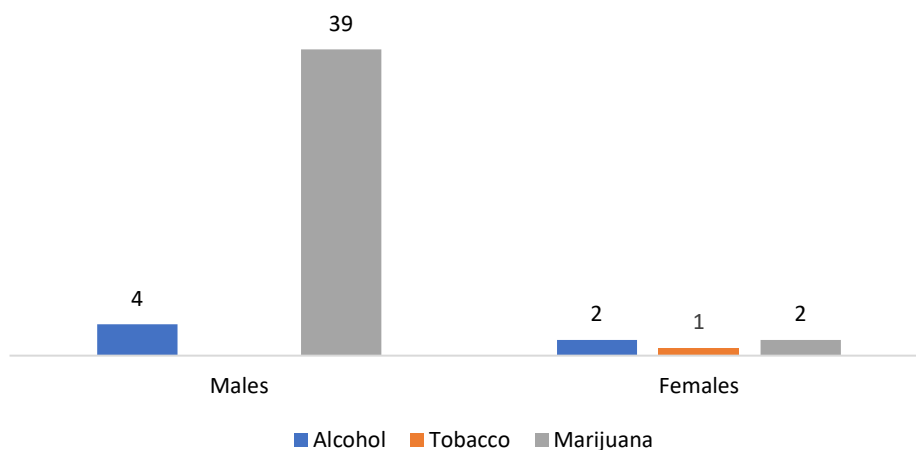
Figure 92: Primary Drugs for which Drug Treatment was Sought at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 93 shows that marijuana and alcohol were the only primary drugs for which male clients sought treatment at the NCSA in 2022, with marijuana being the most common. Alternately, females sought treatment for all three substances. Of these, marijuana and alcohol were reported with equal frequency (two cases each) while there was only one female who sought treatment for tobacco use (See Figure 93).

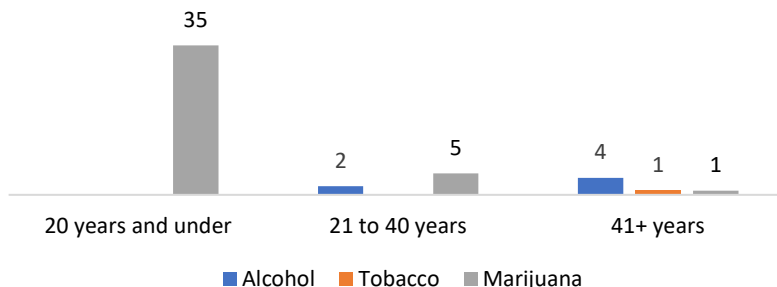
Figure 93: Gender Distribution of the Primary Drugs for which Drug Treatment was Sought at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

With regards to age, marijuana was the only substance for which persons 20 and under were treated at the Council (See Figure 94). While it remained the most common primary substance for those in the 21 to 40 age group, there were also two individuals in this age category who were treated for alcohol use (See Figure 94). In contrast, alcohol was the most common primary drug for those 41 and over, followed by marijuana and tobacco (See Figure 94).

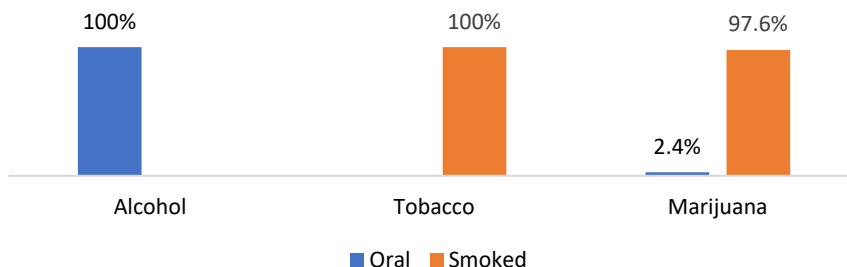
Figure 94: Age Distribution of the Primary Drugs for which Treatment was Sought at the NCSA in 2022



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Clients were also asked about their most frequent method of administration for their primary drug of choice. Figure 95 shows that all persons seeking treatment for alcohol use reported oral consumption while all persons who were treated for tobacco use reportedly smoked this substance. Smoking was also the primary method of administration for marijuana; however, there was one individual who reported oral administration (See Figure 95).

Figure 95: Most Frequent Method of Administration for Primary Drug among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022

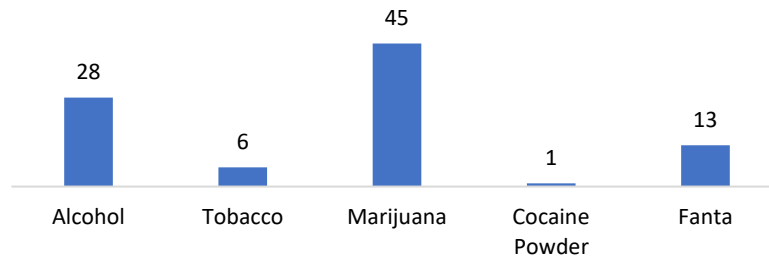


Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figures 96 through 98 present data on the clients' drug use during the year leading up to treatment entry. Figure 96 shows that marijuana, alcohol and fanta were the most frequently used substances during this period. This remained true for both males and females (See Figure 97). With regards to age, marijuana, alcohol and fanta were also the most frequently used substances during the 12-month lead

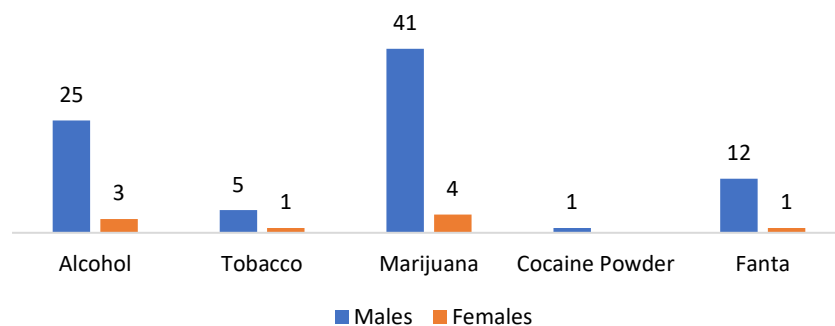
up for those aged 40 and under (See Figure 98). However, for those 41 and over, alcohol use was most common, closely followed by marijuana and tobacco use which were cited with equal frequency (See Figure 98).

Figure 96: Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



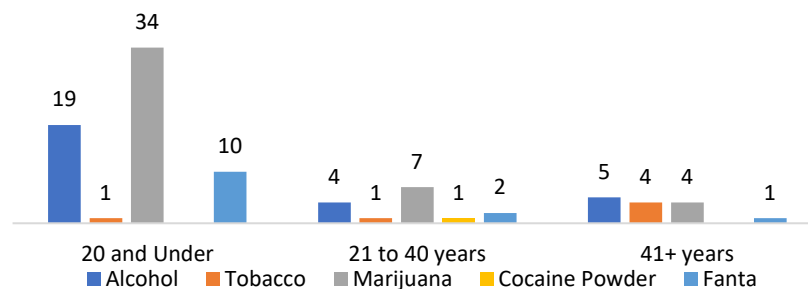
Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 97: Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022 by Gender



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

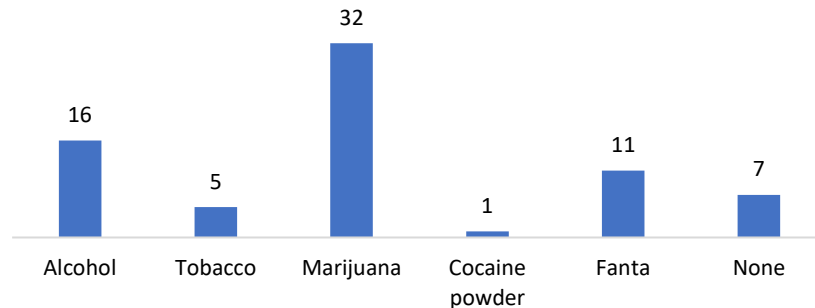
Figure 98: Drugs Used in the Past 12 Months among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022 by Age



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

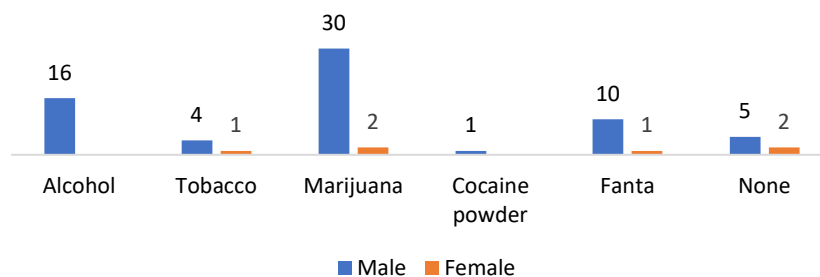
Similar patterns were noted with regards to drug use within the 30 days prior to treatment entry. As such, clients – regardless of gender - were most likely to report the use of marijuana, alcohol and fanta during this time (See Figures 99 and 100). This was also true of persons age 40 and under (See Figure 101). For those 41 and over, persons reported the use of alcohol, tobacco and marijuana respectively (See Figure 101). Figures 99 through 101 also reveal that there was a small number of persons who did not use any substances in the month before starting treatment.

Figure 99: Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days by Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



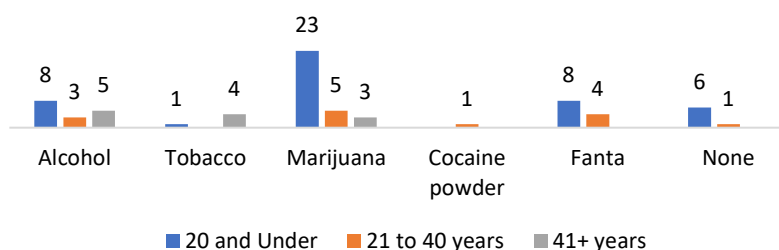
Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 100: Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022 by Gender



Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

Figure 101: Drugs Used in the Past 30 Days among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022 by Age

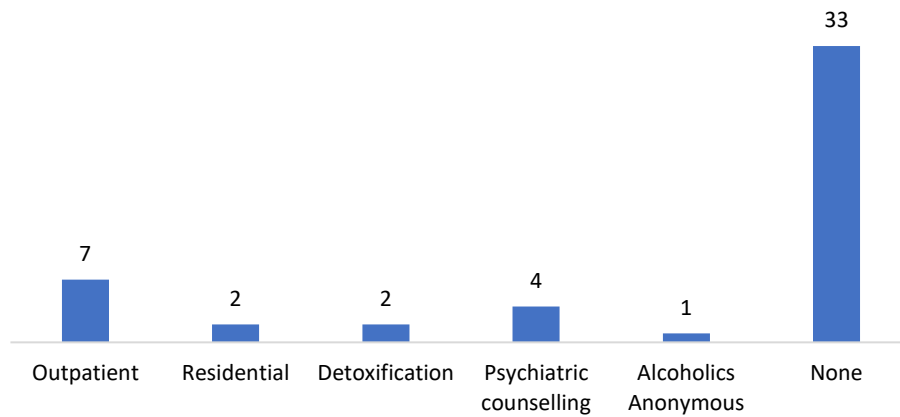


Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse

### ***Most Recent Treatment Prior to Admission***

Only a small number of the clients treated at the NCSA in 2022 had received prior treatment for their drug use. Among those who had, “outpatient treatment” was most common followed by “psychiatric counselling” (See Figure 102). Fewer persons underwent “detoxification” or received “residential treatment” (See Figure 102), and only one individual had participated in “Alcoholics Anonymous” (See Figure 102).

Figure 102: Most Recent Type of Drug Treatment Prior to Current Enrollment among Persons Seeking Drug Treatment at the NCSA in 2022



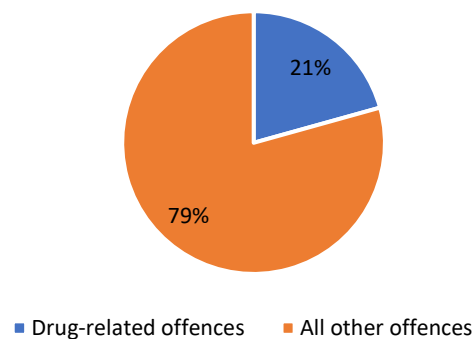
*Source: The National Council on Substance Abuse*

## 5. Supply Control

### 5.1 The Barbados Police Service

The Barbados Police Service (TBPS) recorded 5803 offences during the 2022 calendar year. From Figure 103, it can be seen that approximately one-fifth (21%) of the offences on record for the year were drug-related.

Figure 103: Distribution of Drug Offences vs. All Other Offences Recorded by The Barbados Police Service in 2022

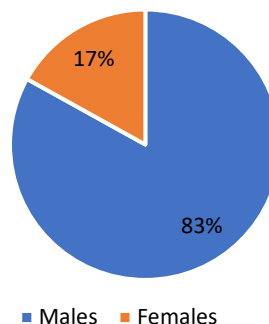


Source: The Barbados Police Service

#### **Demographic Profile of Drug Offenders**

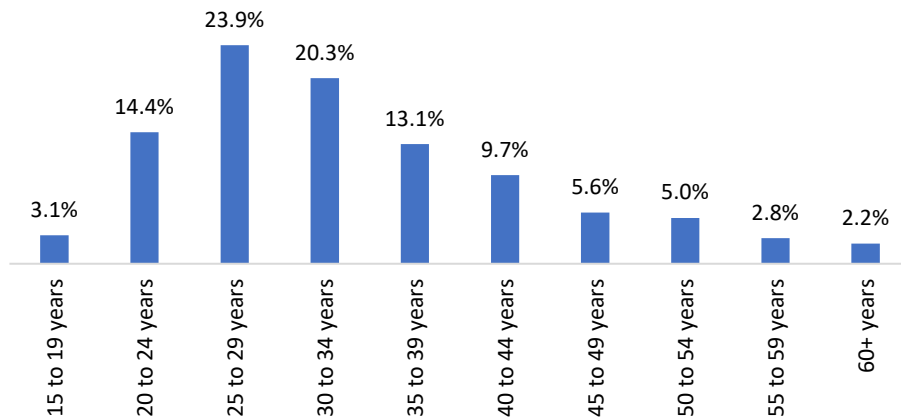
Three hundred and sixty persons were charged with drug offences between January 1 and December 31, 2022, the most of whom were male (See Figure 104). Figure 105 presents the age distribution of drug offenders during the year. From the Chart, it can be seen that the percentage of persons charged with such offences increased steadily with age, peaking in the 25 to 29 age group and then declining thereafter. Figure 106 underscores the fact that younger adults accounted for the majority (74.8%) of drug offenders.

Figure 104: Gender Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences in 2022



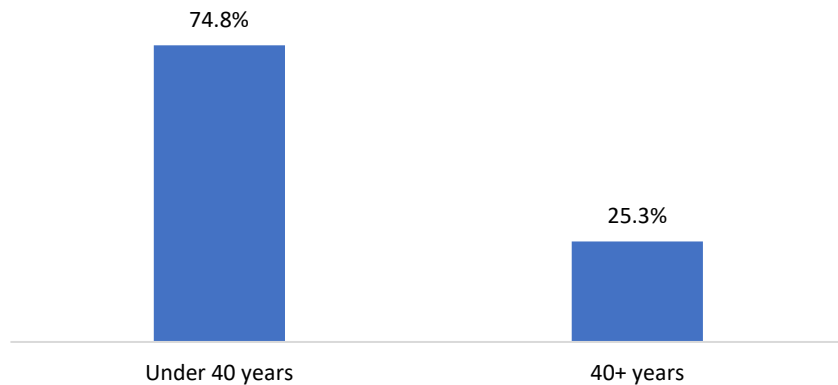
Source: The Barbados Police Service

Figure 105: Age Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences in 2022



Source: The Barbados Police Service

Figure 106: Age Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences in 2022

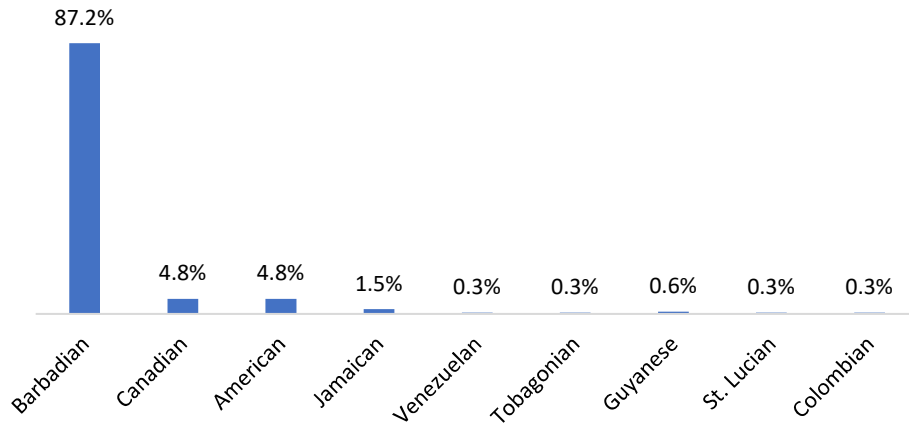


Source: The Barbados Police Service

Consideration was also given to the nationality of drug offenders in 2022. Figure 107 shows that approximately nine out of every 10 persons charged with drug offences during the period were Barbadian. This is consistent with the findings of previous years. Other nationalities recorded included: Canadian, American, Jamaica, Venezuelan, Tobagonian, Guyanese, St. Lucian and Colombian (See Figure 107).



Figure 107: Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences in 2022 by Nationality

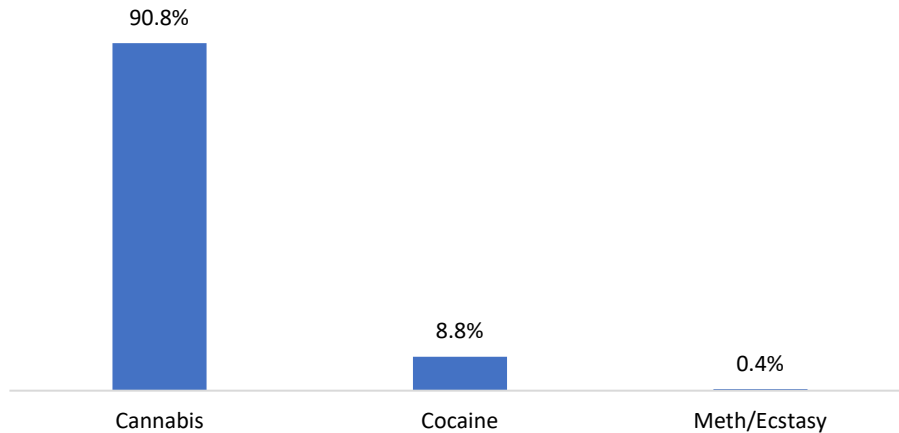


Source: The Barbados Police Service

### **Drug Offences by Drug Type**

Figure 108 presents the distribution of drug offences recorded by drug type. The Chart shows that, in 2022, marijuana offences continued to be the most numerous, far outnumbering cocaine and methamphetamine/ecstasy offences (See Figure 108).

Figure 108: Distribution of Drug Offences Recorded by the Barbados Police Service in 2022 by Drug Type

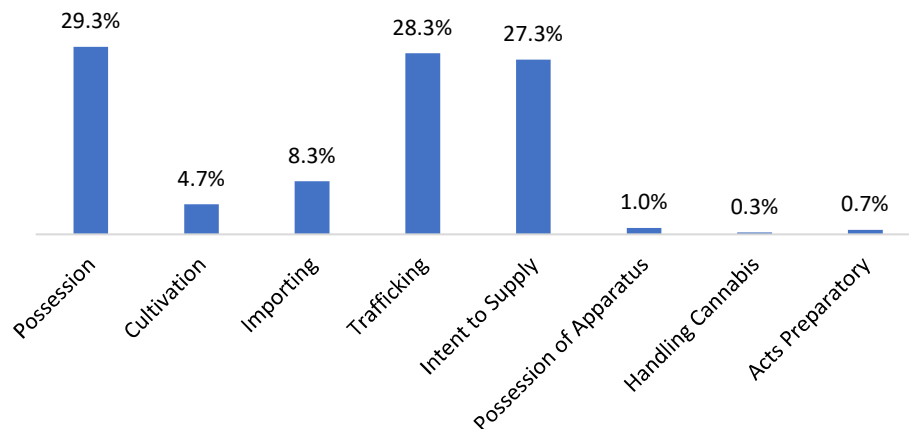


Source: The Barbados Police Service

### ***Cannabis Offences***

As in previous years, “Possession”, “Trafficking” and “Intent to Supply” were the top three cannabis offences recorded during 2022, totaling 84.9% (See Figure 109). Other, less common offences included: “Importing”, “Cultivation”, “Possession of Apparatus”, “Acts Preparatory” and “Handling Cannabis” (See Figure 109).

Figure 109: Distribution of Cannabis Offences Recorded by the Barbados Police Service in 2022

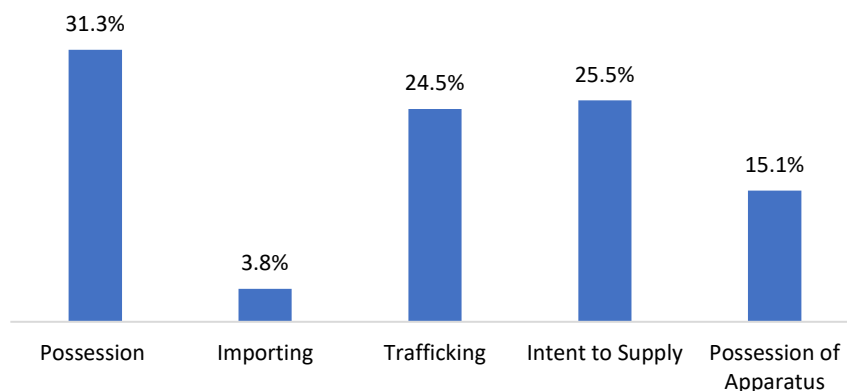


Source: The Barbados Police Service

### ***Cocaine Offences***

As with the cannabis offences, “Possession”, “Intent to Supply” and “Trafficking” were the three most common cocaine offences recorded in 2022 (See Figure 110). This also aligns with the findings of previous years.

Figure 110: Distribution of Cocaine Offences Recorded by the Barbados Police Service in 2022

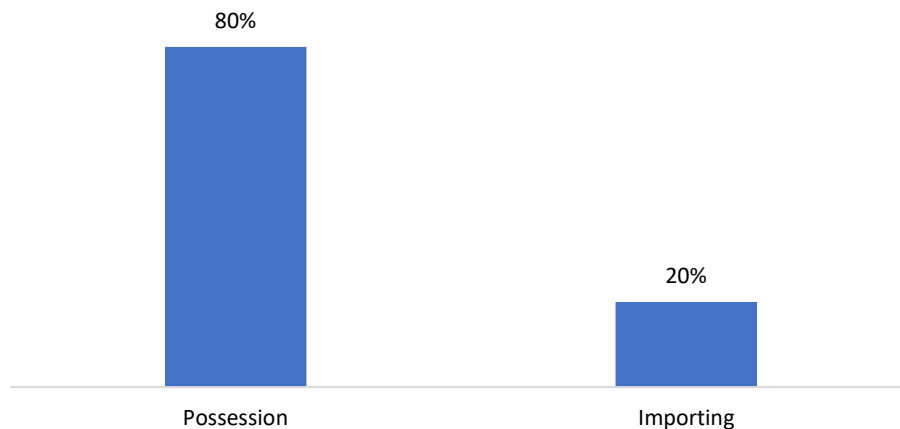


Source: The Barbados Police Service

### ***Methamphetamine/Ecstasy Offences***

There were only two methamphetamine/ecstasy offences recorded in 2022: “Possession” and “Importing” (See Figure 111). Of these “Possession” was most numerous, accounting for 80% of the offences. Nevertheless, caution should be exercised when interpreting these statistics as they are based on a small number (N=5).

Figure 111: Distribution of Meth/Ecstasy Recorded by the Barbados Police Service in 2022



*Source: The Barbados Police Service*

### ***Drug Seizures***

Cannabis was the most commonly seized drug throughout 2022, and it was seized in multiple forms e.g. compressed, plant, loose, seeds and stalks (See Table 3). In addition to cannabis, cocaine, ecstasy (powder and pills) and hashish were also seized during the year, though these seizures were much less common, producing notably smaller quantities (See Table 3).

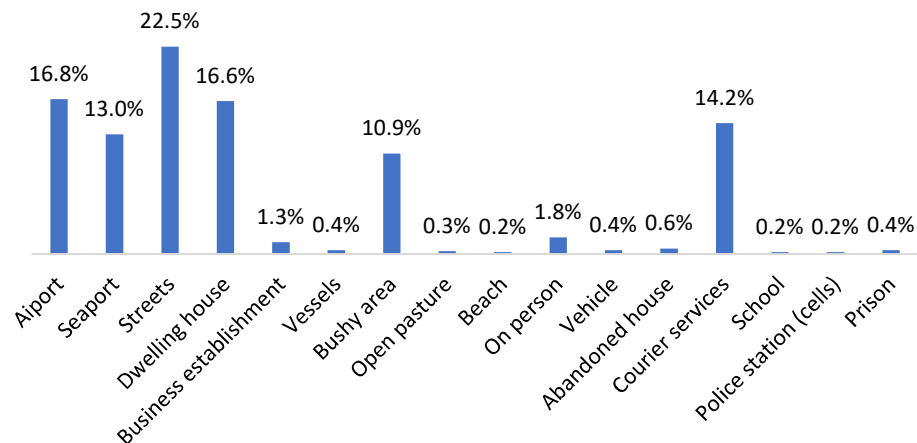
Table 3: Drug Seizures Recorded by the Barbados Police Service in 2022

Drug/Substance	Number of Seizures	Quantity
Compressed cannabis	336	4476.267 kg
Cannabis plants	130	49, 102
Cocaine	28	3.53175 kg
Loose cannabis	164	3174.345 kg
Loose stalks	2	46.5 kg
Seeds	3	4082.335 kg
Ecstasy powder	2	0.006 kg
Ecstasy pills	3	162
Hashish	1	0.05 kg

*Source: The Barbados Police Service*

Seizures were classified according to their location and the mode of transport involved. With regards to location, Figure 112 shows that the streets, airport, dwelling house, courier services, seaport and bushy areas were the most common locations where drugs were seized during 2022.

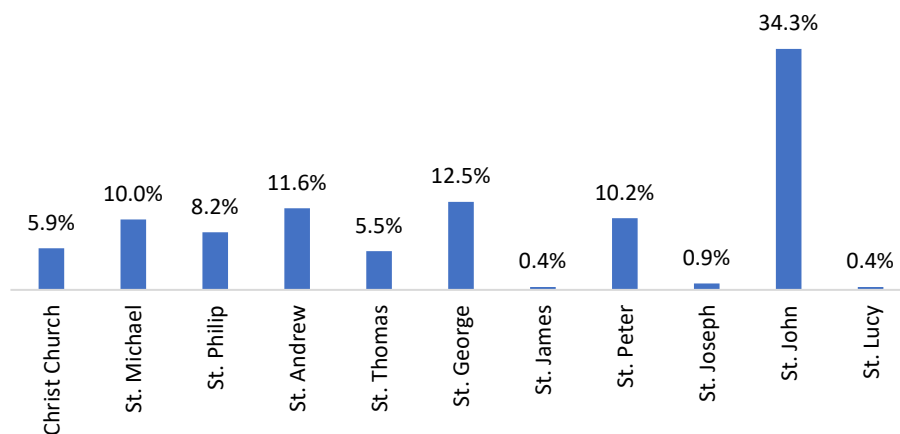
Figure 112: Distribution of 2022 Drug Seizures by Location of Seizure



Source: The Barbados Police Service

The seizures of cannabis plants in particular were further classified according to parish. Of the 11 parishes in Barbados, St. John far outranked all others, accounting for 34.3% of the cannabis plant seizures that year (See Figure 113). This was distantly followed by St. George, St. Andrew, St. Peter and St. Michael for which seizures were recorded with near equal frequency. The Chart also shows that cannabis plant seizures were least common in St. Philip, Christ Church, St. Thomas, St. Joseph, St. Lucy and St. James.

Figure 113: Distribution of Cannabis Plants Discovered and Destroyed in 2022 by Parish of Discovery



Source: The Barbados Police Service

### Street Values of Drugs

Based on intelligence reports, the Barbados Police Service estimated the average street values of the illicit substances available on the local drug market in 2022. These estimates are presented in Table 4. From the Table, it can be seen that the estimated street value for cannabis varied depending on its origin and ranged from \$4,000.00 to \$8,000.00 per kg and \$5.00 to \$10.00 per gram. The value of cocaine was estimated to be \$50,000.00 per kg and \$50.00 per gram, while the value of ecstasy was estimated to be \$20.00 to \$50.00 per pill, and methamphetamine, \$50.00 to \$100.00 per pill. These values remain largely unchanged from those estimated in previous years.

**Table 4: Drug Prices Recorded by the Barbados Police Service for the Period January 1 to December 31, 2022**

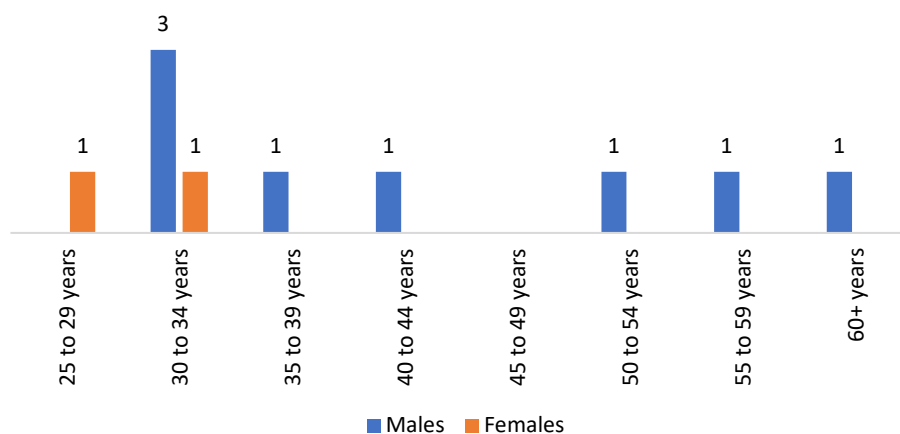
Drug	Estimated Street Value \$
Cannabis	\$4,000.00 per kg/ \$5.00 per gram (cannabis from Barbados, St. Vincent) \$8,000.00 per kg/\$10.00 per gram (cannabis from Canada, Jamaica, USA)
Cocaine	\$50,000 per kg/ \$50.00 per gram
Ecstasy	\$20.00 - \$50.00 per pill
Methamphetamines	\$50.00 - \$100.00 per pill

*Source: The Barbados Police Service*

### Deportation Statistics

Thirty deportees were returned to Barbados in 2022. Of these, 10 individuals were deported for drug-related matters. Figure 114 presents the age and gender profiles of those deported for drug-related matters. From the Chart it can be seen that eight of the individuals were male while the remaining two were female. With regards to age, the Chart also shows that the majority were under the age of 45.

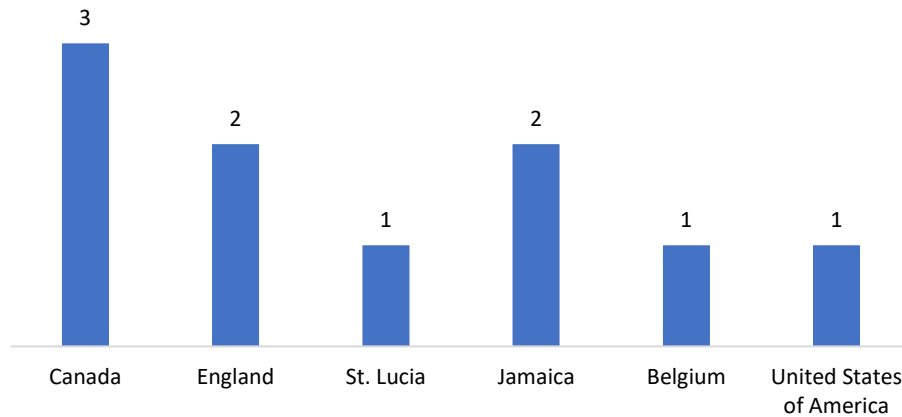
**Figure 114: Age and Gender Distribution of Persons  
Deported to Barbados for Drug-Related Matters in 2022**



*Source: The Barbados Police Service*

The majority of drug-related deportees were returned to Barbados from North America (Canada, USA) and Europe (England, Belgium), while two were deported from Jamaica and one was deported from St. Lucia (See Figure 115).

Figure 115: Distribution of 2022 Drug-Related Deportees by Country



Source: The Barbados Police Service

### **Firearm and Ammunition Seizures**

Table 5 presents the firearm and ammunition seizures recorded in 2022. As in previous years, the seizures of cartridges and projectiles were most numerous. It should be noted that a comparison of the data to that from 2021 revealed a notable increase in the number of firearm, cartridge and projectile seizures in 2022.

Table 5: Firearm and Ammunition Seizures Recorded by the Barbados Police Service in 2022

Item Seized	Quantity Seized
Firearms	143
Cartridges	2030
Projectiles	428
Other weapons (not specified)	1

Source: The Barbados Police Service

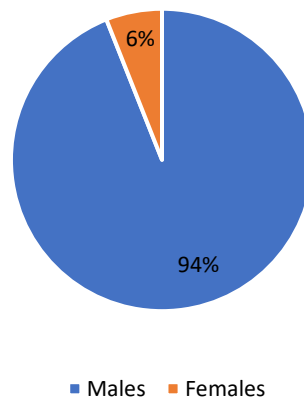
### **Money Laundering Offences**

No money laundering offences were recorded during 2022.

## 5.2 Barbados Prison Service

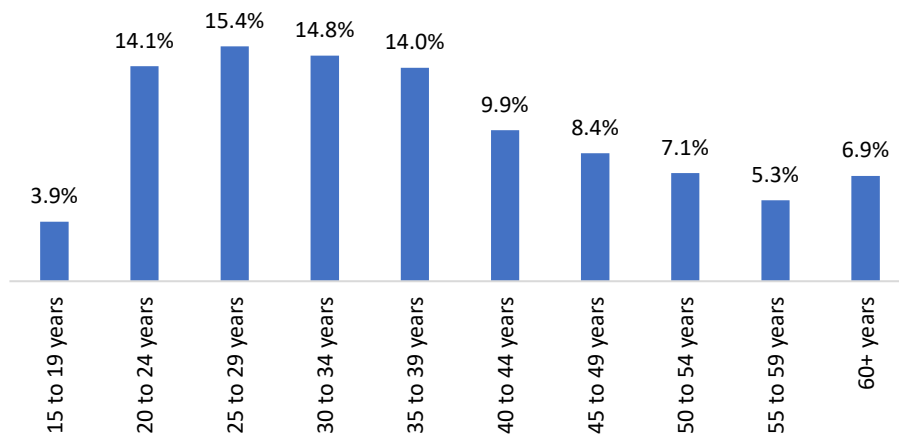
A total of 769 persons were admitted to Dodds Prison in 2022. Figures 116 and 117 show that the majority of these persons were males under the age of 40.

Figure 116: Gender Distribution of Inmates Incarcerated at Dodds Prison in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

Figure 117: Age Distribution of Inmates Incarcerated at Dodds Prison in 2022

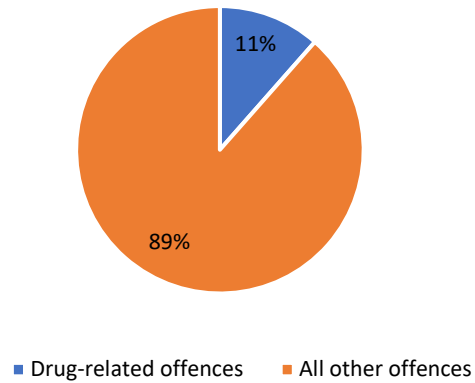


Source: Barbados Prison Service

### ***Drug-Related Incarcerations***

Of those admitted to Dodds Prison in 2022, 11% were admitted for drug-related offences (See Figure 118).

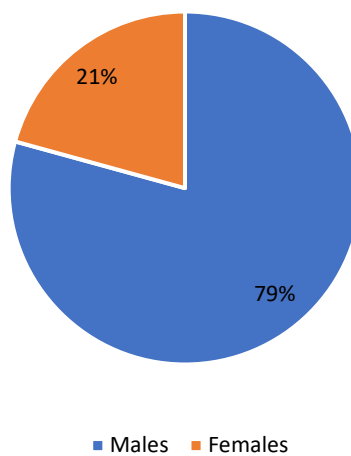
Figure 118: Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison in 2022 for Drug vs. All Other Offences



*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

Like the wider prison admissions, those admitted for drug-related offences were also primarily males under the age of 40 (See Figures 119 and 120).

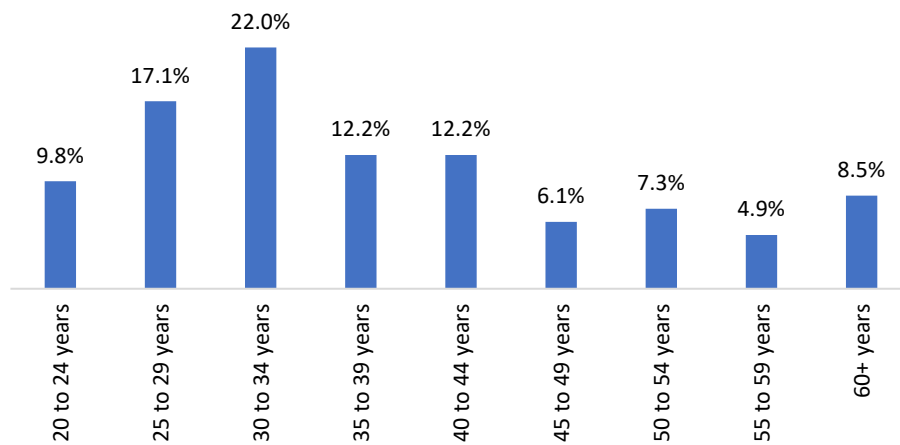
Figure 119: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Offences in 2022



*Source: Barbados Prison Service*



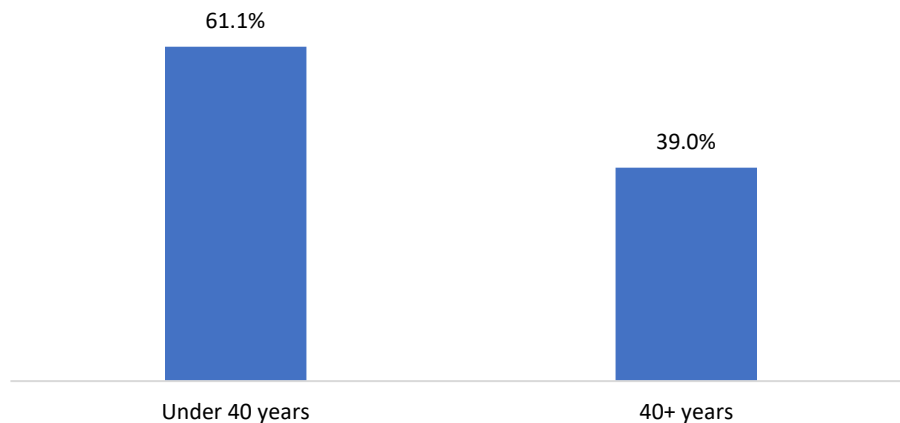
Figure 120: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Offences in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

Figure 121 underscores the fact that just under two-thirds of those admitted for drug offences were under 40 years of age.

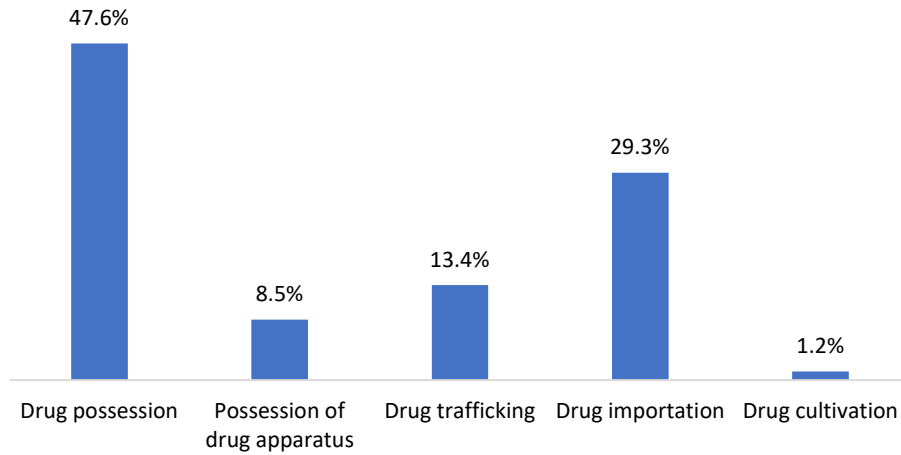
Figure 121: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Offences in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

From Figure 122 it can be seen that “Drug Possession” and “Drug Importation” accounted for largest proportion of drug-related incarcerations during the target period. These were distantly followed by “Drug Trafficking”, “Possession of Drug Apparatus” and “Drug Cultivation” (See Figure 122).

Figure 122: Distribution of Drug Offences for which Persons were Admitted to Dodds Prison in 2022

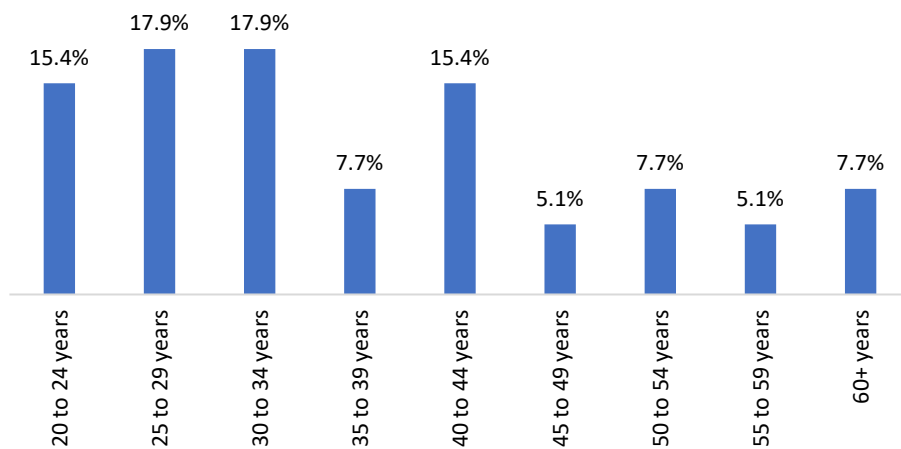


Source: Barbados Prison Service

#### Drug-related Incarcerations by Age and Gender

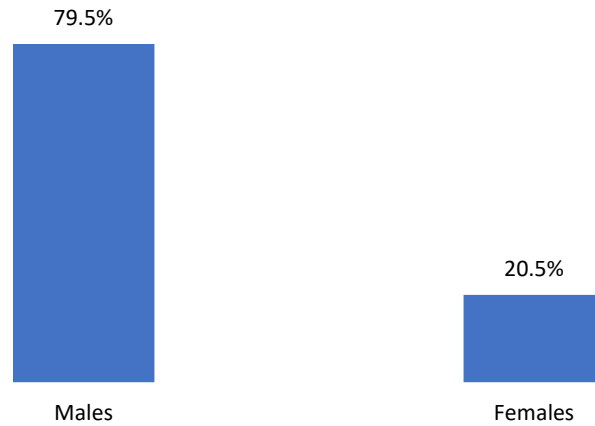
Figures 123 and 124 reveal that approximately three quarters (74.3%) of the persons incarcerated for “Drug Possession” in 2022 were males under the age of 45.

Figure 123: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Possession in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

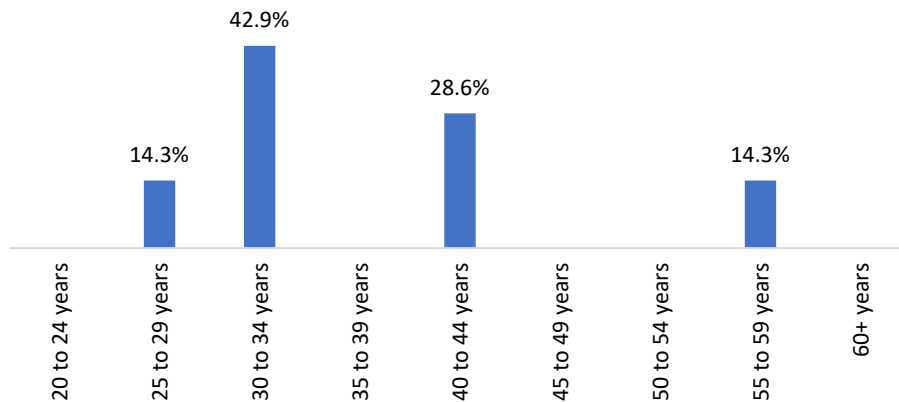
Figure 124: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Possession in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

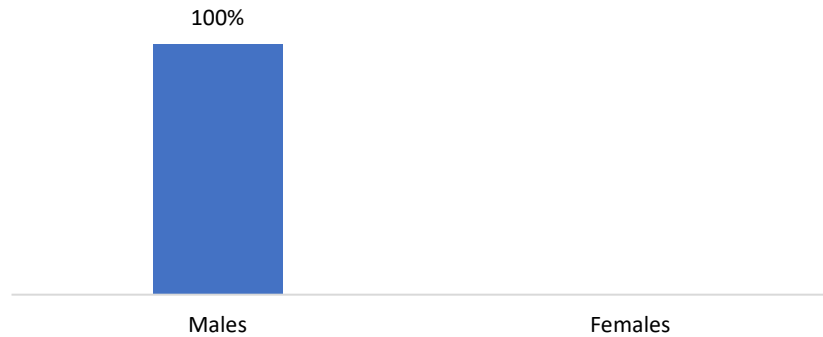
Only males were incarcerated for the “Possession of Drug Apparatus”; however, there was no discernable age-related pattern (See Figures 125 and 126). Figure 125 shows that just over half (57.2%) of those incarcerated for this offence were under the age 35 and the remainder were divided across two age categories: 40 to 44 years (28.6%) and 55 to 59 years (14.3%).

Figure 125: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for the Possession of Drug Apparatus in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

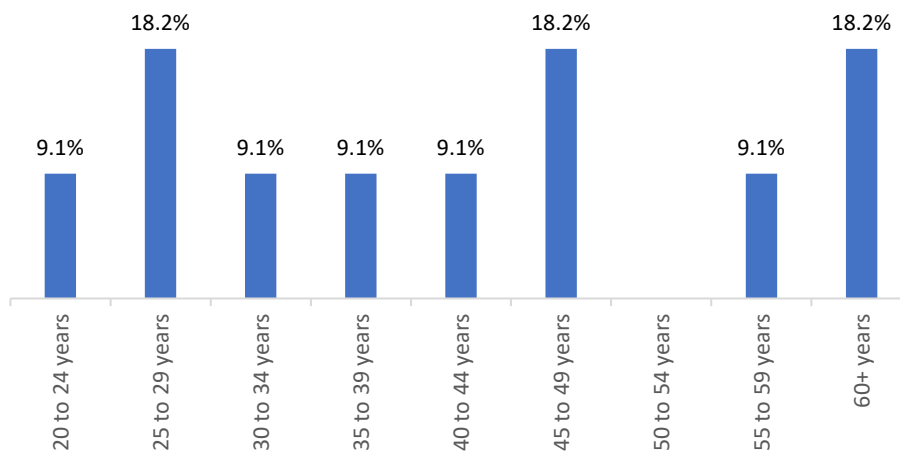
Figure 126: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for the Possession of Drug Apparatus in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

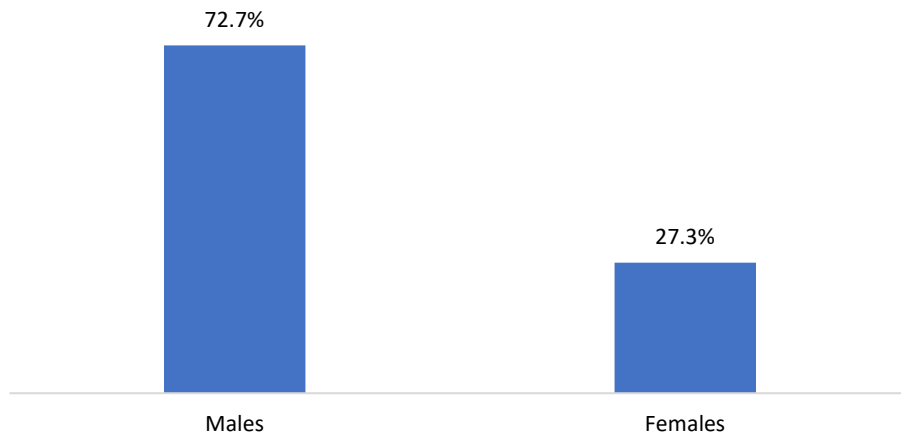
The profile of persons incarcerated for “Drug Trafficking” was somewhat similar to that for “Drug Possession”. This is underscored by Figures 127 and 128 which show that most of these individuals were males under the age of 45.

Figure 127: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Trafficking in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

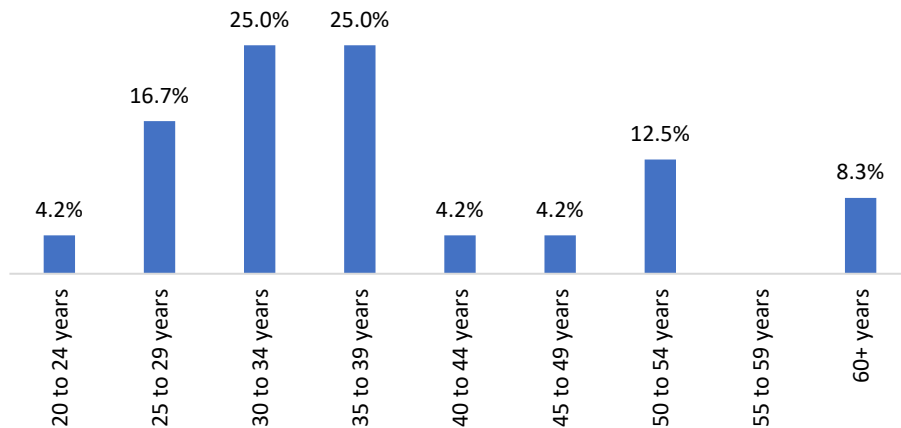
Figure 128: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Trafficking in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

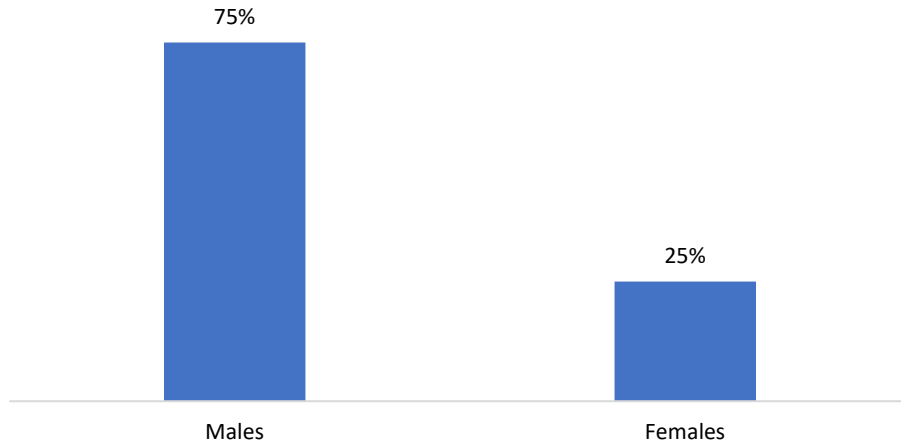
While persons across the lifespan were incarcerated for “Drug Importation”, Figure 129 reveals that the number of persons increased steadily with age, peaking in the 30 to 39 age bracket, following which there was a significant decline. As with all other drug offences, males accounted for the majority of persons incarcerated for “Drug Importation” (See Figure 130).

Figure 129: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Importation in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

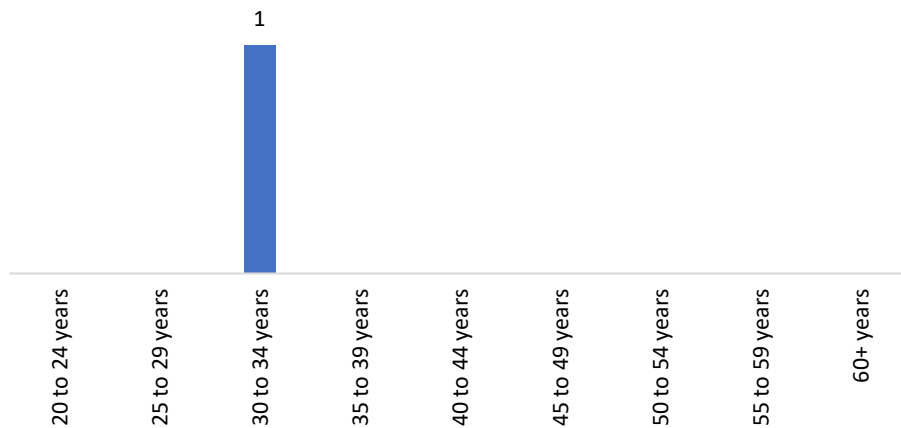
Figure 130: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Importation in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

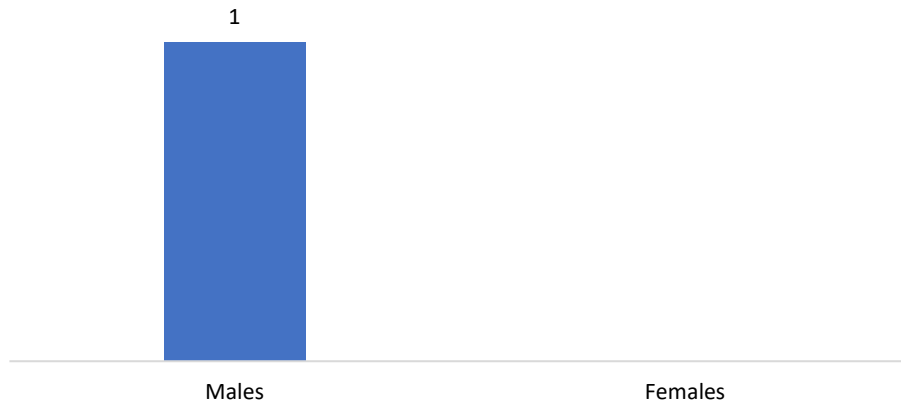
Only one individual – a male in the 30 to 34 age group - was incarcerated for “Drug Cultivation” (See Figures 131 and 132).

Figure 131: Age Distribution of Persons Admitted to Dodds Prison for Drug Cultivation in 2022



Source: Barbados Prison Service

Figure 132: Gender Distribution of Persons Admitted to  
Dodds Prison for Drug Cultivation in 2022

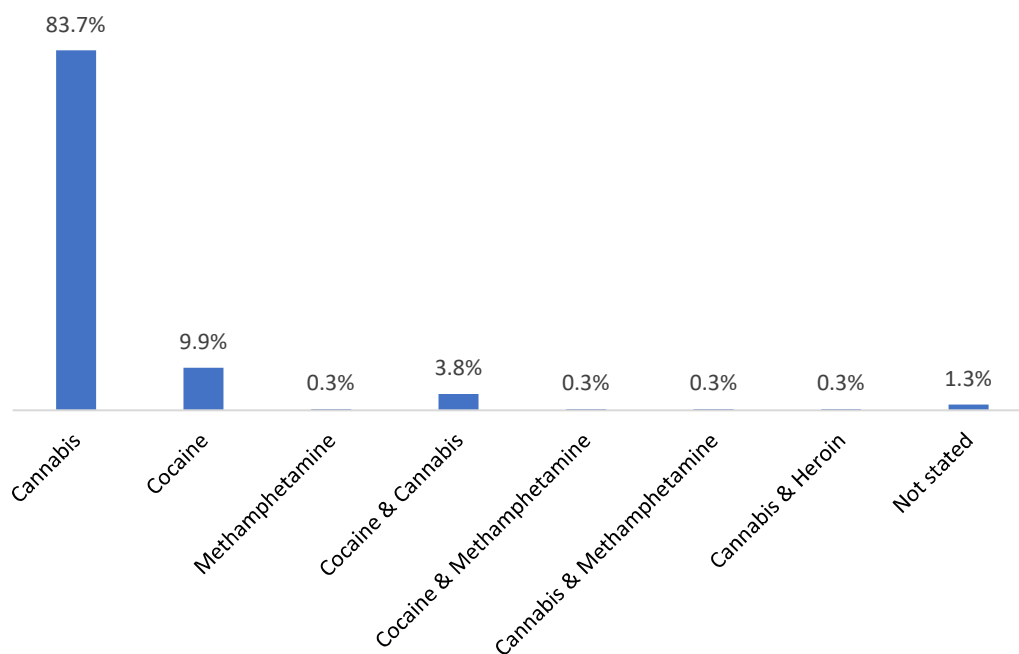


*Source: Barbados Prison Service*

### 5.3 Criminal Justice Research Planning Unit

The Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit reported that during 2022, a combined total of 313<sup>10</sup> persons were tried and sentenced for drug-related offences in the island's Supreme and Magistrate Courts. Figure 133 presents their distribution by drug type. From the Chart it can be seen that the majority of persons were tried and sentenced for cannabis-related offences, either individually or in combination with other substances i.e. cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine.

Figure 133: Distribution of Persons Sentenced in the Law Courts of Barbados in 2022 by Drug Type



Source: Criminal Justice Research & Planning Unit

#### Offence Outcomes

##### Cannabis

The sentence outcomes handed down for cannabis-related offences in 2022 are presented in Table 6. The Table shows that "Possession", "Trafficking" and "Intent to Supply" were the top three offences adjudicated during the target period. It also shows that "Reprimand and Discharge" (R&D) was the most common sentence outcome for "Possession" cases while "Convict, Reprimand and Discharge" (CRD) was the most common for "Trafficking" cases, closely followed by "R&D". Similarly, "R&D" was the most likely sentence outcome for persons tried for "Intent to Supply" during the year.

<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the number of drug offences tried in the Courts is far greater than the number of accused persons as some persons have multiple charges arising from a single case.



**Table 6: Sentence Outcomes for Cannabis Offences in 2022 by Offence Type**

OFFENCE	SENTENCE OUTCOME																	
	Fine	Imprisonment	CRD	R&D	Drug Counselling & RD	Community Service & R&D	Probation, Drug Counselling, & Comm. Service	Bond	Dismissed/ Withdrawn	Probation	Probation & R&D	Suspended Sentence	Discharge	Time Served	Guilty	Not Guilty	Unknown	TOTAL
Possession	29	1	66	123	1	1	1	22	1	26	1		1	1	1	2		276
Importation	39	2	2	6				5		1		3						58
Trafficking	25	8	73	69	1	1	1	27		17		1		2		2		227
Intent to Supply	6	4	78	104	1	1	1	10		14		3		1		2		225
Cultivation	14	2	7	8	1		1	6		1		4				1	1	46
Possession of Apparatus	2		2	10														14
<b>TOTAL</b>	115	17	228	320	4	3	4	70	1	59	1	11	1	4	1	7	1	846

*Source: Criminal Justice Research & Planning Unit*

## Cocaine

As with cannabis, “Possession”, “Trafficking” and “Intent to Supply” were also the top three cocaine-related offences tried in the island’s Law Courts in 2022 (See Table 7). “R&D” was the most common sentence outcome for the “Possession” and “Intent to Supply” cases, while “CRD” was the most common outcome for persons facing “Trafficking” charges (See Table 7).

**Table 7: Sentence Outcomes for Cocaine Offences in 2022 by Offence Type**

OFFENCE	SENTENCE OUTCOME										
	Fine	Imprisonment	CRD	R&D	Drug Treatment & R&D	Probation, Drug Counselling & Community Service	Bond	Suspended Sentence	Time Served	Dismissed/ Withdrawn	TOTAL
Possession	3	3	5	10	1		3	1	1	8	35
Importation	1									1	2
Trafficking	3	2	10		1	5	6			5	32
Intent to Supply	1	2	5	10	2					4	24
Possession of Apparatus		4	2	1			3	2			12
Possession within Radius of 100 yards of school premises			1								1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>106</b>

*Source: Criminal Justice Research & Planning Unit*

## Methamphetamine

A total of three methamphetamine cases were adjudicated in 2022. All three were for “Possession” of the substance (See Table 8). Two were “Dismissed” and one resulted in a “Fine” (See Table 8).

**Table 8: Sentence Outcomes for Methamphetamine Offences in 2022 by Offence Type**

OFFENCE	SENTENCE OUTCOME		
	Fine	Dismissed	TOTAL
Possession	1	2	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

*Source: Criminal Justice Research & Planning Unit*

## Heroin

Two heroin charges were adjudicated during the period under review. They both involved the same individual who was jointly charged with “Possession” and “Trafficking” (See Table 9). They received a “R&D” for “Possession” and a “Fine” for “Trafficking” (See Table 9).

**Table 9: Sentence Outcomes for Heroin Offences in 2022 by Offence Type**

OFFENCE	SENTENCE OUTCOME		
	Fine	R&D	TOTAL
Possession		1	1
Trafficking	1		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

*Source: Criminal Justice Research & Planning Unit*

## Controlled Substances (Not Stated)

There were six cases which involved unidentified controlled drugs: three for “Possession”, two for “Trafficking” and one for “Importation” (See Table 10). All of the “Trafficking” and “Importation” cases were “Dismissed” (See Table 10). Of the three “Possession” cases, one resulted in a “CRD”, another was “Dismissed” and the individual in the remaining case was found “Not Guilty” (See Table 10).

**Table 10: Sentence Outcomes for Controlled Substance (Not Stated) Offences in 2022 by Offence Type**

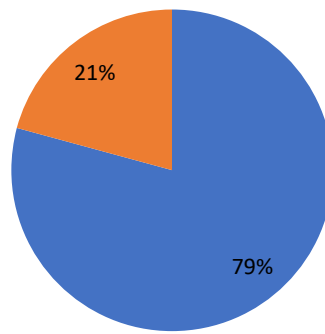
OFFENCE	SENTENCE OUTCOME			
	CRD	Dismissed	Not Guilty	TOTAL
Possession of a Controlled Drug: Not Stated	1	1	1	3
Trafficking of a Controlled Drug: Not Stated		2		2
Importation of a Controlled Drug: Not Stated		1		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>

*Source: Criminal Justice Research & Planning Unit*

## 5.4 Government Industrial School

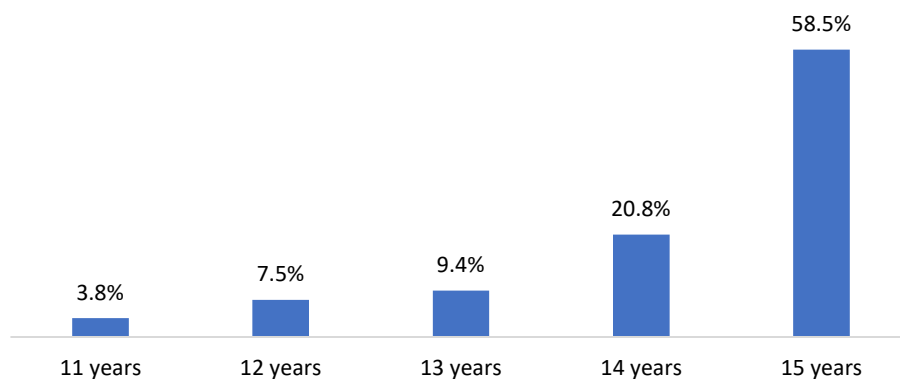
Fifty-three wards were committed/remanded to the Government Industrial School (GIS) during the period January 1 to December 31, 2022. Figure 134 reveals that the majority of young persons committed/remanded to the GIS in 2022 were male while just over half (58.5%) were age 15 (See Figure 135).

Figure 134: Gender Distribution of Wards Remanded/Committed to the Government Industrial School in 2022



Source: Government Industrial School

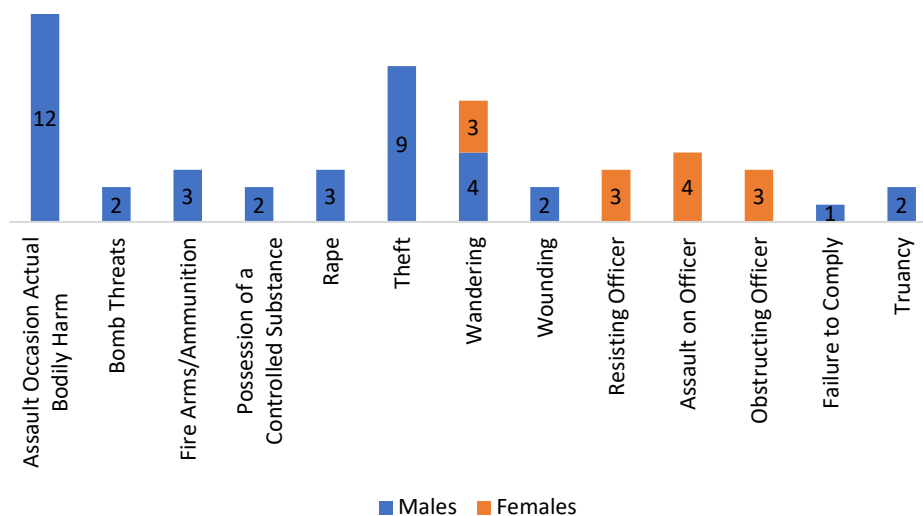
Figure 135: Age Distribution of Wards Remanded/Committed to the Government Industrial School in 2022



Source: Government Industrial School

The offences for which wards were committed/remanded to the institution during the year are presented in Figure 136. “Assault Occasioning Actual Bodily Harm” and “Theft” were the two most common offences recorded among all wards, and males in particular (See Figure 136). For females, “Assaulting an Officer” was the most common while “Wandering”, “Resisting an Officer” and “Obstructing an Officer” were of equal frequency (See Figure 136). The Chart also shows that males were committed/remanded for wider range of offences, many of which were more serious in nature, than those for which females were committed/remanded.

Figure 136: Gender Distribution of Offences for which Wards were Remanded/Committed to the Government Industrial School in 2022

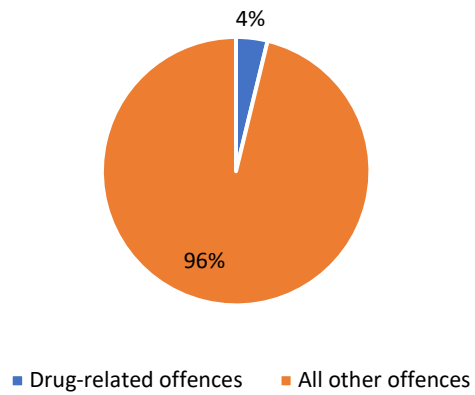


Source: Government Industrial School

### Drug-related Offences

There were only two wards committed/remanded for drug-related offences, both of whom were 15 year old males; and in each case, the charge was “Possession of a Controlled Substance” (See Figure X). Based on these statistics, drug-related offences accounted for only 4% of the offences for which wards were committed/remanded to the GIS in 2022 (See Figure 137).

Figure 137: Drug-related vs All Other Offences for which  
Wards were Remanded/Committed to the Government  
Industrial School in 2022



*Source: Government Industrial School*

### ***Drug Testing***

On occasion, court-ordered drug tests are requested by the presiding Magistrate. In 2022, only one ward, a 15 year old male tested positive for marijuana use, with a reading of 214 ng/ml. No wards tested positive for cocaine use.

## 5.5 Financial Intelligence Unit

The Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) recorded a total of 233 Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) during 2022. Each year, these reports are submitted to the FIU by financial institutions and non-financial designates, and they detail suspicious financial activity by individuals, groups and organizations. The FIU examines the reports with a view to identify potential crimes such as fraud, terrorist financing and money laundering. Credible reports are forwarded to the Barbados Police Service for investigation.

The strong link between money laundering and the drug trade necessitates the inclusion of this data in BARDIN reports. However, caution must be exercised when interpreting the data, as not all STRs will result in a police investigation or in persons being charged with a criminal offence. As such, STRs are merely building blocks for investigations.

### ***Suspicious Transaction Reports During 2020***

Of the 233 STRs recorded in 2022, 7 (3.0%) were drug-related (See Table 11). Also of note are those STRs for which predicate offences could not be easily identified (n=169 or 72.5%) (See Table 11), as these may be found to have a drug link following police investigation.

**Table 11: Suspicious Activity Reports During the Period January 1 to December 31, 2022**

<b>Total Number of Suspicious Transaction Reports</b>	<b>Number of Drug-related Suspicious Transaction Reports</b>	<b>Number of Suspicious Transaction Reports for which a Predicate Offence Could Not be Easily Identified</b>
233	7 (3.0%)	169 (72.5%)

*Source: Financial Intelligence Unit*

## 6. Select Trend Analysis

This section presents select trend data, with a specific focus on: the NCSA's drug prevention efforts; the students admitted to - and testing positive for marijuana use - at the Edna Nicholls Centre; the profile of persons seeking drug treatment in Barbados; and the drug offences recorded by the Barbados Police Service. A comparison of the marijuana possession cases adjudicated in the Law Courts during 2019, 2021 and 2022 is also included.

As in previous reports, five-year trend analyses are presented where possible. However, in some instances only three- and four-year analyses were possible due to data limitations.

### ***Prevention and Drug Education***

#### *National Council on Substance Abuse*

Figure 138 presents the number of persons reached by the NCSA's drug prevention interventions during the period 2018 through 2022. The Chart reveals a sharp decline in persons reached following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which was due to the public health restrictions implemented to curb the spread of the virus, including the shift to online schooling. The latter resulted in an adjustment period for the Council which curtailed the delivery of prevention programming to educational institutions. It should be noted that scheduling difficulties also hampered school-based programming during the pandemic, as schools often preferred to retain their online sessions for academic teaching in order to compensate for any lost teaching time.

Figure 138 also reveals some level of recovery in 2022, as the Council saw an increase in the number of persons reached during this year. Nevertheless, this number remains markedly lower than pre-pandemic levels.

The proportion of persons reached within primary schools also remains notably low (See Figure 139). In fact, Figure 139 shows that the proportion of primary school students participating in NCSA's initiatives in 2022 remained similar to that of 2021 - despite the resumption of in-person teaching - while the proportion of secondary school students significantly increased. This is likely due in part to the 2020 decommissioning of the Life Education Centre (LEC)<sup>11</sup> and cessation of LEC programmes within primary schools. In previous years, the LEC accounted for the majority of persons reached by the Council.

In an effort to compensate for the shortfall created by the loss of the LEC, the NCSA has developed a suite of online educational materials for primary schools which are intended to be used in combination with in-person educational sessions. However, the implementation of this new approach has thus far

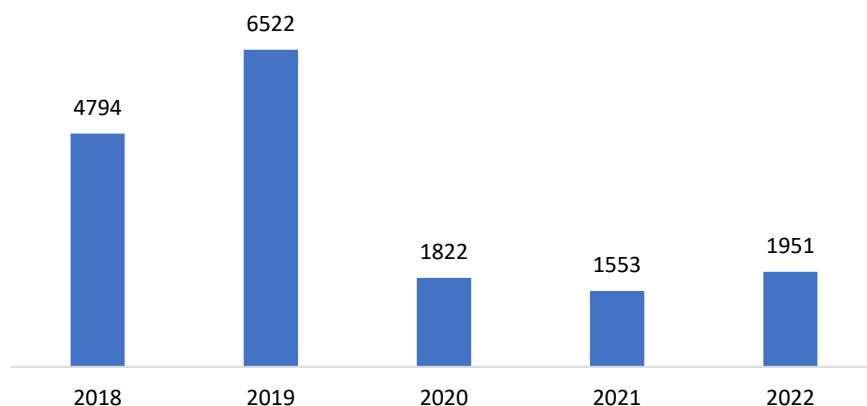
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<sup>11</sup> The Life Education Centre was a mobile classroom which visited primary schools across Barbados with a view to deliver drug prevention education to this population. The programme operated under a franchise agreement with CORAM Life Education (UK). Ongoing maintenance challenges and franchise restrictions which prohibited the Council from updating the programme to meet the current needs of the local population resulted in the decision to end the programme in 2020 and sell the unit in 2022.



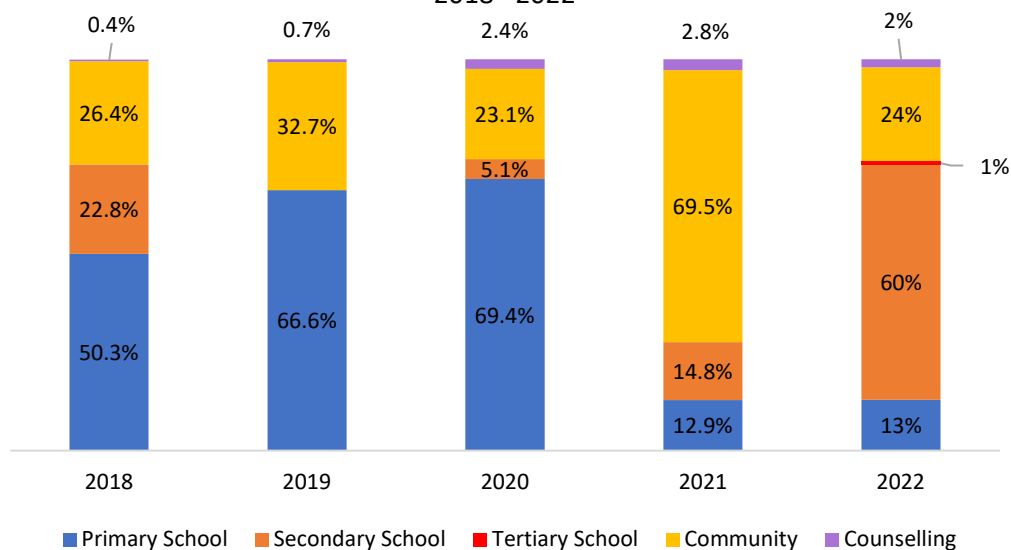
been hampered by the need for technical upgrades to the Council’s website and an active volunteer pool.

Figure 138: Number of Persons Reached by NCSA Drug Prevention Interventions 2018 -2022



Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 139: Distribution of Persons Reached by NCSA's Interventions 2018 - 2022

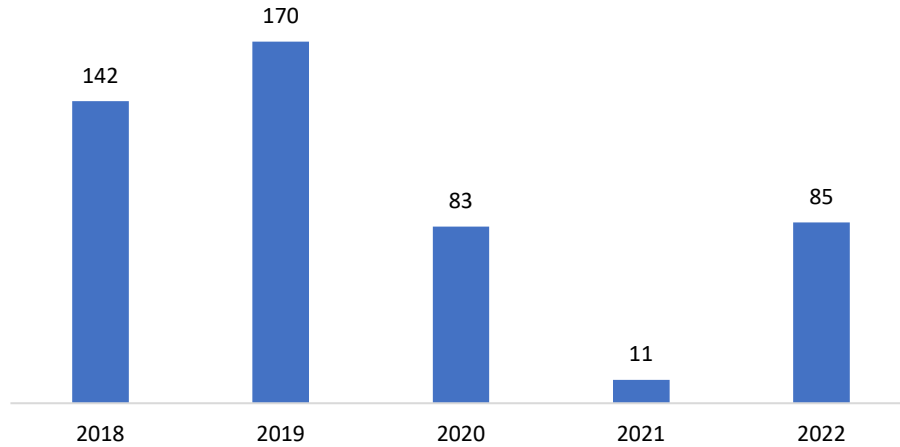


Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

### Edna Nicholls Centre

Much like the statistics from the NCSA, Figure 140 shows that the Edna Nicholls Centre also saw an increase in the number of admissions during 2022 – though this number has also not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

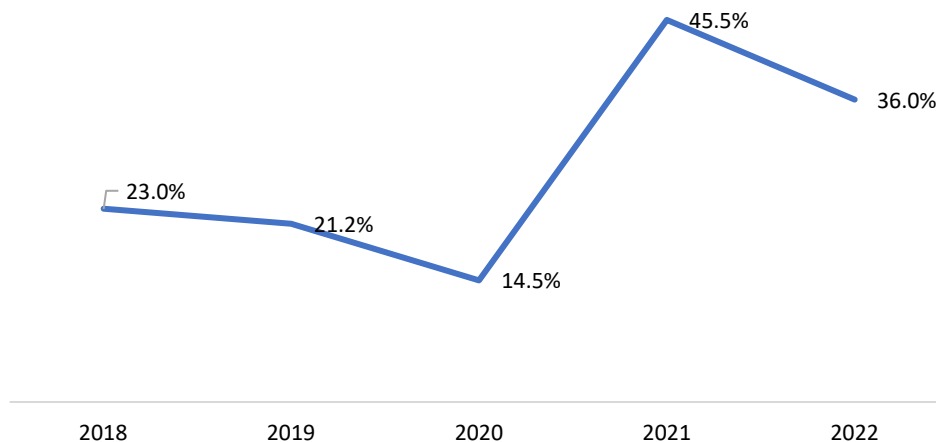
Figure 140: Number of Students Admitted to the Edna Nicholls Centre 2018 -2022



Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 141 reveals that the percentage of students testing positive for marijuana use in 2022 was lower than that observed in 2021. However, it remains higher than that in previous years. The unusually high percentage recorded in 2021 was likely due in part to the small number of admissions during that year – and by extension the small number on which the percentage was calculated. As such, it is not surprising that the percentage for 2022 has shown some decrease given that there was a corresponding increase in admissions.

Figure 141: Percentage of Students Testing Positive for Marijuana Use at the Edna Nicholls Centre between 2018 and 2022

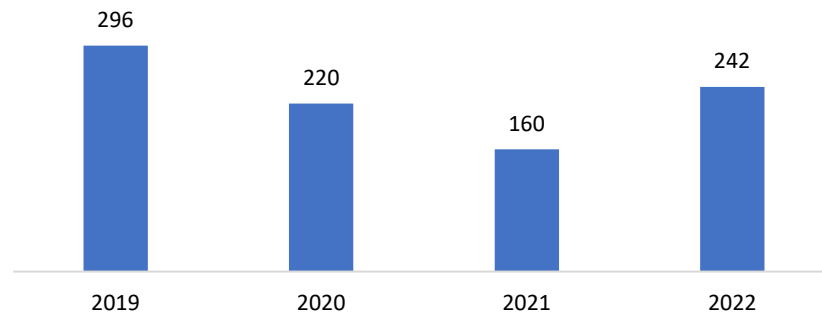


Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

## Treatment

Figures 142 through 146 present data on drug treatment admissions during the period 2019 through 2022. From Figure 142, it can be seen that following the decrease in admissions which occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021), 2022 saw a marked increase in admissions – with numbers approaching the pre-pandemic level.

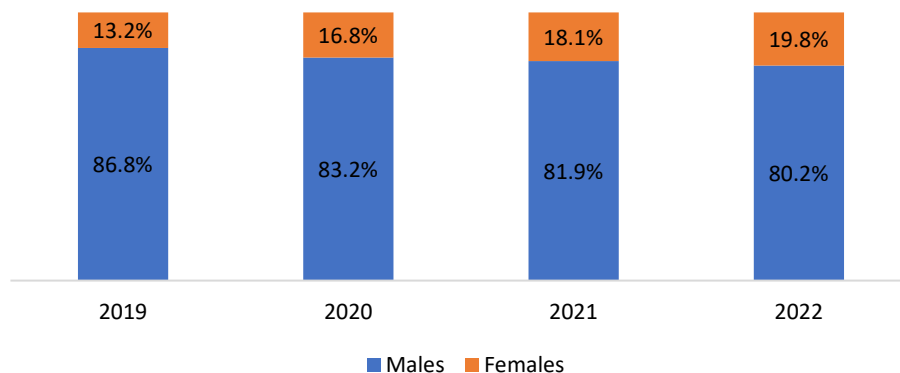
Figure 142: Number of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment in Barbados 2019-2022



Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

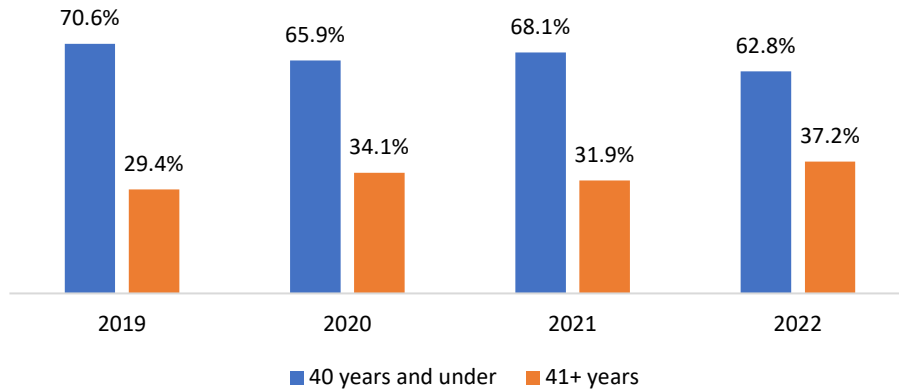
With respect to gender, Figure 143 reveals that, while males seeking treatment still far outnumber their female counterparts year after year, the percentage of women entering treatment has steadily increased since 2019. In terms of age, Figure 144 shows that, at the national level, those in the 40 and under age category continue to account for the majority of treatment seekers in Barbados.

Figure 143: Gender Distribution of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment in Barbados 2019 - 2022



Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

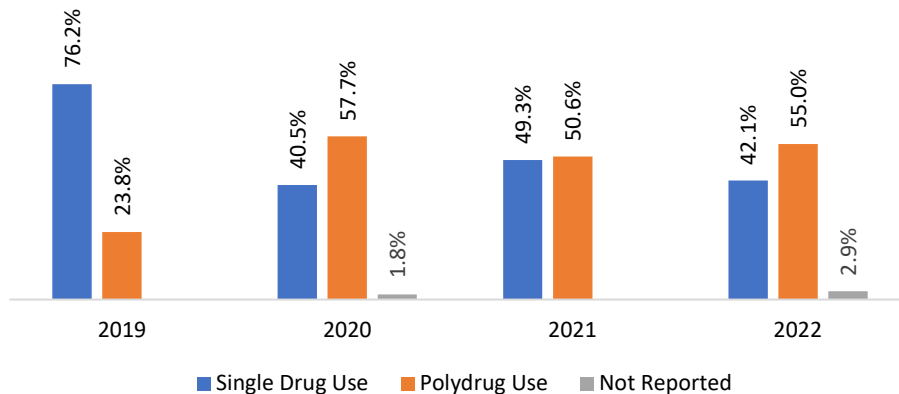
Figure 144: Age Distribution of Persons Seeking Drug Treatment in Barbados during the Period 2019 through 2022



Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

While Figure 145 shows that approximately three out of every four persons seeking treatment in 2019 were treated for single drug use, there was an increase in persons treated for poly drug use from 2020 onwards. The Chart shows that while there was a near equal split of persons seeking treatment for poly drug use and single drug use in 2021, poly drug users actually outnumbered single drug users in 2020 and 2022. This is a trend that must continue to be monitored given its implications for treatment delivery.

Figure 145: Distribution of Persons Seeking Treatment in Barbados for Polydrug vs Single Drug Use during the Period 2019 - 2022

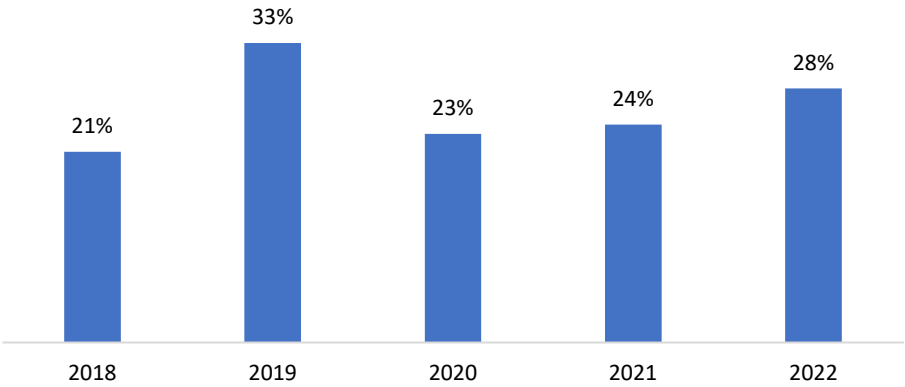


Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

Co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders can also affect the treatment process and success rates. This is noteworthy as Figure 146 shows that between one-fifth and one-third of the

patients admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital between 2018 and 2022 had comorbid diagnoses. While the Chart shows 2019 to have the highest percentage of comorbid admissions, it also suggests that there has been a steady increase in these cases since 2020.

Figure 146: Percentage of Patients with Comorbid Diagnoses Including Substance Use Disorders Admitted to the Psychiatric Hospital between 2018 and 2022



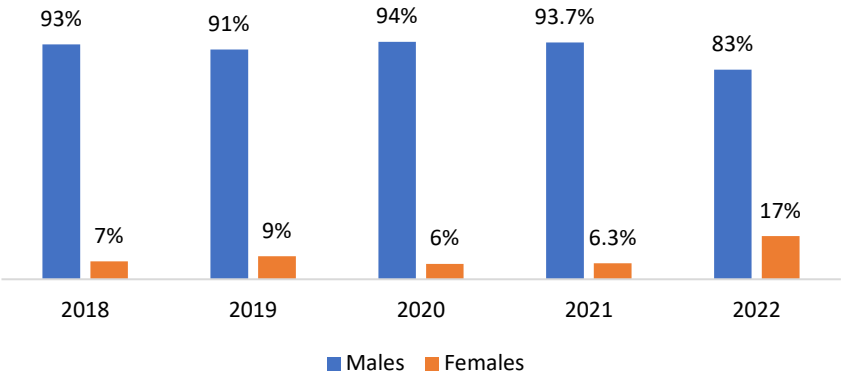
Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

Supply Reduction

The Barbados Police Service

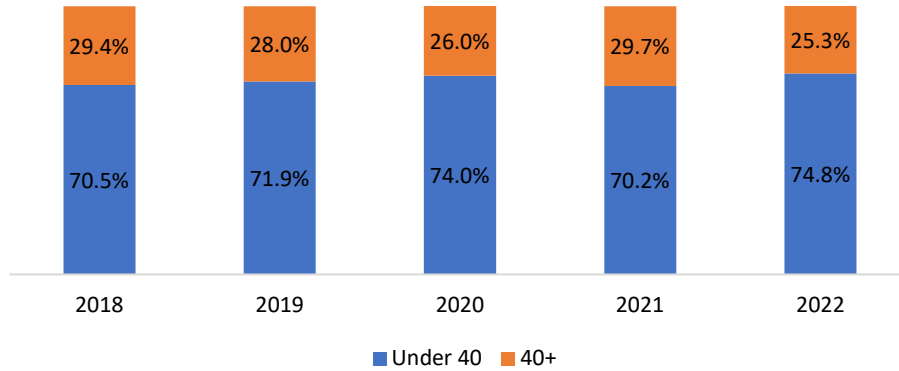
Figures 147 and 148 show that the majority of persons charged with drug offences in Barbados continue to be males and persons in the under 40 age category; while Figure 149 highlights the fact that they are most likely to be charged with cannabis-related offences as these have traditionally been the most numerous – a trend which continued in 2022.

Figure 147: Gender Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences between 2018 and 2022



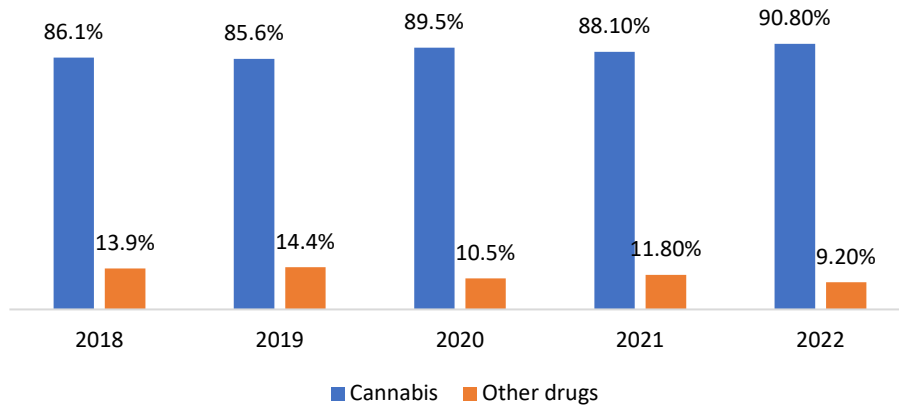
Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 148: Age Distribution of Persons Charged with Drug Offences between 2018 and 2022



Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 149: Distribution of Drug Offences by Drug Type Recorded by the Barbados Police Service for the period 2018 through 2022

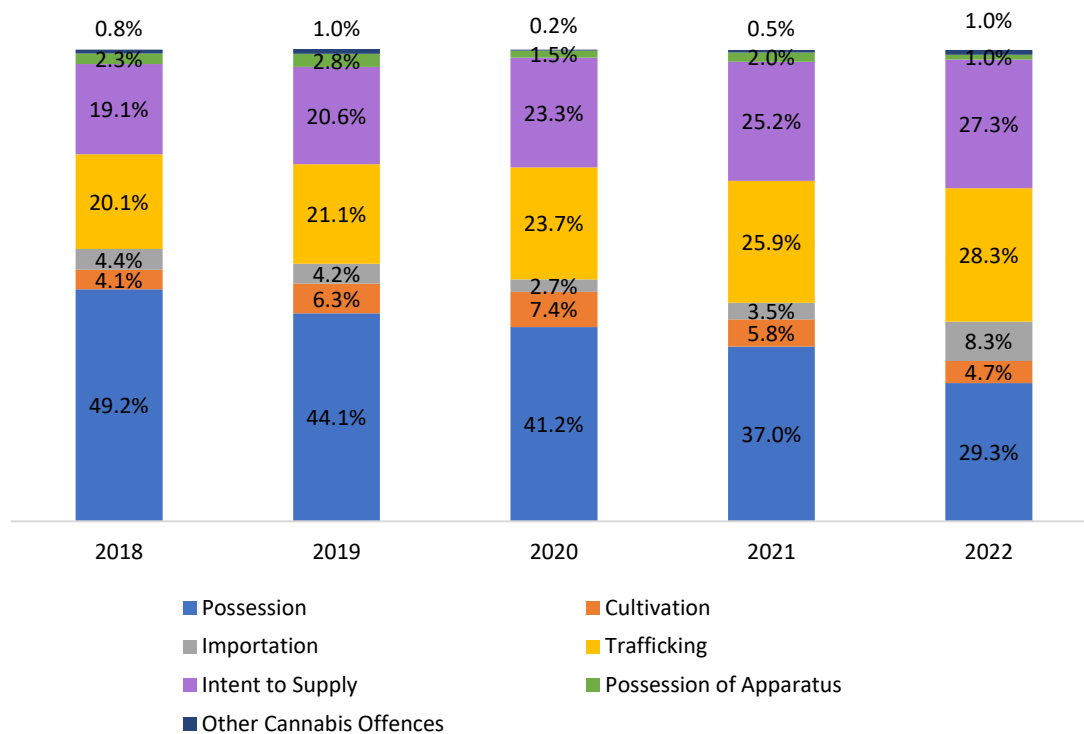


Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

Figure 150 presents the distribution of cannabis offences between 2018 and 2022, and it reveals that “Possession”, “Trafficking” and “Intent to Supply” were the top three offences during this five year period. Of these, “Possession” was the single most common cannabis offence each year – a rank which is likely due it being a predicate offence i.e. one which accompanies other, more serious offences.

The Chart also reveals the continuous decline in the percentage of “Possession” charges, which started in 2019 and coincides with legislative changes surrounding the use of cannabis for medicinal and sacramental purposes as well as the decriminalization of small scale possession. In addition to the decrease in the proportion of “Possession” charges, there was also a concomitant increase in the proportion of “Trafficking” and “Intent to Supply” cases.

Figure 150: Distribution of Cannabis Offences Recorded between 2018 and 2022



Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network

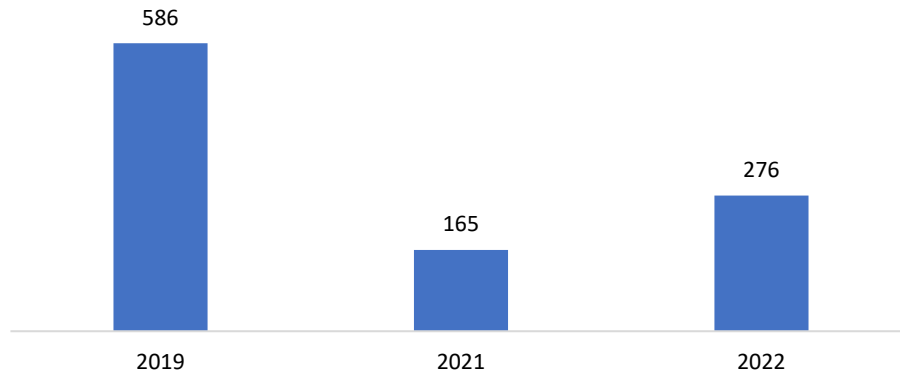
#### Criminal Justice Research and Planning Unit

Figure 151 presents a comparison of the number of cannabis possession cases adjudicated in the law courts in 2019, 2021 and 2022. Data for 2020 was not available for inclusion. Additionally, the data for 2021 is based on the cases tried in the Magistrates’ Courts only, while that for 2019 and 2022 reflects the cases tried in both the Magistrates’ Courts and the Supreme Court. Despite this difference, the data for 2021 was still included as the Magistrates’ Courts adjudicate the majority of marijuana possession cases each year; and therefore, it was determined that the difference in the total number of cases would not be significant enough to change the analysis and interpretation.

That said, Figure 151 highlights the sharp decline in the number of marijuana possession cases tried in the Courts since the aforementioned legislative changes. While there was an increase between 2021 and

2022, it is possible that the number in 2021 was artificially low due to the pandemic which may have resulted in fewer persons being charged and fewer cases being heard during the year. As such, it is recommended that this variable continue to be monitored in an effort to identify true trends going forward.

Figure 151: Number of Cannabis Possession Cases  
Adjudicated in the Law Courts of Barbados: 2019, 2021  
and 2022



*Source: The Barbados Drug Information Network*



## 7. Discussion

The current report indicates that the drug situation in 2022 was similar to that observed in previous years, with alcohol, marijuana and cocaine being the most prevalent – both in terms of treatment and supply control activities e.g. drug offences, seizures, incarcerations, etc. Likewise, males and persons ages 40 and under continue to be the main players on the local drug scene, accounting for the majority of treatment admissions, arrests and incarcerations during the year.

### ***Women in Treatment***

While males entering treatment continued to outnumber their female counterparts in 2022, this report highlights a steady increase in the number of women seeking treatment since 2019. This is noteworthy and may suggest some measure of progress in addressing the barriers that have traditionally hampered women's access to, and uptake of, treatment on island. These were identified in the Council's research report "Barriers to Substance Abuse Treatment in Barbados: Factors Hindering Women's Use of Treatment Services" which was released in October, 2023; and include, but are not limited to: childcare issues and women's concerns about their children's safety in their absence, lack of family support, having a drug using partner, societal stigma and a lack of workplace drug policies, just to name a few (National Council on Substance Abuse [NCSA], 2023). Denial and a lack of knowledge about addiction and treatment services were also found to be treatment barriers for local women (NCSA, 2023).

The increase in females seeking treatment is a significant development due to the possibility for positive outcomes at the individual, family and societal levels. Women are the central thread in the fabric of our society given their traditional role as the main breadwinners and childrearsers in Barbados, and the wider Caribbean (Quinlan, 2006). At the individual level, women in recovery are more likely to experience improvements in physical and mental health which will enhance their ability to be productive members of society and meet the demands of parenting (Elsworth, 2023). A sober mother is more inclined to play an active parenting role, serve as a positive role model and spend quality time with her children (Elsworth, 2023). She is also more likely to provide a comparatively safer environment for her children to grow up in (Elsworth, 2023). Together, these can have a profound, positive impact on a child's life and future.

### ***The Need to Address of Adverse Childhood Experiences & Provide Parenting Skills Training***

It should be noted that women with substance use disorders typically have psychosocial characteristics that increase the likelihood of poor parenting or family disruption<sup>12</sup>, including co-occurring disorders and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)<sup>13</sup> (Grant, Huggins, Graham, Ernst, Whitney & Wilson, 2011). As the number of ACEs experienced increases, so too does the risk of developing a substance use disorder (LeTendre & Reed, 2017). This has implications for future generations, as research has shown that children whose parents – and particularly whose mothers - have experienced ACEs and have substance

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<sup>12</sup> The term 'family disruption' refers to any disruption of the family structure, including children being removed from the home. Family disruption can have long-term consequences on children's mental health and well-being, placing them at higher risk for depression, anxiety and academic failure (Stanick, Crosby & McDonald, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events experienced before the age of 18 and include being exposed to emotional, physical or sexual abuse, neglect or household dysfunction (Smith et al, 2021).

use disorders are more likely to experience ACEs themselves. This has been linked to their mother's inability to adequately care for their needs as well as the increased parenting stress and behavioural and emotional challenges experienced by mothers with a history of ACEs (Gannon et al., 2021; Murphy et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2021). Together these threaten the mother-child bond, increase the said likelihood of ACEs in the offspring and by extension increase the children's potential for developing a substance use disorder in the future (Smith et al., 2021). In addition to the increased risk of developing a substance use disorder, children with exposure to multiple ACEs also have a higher likelihood of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, depression, anxiety, behavioural disorders and school dropout (Petrucelli, Davis & Berman, 2019; Smith et al., 2021).

Given the apparent intergenerational continuity of ACEs and the proven link between ACEs and substance use disorders, it has been suggested that trauma informed interventions that target *both* mother and child could be a particularly useful way of reducing the associated negative outcomes - including substance use disorders - in subsequent generations through their ability to promote resilience and post-traumatic growth (Smith et al., 2021). It is acknowledged that trauma-informed approaches are used at the Substance Abuse Foundation; however, it is recommended that such approaches be adopted by other treatment centres, used with clients as appropriate and expanded to include the clients' offspring.

Additionally, given the often poor parenting practices of women with substance use disorders – particularly those who have been exposed to multiple ACEs - it is also recommended that interventions designed to enhance parenting skills and promote securely attached relationships between mother and child be included in the treatment plans for mothers entering substance abuse treatment. Examples of interventions that have been shown to improve the mother-child relationship include: *Mothering from the Inside Out* and *Mindfulness Based Parenting* (Burgdorf, Szabó & Abbott, 2019; Suchman et al., 2017).

#### *The Need to Continue to Close the Gap between Male and Female Admissions*

Despite the increase in female treatment admissions, the continued male/female disparity suggests that there is still much work to be done to increase treatment access and uptake for women. To this end, it is further suggested that the *full suite* of policy and programming recommendations set out in the Council's *Barriers to Treatment* report be considered and, where possible, implemented with immediacy.

Consideration can also be given to developing and implementing gender-responsive treatment programmes which cater to the specific needs of women. In their Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 51<sup>14</sup>, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) highlights the existence of gender differences in substance use disorders and suggests that women's unique biopsychosocial characteristics influence their risk factors and relapse potential as well as their treatment engagement and drop-out rates (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2013). For this reason, SAMSHA recommends the use of approaches and the inclusion of services which align with women's life circumstances.

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<sup>14</sup> SAMSHA's Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) 51 "Substance Abuse Treatment: Addressing the Specific Needs of Women", discusses the issues related to the provision of treatment for women and provides a range of recommendations for improving treatment outcomes.

TIP 51 can be used as a starting point for the development of gender-responsive programmes for women in Barbados. However, it is suggested that this be supported by the conduct of a needs assessment designed to identify the characteristics and associated needs of women requiring treatment on island, so as to ensure the cultural relevance of any programmes which are ultimately implemented.

### ***High Unemployment Among Treatment Seekers***

The current report reveals that unemployment continues to be a dominant characteristic of persons seeking drug treatment in Barbados. While this corresponds with international findings (Laudet, 2012), and is often related to the highly stigmatized nature of addiction, as well as individuals' inability to function within the workplace during active drug use, it is concerning for a variety of reasons.

The wider economic impact has been discussed in depth in previous BARDIN reports and remains tied to the loss of productivity and taxes (National Council on Substance Abuse [NCSA], 2022). At the individual level, research has shown that unemployment is a risk factor for substance use and substance use disorders – and vice versa. It has also been suggested that unemployment is a risk factor for relapse (Nolte-Troha, et al., 2023). Therefore, employment can make the difference between long term sobriety and a return to active use (Eddie et al., 2020). This is intuitive as employment alleviates financial insecurity thereby increasing access to housing and enabling individuals' ability to meet their basic needs – both of which are fundamental for success in treatment and recovery. Employment also provides structure and can increase self-esteem and improve mood. These can serve as buffers against relapse.

It is therefore recommended that efforts be made to increase employment among those in recovery. These should include: providing job training and opportunities for education and skill development as part of treatment and after-care programmes, as well as establishing partnerships between treatment facilities and corporate Barbados with a view to facilitating employment, internships, and apprenticeships for clients. Consideration can also be given to establishing an employment assistance programme designed specifically for persons completing treatment. It is envisioned that such a programme can be implemented under a public/private partnership e.g. between the Ministry of Labour and the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Responsibilities can include: recruiting companies to participate, providing educational sessions for employers on key issues surrounding the employment of persons in recovery, helping companies to become recovery-friendly organizations (including the development of recovery-ready workplace policies), and facilitating job placements, just to name a few.

There also remains a critical need for general workplace drug policies in Barbados. These enable organizations to effectively respond to the issue of drug use in the workplace while simultaneously assisting employees with substance use disorders. They set out the procedures to be followed, the available support and how it can be accessed. The absence of workplace drug policies has been identified as a key barrier to treatment in Barbados, as the lack of protocols make many individuals fearful about the implications for their future employment if their colleagues or employers find out that they use drugs or have an addiction (NCSA, 2023; National Council on Substance Abuse [NCSA], 2023b).

As such, the call for a national campaign promoting the establishment of workplace drug policies which was set out in the Council's *Barriers to Treatment Report* is reiterated here. Again, it is suggested that the campaign be led by the NCSA given its experience in helping companies to develop such policies, and recommended that it include a public education component to raise awareness about these policies, their importance and content.

### ***The Continued Dominance of Marijuana on the Local Drug Scene***

The current report supports the old adage that 'the more things change, the more the stay the same', as marijuana has captured the attention of treatment professionals and the supply control sector - particularly in relation to people under the age of 40 - since the publication of the first BARDIN report in 2013. That report covered the calendar year 2011; and this report shows that 11 years later, the situation remains largely the same.

Prior to the recent legislative changes, which saw the enactment of laws allowing the use of marijuana for medicinal and sacramental purposes and the decriminalization of the possession of small amounts of marijuana (14 grammes or less), the legal position required a zero tolerance approach to the substance. However, the legislative changes combined with the increasing societal acceptance of marijuana use, the declining perception of harm associated with the drug and the ease of access necessitate a different approach; and it is recommended that this be one of harm reduction.

### ***A Harm Reduction Approach for Marijuana***

As the name suggests, 'harm reduction' involves the use of approaches designed to reduce the harms (physical, health, legal, etc.) associated with the use of a drug or drugs (Coulson & Hartman, 2022). It shifts the focus away from the drug itself and the view that drug use is a moral failing, to the consequences or effects of the behaviour (Coulson & Hartman, 2022; Meffert, et al., 2019). The intention is to save lives and protect the health of people who use drugs and their communities while simultaneously destigmatizing addiction (Coulson & Hartman, 2022).

To identify appropriate harm reduction approaches, consideration must first be given to the potential harms associated with marijuana use. These include, but are not limited to: marijuana-related motor vehicle and other accidents, marijuana dependence, mental illness induced or exacerbated by marijuana use, risky sexual behaviour and respiratory effects e.g. poor lung capacity, difficulty breathing, chronic bronchitis (Hall & Fischer, 2010; Pedersen, Hummer, Rinker, Traylor & Neighbors, 2016).

Each potential harm provides an avenue for harm reduction initiatives. As such, it is recommended that consideration be given to the following:

- Implementing legislation that makes it illegal to drive while under the influence of marijuana.
- Implementing roadside testing in cases where there is a suspicion of marijuana-impaired driving.
- Educating the public about the dangers associated with marijuana-impaired driving.
- Promoting the use of designated driver programmes similar to those advocated for alcohol use.
- Promoting the use of screening and brief interventions by medical professionals who suspect that patients may have a Cannabis Use Disorder or be at risk for developing one.

- Educating the public about the possibility of dependence and the implications for mental illness, with a special focus on at populations most at risk e.g. populations known for frequent/high levels of use; persons with a personal/family history of mental illness.
- Educating the public about the benefits and risks associated with various methods of marijuana administration.

Many of the foregoing suggestions speak to public education. In order to develop appropriate and effective public education campaigns, it is further suggested that research be conducted among the target populations to determine their specific informational needs as well as their preferred methods of information sharing. This can be done through market research (Hall and Fischer, 2010).

The promotion of protective strategies can also be used in tandem with a harm reduction approach. Protective strategies are behaviours that an individual engages in to limit potential consequences, including the development of cannabis use disorder, if they opt to engage in drug use (Pederson et al., 2016). Examples of protective strategies for marijuana use include: choosing to use lower potency products, avoiding marijuana use before work or school, avoiding marijuana use before driving or operating heavy machinery, avoiding methods of use that can lead to greater levels of intoxication, avoiding the use of marijuana if taking prescription medication that can intensify its effects, etc. (Pedersen et al., 2016).

#### *Training for Medical Professionals*

Marijuana can interact with prescription medications and may also potentially affect existing medical conditions (Canadian Medical Protective Association [CMPA], 2018; Kreusel, 2023). Given the apparent prevalence of marijuana use and the relaxation of marijuana legislation on island, it is highly likely that medical practitioners will encounter patients who use the drug either recreationally or for medicinal purposes in the course of their daily practice. As such, it is important that doctors be trained as to the possible interactions and complications that can arise from marijuana use. Such training will enable them to better assess health risks and identify potential interactions with medications they have previously prescribed or are considering prescribing (CMPA, 2018). They should also be encouraged to routinely ask clients about their use of marijuana and other drugs (CMPA, 2018). The proposed training can be offered as part of continuing education initiatives offered by the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners and other organizations.

#### *The Need for Research*

The precise prevalence of marijuana use among the general population is not currently known. While school surveys have been conducted sporadically throughout the years to assess the prevalence of drug use among the school aged population, to date only one general population survey has been carried out in Barbados, and this was conducted in 2006. As such, the data from that survey is now outdated and not useful for policy makers and practitioners. For this reason, it is recommended that a national household survey be conducted to determine the prevalence of marijuana use as well as the use of other drugs by persons of all ages in society. The results can then be used to craft up-to-date policies and programmes designed to curb the scourge of drugs.

Similarly, no research has been conducted to determine the effects of the marijuana-related legislative changes. As no data was gathered prior to the changes, it will be difficult to evaluate post-implementation changes in key indicators. Nevertheless, this type of research remains critical for future policy making and programming as it can highlight the need for initiatives to address any fallout from the new laws. It is therefore recommended that a study be conducted using proxy data to assess the impact of the legislative changes and this should investigate key indicators including marijuana use, rates of marijuana use disorders and marijuana-related offences, just to name a few.

### ***New Psychoactive Substances and Non-traditional Drugs***

While this report showed little evidence of non-traditional substances during 2022, developments on the local drug scene in 2023 – the year during which this report was prepared – cannot be ignored. The year saw the issuing of two Early Warning System alerts following the discovery and confirmation of new psychoactive substances (NPS) on island. In March 2023, an alert was issued for Methamphetamine, and in August 2023, an alert was issued for synthetic cannabinoids containing 4-fluoro MDMB-BUTICA and MDMB-4en-PINACA. There were also unconfirmed reports of at least one case involving fentanyl in Barbados during the year. The presence of these substances is concerning due to their potential for significant harm to public health.

In addition to our local discoveries, the proliferation of NPS on the international market and the discovery of such substances in neighbouring islands, creates an urgent need for us to have a greater understanding of NPS in the Barbadian context. This includes: what substances are available and in use, how/where they are obtained, the populations who are most likely to use them and their methods of use. This information will be particularly useful for crafting appropriate responses to address/combat the emergence of these new substances.

Research will be key to gathering the information. At the time of writing this report, initial plans were underway for the conduct of a descriptive study on NPS in three Caribbean islands, namely, Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad. The study will be funded and led by the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) and was designed with the view to describe the trafficking, sale, distribution and use of NPS and other emerging drugs in the participating countries. It will also review the countries' current response to synthetic and emerging drugs and provide suggestions for improved monitoring and responses to curb the threat associated with these substances.

The aforementioned study will use a qualitative approach, with a heavy reliance on interviews. As such, it is recommended that the research efforts be buttressed with the use of wastewater analysis. This method is used to estimate the community consumption of drugs and is a relatively new and emerging field (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction [EMCDDA], 2023). As the name suggests, wastewater analysis involves testing wastewaters for drugs and their metabolites (EMCDDA, 2023), thereby allowing for the identification of drugs (nature and chemical composition) used in a particular jurisdiction. One popular approach to wastewater analysis involves the testing of water from chemical toilets at festivals and parties given the high probability for drug consumption at such events. It is recommended that this approach be utilized in Barbados, and consideration can be given to conducting such a study during the Crop Over Festival. The involvement of the Barbados National

Standards Institute and the Forensic Sciences Centre will be necessary for research of this nature; and it is therefore suggested that these agencies partner with the NCSA to design and implement the study.

#### *Screening for NPS and Non-Traditional Drugs*

In addition to conducting research on NPS and non-traditional drugs, another avenue for identifying such substances currently in use on island is through drug testing. Thus, consideration should be given to expanding the drug test panels employed at the Edna Nicholls Centre and at the treatment centres across the island.

At present, there is wide variation in the testing practices at these institutions. Some test only for traditional substances, namely marijuana, cocaine, and in some instances – alcohol, while others use more extended testing panels, testing in some cases for seven and as much as 13 substances. The latter offer more comprehensive insight into the drug use history of individuals and allows the use of emerging substances to be identified. It is therefore recommended that those agencies currently limiting their testing to more traditional substance move towards the use of panels which include non-traditional substances such as methamphetamine, ecstasy, etc.

#### **Summary of the Recommendations to Enhance the National Response to the Drug Situation**

Below is a summary of the recommendations emerging from the foregoing discussion.

1. To reduce the continued male/female disparity in treatment admissions, the full suite of policy and programming recommendations set out in the Council's Barriers to Treatment report should be considered and implemented with immediacy where appropriate. Consideration should also be given to designing and implementing gender-responsive treatment programmes which cater to the needs and life circumstances of women. SAMHSA's TIP 51 can be used as a starting point, and efforts should be supported by the conduct of a needs assessment to ensure the development of culturally appropriate programmes.
2. In an attempt to address the parenting deficits among mothers with substance use disorders, interventions designed to enhance parenting skills and promote securely attached relationships between mother and child should be included in the treatment plans for mothers entering substance abuse treatment.
3. Efforts should be made to curb the intergenerational continuity of ACEs given their proven link with drug use and addiction. As such, trauma-informed approaches should be implemented at treatment centres across Barbados, and expanded to include the offspring of mothers in treatment.
4. As employment is a key factor in the success of treatment and recovery, efforts should be made to increase employment among those in recovery. These can include interventions within treatment centres (e.g. opportunities for education and skill development, partnering with corporate Barbados to secure jobs/internships/apprenticeships for clients). At the national level, an employment assistance programme can be implemented under a public/private partnership involving the Ministry of Labour and the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This

programme can be responsible for facilitating job placements, recruiting companies to participate, and helping workplaces to become recovery-friendly organizations.

5. Workplace drug policies are needed to ensure that organizations can effectively respond to the issue of drugs and remove any fears which employees may have surrounding the future of their employment if they seek treatment. Workplace drug policies are not common in Barbados. As such, a national campaign designed to educate the public about such policies and promote their implementation should be enacted and coordinated by the NCSA.
6. A harm reduction approach should be used to address the continuing predominance of marijuana use in Barbados and its associated negative effects. Such an approach should target the physical and health harms associated with the use of the drug and can be buttressed with the promotion of protective strategies.
7. The apparent prevalence of marijuana use, and the relaxed marijuana laws increase the likelihood that medical practitioners will encounter patients who use marijuana recreationally or for medicinal purposes. Given the drug's potential for interacting with prescription drugs and affecting existing medical conditions, doctors should be trained about the possible effects of marijuana use in their clinical practice and encouraged to routinely ask patients about their use of marijuana and other drugs.
8. Research is needed to provide current data for policy making and programming. Recommended studies include:
  - a. A general population survey to estimate the current prevalence of marijuana (and other drug) use
  - b. A mixed methods study to investigate the impact of the relaxed marijuana legislation
  - c. Wastewater analysis to identify any new and emerging drugs being used in Barbados
9. To identify the use of emerging drugs on island and obtain more comprehensive insight into the drug use history of individuals, it is recommended that the Edna Nicholls Centre and local drug treatment centres use extended drug test panels when testing their students/clients. This recommendation is particularly relevant for those institutions which currently only test for traditional substances i.e. marijuana, cocaine and alcohol.



## 8. Conclusion

This report revealed that the 2022 drug situation was similar to that presented in each of the eleven preceding BARDIN reports, with alcohol, marijuana and cocaine being the primary drugs capturing the attention of treatment providers and the law enforcement sector. Of particular note is the dominance of marijuana – particularly among those in the 40 and under age category. The apparent prevalence of marijuana and the recently relaxed marijuana legislation suggests the need for a new approach to tackle the use of this drug and its implications, with harm reduction being a possible alternative.

Despite the dominance of traditional drugs on the local drug scene, recent developments pointing towards the emergence of NPS and non-traditional drugs cannot be ignored. The confirmed presence of methamphetamine and synthetic cannabinoids, together with unconfirmed reports of fentanyl and the proliferation of NPS across the globe underscore the need for us to have a greater understanding of NPS and emerging drugs on island. Research will be key to gaining this understanding.

While males continued to outnumber their female counterparts in terms of treatment admissions in 2022, this report showed that there has been a steady increase in women entering treatment since 2019. This is a significant development with the potential to generate positive outcomes at the individual, family and societal level. Despite the noted increases in female admissions, there still remains a large male/female disparity which suggests that further work needs to be done, with a specific focus on breaking down the barriers to treatment for women in Barbados.

Unemployment remained a key feature of persons entering treatment in 2022. This is notable as unemployment is a risk factor for relapse. As such, efforts should be made to facilitate employment among those in recovery. Initiatives by treatment centres as well as a proposed national employment assistance programme designed specifically to assist this population will be pivotal in this regard.

Lastly, this report showed that there was some measure of recovery in the number of persons reached by the agencies in the demand reduction sector following the decline that occurred as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This augurs well for our national response to the local drug situation. Nevertheless, there remains room for continued improvement as some agencies have not yet seen a return to their pre-pandemic levels.

## 9. References

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