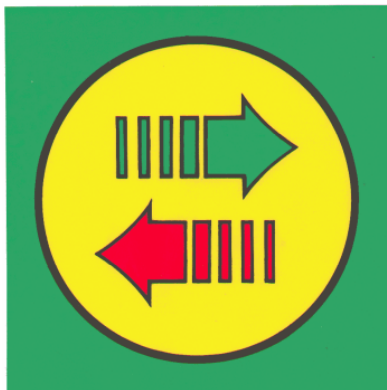


**NORTH WALES
NEEDLE SYRINGE EXCHANGE SERVICE**



**ANNUAL REPORT
APRIL 2004 – MARCH 2005**

Carry Burton
Harm Reduction/Needle Exchange Service Manager
Deeside Counselling Centre
Rowley's Drive, Shotton, Flintshire CH5 1PU
Tel: 01244 818513/FAX: 01244 816920
Email: Carry.Burton@new-tr.wales.nhs.uk



INTRODUCTION

Current Situation

The Needle Syringe Exchange (NSE) Service continues to operate across North Wales, aiming to provide a uniform standard of service delivery. We currently have 57 participating pharmacists spread across the region, together with 7 Community Drug Team (CDT) offices, offering a wide variety of equipment. Our pharmacies have the option of issuing ready-made packs (which contain 15 needles and syringes, swabs, citric acid sachets, a sharps box, condom and information leaflet) or using a 'pick 'n' mix' system which can be tailored more towards individual need. The expectation of CDT's is that the quality of NSE services offered, is enhanced by providing safer injecting/harm reduction advice and information, alongside a range of needles, syringes and paraphernalia.

The data in this report shows that despite no new investment in the service, we have distributed a total of 692,763 needles and syringes to 2,670 clients via the pharmacy scheme and 629 clients via the CDT and Harm Reduction Team (HRT) NSE Services. Notwithstanding the potential for some duplication (with clients choosing to use both CDT and pharmacy needle exchanges) this is, without doubt, an extremely cost effective service, protecting clients and communities from serious infections.

Without adequate NSE provision we would predict not only a significantly higher incidence of serious diseases such as HIV and Hep B and C amongst our drug-using population, but also an **increase** in drug-related litter.

Funding

This last year has seen the transfer of funding to Conwy Local Health Board (LHB) who now assume a lead role for NSE on behalf of the six counties. This ensures that service delivery can continue as before and allows for flexibility across the region enabling service provision to be responsive according to need, in any given area.

The issue of funding remains high on the agenda. The increasing uptake of NSE is **not** met with a proportionate increase in monies allocated to the service. This, together with the recent change in legislation allowing distribution of drug-using paraphernalia, means that resources are inadequate to meet the demand from service users.

We continue to issue citric acid across the region as core equipment in both pharmacy and Community Drug Team Needle Syringe Exchanges. Restrictions on the consumables budget however means that spoons, filters and other paraphernalia can only be issued targeting specific 'at risk' groups, via the Harm Reduction Team.

The re-classification of NSE clinical waste means that incineration costs have risen from £270 per ton to a staggering £750 per ton. This, together with the

proposed changes by the Environmental Agency (which will require each collection site being registered at a further cost of £18 plus £5 per visit) means that funding streams need to be increased to respond to these new financial demands.

Similarly, insufficient funding and resources do not allow for any development and growth to address the constantly evolving challenges faced by the service. There are currently no means of implementing new and innovative strategies to distribute sterile injecting equipment and associated paraphernalia to drug injectors in North Wales.

Research

National studies have demonstrated that too little equipment is being distributed to our drug injectors. In London it has been shown that only one new needle is given out per user every two days. Research in our area supports these findings with the Hidden Population Study showing that across North Wales, sharing of equipment is normal behaviour for our injectors. These findings give 'real cause for concern in relation to the risk of viral transmission and the possibility of cross infections'.

This year in North Wales, we distributed a total of 692,763 needles and syringes, a downturn from last year's figures of 722,049. In order to make sharing and re-use of equipment no longer 'the norm' we need to significantly increase this number (it is estimated that the UK market for needles and syringes is over 45 million!).

Problem Area – Conwy

Colwyn Bay continues to be highly problematic with no pharmacies being prepared to offer NSE as a direct response to local residents' vigilante-type action. The Harm Reduction Team has this year also been subjected to strong anti-Needle Syringe Exchange action when the mobile unit was picketed and forced to move elsewhere. Together with limited prescribing options, Colwyn Bay is a public health time bomb just waiting to explode, as all attempts to ensure appropriate service provision for local drug users have been thwarted.

Production this year of the booklet 'North Wales Needle Syringe Exchange Service – Your Questions Answered' was particularly timely helping to educate and raise awareness of our Needle Syringe Exchange Service and its reasons for being. Whilst the contents are invaluable in terms of justifying service provision, it would seem that in Colwyn Bay, many local residents prefer the 'ostrich' technique of burying their heads in the sand.

Dilemma

The problem faced by the NSE is that it now no longer belongs anywhere. With heavy emphasis placed upon reducing criminality, funding is channelled via the

police and criminal justice system. Similarly drug treatment schemes attract Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) resources as they are deemed successful at reducing chaos and in turn, criminal activity. The health agenda has got buried and the Substance Misuse Action Teams (SMATs) are commissioning drug services according to Community Safety and Crime & Disorder priorities with little, if any, consideration for health gain.

The question was posed at the 2004 UK Harm Reduction Conference, *“Why are we spending so much on enforced treatment options that we are not sure if or how well they work and so little on an intervention that we know can work well?”*, ie, needle exchange services. The question remains unanswered and in the meantime, the public health implications continue to grow alongside the financial costs of **not** providing an adequate service.

Research shows that nationally we are starting to see a rising incidence of HIV and Hep C in our injecting drug using population alongside an increase in the number of those injecting drugs and increased risk behaviour in newer injecting drug users. In the absence of a comprehensive Hep C testing programme for drug users in North Wales the spread of this disease remains incalculable, but doubtless, increasing steadily.

It is crucial that commissioners invest in harm reduction/NSE services in order to safeguard the health and well-being of all communities in North Wales.

The Way Ahead

There is no doubt that the future for NSE in North Wales is about there being more; not just more of the same, but:

More outlets – fully utilising currently under-developed supply points such as agency sites, vending machines, custody suites, secondary supply and outreach.

More equipment – emphasis must be placed on distributing a greater amount of needles and syringes and paraphernalia to a greater number of injectors.

More knowledge and information – delivered in new ways.

To achieve this, there needs to be a commitment from all six counties across the region to invest in needle syringe exchange. In so doing, we can share the costs whilst reaping the benefits.

The recent submission for a Needle Syringe Exchange Service Development Worker (which was rejected by the SMAT's in North East Wales) provides a good example of how the service can be developed according to local need but at the same time, as a unified North Wales initiative.

Annual Data Collection

This is the first year ever that **all** NSE participating sites have collated and returned their figures. Not only has this made the compilation of this report so much easier, but also, it has made it a considerably more thorough report, providing more accurate data. A **big** “thank you” to everyone who returned their forms so promptly!

Collection and Delivery Service

The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust continues to hold the contract for the NSE delivery and collection service across North Wales.

Over the last twelve months they have packed, prepared and delivered thousands of NSE packs and boxes to our pharmacies and Community Drug Teams and their service continues to be of an extremely high standard.

Community Pharmacy Sector Report by Gron Bennett-Williams

OVERVIEW: From Glyn Ceiriog to Holyhead and from Flint to Aberdovey, over 160 community pharmacists are serving their communities, monitoring substance misuse locally and where necessary, providing services. Our thanks go out to all but particularly to the 57 who are providing needle exchange.

“The largest risk factor remains an outbreak of HIV/AIDS which could easily become a major health issue in the community.”

Dr Jim O’Toole (December 2004)

The work to date has helped to keep prevalence extremely low. A recent street survey also shows users still sharing syringes and using poor techniques with water, cleaning and dissolution practises. The service remains essential and informing clients of good practises equally as vital.

Our policy is to maintain and develop new NSE sites as the need is proven and the funding allows.

Pharmacies in general have experienced a 6% drop in volume of work (except Gwynedd, which has increased by over 10%). It may be that habits are changing, but could also mean clients are less disposed to attend the NSE service. Good returns rates are always difficult to attain, but with training and persistence we would hope to reduce the ‘emergency pack’ volume and increase good exchange figures.

New pharmacies are warmly welcomed aboard at Mynydd Isa, Harlech, Amlwch, Rhosneigr, Penmaenmawr (new ownership) and soon Llandudno Junction. We also wish to encourage the recent additions at Abergele, Llandudno, Prestatyn and Llanfairfechan as they establish trust with their clients and increase their effectiveness.

Communication must undoubtedly be one of the prime essentials to success. Conwy Local Health Board, on behalf of the six Boards, now hosts the service. This gives us a healthy new framework within LHB contracting and also ensures parity across all areas of North Wales, with identical service level and remuneration etc, wherever the work is performed. You can still communicate with us as before:

- Carry Burton/Alison Brett 01244 818513
- Gron Bennett-Williams 01492 582911 01781 895303
- With each other! This would build up the ‘family’ at work, help solve local problems and encourage colleagues who may well feel isolated or be struggling with a niggling problem. Our concept is of a profession helping each other reach the clients. This report contains lists of NSE outlets in all the areas. Communicate!

The new pharmacy contract will bring consultation areas to most of us (some funding help still remains). This can have great potential in NSE, which falls into the ‘enhanced services’ category, as does supervised consumption. Both

services make up Substance Misuse Services and will shortly be commissioned/contracted. If you move the service within your pharmacy, don't forget to upgrade your protocol. At the end of April 2005 we welcomed the news of deregulation of 'Water for Injection'. This can have a considerable effect on Hep C transmission and when funding is available, we hope to include it in the pharmacy packs. Remember also there are a variety of pre-packed kits which would benefit the clients and ultimately the service quality.

And finally, we appreciate that this service can be problematic as well as rewarding, but be assured it is valued by Local Health Boards, Substance Misuse Action Teams and practitioners alike and we thank you for your contribution, which is often not personally rewarded to the full. Keep up the good work and don't forget to communicate!

FINANCE

Payment for community pharmacists (Conwy Local Health Board)	£83,696.00
Pharmacy Co-ordinator travel and on-costs (National Public Health Service)	£10,068.43
North Wales Needle Exchange Service Manager, Service Administrator, Training, Travel and on-costs (N E Wales NHS Trust)	£43,926
Leaflets and printing costs (N E Wales NHS Trust)	£2,000
SUB TOTAL	£139,690.43

Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust:

• Sharps boxes	£41,793.70
• Needles and syringes	£52,268.81
• Citric acid	£24,233.50
• Swabs	£7,320.59
• Stericups	£1,727.25
• Condoms	£5,479.87
• Miscellaneous consumables	£6,545.28
• Management, admin and packing	£29,244
• Transportation and incineration	£35,273
SUB TOTAL	£203,886

TOTAL COSTS £343,576.43

**OVERALL BREAKDOWN OF EQUIPMENT ISSUED
ACROSS THE REGION**

COUNTY	No of Packs	No of Emergency Packs	No of Boxes	TOTAL No of Needles	TOTAL No of Clients
WREXHAM	5,357	235	564	137,225	577
FLINTSHIRE	3,534	272	343	87,854	474
DENBIGHSHIRE	4,478	1,485	37	73,840	736
CONWY	3,158	772	3	49,214	149
GWYNEDD	10,125	2,785	23	159,745	457
YNYS MÔN	3,560	2,490	4	58,780	277
N W WALES DRUG SERVICE (4 offices)	10	0	246	24,750	146
N E WALES DRUG SERVICE (3 offices)	12	0	674	67,580	242
HARM REDUCTION TEAM (W,F,D,C)	0	0	264	30,400	241
YSBYTY GWYNEDD A&E DEPARTMENT	225	0	0	3,375	-
TOTAL	30,459	8,039	2,158	692,763	3,299

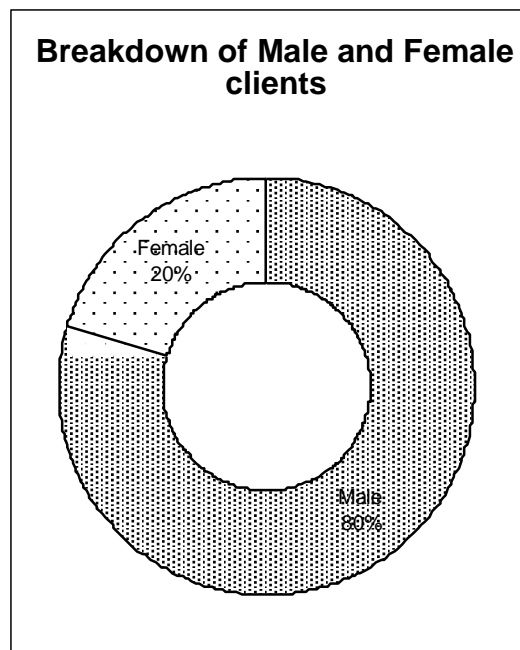
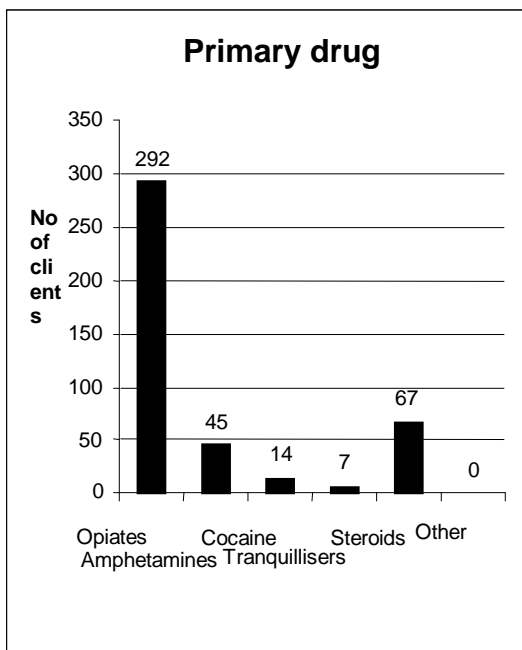
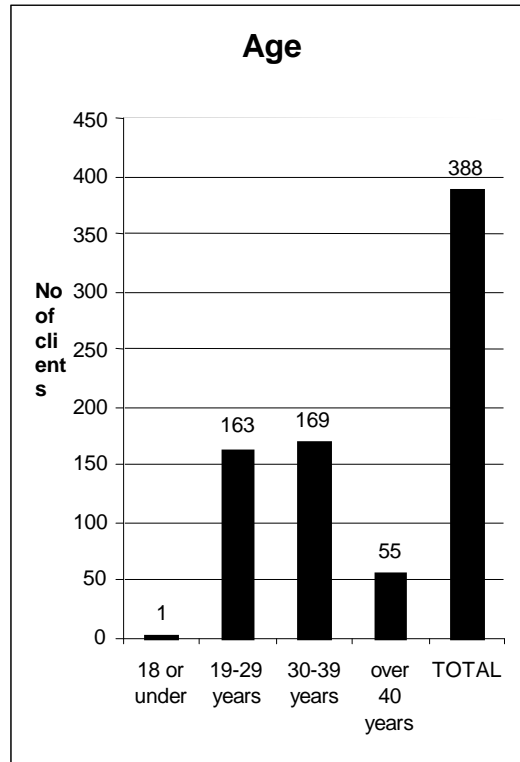
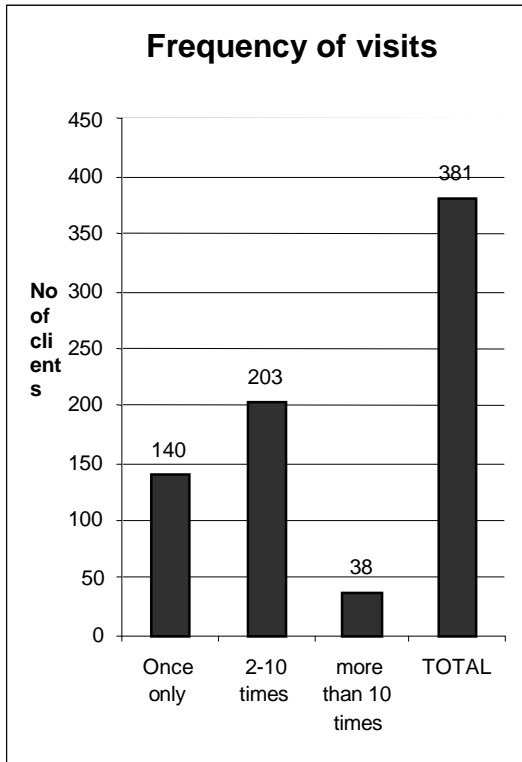
BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPATING PHARMACIES BY COUNTY

COUNTY	Total No of Pharmacies in N Wales	Number of Pharmacies in NSE	% of Pharmacies in NSE
WREXHAM	29	6	21%
FLINTSHIRE	27	9	33%
DENBIGHSHIRE	23	8	35%
CONWY	28	9	32%
GWYNEDD	31	14	45%
YNYS MON	13	11	85%
TOTAL	151	57	38%

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEEDLE & SYRINGES
ISSUED OVER 4 YEARS**

	2004/05	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02
<i>From Pharmacies:</i>				
WREXHAM	137,225	144,625	176,872	155,405
FLINTSHIRE	87,854	71,600	56,809	70,936
DENBIGHSHIRE	73,840	80,679	82,088	68,539
CONWY	49,214	66,508	48,324	39,094
GWYNEDD	159,745	135,970	158,005	133,004
YNYS MÔN	58,780	65,517	77,908	72,958
SUB TOTAL	566,658	564,899	600,006	539,936
<i>From A&E Depts:</i>				
YSBYTY GWYNEDD	3,375	7,500	3,075	450
<i>From CDT's:</i>				
BANGOR	20,650	22,200	28,300	15,000
HOLYHEAD	0	6,000	10,900	14,400
LLANGFNI	3,000	600	4,000	11,000
AMLWCH	1,100	-	-	-
HARM REDUCTION TEAM	30,400	48,835	30,315	-
DEESIDE	50,300	51,215	75,185	28,100
RHYL	15,400	19,100	9,800	8,800
WREXHAM	1,880	1,700	5,090	1,400
SUB TOTAL	122,730	149,650	163,590	78,700
TOTAL needles/ syringes issued per year	692,763	722,049	766,671	619,086

COMMUNITY DRUG TEAMS NSE STATISTICS



COMMUNITY DRUG TEAMS DATA

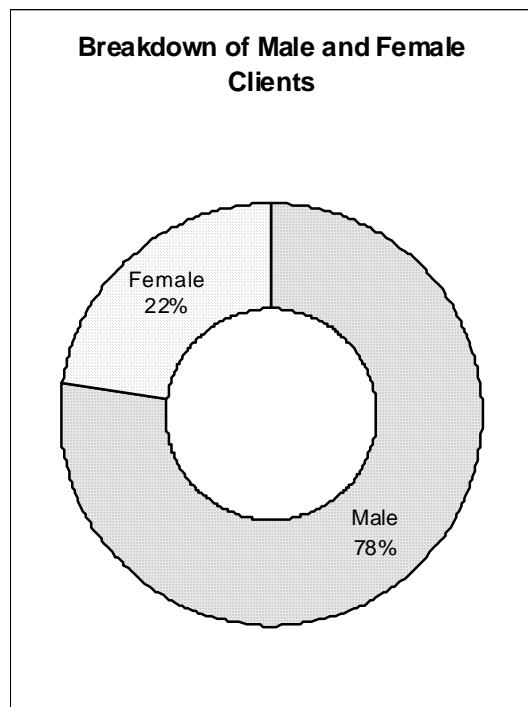
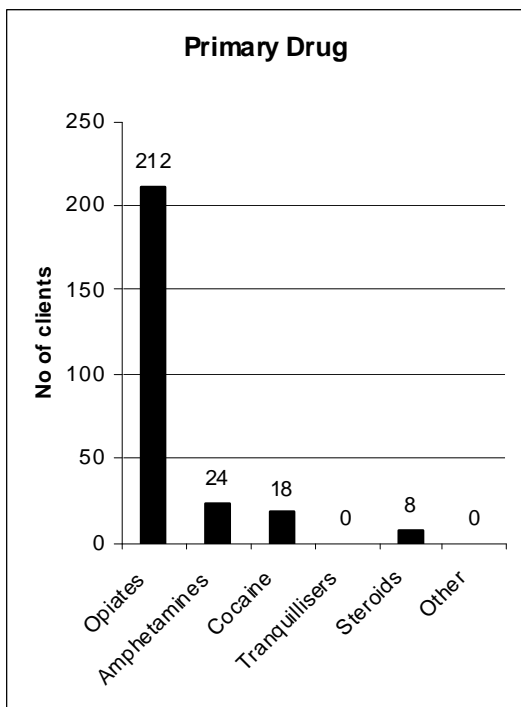
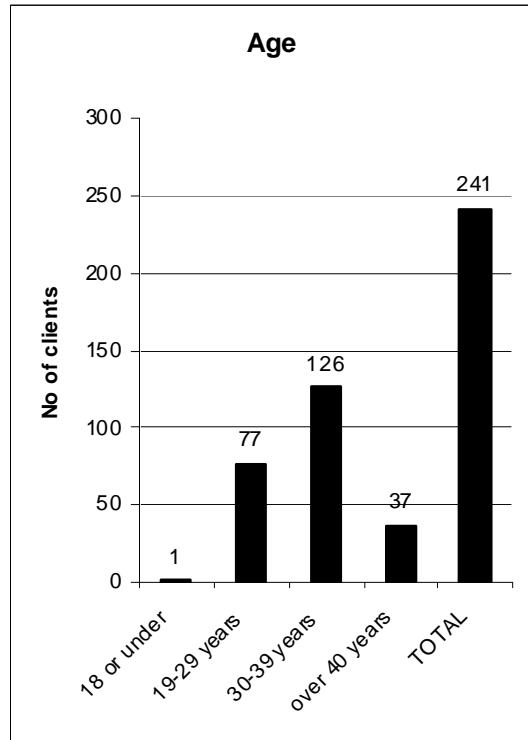
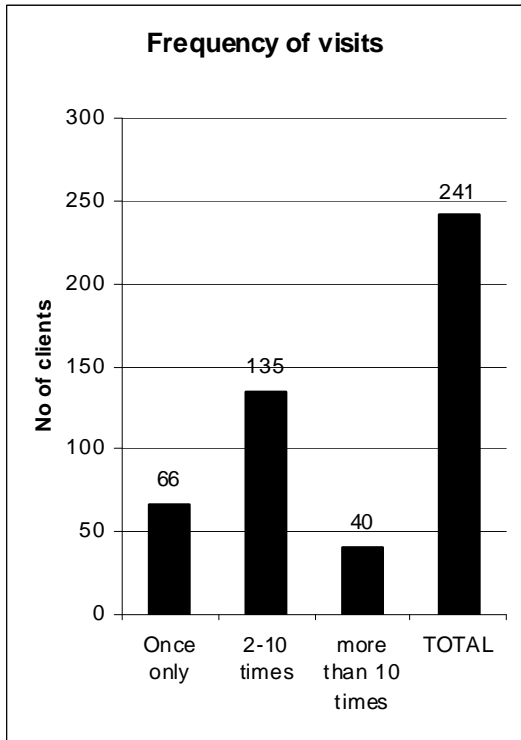
Comparative analysis of Primary Drug injected over 4 years

	2004/05	2003/04	2002/03	2001/02
Primary Drug used:				
Opiates	292	397	336	263
Amphetamines	45	47	67	37
Cocaine	14	7	16	4
Steroids	67	94	63	40
Tranquillisers	7	0	0	0
Other	0	1	0	8
Unknown	0	0	0	3

Number of clients seen:

	2004/05	2003/04	2002/03
<i>N E Wales NHS Trust</i>			
Wrexham	28	17	37
Deeside	105	114	116
Rhyl	109	161	100
HARM REDUCTION TEAM	241	306	-
<i>N W Wales NHS Trust</i>			
Bangor	79	185	135
Holyhead	0	5	21
Llangefni	53	80	58
Amlwch	7	-	-
TOTAL	622	868	467

HARM REDUCTION TEAM NSE STATISTICS



OUTREACH HARM REDUCTION TEAM

The Harm Reduction Team have been employed by the N E Wales NHS Trust since December 2001 with the aim of targeting hard-to-reach 'at risk' groups across Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire and Conwy.

Over the last three years the team have worked hard to become established in areas which have previously not been accepting of statutory service provision.

Their approach has been to provide user-friendly, low threshold, easy access services, tailoring service provision according to service user need (and responding to local demand).

The mobile unit has enabled the team to be a responsive service whilst offering a local facility where clients can be made to feel welcome.

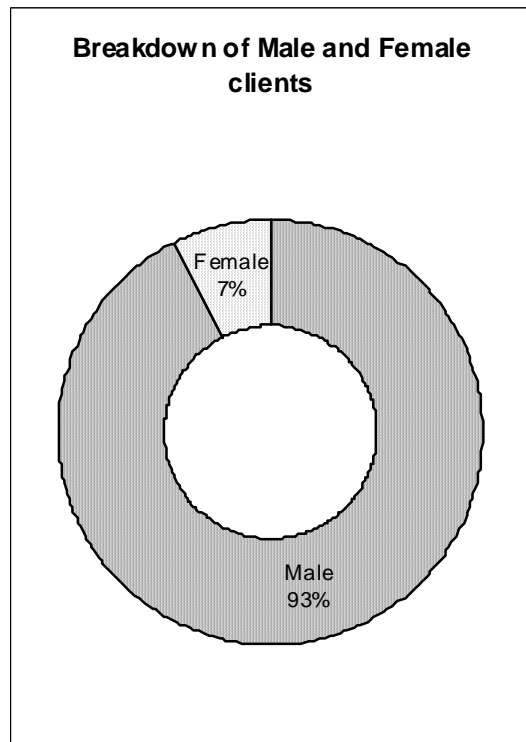
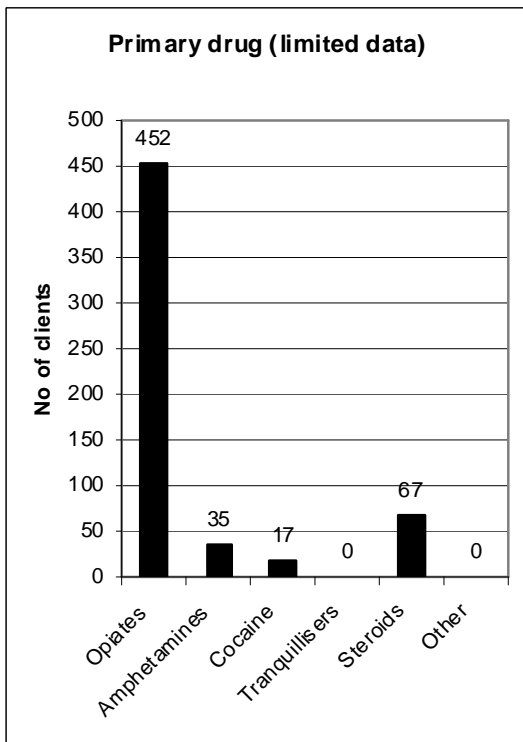
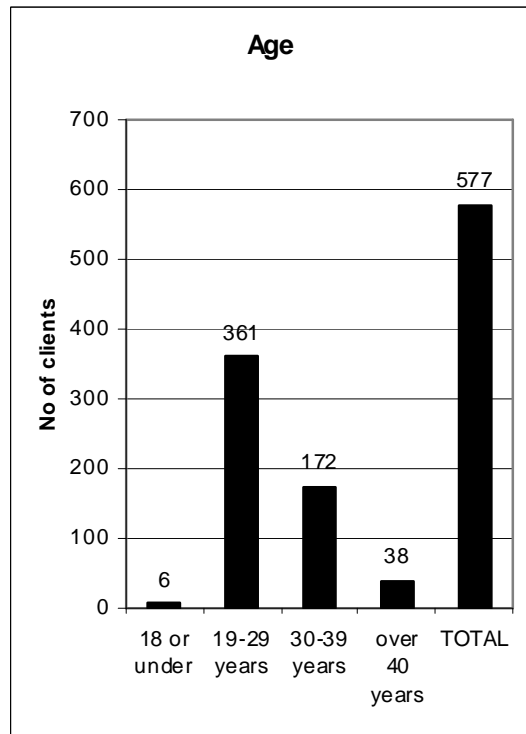
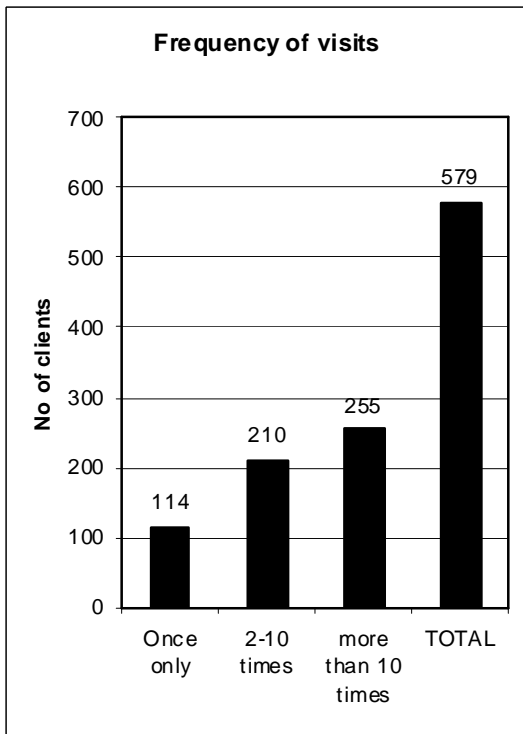
The emphasis has always been upon providing a qualitative service; a concept which is hard to evaluate and which can easily get lost with pressure from SMAT's to provide quantitative statistics which measure the number of people being seen and percentage increase in service uptake.

The work of the Harm Reduction Team has been varied with the primary objective being to access all groups identified as being at risk in terms of transmission of blood-borne viruses, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's), injecting injuries and other health issues. Such groups include:

- Drug users not known to services.
- Vulnerable groups at risk of starting to use drugs, or on the periphery of the drug-using scene.
- Female drug users.
- Men and women in the sex industry.

NSE remains central to the work undertaken, with the team distributing over 30,000 needles and syringes in this last year across the four counties.

WREXHAM NSE STATISTICS

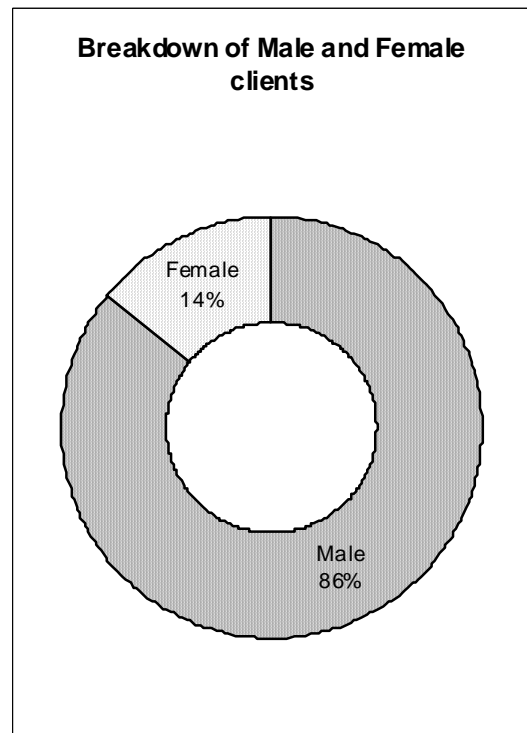
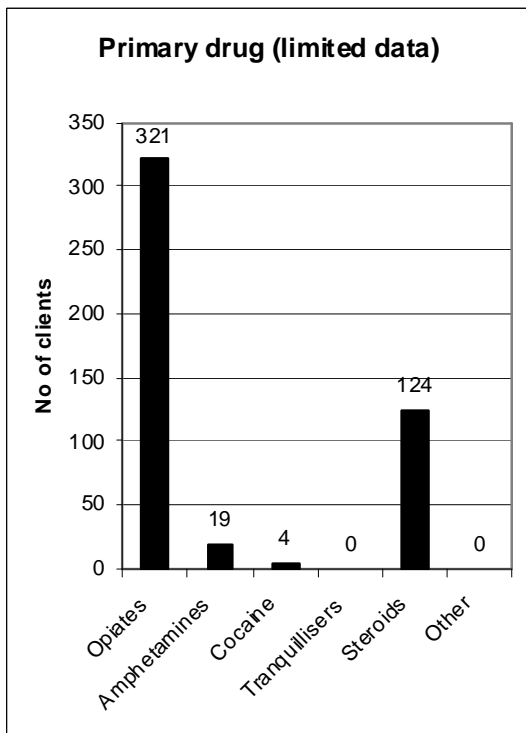
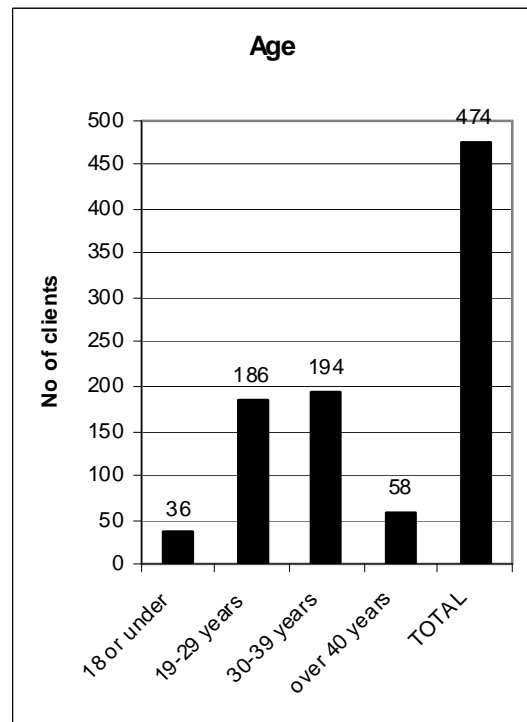
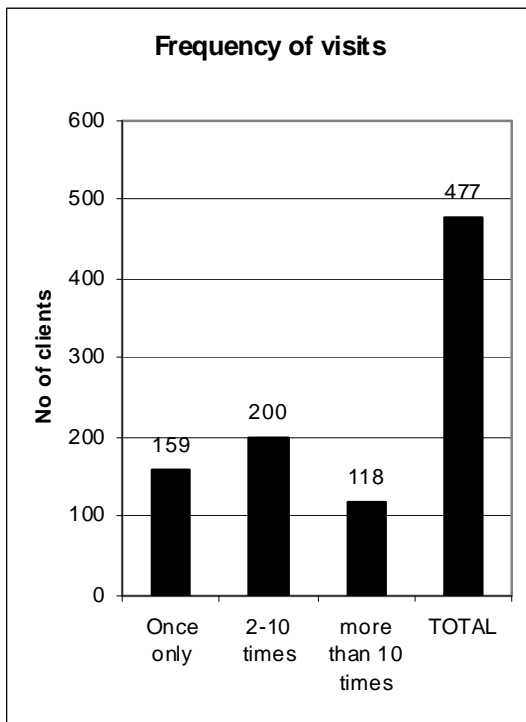


WREXHAM NSE STATISTICS
(currently 6 participating pharmacies)

- Acrefair Pharmacy, Plas Madoc, Acrefair, Wrexham
- L Rowland & Co, Medical Hall, Crane Street, Cefn Mawr, Wrexham
- L Rowland & Co, 28 High Street, Coedpoeth, Wrexham
- A Daglian, 203 Stryt Issa, Penycae, Wrexham
- L Rowland & Co, The Pharmacy, 3 Chapel Street, Wrexham
- Boots the Chemist, 3-7 Regent Street, Wrexham

<i>Number of different clients issued with Emergency Packs</i>	310
<i>Estimated percentage of needles/syringes returned</i>	60%
<i>Approximate number of individual needles/syringes sold each month</i>	152

FLINTSHIRE NSE STATISTICS



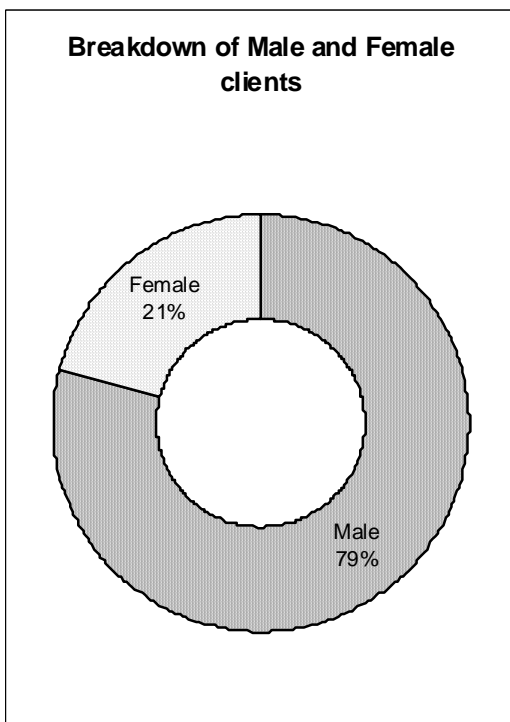
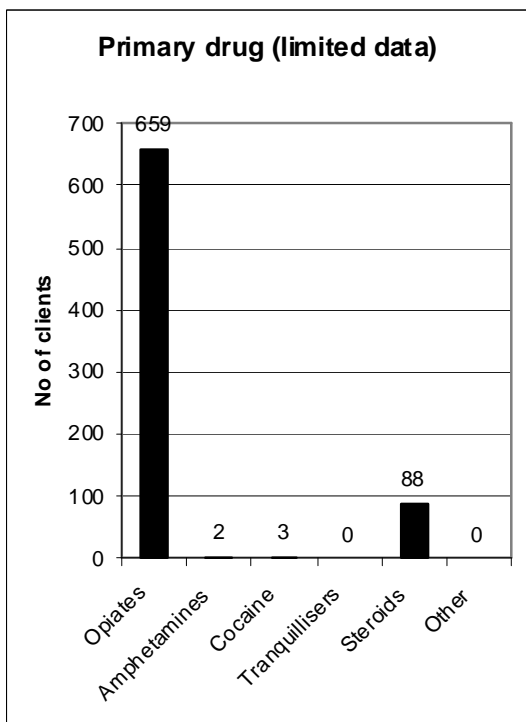
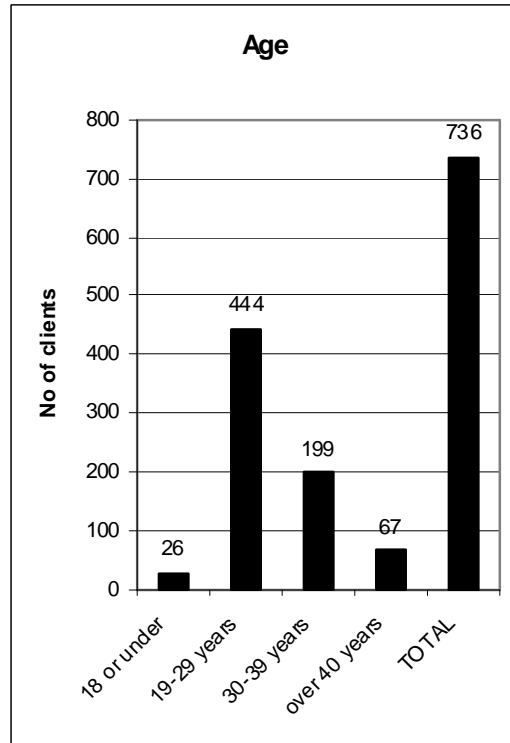
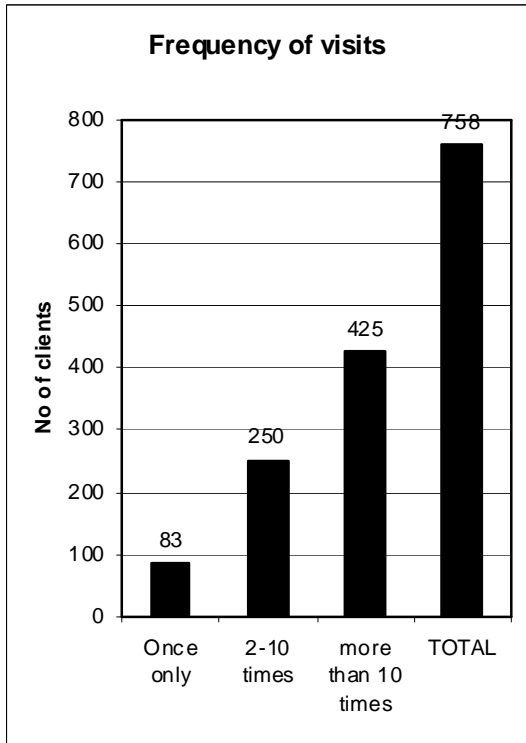
FLINTSHIRE NSE STATISTICS

(currently 9 participating pharmacies)

- S E John, Albert House, High Street, Bagillt
- Lloyds Pharmacy, 13-14 The Precinct, Buckley
- L Rowland & Co, 2 The Precinct, Connah's Quay
- Wepre Pharmacy, 113 High Street, Connah's Quay
- Lloyds Pharmacy, 29 Church Street, Flint
- L Rowland & Co, Coleshill Street, Holywell
- John Hughes, 11 Daniel Owen Precinct, Mold
- Speed's Pharmacy, 7 The Square, Mercia Drive, Mynydd Isa
- H A Crook, 23 Chester Road East, Shotton

<i>Number of different clients issued with Emergency Packs</i>	184
<i>Estimated percentage of needles/syringes returned</i>	54%
<i>Approximate number of individual needles/syringes sold each month</i>	430

DENBIGHSHIRE NSE STATISTICS



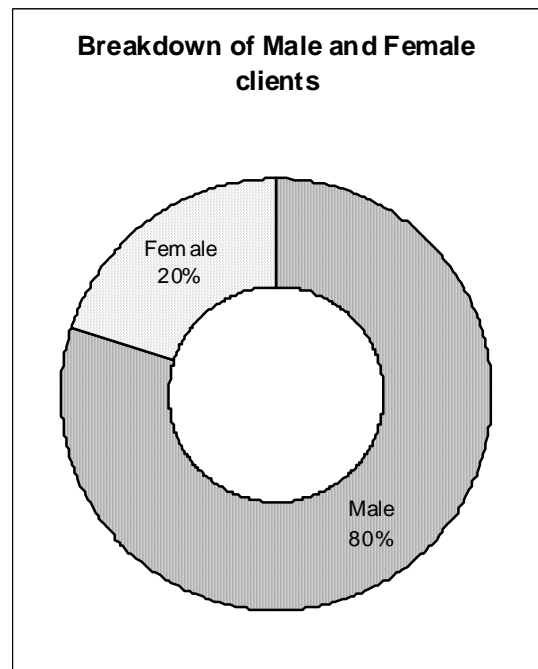
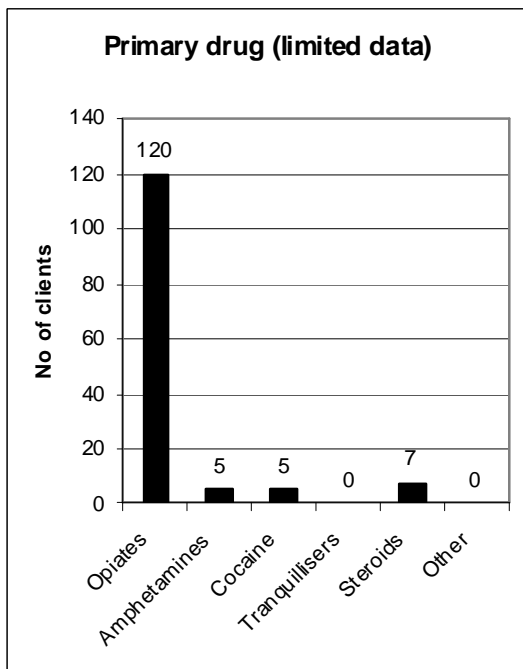
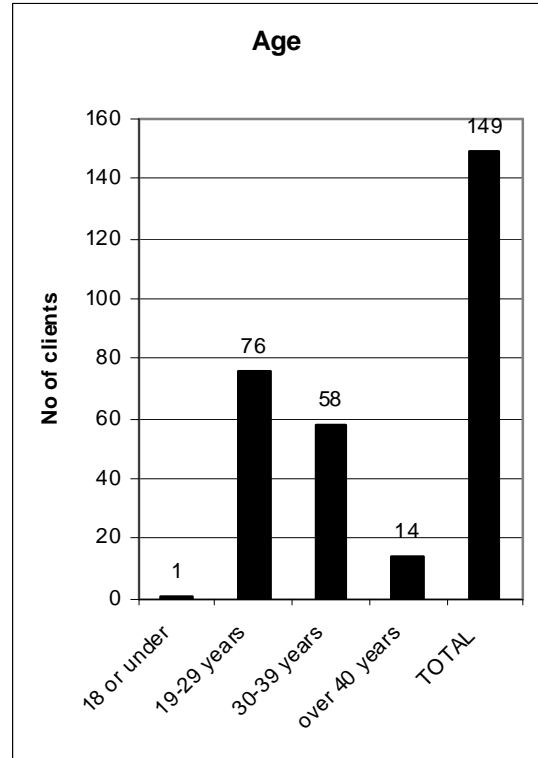
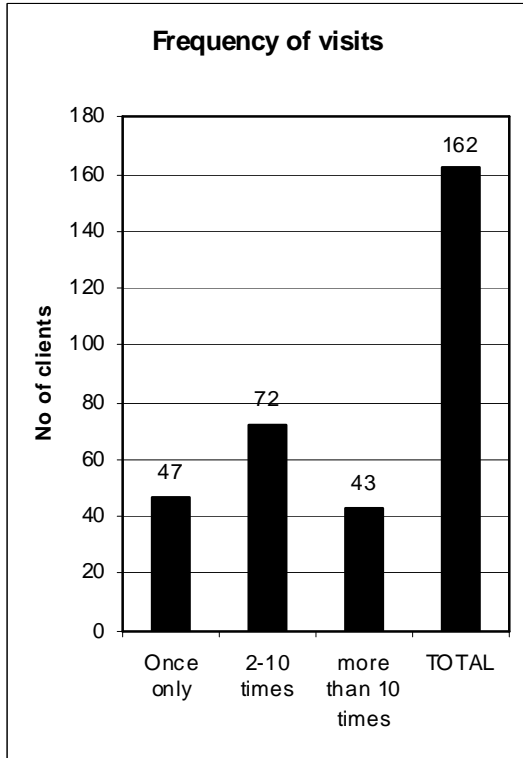
DENBIGHSHIRE NSE STATISTICS

(currently 8 participating pharmacies)

- L Rowland & Co, Vulcan House, Corwen
- L Rowland & Co, Regent Pharmacy, 12 Regent Street, Llangollen
- Boots the Chemist, 72-80 High Street, Prestatyn
- Lloyds Pharmacy, 141 High Street, Prestatyn
- Boots the Chemist, Stryd y Castell, Ruthin
- Westminster Park, 108 Wellington Road, Rhyl
- Lloyds Pharmacy, 33 Wellington Road, Rhyl
- Plas Meddyg Surgery, Station Road, Ruthin

<i>Number of different clients issued with Emergency Packs</i>	86
<i>Estimated percentage of needles/syringes returned</i>	64%
<i>Approximate number of individual needles/syringes sold each month</i>	20

CONWY NSE STATISTICS

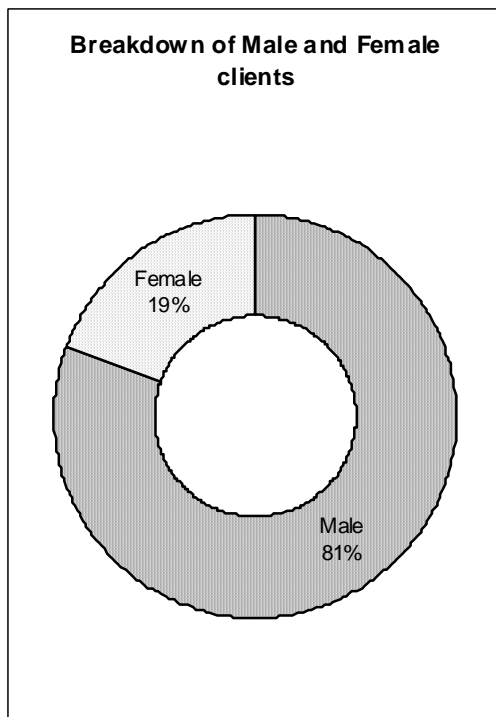
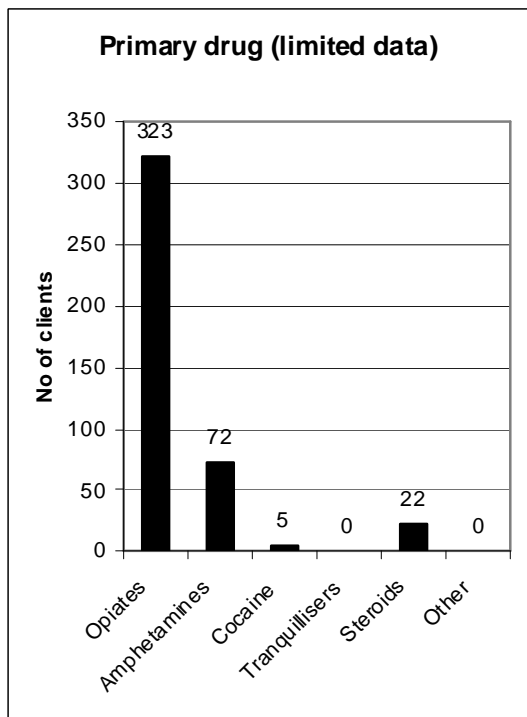
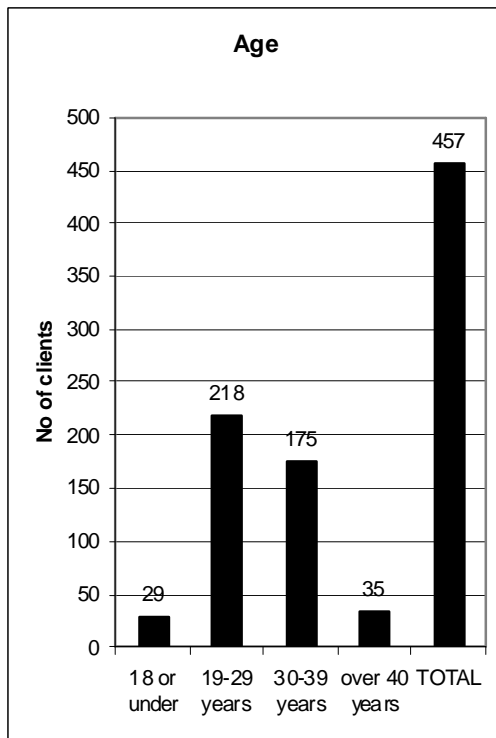
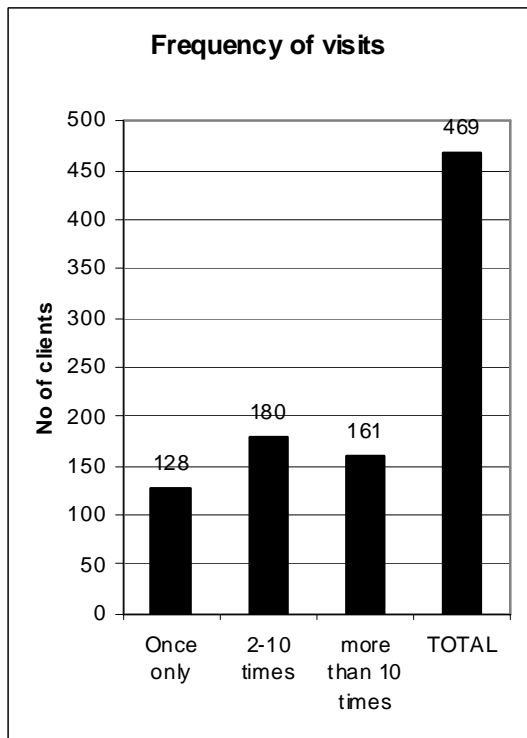


CONWY NSE STATISTICS
(currently 9 participating pharmacies)

- Lloyds Pharmacy, 17 Market Street, Abergele
- L Rowland & Co, 24 High Street, Conwy
- Boots the Chemist, 9 Victoria Centre, Mostyn Street, Llandudno
- Lloyds Pharmacy, Broadway Buildings, Mostyn Broadway, Llandudno
- Moss Chemists, 98 Mostyn Street, Llandudno
- Moss Pharmacy, 140 Conwy Road, Llandudno Junction
- Moss Pharmacy, Plas Menai Medical Centre, Penmaenmawr Road, Llanfairfechan
- Moss Chemists, Oak Pharmacy, Denbigh Street, Llanrwst
- Gwynan Edwards Chemists, Medical Hall, Penmaenmawr

<i>Number of different clients issued with Emergency Packs</i>	87
<i>Estimated percentage of needles/syringes returned</i>	69%
<i>Approximate number of individual needles/syringes sold each month</i>	40

GWYNEDD NSE STATISTICS



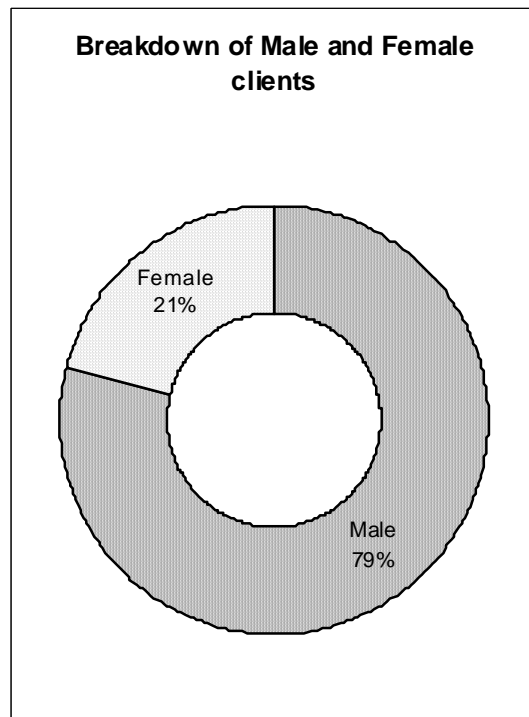
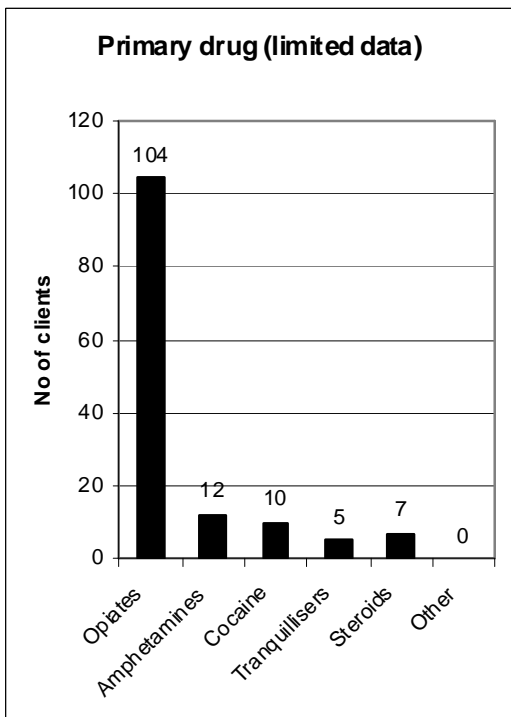
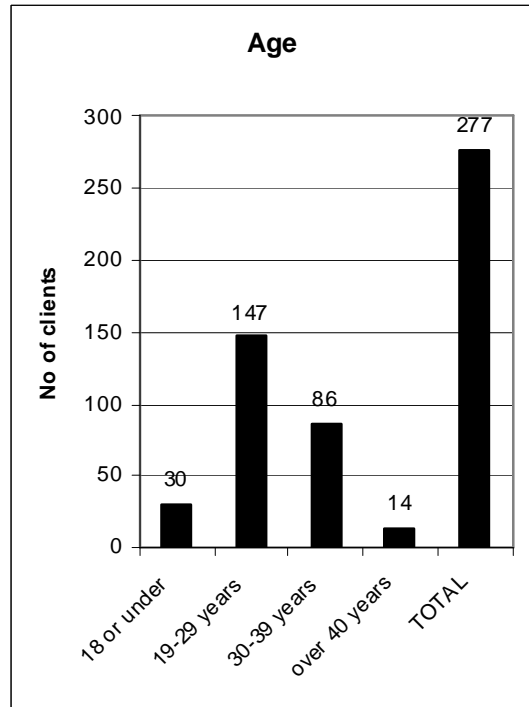
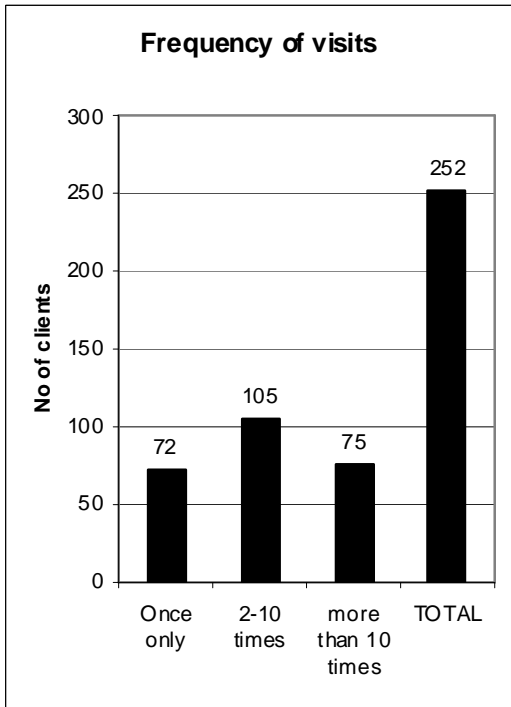
GWYNEDD NSE STATISTICS

(currently 14 participating pharmacies)

- Boots the Chemist, 276 High Street, Bangor
- Tesco In-Store Pharmacy, Cyttir Lane, Caernarfon Road, Bangor
- L Rowland & Co, 1 High Street, Barmouth
- E Moss Ltd, 27 High Street, Bethesda
- A Martin, 26 High Street, Blaenau Ffestiniog
- KM & FA Jones, 24 High Street, Blaenau Ffestiniog
- Boots the Chemist, 37 Pool Street, Caernarfon
- Sutherland & Roberts, Castle Pharmacy, Castle Square, Caernarfon
- Boots the Chemist, Queen's Square, Dolgellau
- L Rowland & Co, The Medical Hall, High Street, Harlech
- L Rowland & Co, Compton House, High Street, Llanberis
- GL & S Williams, 37 Water Street, Penygroes
- L Rowland & Co, The Pharmacy, Y Maes, Pwllheli
- L Rowland & Co, 127 High Street, Porthmadog

<i>Number of different clients issued with Emergency Packs</i>	90
<i>Estimated percentage of needles/syringes returned</i>	73%
<i>Approximate number of individual needles/syringes sold each month</i>	72

YNYS MÔN NSE STATISTICS



YNYS MÔN NSE STATISTICS

(currently 11 participating pharmacies)

- Glanrafon Surgery, Queen Street, Amlwch
- L Rowland & Co, 6 Queen Street, Amlwch
- L Rowland & Co, 40 Castle Street, Beaumaris
- L Rowland & Co, The Pharmacy, Benllech
- Boots the Chemist, 29 Market Street, Holyhead
- L Rowland & Co, 18-20 Market Street, Holyhead
- L Rowland & Co, The Pharmacy, Llanfairpwll
- Boots the Chemist, 4 High Street, Llangefni
- L Rowland & Co, 19 High Street, Menai Bridge
- David Barlow, The Pharmacy, High Street, Rhosneigr
- Valchem Ltd, Valley Pharmacy, Valley

<i>Number of different clients issued with Emergency Packs</i>	146
<i>Estimated percentage of needles/syringes returned</i>	43%
<i>Approximate number of individual needles/syringes sold each month</i>	260