

# **Understanding and preventing Drug Related Deaths in Scottish Borders**

**21st September 2016**

action on  
**drugs+alcohol**  
BORDERS

# Key Characteristics of drug-related deaths in Borders

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# What is a 'drug-related death'?

'Baseline' definition from the UK Drugs Strategy used by National Records for Scotland (NRS)

Deaths where the underlying cause is coded to ICD10:

- **Mental and behavioural disorders, or**
- **Accidental poisoning, Intentional self-poisoning**
- **Assault by drugs or Undetermined intent, poisoning**

**And, there is Involvement of substances controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971)**

**In short – deaths from overdoses, and the toxic effects of drugs**

# Outside the definition

## Official exclusions

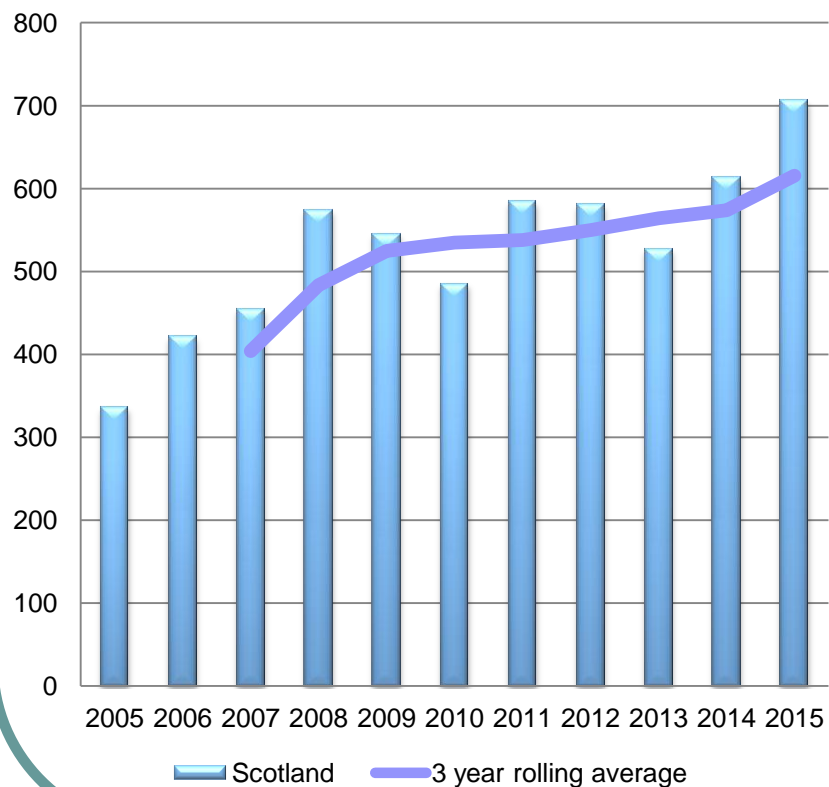
- Deaths from AIDS acquired by sharing of needles
- Deaths from drowning, falls, road traffic accidents (under the influence of drugs)
- Volatile substances e.g. lighter fuel
- Deaths where a drug listed under the Misuse of Drugs Act was present as part of a compound analgesic or cold remedy
- Secondary infections and related complications related to drug misuse

## Borders also do not review

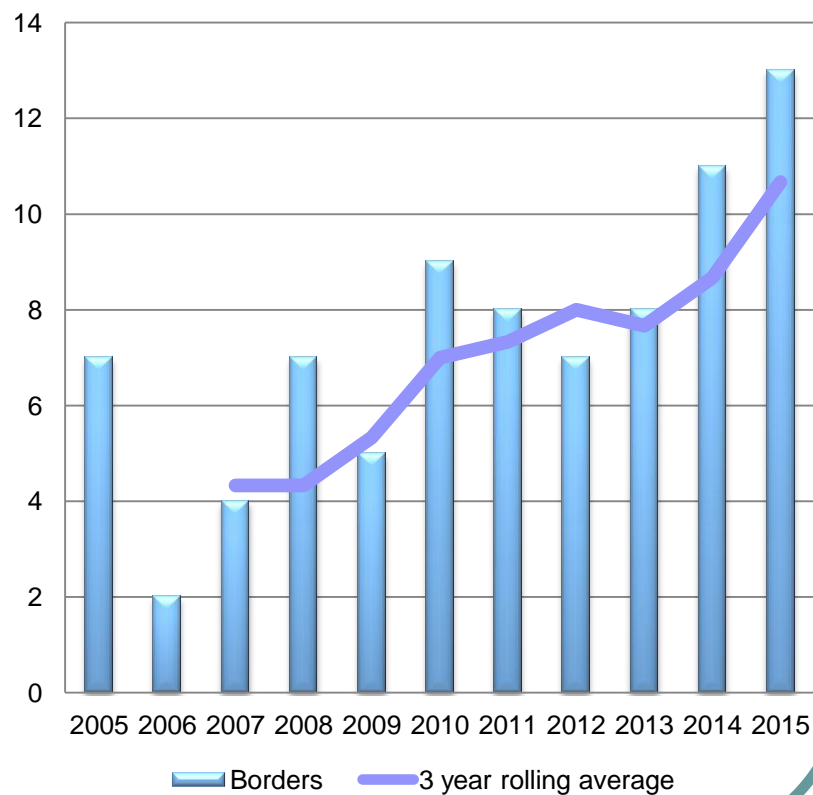
intentional or accidental overdoses involving controlled drugs prescribed were there had been no previous history of substance misuse.

# Drug-related deaths 2005 – 2015

## Drug-related deaths: Scotland

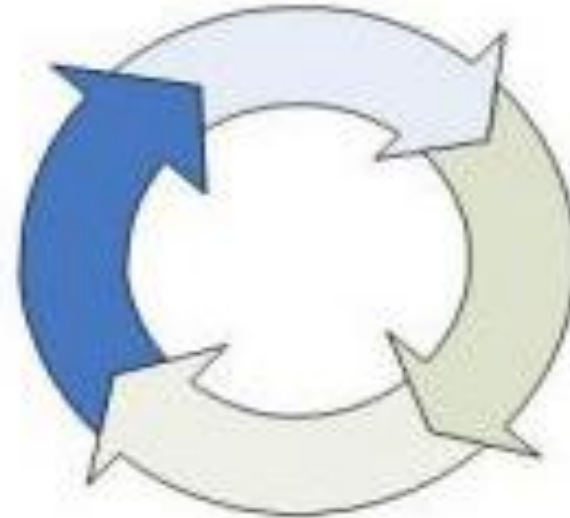


## Drug-related Deaths: Scottish Borders



# Drug Related Death Review Group: Process

**Dissemination  
of key data and  
learning points**



**Quarterly case review by  
multidisciplinary group  
(identification of actions  
& follow-up)**

**Data analysis  
(and annual  
submission to  
ISD national  
database)**

**Case  
notification &  
data collection**

# Why do we review?

- To learn in order to find ways of preventing future deaths
- To assess the impact of existing interventions
- To inform the development of future drug strategies
- To contribute to the National Drug-Related Database (NDRDD)

# Data collection for case review

Many different sources are searched for each case:

- Sudden death report (Police)
- GP patient records
- Social Work
- Criminal Justice
- Ambulance Service
- Homeless Service
- Drug & Alcohol Services
- Take Home Naloxone
- Final Pathology Report
  
- Other services involved as required





MOSTLY

Single

had a known  
history of  
alcohol  
misuse

Not in  
treatment  
services

23 deaths

2012 - 2015

Male

White Scottish

Early thirties

Known to  
use  
drugs

Drug misuse and death often  
occurred at home, in the company  
of friends/family

# Implicated substances in cause of death

Substance	
Heroin/Morphine	64%
Alcohol	23%
Diazepam	18%
Methadone	14%
Amphetamines	9%

More than one substance was implicated in the majority of deaths

# Engagement with services

- Majority not in contact with a drug treatment service at time of death.
- GP (Over 50% in previous month)
- Mental Health Services (1/3)
- Social Work Services (1/4)
- Police (70% been in custody at some point in their life)

## Take Home Naloxone (THN)

- Majority had overdosed previously (65%)
- 52% of cases someone else in home at time of death
- 4 occasions where THN available in room
- 52 Take Home Naloxone Kits used in one year in emergency situation (2015-16)

# Summary

- Male
- Over 30yrs
- Long term drug user
- Not in a drug service
- Overdosed previously
- Who's on your caseload?