

## Council Question – 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024

### **Drug Related Deaths Supplementary Information**

A recent quarterly report issued by Police Scotland provided an indication of current trends in suspected Drug Related Deaths (DRD) in Scotland. The number of suspected DRD's in Scotland increased by 10% in 2023, according to data from Police Scotland, following a downward trend between 2021 and 2022. Please note that this information relates to 'suspected' DRD's and not confirmed validated DRD's.

The data show that in Scotland there were 1,197 suspected DRD's between January 2023 and December 2023, compared with 1,092 during the same period in 2022.

With regard to the 'Ayrshire' Police Division information, the number of suspected DRD's decreased in 2023 compared to the year before. The number of suspected DRD's across Ayrshire has decreased year on year since 2019.

Year	Number of suspected DRD's
2019	132
2020	121
2021	109
2022	93
2023	83

The information provided by Police Scotland only covers 'Ayrshire' as a whole with no breakdown of information available specific to North, South or East Ayrshire.

Each of these deaths are preventable and the statistics do not illustrate the tragic impact each of these deaths has on individuals, families, carers and communities. This highlights the need for all services and communities to work together to implement the National Mission to prevent drug related deaths and to improve lives. Recent initiatives, including the introduction of Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT Standards), a focus on increased support to individuals following a Non-Fatal Overdose, increased Naloxone supply and easier access to residential rehabilitation require to be supported by longer term solutions including addressing inequality and poverty and wider determinants which impact on people's health.

Additional North Ayrshire actions to prevent DRD's:

- Continued roll out and expansion of the Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) standards.
- The implementation of a local MAT Improvement Implementation Plan and submission to the Scottish Government regular MAT progress reports.
- Increased support to individuals following a Non-Fatal Overdose.
- Increased promotion and supply of Naloxone. In 2022/23 631 kits were supplied (against a local target of 480 kits to be supplied) in the community with a minimum of 31 lives saved reported.

- Steering Group meetings in place to focus on improvement actions to ensure that there is increased support for individuals with 'co-existing mental health and drug and/or alcohol use'. A new Protocol to support staff has recently been refreshed with awareness sessions delivered in the last few weeks with over 100+ staff attending from across mental health and alcohol and drug services
- The implementation of the Alcohol and Drug Liaison Service across Ayrshire and Arran.
- Compliance with all Alcohol and Drug 'Access to Treatment' waiting times standards. All standards and targets have been exceeded.
- Continued promotion and availability of drug and alcohol related training
- Promotion and delivery of Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABI) across priority and non-priority settings whilst continuing to meet the ABI national standards
- Access to residential rehab and detoxification at Ward 5, Woodland View, for anyone who has an alcohol and/or drug problem.
- New support for families into, during and after external Residential Rehabilitation placements, including access to Whole Family Residential Rehab support at Harper House in Saltcoats.
- The ADP commission Turning Point Scotland who provide support to people at various stages of the recovery journey. Working closely with NADARS and other statutory partners to ensure people who require support and their families have continued access to support pre/post statutory involvement.
- The ADP Support Team working closely with education, PSST and other partners to develop a programme focused on prevention and education across our schools in North Ayrshire. This preventative work enables us to deliver valuable input to young people and also identify how we can better support young people impacted by substances.
- Investment in the Recovery Community- The ADP has distributed grant funding to various organisations in the community to help sustain vital recovery groups and supports for people in the local area. The Recovery Hub operates as a drop in on a Friday with various partners present to help encourage people to come in for support. In recent times this has proven to be pivotal in supporting people to take their first steps in their recovery.

The local Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) is instrumental in directing and supporting all drug and alcohol related prevention strategies including promoting the work of the North Ayrshire Drug Death Prevention Group (which is a multi-agency sub-group of the ADP) who have recently updated its 'Preventing Drug Related Deaths – Action Plan'. The identified actions are being implemented and will continue to be reviewed and evaluated.

A more detailed report on 'Prevention actions for drug and alcohol related deaths' was presented to the IJB on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022, with regular updates on this important topic provided in yearly performance management reports.