

Alcohol and Drug Snapshot

August 2023



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'Recognising those people who go unseen'

The 31st August is international Overdose Awareness Day the world’s largest annual campaign to end overdose, remember those who have died from overdose and acknowledge the grief of the family and friends.

The campaign also provides an opportunity to educate about overdose prevention and seeks to end overdose stigma.

All drugs, including alcohol and pharmaceutical medications, can cause an overdose and it happens when a person has more of a drug, or a combination of drugs, than their body can manage.

Poly substance use (the use of more than one drug) increases overdose risk. Most accidental overdose deaths happen when multiple drugs have been taken.

In Scotland (2021), in 93% of all drug related deaths, more than one drug was found to be present in the body.

[Source](#)

Recognising the signs of an opiate overdose

The signs and symptoms of an overdose vary between drugs.

Of all drug related deaths in Scotland (2021), 84% involved opiates or opioids (such as heroin, morphine and methadone).

[Source](#)

Signs of an opiate overdose can include:



shallow breathing



blue lips and pale skin



pinpoint pupils



snoring

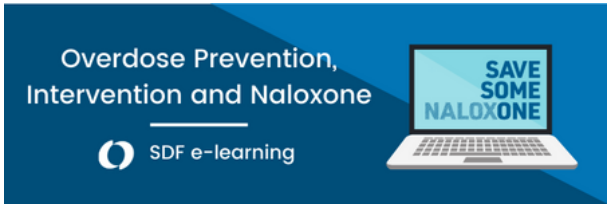


unresponsive



Naloxone

Naloxone is a drug that can reverse the effects of opioid drugs like heroin, methadone, opium, codeine, morphine and buprenorphine. It is only effective for opioid overdoses and won’t work with any other drug. Although naloxone works on opiates, as most drug related deaths involve multidrug use, the use of naloxone will do no harm and may increase the chances of survival until medical help can be sourced. Naloxone kits are available to anyone who may be supporting someone at risk or likely to witness an overdose. Naloxone can come as either Prenoxad, which is a pre-filled syringe or as Nyxoid, which is a nasal spray.



This short e-learning course will show you how to administer Naloxone. You will learn facts about drug-related deaths in Scotland, how to identify an overdose and how to respond to an overdose.




Scottish Families
Affected by Alcohol & Drugs


Scottish Families provide a ‘Click & Deliver’ take-home naloxone service to anyone living in Scotland who is over the age of 16 (for injection kit) and 14 (for nasal kit).


Recognising the signs of alcohol poisoning and overdose


Alcohol poisoning happens when a person consumes a large amount of alcohol in a short amount of time. Alcohol poisoning can be fatal and usually requires emergency medical treatment. If an overdose of alcohol is suspected, it is important to get help right away.


The common signs and symptoms of alcohol poisoning include:


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shallow, slow or irregular breathing
- 

pale or blue looking skin
- 

low body temperature
- 

passing out or being unresponsive
- 

extreme confusion and disorientation
- 

vomiting and seizures

[Source](#)

RADAR Alerts



Rapid Action Drug Alerts and Response (RADAR) is Scotland's drugs early warning system.

Using innovative data collection methods, RADAR validates, assesses and shares information to reduce the risk of drug-related harm by:

- identifying new and emerging harms
- recommending rapid and targeted interventions
- publishing accessible, up-to-date information on services, harms and emerging drug trends, including quarterly reports.

The fourth RADAR Quarterly Report was published on 25 July 2023. This report contains a range of drug-related indicators in order to inform action to prevent drug harms. The report can can be accessed by clicking the link below.

[Click here to view Quarterly Report 4.](#)



Support Services



Alcohol and Recovery Drug Services are joint Social Work Services and Health Addiction Teams. Click on the NHS GGC Logo to access the contact details for both central and local ADRS Services



Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs is a national charity that supports anyone affected by someone else's alcohol or drug use in Scotland.