
To: Renfrewshire Integration Joint Board

On: 25 November 2022

Report by: Laura Howat, Interim Head of Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Alcohol and Drugs Recovery Services

Heading: Alcohol and Drugs Recovery Service - Update

Direction Required to Health Board, Council or Both	Direction to:	
	1. No Direction Required	X
	2. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde	
	3. Renfrewshire Council	
	4. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and Renfrewshire Council	

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides an update to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) on the local activity and progress in relation to tackling drug related deaths in Renfrewshire. This follows the outline brief update within the Chief Officer's Report to IJB on 14 September 2022 and includes information relating to the publication of 2021 statistics and the most recent figures on suspected drugs related deaths for 2022.
- 1.2. This paper provides detail on the current local position and how this aligns with national context and policies, and an overview of the important work already underway or planned to tackle drug related deaths in Renfrewshire.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the IJB note:
- The confirmed 2021 drug related death statistics published by National Records of Scotland, and the 2022 Suspected Drug Related Deaths report from Police Scotland;
 - The local and national position and ongoing activity in relation to tackling drug related deaths in Renfrewshire; and
 - The important local work progressed thus far, future planned activity; and how the impact of this will be monitored and evaluated.
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3. Background

- 3.1. On 28 July 2022, the National Records of Scotland (NRS) published the Drug Related Deaths in Scotland in 2021. [Drug-related Deaths in Scotland in 2021](#).

In Scotland, there were 1330 drug misuse deaths in 2021 – 9 fewer than in 2020. In Renfrewshire, there were 50 drug related deaths – a decrease of 25% compared to 2020 when 67 deaths were recorded.

3.2. On 23rd September 2022, Police Scotland published their latest quarterly report [Suspected Drug Deaths in Scotland](#). In the Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Police Division, suspected drug deaths decreased from 23 (January to March 2022) to 7 (April to June 2022).

3.3. Every single drug related death is a tragedy and impacts on a wide range of people and has far reaching implications for families and communities. The latest statistics reinforce the local commitment to continuing to work collaboratively to prevent and reduce drug-related harms within communities.

4. Drug-related deaths 2021 – National and Local Context

4.1. Across all 32 local authorities Renfrewshire had the 7th highest rate of deaths per 100,000 population. Within NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGG&C), there were 427 drug misuse deaths in 2021, a decrease of 4% compared with the previous year.

4.2. Figure 1 details the number of drug misuse deaths across each NHSGG&C local area in 2021:

Area	2020	2021	% change
Renfrewshire	67	50	-25%
East Dunbartonshire	14	16	+14%
East Renfrewshire	10	6	-40%
Glasgow city	291	311	+7%
Inverclyde	33	16	-52%
West Dunbartonshire	29	28	-3%
NHS GGC	444	427	-4%
Scotland	1339	1330	-1%

4.3. Initial analysis undertaken across NHSGG&C has highlighted deaths are more common in males (68.4%), aged between 45-54 (37.5%). In 2021 there was an overall 9% decrease in male deaths whilst there was a 10% increase in female deaths. This means that the ratio of M:F deaths was 2:1.

4.4. In 93% of all drug misuse deaths, more than one drug was found to be present in the body. Subsequently, in recent years there has been a large increase in the number of drug misuse deaths involving benzodiazepines.

In 2015 there were 191 of these deaths and in 2021 there were 918; almost five times as many. This increase has mostly been driven by street benzodiazepines rather than those which are prescribed.

- 4.5. Opiates or Opioids continue to be present in 82% of all drug related deaths in NHS GG&C with heroin/morphine in 33%. Codeine (3%) and Dihydrocodeine (9%) were implicated to a much lesser degree. Methadone was implicated in 51% of all deaths, a decrease of 5% compared with 2020. In 2021 there was a slight fall in the incidence of benzodiazepines implicated but it is still one of the most commonly found family of drugs implicated in drug related deaths (70.0%), which is usually due to the drug Etizolam (67.0%).
- 4.6. Across NHS GG&C there were decreases in Gabapentinoids (28%) use and Cocaine (22%) use compared with 2020 such that they are now both implicated in one in every four deaths. There was small or no change in the incidence of Ecstasy (1%), and Amphetamine (2%) in those involving Alcohol (10%).
- 4.7. Across NHS GG&C 42.9% of all drug-related deaths were on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) at the time of their death, which is a slight increase compared to 2020 (39%).
- 4.8. In Renfrewshire, 36% of all drug related deaths were on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) at the time of their death, also an increase compared to 2020 (29.9%).

5. Suspected Drug Deaths in Scotland 2022

- 5.1. The Scottish Government's National Mission announced in January 2021, included a commitment to improve data and surveillance. Police Scotland have since published quarterly reports on suspected drug deaths to provide as timely indication of current drug trends in Scotland as is possible.
- 5.2. In the quarter 2 report for 2022/23, Police Scotland reported that Renfrewshire and Inverclyde had the lowest number of suspected drug deaths (7) in quarter 2 of all Police Divisions. This is also the lowest figure reported for Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Police Division over the period covered by this report (January 2017 – June 2022)
- 5.3. There were 562 suspected drug deaths in Scotland during the first 6 months of 2022, 22% (160) lower than during the same period in 2021.
- 5.4. Males accounted for 69% of these deaths. This compares with 72% between January and June 2021. There were 173 suspected drug deaths of females, a decrease of 15% (30) compared to the same period in 2021.
- 5.5. The majority (64%) of suspected drug deaths were of people aged between 35 and 54, broadly in line with previous quarters, and there were 31 suspected drug deaths in the under 25 age group, 11% (4) fewer than between January and June 2021.

5.6. The Police Divisions with the greatest number of suspected drug deaths were: Greater Glasgow (103), Edinburgh City (70) and Lanarkshire (57).

5.7. It is worth noting that Police Scotland's Suspected Drug Deaths figures are for the purpose of monitoring trends only, and it is likely that final confirmed figures, which form the statistics released annually by the National Records of Scotland report, will differ.

6. Preventing Drug-Related Deaths: Local Actions

6.1. A number of activities and developments are underway and continue to be progressed locally to reduce and prevent drug related deaths in Renfrewshire.

6.2. A dedicated post to support the prevention of drug-related deaths in Renfrewshire was recruited to in September 2021. The Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) Drug Deaths Prevention Lead Officer has been working with all relevant partners to deliver local and national recommendations. This has led to the development of the Drug Deaths Prevention Group, the expansion of the provision of Naloxone throughout Renfrewshire; and the investigation of drug-related deaths to inform future preventative activities, as part of the Drug Deaths Review Group.

6.3. Funded by the Drug Deaths Taskforce, the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Overdose Response Team launched in Renfrewshire in September 2021. The Team provides a rapid response to those who have suffered a non-fatal overdose, offering harm reduction interventions; and signposting and supporting individuals into mainstream alcohol and drug recovery services. The service provides an outreach response and operates out of hours between 10am-10pm, 7 days a week.

6.4. A recent report from the Overdose Response Team identified that there were 25 individuals in Renfrewshire open to their service in August, including 10 individuals referred into the service that month. Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (ADRS) is working with the team to increase the number of referrals by further developing internal processes, including immediate referrals as part of the assertive outreach process, Friday prison releases; and instances when medication is not collected from pharmacy.

6.5. The Drug Deaths Prevention Group was established in November 2021 and is attended by partners across the ADP. The Group aims to provide interagency working to apply national policy and guidance alongside local needs to mitigate the harms caused by drug use in Renfrewshire. An Action Plan has also been developed which details the multi-agency activities required to achieve these outcomes as well as having a monitoring performance role. The Group will also action any trend information and implement learning highlighted through the drug death review process.

6.6. A multiagency Naloxone Delivery Group has been established with the goal of expanding Naloxone availability throughout Renfrewshire. The Group has developed a work plan which focuses on reducing barriers to receiving Naloxone,

addressing stigma, raising the profile of Naloxone; and providing more learning opportunities for overdose awareness.

The distribution of Naloxone continues to target those most at risk of overdose through supply by local services including ADRS, CIRCLE, HaRRT, the Overdose Response Team, pharmacies, and needle exchanges.

- 6.7. Naloxone figures have been released for quarters 1 and 2 (April - September 2022) and indicated that 331 Naloxone kits have been supplied in the community in Renfrewshire during this period. This is 38% towards the 2022/23 target of 880 kits.
- 6.8. The Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards were developed by the National Drug Death Task Force in 2019. The Standards have been developed to address issues related to treatment access, retention, and quality of services across Scotland. There are ten standards in total which aim to address change in the service delivery landscape and the culture of services, both over the short and long term. ADRS is currently implementing the MAT Standards with a focus on introducing same day prescribing and choice of treatment. ADRS will aim to offer 'same day' provision, where appropriate, for hard-to-reach individuals using rapid access assessment to opiate substitute therapy. In addition to this, ADRS is currently in the process of upscaling the administration of Buvidal, with the aim of being able to offer same day treatment. A NHSGG&C standard operating procedure is in place. The data to be captured, and how it is to be used, is currently being explored to enable the ADP to monitor progress. ADRS is committed to the implementation of the MAT Standards in Renfrewshire to ensure individuals who use the service have immediate access to support and treatment with the same range of options as other parts of Greater Glasgow and Clyde.
- 6.9. The expectation from the Scottish Government is that all 10 MAT Standards are be implemented throughout Scotland by April 2023. An Improvement Plan which outlines the specific actions required within Renfrewshire to achieve implementation of the standards is now in place. A Senior Information Analyst, specifically for Renfrewshire has been recruited, and the process is underway to employ three Project Managers to work across NHS GG&C to support this work, one of which will be a dedicated post for Renfrewshire.
- 6.10. Providing enhanced access to residential rehabilitation placements has been introduced as part of the choice of treatment options. A scoping exercise has been carried out to identify abstinence-based provision which has led to an agreed contract with a local provider. A standard operating procedure has been developed to ensure consistency of assessment, reinforce care management roles/responsibilities and aftercare provision. Discussions are also underway to address gaps in stabilisation and crisis service provision. The development of a pathway has also been published to ensure the process of accessing residential rehabilitation services is clear and easy to navigate for staff and service users.

- 6.11. The Acute Addiction Liaison Service continues to work with colleagues in the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH). The Service assesses the nature and degree of alcohol and drug use experienced by patients admitted to hospital.

The Team works in partnership with acute and community services that support the delivery of care and treatment whilst the patient is in an acute hospital. This provides capacity to deliver immediate care and to manage higher levels of risk, along with engaging individuals with the appropriate services for continued support following their hospital discharge.

- 6.12. CIRCLE (Continuing In Recovery Changes Lives Entirely) Recovery Hub opened its doors in late 2021. CIRCLE provides unique mental health and addiction support for people looking for a recovery focus, by providing a varied programme of activities aimed at encouraging, involving, and supporting people in their recovery journey. CIRCLE has a different look and feel to any similar resource in Renfrewshire, having been designed collaboratively with a group of peers with lived and living experience, who have been at the heart of the development and instrumental in shaping how our services will operate. CIRCLE operates an open referral system, including self-referrals; and continues to scale up the service provision. The service has been subject of national interest and was formally opened by the Minister for Drug Policy, Angela Constance, on 26 October 2022.

- 6.13. The current FIRST Crisis Service, delivered by RAMH (Recovery Across Mental Health), has been enhanced and now includes alcohol and drugs. The Service was set up in April 2022 as a test of change for a period of 18 months. The Service provides access to a telephone helpline in the evenings, weekends and public holidays for individuals aged 16 years and over who are experiencing a crisis related to their alcohol and or drug use. Two dedicated practitioners offer appropriate advice and support applying a strength-based approach. The practitioners will also aim to enhance the role of existing mental health workers to ensure the sustainability of the service going forward. This will be achieved by delivering alcohol and drug training to all FIRST Crisis staff to broaden core knowledge and skills around the effects and impact of alcohol and drugs.

- 6.14. The Specialist Outreach Alcohol Nurses provide assertive outreach in the community to individuals frequently attending hospital as a result of their alcohol use. The Service aims to reduce frequent A&E attendances and hospitalisations by supporting individuals who are not currently engaged with services, providing care and treatment, and connecting individuals with appropriate services, including district nurses, ADRS, and other care providers. This service is being expanded to incorporate service users who have issues relating to drug use.

- 6.15. In collaboration with the Scottish Recovery Consortium (SRC), Renfrewshire has hosted a series of events throughout 2022 including the National Recovery Walk to highlight recovery development support, tackle discrimination and stigma, amplify compassion and connect communities across the whole population. This will form part of the Connected and Caring legacy.

- 6.16. SRC estimated that between 3000-4000 people attended the National Recovery Walk, which took place in Paisley, 24th September 2022. These are the largest numbers reported in its eleven-year history.
- 6.17. In collaboration with Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs, a programme of Family Inclusive Practice and Bereaved Through Substance training is underway for all ADRS staff.

7. Planned Activity and Next Steps

- 7.1. Although recent drug-related figures in Renfrewshire have reduced, it is acknowledged that there is still much work to be done. Building on the extensive work already underway, the HSCP continues to work with the ADP and local partners to develop and embed these and additional preventative measures.
- 7.2. Renfrewshire is currently enhancing the drug death review process. An important aspect of preventing drug deaths includes the gathering of intelligence in relation to drug harms and deaths in order to identify trends, risk factors, and areas of focus for prevention. Although a process is currently in place to collect information on individuals who have died of a drug-related death in Renfrewshire, the ADP is in the process of working with a wide range of partners to enhance the scope of the Group. By including multiagency partners in this process, a higher quality of information on circumstances will be available. The enhanced model will also aim to identify good practice, trends, and learning opportunities which can be communicated to a whole range of partners.
- 7.3. A multi-disciplinary MAT Response Team will be established to ensure rapid, responsive support, with no barriers to accessing treatment. This will also include the recruitment of a Pharmacy Independent Prescriber which will enable ADRS to significantly enhance the opportunity to prescribe flexibly and consistently. The recruitment of a MAT Project Manager and a dedicated Information Analyst will assist the ADP to drive forward the embedding and evaluation of the MAT standards.
- 7.4. The ADP will continue to work to ensure alcohol and drug services are more visible and accessible by mapping routes to recovery, including service provision, and referral pathways for services available to citizens of Renfrewshire.
- 7.5. The Preventing Drug Deaths in Renfrewshire Action Plan will be embedded and monitored.
- 7.6. A self-assessment against the Drug Death Task Force Final Report: Changing Lives (2022), which outlines a number of recommendations and evidence-based actions that will prevent drug-related harms and deaths is underway by the ADP. The Drug Death Prevention Group will evaluate these findings and include required developments and actions within the Preventing Drug Deaths Action Plan.

- 7.7. A workforce development plan has been devised to ensure all ADRS staff have the most appropriate, up to date, trauma and recovery informed training in relation to both alcohol and drug use.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – No implications from this report - all costs will be contained within the allocated funding
 2. **HR & Organisational Development** – No implications from this report.
 3. **Community Planning** – No implications from this report.
 4. **Legal** – All updates in this report are consistent with the HSCP's statutory duties and support delivery of the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014.
 5. **Property/Assets** – No implications from this report.
 6. **Information Technology** – No implications from this report.
 7. **Equality and Human Rights** – No implications from this report.
 8. **Health & Safety** – No implications from this report.
 9. **Procurement** – No implications from this report.
 10. **Risk** – No specific risks require to be highlighted.
 11. **Privacy Impact** – None from this report. Completed
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List of Background Papers: None

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