



Celebrating
— 25 YEARS —
1997-2022



Alcohol & Other Drugs Edition

www.safercommunitiesScotland.org

Drug Deaths down slightly for 2021, but still second highest figure on record

The latest [Drug Deaths figures for Scotland](#) were published on 28th July. 1,330 people died from a drug overdose in Scotland in 2021, a slight decrease (down 1%) from 1,339 in 2020. It was the first time since 2013 that Scotland saw a decrease in the recorded numbers in drug related deaths, but this positive news is tempered by the fact that this is still the second highest figure on record.



Of those who died from the misuse of drugs, 65% were aged between 35 and 54 years old and more than two thirds (70%) were men.

Dundee City had the highest age-standardised drug misuse death rate of all local authority areas (45.2 per 100,000 population for the 5-year period 2017-2021), followed by Glasgow City (44.4) and Inverclyde (35.7).

Julie Ramsay, Vital Events Statistician at NRS, said:

“Drug misuse deaths have increased substantially over the past few decades – there were more than five times as many deaths in 2021 compared with 1996. 2021 is the first year since 2013 that drug misuse deaths have not increased.

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Alcohol Deaths in Scotland rise by 5% in 2021, highest since 2008

1,245 people died from conditions caused by alcohol in Scotland in 2021, according to latest figures published by National Records of Scotland.

The number of deaths is 5% (55) higher than 2020 and is the highest number of deaths since 2008. More detailed analysis shows the rate of mortality from alcohol-specific causes was 22.3 deaths per 100,000 people in 2021. Whilst this is higher than the 21.5 deaths per 100,000 in 2020, it is not a statistically significant increase, and remains below the peak rate of deaths from alcohol in 2006.

Of those who died from alcohol-specific causes, two thirds were male. The average age of deaths of those who died from these causes was 58.7 years for females and 59.7 years for males.

There is a strong link between areas of high deprivation and alcohol deaths.

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Rescheduled Event: Community Safety & Justice Joint Working Arrangements Research

Recent years have seen significant reform, legislation and policy changes that have impacted local community safety (CS) and community justice (CJ) practices in Scotland, in response to which, several local authority areas have commenced the implementation of joint CS and CJ working arrangements.

These arrangements can range from a fully joint CS and CJ partnership to the occasional joint project.

In a bid to learn more about these new ways of working, Community Justice Scotland (CJS) and the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) have undertaken joint research to:

- find out more about what the drivers have been for joint working arrangements between CS and CJ;
- find out where and how these joint working arrangements are operating; and
- produce case studies that feature the various ways in which joint working arrangements are being used by different areas across Scotland.

Find out more & book your place [here](#).



Question of the Month

Our Question of the Month for July was based around our July newsletter theme of Water Safety - and came from our 'SCSN Conversations With...' interviewee Carlene McAvoy of RoSPA/Water Safety Scotland.

We asked:

"Do you know what to do if you see someone struggling in water?"

- 81% said Yes (17 votes)
- 14% said No (3 votes)
- 5% said Not Sure (1 vote)

Question of the Month August 2022

Our Question of the Month for August is based around our 'SCSN Conversations With...' interview with Simon McLean of Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) Scotland.

We're asking:

Do you believe prohibition of drugs makes our communities safer or more dangerous?

Take part in our poll [here](#).

SCSN Conversations with...

Simon Mclean, LEAP Scotland

SCSN CONVERSATIONS WITH...



Simon McLean
Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) Scotland

Our 'SCSN Conversations With...' interview this month is with Simon McLean, head of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) Scotland.

Against a background of the newly published Drug Deaths Taskforce report, and newly announced plans by the Home Office to further penalise drug users, we discuss whether our current drug laws make communities safer or more dangerous places; what law enforcement officers think about their role in prosecuting the failed War on Drugs; and what effect drug laws have on corrupting our democratic institutions by handing power to drug gangs.

Listen to the interview on our Podcast [here](#). You can also listen/view on Youtube [here](#).



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SAFER COMMUNITIES SCOTLAND PODCAST

New Safer Communities Scotland Podcast launched!

We're delighted to launch our new Community Safety Podcast for Scotland, titled the 'Safer Communities Scotland Podcast'.

The aim of this podcast is to inform, engage, champion and influence with and among professionals working in community safety in Scotland – as well as helping to inform and influence the general public on major community safety issues in Scotland.

The Podcast is available on Spotify & Anchor, as well as on our website [here](#).

Water Safety Signage Audit published

This report, in partnership with Water Safety Scotland & the RNLI, outlines research carried out in 2022 into water safety signage across Scotland. The research is a 'snapshot' of the current signage in place across key areas of owned land in Scotland.

The report found that water safety signage in Scotland is not uniform and lacks clarity. The key findings were that:

- water safety signs had little consistency in

terms of font size, sign size, colouring and amount of written information

- 63% of the signs were not specific to water safety
- 69% of the signs included the correct use of British Standard symbols
- 19% of the signs did not include information on what to do in an emergency
- Only 44% of the signs included a location code, although there was little consistency in terms of the type of location code.

Read more & download the report [here](#).

FOCUS ON THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS



Feeling the pinch? - Monthly SCSN Chief Officer blog by Lorraine Gillies

Is there anyone not feeling the pinch just now? As the news reports the [fastest fall in real pay on record](#), - the cost of living crisis comes into everyone's orbit.

The statistics are terrifying, and change with pace – by the time I write this and publish it, all will be worse

The Fuel Bank Foundation says this – *“It's hard to believe that some people in the UK are today living without heat, light and power. This is because they don't have money to top up their prepayment meter. These people live in cold homes and are unable to cook a hot meal for their family, or have a shower before a job interview.*

It's only getting worse. We call this fuel crisis.”

The Trussell Trust said this* in May 2022 -: “In recent weeks we have been encouraged by politicians to cut back on luxuries and shop around for cheaper supermarket staples. But for people already struggling to afford the essentials, there is simply nothing left to cut and food banks across the UK are picking up the pieces.”

The Scottish Community Safety Network is REALLY concerned about this.

With the predicted £3500 price cap rise just two months away the Wise Group are hosting an emergency leadership summit in August, and we will be there.

Why?

I'm not going to inundate you with all the stuff evidencing the links between poverty, inequality and crime, violence against women and girls, anti-social behaviour – if you know us you will find all of that on our website. It's all there. And [well-articulated](#) by our friends Niven Rennie from the Violence Reduction Unit - and in this recent [‘SCSN Conversations With...’ interview](#) - as Dr Anna Pearce describes how inequality affects child and home safety.

But I want to ask why we are in the ring?

Fundamentally, we want to see a Safer Scotland. And we believe that means an equal Scotland, where prevention really is better than a costly cure.

That's why we bang on so much about poverty and that's why we will continue to do so.

N.B. See also last year's [guest blog](#) by Austin Smith of the Scottish Drugs Forum on the links between poverty and Scotland's Drug Deaths Crisis.



Money Wellbeing Makes the World Go Round



SCSN recently attended an event on the Wellbeing Economy as part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival of Politics.

The event was hosted by Paul McLennan MSP, with panellists including Miriam Brett, research fellow at the Democracy Collaborative and Wellbeing Economy Alliance; and Gemma Bone Dodds and Thobile Chittenden of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance.

Following this event SCSN has applied to become members of the global [Wellbeing Economy Alliance](#).

We're applying because we know that the current economic system based on ever increasing growth measured by GDP is unsustainable and contributes to a wide range of entrenched social problems, including crime, violence, anti-social behaviour, alcohol and drug deaths, homelessness, unintentional harm and injury, human trafficking, fuel poverty – as well as contributing to existential threats such as the climate crisis.

Read this article in full on our website [here](#).

Save the Date: National Youth Work Conference



This year's National Youth Work Conference will take place in Glasgow on 8 November. The focus of our conference will be youth work and poverty.

More than one in four children and young people are officially living in recognised poverty in Scotland. This can have a significant impact on health and wellbeing, access to services, educational attainment and employability pathways. In addition, many young people currently experience poverty

related stigma and discrimination. Youth work plays a vital role supporting the needs of young people whilst ensuring they have equal access to services and that their voices are heard.

This conference will explore youth work's role in poverty reduction, demonstrating best practice across the sector from practitioners, academics and keynote speakers, including the voices of individuals who have first-hand experience of the daily poverty-related issues faced and ways that the sector could work together to resolve some of these issues and continue supporting young people.

Find out more and book your place [here](#).

Fuel Bank Foundation

The energy supplier Npower developed Fuel Bank. The goal was to identify and support those in fuel crisis. Npower put together a team of specialists who used their expertise to work on the problem. Fuel Bank has the experience to generate meaningful, long-lasting change. In 2017, Fuel Bank Foundation became an independent registered charity.

Fuel Bank Foundation is the **only UK charity** to focus on the challenges of people living in fuel crisis.

Fuel Bank Foundation provides emergency financial support through our network of partners. We identify people who cannot afford to pre-pay for their fuel or energy. Often they will have used up all their options for support. This means that when their money runs out, they have no heating or means to cook hot food. We call this **"fuel crisis"**.

Find out more about the Fuel Bank Foundation by visiting their website, www.fuelbankfoundation.org

Continued from front page, main article

"In 2021, after adjusting for age, people in the most deprived areas were more than 15 times as likely to have a drug misuse death as those in the least deprived areas. This ratio has widened over the past two decades."

In 93% of all drug misuse deaths, more than one drug was found to be present in the body, and the type of drugs that are implicated in deaths has been changing. In 2015 there were 191 deaths involving benzodiazepines, last year there were 918, near five times as many. This increase has mostly been driven by street benzodiazepines rather than those which are prescribed. Of all drug misuse deaths in 2021, 84% involved opiates or opioids (such as heroin, morphine and methadone), 69% involved benzodiazepines (such as diazepam and etizolam).

In 2020 (the most recent year available for the rest of the UK) Scotland's drug misuse rate was 3.7 times that for the UK as a whole, and higher than that of any European country.

While welcoming an end to seven annual increases in drugs deaths, Drugs Policy Minister Angela Constance made clear the situation remains "unacceptable", and work will

continue at pace to address the emergency.

A national mission was announced in January 2021 to tackle rising death deaths in Scotland with additional funding of £250 million over the course of this Parliament.

The first year of the national mission has seen the introduction of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards, the expansion of residential rehabilitation provision, the setting of a new treatment target, increased funding to community and grass-roots organisations and the laying of ground work for innovation such as Safer Drug Consumption Facilities.

Ms Constance said: "Scotland suffers a terrible toll from drug deaths, leaving families grieving and in pain and my heart goes out to all those affected by the death of a loved one through drugs.

"These latest statistics provide yet more heart-breaking reading, and the situation remains unacceptable. While there is so much more work to do, every life saved means one less family grieving and I am determined we can use this halt in the upward trend of recent years as a platform for real change.

Read the full Scottish Government response [here](#).

Drug Deaths Taskforce (DDTF) Publishes Final Report



The report represents 3 years of Taskforce work and sets out an evidence based strategy for tackling Scotland's drug deaths crisis.

The report draws on evidence of good practice, both in Scotland and internationally. The DDTF are calling for an end to stigma, discrimination and punishment creating a new system based on care, compassion and human rights.

Every day in Scotland, three people lose their life to a drug related death, this is tragic and unacceptable.

While significant UK legislative changes would help to strengthen the public health approach, immediate action is required,

therefore the DDTF has focused on what Scotland can do now, within its powers, to deliver for its people.

David Strang, Chair of the Taskforce said, "We know that factors such as poverty and inequality, trauma, mental ill health, alcohol and drug dependency are all closely linked. Addiction is not a crime and you cannot punish people out of addiction. That has been the approach for years and it hasn't worked.

What is needed now is a comprehensive, consistent and person centred system of care, which takes account of local need. A system which is appropriately funded to respond to the public health emergency it faces. Our report says what needs to be said and identifies what needs to change."

You can read the final report of the Drug Deaths Taskforce [here](#).

Continued from front page, inset article, alcohol deaths

Julie Ramsay, Vital Events Statistician at NRS, said:

"Health inequalities are a feature of alcohol-specific deaths. Deaths attributed to alcohol were 5.6 times as likely in the most deprived areas of Scotland compared to the least deprived areas. This is more than the deprivation gap for all causes of death, which is 1.9. Two thirds of those who died last year were male."

Alison Douglas, chief executive of Alcohol Focus Scotland, said the high number of deaths from alcohol was "devastating" and each one left behind family and friends suffering their loss.

"These impacts are experienced unequally with many more people dying in our poorest communities," she said.

"We seem to almost accept this toll as inevitable, but we should not. Each death can be prevented."

Ms Douglas called for the minimum unit price of alcohol to be raised from 50p to 65p in an effort to change attitudes to drink. She also called for an emergency response on the same scale as the efforts to tackle the drug deaths crisis.

Of course alcohol related deaths are only one part of the picture on Scotland's problem with alcohol.

Excessive alcohol is implicated heavily in crime, including violence, domestic abuse, sex crime and anti-social behaviour.

SCSN continues to support Minimum Unit Pricing as an essential component of an integrated approach to tackling alcohol harm in Scotland. We recently attended a roundtable event on MUP as part of the Scottish Government ongoing review process.

Shifts in alcohol consumption during the pandemic could lead to thousands of extra deaths in England

Changes in alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to lead to thousands of additional cases of disease, premature deaths and hospital admissions, costing the NHS billions.



Moderate drinkers consumed less alcohol during the pandemic, whereas heavy drinkers consumed more.

Two separate modelling studies looked at these shifts in drinking during the pandemic and modelled the long-term health impacts of several different scenarios for how these changes might develop in the future.

The University of Sheffield's NHS-commissioned report examined how alcohol-related hospitalisations and deaths are likely to

increase over a longer period of 20 years. The study found that with their worst-case scenario there will be 972,382 additional hospital admissions and 25,192 additional deaths, at a cost of £5.2 billion.

The researchers warn that as both reports provide a snapshot of a small number of the 200 diseases related to alcohol, the true impact is likely to be far greater. They highlight that the results are consistent with real-world increases in alcoholic liver disease and alcohol-specific deaths that have occurred since the onset of the pandemic.

The studies also highlight that the impacts are not evenly distributed across the population, with heavier drinkers and those in the most deprived areas – who already suffer the highest rates of alcohol harm – expected to be disproportionately affected. With the Government's impending Health Disparities White Paper, IAS says it must include policies to reduce alcohol harm if it wants to stand any hope of tackling rising health inequality exacerbated by the pandemic.

Read more [here](#).

International Overdose Awareness Day - 31 August

International Overdose Awareness Day takes place on 31 August. This international day invites all of us to get involved in campaigning around drug deaths. You can find out more about how to get involved [here](#).

SCSN would also like to draw your attention to the Scottish Drugs Forum's 'Stop The Deaths' campaign for 2022.

This year's #stopthedeaths theme is **Voices of Experience: Saving Lives, Driving Change**. #StopTheDeaths 2022 will focus on the roles of people with current and previous experience of drug-related problems in preventing drug deaths and driving the change necessary to reduce the tragic loss of lives.

You can find out more about #StopTheDeaths & how to get involved [here](#).

Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme Summary (August 2022)

Shaping Places for Wellbeing is a 3 year programme, running until March 2024, which is being delivered by Public Health Scotland (PHS) and the Improvement Service (IS) jointly with local authorities and NHS local boards.

The stated ambition of the Programme is to 'Improve Scotland's wellbeing by reducing the significant inequality in the health of its people while addressing the health of our planet.'

The programme focusses on the evidenced impact that the places where we live, work and relax have on our ability not just to stay healthy but to experience wellbeing.

You can read the Summary report [here](#).

Lessons and Innovations in Law Enforcement and Public Health

The **2022 GLEPHA (Global Law Enforcement & Public Health Association) Marketplace of Ideas** is a series of online events that will take place from 5th to 23rd September 2022. It will showcase practical and innovative programmes that demonstrate the successful convergence of law enforcement and public health approaches, with a particular focus on policing and policing alternatives.

The **Marketplace of Ideas** will also be an opportunity to network and build alliances by bringing together practitioners, policymakers, and academics to discuss a wide range of law enforcement and public health themes and topics, including violence prevention, deflection and diversion, mental health, harm minimization, and more.

Find out more [here](#).

Police Scotland Consultation: Violence Against Women & Girls: Your Stories



POLICE SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe
POILEAS ALBA

If you are aged 16 or above, Police Scotland want to hear about your experiences of violence directed towards women and girls.

This activity is about helping them to understand your experiences. They have provided prompts for you as they may help you share your story. You can include as much or as little information as you feel comfortable. You do not have to complete every box.

The anonymised findings from this and other engagement activity will be used to inform our Violence against Women and Girls Strategy.

You can take part in the consultation [here](#).

Climate Crisis Corner



SCSN Climate Change & Community Safety Special

With the UK and Scotland having endured two heatwaves in July and August, and the UK having recorded it's first 40C degree day, we published a brief Climate Change & Community Safety Special Edition newsletter.

In this Special edition, we discuss some of the impacts that have been felt in the UK in July and August, and consider future implications for Community Safety.

We also took the opportunity to reshare our Climate Change & Community Safety Zine, and our recent SCSN Climate Action Case Study.

You can download the Climate Change & Community Safety Special Edition newsletter [here](#).

Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Report: Environment & Sustainability in Focus

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners has published a new report 'Environment & Sustainability in Focus', which considers the role PCCs have to play in ensuring that their police forces, commissioned services and offices are employing environmentally and sustainable practices.

The report also considers the implications for policing of climate change.

Identified impacts include:

- Growing protest movements
- More civil emergencies (e.g. flooding)
- A rise in Organised Crime Groups taking advantage of demand for resources
- Demand on police to enforce new legislative action on those causing climate harms

You can read the report in full [here](#).

National litter and fly tipping strategy: consultation analysis

The Scottish Government has published an [analysis of responses](#) to its recent National Litter & Fly tipping Strategy consultation.

The consultation received a total of 978 responses. Of these, 892 were from individuals, and 86 from organisations.

The consultation saw particularly high levels of support (88%) to develop and adopt a national anti-littering campaign, while over

three quarters (78%) support the development of a national anti-fly tipping campaign.

To help reduce littering and fly tipping, there is a call from many respondents to reduce fees at Household Waste Recycling Centres for waste disposal, and to ideally make these free.

Alternative penalties instead of fines for littering are welcomed. Litter picks or community work are suggested.



Latest news from the Home Safety Scotland Forum

Presenting once more, our new Home Safety Map

In case you missed it, we wanted to share once again our brand new illustrated 'Home Safety Map', developed in partnership with our close friends and colleagues at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

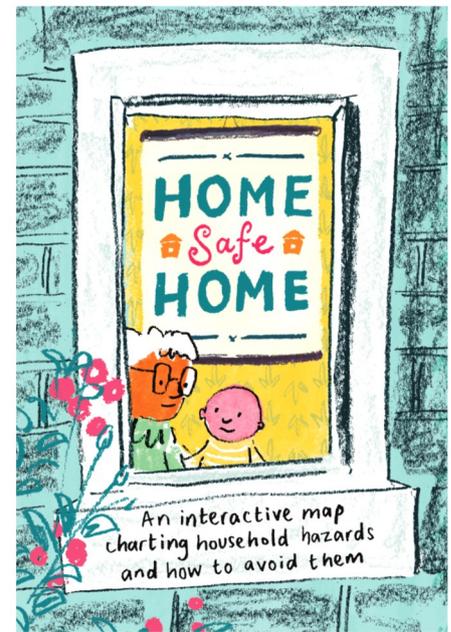
This map illustrates research into common, avoidable hazards in our homes. It highlights tragic causes of injury and death, specific to pre-school children and adults over 65.

This resource is for everyone but should be of particular interest to parents and carers. We want all citizens in Scotland, young and old to be safe and aware at home.

You can download the new 'Home Safety Map' on the SCSN website [here](#).

View our Home Safety Map marketing video on YouTube [here](#).

Commissioned and funded by SCSN in collaboration with RoSPA. Illustrated by Laura Darling



Safer Sleeping Webinar - 22nd September

The National Child Mortality Database (England) is hosting a webinar on September 22 from 11:00am – 12:25pm on the subject of 'Safer sleeping: What do we know about sleeping arrangements and sudden infant deaths?'.
The session is free and open to all with free registration in advance. They're also issuing continuing professional development certificates following attendance, upon request.

There will also be time for questions at the end of the session, and you can submit questions in advance by emailing ncmd-programme@bristol.ac.uk

Find out more and book your place [here](#).

Evidence review of home adaptations

A [new review](#), which is one part of The Adaptations Policy and Practice Programme, has been co-ordinated by the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE) and has involved collaborations with a number of organisations to focus on understanding the academic evidence and policy landscape behind home adaptations.

In the review they have also generated a few thoughts which might be useful for policymakers and practitioners in Scotland to consider.

Get lots more home safety news in the RoSPA [HomeWord newsletter](#).

OPEN NOW

SAFETY INNOVATION AWARD

GET THE RECOGNITION YOU DESERVE

Deadline for submissions: 31 August 2022
Free to enter: electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/award



Showcase your innovative project or product in front of our audience of retailers, manufacturers and distributors.

The Safety Innovation Award recognizes and rewards projects or projects that help protect consumers against electrical danger.

Your project or product does not need to be complete - it can be in the creation/prototype stage. Simply let us know what you're working on and we'll provide the rest:

- A platform to speak at our **Annual Electrical Product Safety Conference** on Wednesday 23 November at Church House, London (attended by 200+ industry experts)
- A space in the networking area to demo your idea / provide further information at the conference (provided for all shortlisters)
- Press releases, social media and online activity showcasing your innovation
- ½ day coaching with the Electrical Safety First Technical Team – explaining everything you need to know to deliver your idea or get your product to market

- A year's tailored newsletters highlighting legislation, standards and industry updates that affect your innovation.
- Award excellence graphic to use on email footers, social media, newsletters etc. as mark of endorsement.

Find out more and submit your project or product for consideration [here](#).

Gas Safety Week 2022



Gas Safety Week will be taking place 12th-18th September 2022.

Celebrating its twelfth year, this pan-industry event sees everyone coming together for one common goal — keeping the nation gas safe.

SCSN and Home Safety Scotland will be supporting Gas Safety Week via our social media accounts and raising awareness about how people can stay safe in their homes.

Find out more & how you can take part [here](#).



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Share your news with us!



If you would like to submit an article, request information or share good practice in our newsletter, please get in touch!

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