

## News Release

# Drug-Related Deaths in Scotland in 2009

17 August 2010



The Registrar General for Scotland today published a short paper analysing the number of drug-related deaths in Scotland.

The key points are:

- There were 545 drug-related deaths in 2009, 29 (5 per cent) fewer than in 2008.
- This was the second-highest number ever recorded, 90 (20 per cent) more than in 2007 and 254 (87 per cent) more than in 1999.
- The number of drug-related deaths rose in seven of the past ten years: the long-term trend appears to be upwards.
- 76 per cent of the deaths were of men.
- 35 per cent of drug-related deaths were of 35-44 year olds; a further 33 per cent were of 25-34 year olds.
- The Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board area accounted for 37 per cent of the deaths, and Lothian for 15 per cent.
- Using the annual average for 2005-2009 (in order to reduce the effect on the figures of any year-to-year fluctuations), the average of 466 drug-related deaths per year represented about 0.09 per 1,000 population for Scotland as a whole. Only one Health Board area had a higher rate: Greater Glasgow & Clyde (0.14 per 1,000 population).
- Comparing the annual average for 2005-2009 with that for 1996-2000:
  - there were similar percentage increases in deaths of men and women;
  - numbers rose faster for 35-44 year olds, and for people aged 45-54, than they did for 25-34 year olds and people aged 55 and over; there was a fall in the number of deaths of people aged under 25; and
  - the Health Board areas with the largest increases in the numbers of drug-related deaths were Greater Glasgow & Clyde, Lanarkshire, Lothian and Ayrshire & Arran.
- Of the 545 drug-related deaths in 2009:
  - heroin and/or morphine were implicated in, or potentially contributed to, 322 deaths (59 per cent);

- methadone was implicated in, or potentially contributed to, 173 deaths (32 per cent);
- benzodiazepines (such as diazepam) were implicated in, or potentially contributed to, 154 deaths (28 per cent);
- cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamines were implicated in, or potentially contributed to 32, 2 and 6 deaths respectively; and
- alcohol was implicated in, or potentially contributed to 165 deaths (30 per cent).

The full publication, [Drug-related Deaths in Scotland in 2009](#), is available on this website.