

# Publication Summary



## Estimating the National and Local Prevalence of Problem Drug Use in Scotland 2012/13

28 October 2014  
**(Updated - 4th March 2016)**

### About this Release

This report provides revised estimates of the national and local prevalence of problem drug use for those aged 15 to 64 in Scotland between April 2012 and March 2013. Problem drug use includes the routine and prolonged use of opiates (such as heroin) and includes illicit and prescribed methadone use and / or the illicit use of benzodiazepines (such as temazepam or diazepam). It does not include recreational and occasional drug use.

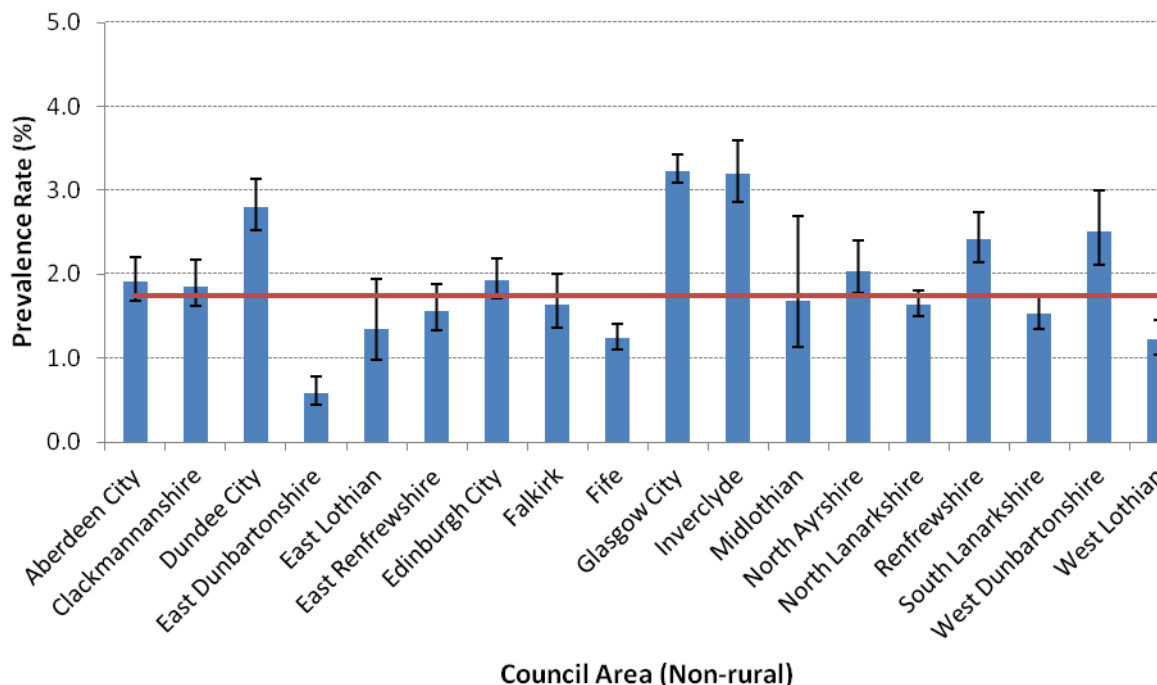
As much of the problem drug using population is hidden, the prevalence figures provided here and in the main report are estimates calculated from a number of different data sources.

### Key Points

- The estimated number of individuals aged 15 – 64 years old with problem drug use in Scotland in 2012/13 was 61,500. This is an estimated prevalence rate of problem drug use in Scotland of 1.74%. The prevalence rate is the percentage of the population of this age in Scotland.
- These figures indicate that there has not been any substantial change in the prevalence of problem drug use for Scotland as a whole over recent years.
- The majority of individuals with problem drug use in Scotland during 2012/13 were male (70%).
- The rate of problem drug use amongst all males in Scotland during 2012/13 was highest in the 25 to 34 years age-group. For males aged 15 to 24 and those aged 25 to 34, the rates are slightly lower than those previously published for 2009/10, however the rate has increased for those aged 35 to 64. The proportion of all male problem drug users that are aged 35 to 64 has increased from 43% in 2009/10 to 51% in 2012/13.
- Prevalence rates of problem drug use tend to be higher in non-rural areas; the four major cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow are all above the Scottish

rate. Similarly, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire are also higher than the Scottish rate. These Council Areas serve some of the most deprived communities in Scotland according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2012.

### Estimated prevalence rate of problem drug use by Council Area (non-rural), ages 15 to 64 years old; 2012/13



## Background

Council area has been the main unit of analysis used in this research. Using Council area estimates, it has been possible to produce estimates for the differently configured Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) areas, NHS Board areas and the former Police Force areas of Scotland.

Estimates of the hidden population were obtained for each council area using capture-recapture statistical models. This form of analysis requires multiple data sources which in some way identify individuals with problem drug use and can identify the overlap between the data sources. These estimates come with a margin of error which is reflected in the 95% confidence intervals. Scotland's rate of 1.74% has a 95% CI of (1.69%, 1.79%). Further information on the methods and revisions are available in the main report.

The definitions and methodology used for these latest estimates are consistent with those used in previous studies. These estimates provide an update to those published by ISD in November 2011 for the period between April 2009 and March 2010.

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## Further Information

Further information can be found in the [full publication report](#).