National Naloxone Programme Scotland
Monitoring Report 2016/17
An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release
This release from the Information Services Division presents information on the number of take-home naloxone kits issued by the National Naloxone Programme in Scotland. Data are presented separately for kits issued in the community, kits issued in prisons at the point of prisoner release and (for the first time) kits dispensed via community prescription.

This planned revision provides additional information on the number and percentage of opioid-related deaths that occurred within four or 12 weeks of prison release or within four or 12 weeks of hospital discharge. These data were not available for inclusion in the November 2017 release of this publication.

Accidental overdose is a common cause of death among users of heroin, morphine and similar drugs, which are referred to as opioids. Naloxone is a drug which reverses the effects of a potentially fatal overdose with these drugs.

Main Points
- A total of 8,159 take-home naloxone kits were issued in Scotland in 2016/17, a decrease of 1% on the previous year. A total of 37,609 take-home naloxone kits were supplied in Scotland between 2011/12 and 2016/17.
- In 2016/17, 6,497 kits were issued in the community, 700 kits were issued in prisons upon release and 962 kits were dispensed via community prescription.

Cumulative number of kits supplied, by source (Scotland; 2011/12 to 2016/17)
In 2016/17, 3,471 (48%) take-home naloxone kits distributed in the community and prisons were repeat supplies. Of these, 882 (25%) repeat supplies were made because the previous kit was reported as having been used to treat an opioid overdose.

At the end of 2016/17, the ‘reach’ of take-home naloxone (based on the number of ‘at risk’ individuals supplied with kits between 2011/12 and 2016/17) was estimated to be 345 kits per 1,000 problem drug users.

In 2016, 3.5% of people whose death was opioid-related had been released from prison in the previous four weeks. This was significantly lower than the 9.8% observed in the five years before implementation of the National Naloxone Programme (2006-10). These figures should be treated with caution due to the small number of opioid-related deaths within four weeks of prison release.

In 2016, 9.4% of people whose death was opioid-related had been discharged from hospital in the previous four weeks. This was similar to the percentage observed in the five years before implementation of the National Naloxone Programme (2006-10: 9.7%).

Background
The overall aim of the National Naloxone Programme is to contribute to a reduction in fatal opioid overdoses in Scotland. Intramuscular injection of naloxone provides time for emergency services to arrive and for further treatment to be given. Following training, take-home naloxone kits are issued to people at risk of opioid overdose in order to help prevent overdose deaths. To help achieve this, in the five years from April 2011 to March 2016, the National Naloxone Programme co-ordinated distribution of take-home naloxone kits from community outlets (usually specialist drug treatment services) and prisons. During this period, NHS Boards were responsible for local delivery of the programme and (until March 2016) the cost of naloxone kits was reimbursed by the Scottish Government. From 2015/16, some NHS Boards have also started to dispense take-home naloxone from pharmacies via community prescription (for example, from GPs, specialist nurses).

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Further Information

Other ISD publications on drug and alcohol misuse can be found at the drug and alcohol topic pages on the ISD website.

The Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) provides information on various aspects of drug misuse in Scotland: ScotPHO drug misuse section.

The next release of this publication will be in October 2018.