Scottish Drug Misuse Database

Overview of Initial Assessments for Specialist Drug Treatment 2016/17

A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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About this release

This release by Information Services Division on the Scottish Drug Misuse Database presents the information available on individuals presenting for initial assessment at specialist drug treatment services in 2016/17.

Main Points

- In 2016/17, initial assessments for specialist drug treatment relating to 11,721 individuals were recorded on the Scottish Drug Misuse Database.

- Drug services are increasingly dealing with an older population; the percentage of individuals assessed for specialist drug treatment who were aged 35 and over increased from 29% in 2006/07 to 51% in 2016/17.

- Heroin was the most common substance people reported needing help with, although reported use of heroin has decreased over time. Among those who indicated recent drug use, the percentage of individuals reporting heroin as their main drug decreased from 64% in 2006/07 to 46% in 2016/17.

Main illicit drug used in the month prior to assessment by financial year

Notes: 2012/13 and 2013/14 are not reported due to data quality and completeness issues.

‘OST’ - Opioid Substitution Therapy.

‘Other drugs’ includes: Amphetamines, dihydrocodeine, Ecstasy, Mephedrone, other sedatives and other drugs.
• There has been a decrease in reports of injecting drug use; the percentage of individuals who reported that they were currently injecting drugs declined from 28% in 2006/07 to 18% in 2016/17.

• Sharing of needles/syringes and other injecting equipment increases the risk of blood borne virus infection. Between 2006/07 and 2016/17 sharing of needles/syringes decreased from 12% to 6% and sharing of other injecting equipment fell from 20% to 9%.

Background
The Scottish Drug Misuse Database (SDMD) was set up in 1990 to collect information about individuals seeking specialist treatment for problem drug use in Scotland. The SDMD is a unique source of data and provides insights into drug treatment needs and the social circumstances and behaviours of individuals at the point when they contact services for treatment.

This release should be viewed in conjunction with the electronic dashboard which is publicly available and provides users with accessible, interactive content based on data from 2006/07 to 2016/17.

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Further Information
Find out more in the full report.

For more information on SDMD see the Scottish Drug Misuse Database section of our website.

For related topics, please see the Drugs Misuse pages.

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 spring 2019.