

01 Background On 20th August 2024 the National Records of Scotland published [Drug-related deaths in Scotland in 2023](#). This highlighted continued high levels of drug related deaths across Scotland and despite a small reduction Edinburgh's deaths remain high. It prompted a discussion within a recent Edinburgh Child Protection Committee around the impact of deaths from drug use on children and preventable measures to reduce drug harm.

02 Concern An overdose happens when drugs switch off the vital signal from the brain to the lungs. The report highlights that people aged 35-54 were most likely to die from drug use and so these people are likely to be parents and grandparents. We know from an official report in 2023 that of the people who died from drug use in Edinburgh, 19% lived with an under 16-year-old. Deprivation and drug use are also highly associated and people are 15 x more likely to die of drug use in the poorest areas of the country.

07 Other Advice and Support

[Know the Score](#)

[Scottish Drugs Forum](#)

[Re-solve prevention of solvent abuse charity](#)

[Talk to FRANK](#)

[NHS Live well](#)



03 Types of Drugs In Scotland, most drug deaths are related to poly drug use, where more than one drug is taken together. Opiates and opioids (heroin, methadone, buprenorphine) account for 80% of drug deaths, although there is also growing concern about the impact of benzodiazepines. In Edinburgh, there has also been an increased focus on addressing the concerns of crack and cocaine use. You can improve your understanding of different drug use and what it looks like by accessing [Scottish Drug Forum e-learning](#).

06 Reachable Moments

Research suggests that being in treatment is a protective factor with young people and adults who are at risk of harm from drug use, so it is important that all staff are equipped with the right knowledge & skills about drug use and how people can access local services.

The Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership website has lots of advice about local how people can access support at one of 4 [Recovery Hubs](#) situated in each quadrant of the city; services [for young people under 21](#); and [help for families](#).

04 Recognising the signs of an Overdose

1. Unconscious or unresponsive
2. Shallow breathing
3. Rasping breath or snoring
4. Pale skin
5. Blue lips
6. Pin point pupils

Any change in circumstances can be a risky time for overdose, especially if unplanned or unexpected but we especially know that: leaving a residential service; significant life events and starting or ending a prescription can be increase overdose risk.

05 Overdose Prevention and Naloxone You are encouraged learn more about Naloxone, an intranasal (nyxoid) or intramuscular (prenoxad) drug that can be administered to temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. Local awareness raising sessions can be arranged by contacting the Lead Officer for Child Protection. Alternatively, there is a short [e-learning course](#), available on the Scottish Drug Forum website, which will show you how to administer Naloxone in a life-saving emergency (you do need to sign up for a FREE account). Any person over 14 can then order a Naloxone kit to carry with you on the [Scottish Families Affected by Drugs website](#).

