ANNEX A

FOI RELEASE FOR CASE 202600518866

Document A

Minutes

Title of Meeting: **National Drug Deaths IMT**
Date: **13 January 2023**
Time: **10:30 – 12:30**

Chair: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]**, SDsPH**
Secretariat: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]**, PHS ScotPHN**

[out of scope]

1. Introduction, confidentiality, and conflicts of interest
Introductions were made from those in attendance.
2. Draft note of 1 November 2022 and action log update
Note was approved. The action log was reviewed and discussed as follows. • [out of scope] • Action no. 1 - Waste water SLWG proposal – [redacted S.38(1)(b)] updated that work on wastewater is still at an early stage of development so from a drugs perspective this will be brought back when its more developed and can now be removed from the action list.
3. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
4. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
5. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
6. AOCB – Not discussed due to time constraints
[out of scope]
7. Date and time of next meeting
24 March 2023

Document B

Action Sheet

Meeting:	**NDDIMT**	**Meeting called by:**	[redacted S.38(1)(b)]/ [redacted S.38(1)(b)]		
		Date:	Friday 13 January 2023		
		Apologies:			
Attendees:	[redacted S.38(1)(b)] Chair	**Copy to:**	Attendees		
Via Teams:	[redacted S.38(1)(b)]	**Date of next meeting:**	24 Mar 2023	**Time:**	TBA
Notes:	[redacted S.38(1)(b)]	**Venue:**	TEAMS		

DATE	ACTION NO.	WHAT: (Action)	WHEN: (Commit)	WHO: (Owner)	RESULT: (Conclusion)
		[out of scope]			
Closed Actions					
		[out of scope]			
31/5/22	1	Feedback welcomed on wastewater proposal to ScotPHN	TBA	Attendees	**Removed 13/1/23 – still at early stage of development so from a drugs perspective look again in future**

Document C

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Water Industry Policy
20 July 2023

To: Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport
Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs;

WASTEWATER ANALYSIS FOR DRUGS IN SCOTLAND

Priority and Purpose

1. To make you aware of an approach from Home Office Drugs Policy Colleagues to extend sampling for drugs to Scotland, and **seek your approval** to proceed.

2. Routine.

Recommendation

3. Recommends that you **approve** the proposal to bring the Home Office drugs sampling and testing project to Scotland.

Context and Issues

4. Wastewater analysis for drugs is currently being used in England to help estimate the total size of the drug market, as well as improve understanding of trends in drug consumption across Great Britain. This in turn can support work to target public-health interventions, including drug treatment, to reduce societal harms.

5. Wastewater analysis of this nature has been conducted for a number of years through a European project (see Wastewater analysis and drugs – a European multi-city study). These results have provided unique insights into licit and illicit drug use as well as providing a measure of the environmental impact on wider chemical use in Europe. The National Crime Agency (NCA) also undertook wastewater analysis for drugs in 2019, working with a range of water companies to do so.

6. Following a similar approach last year Home Office colleagues have again contacted Scottish Government seeking agreement and assistance in extending a programme of wastewater sampling and analysis at a range of wastewater treatment sites in Scotland covering significant populations ([redacted S.30(b)(i)]) The process would involve Home Office-appointed contractors taking representative samples of untreated influent wastewater via auto sampling equipment provided by the project, supported by a relatively minimal manual effort by personnel at the relevant treatment works. The results would then be analysed in a laboratory alongside samples from other wastewater sites. Following this, Home Office and NCA analysts would carry out further analysis, which they would seek to share with the Scottish Government, in order to inform policy-making and enable more effective public-health interventions.

Link to SG Drugs Policy

7. Findings from wastewater analysis may help to provide updated estimates of drug trends across the country and could identify changing habits and the use of any new substances. The data would complement current existing surveillance approaches in use, that in turn can support current policy work in implementing a public-health approach to drug misuse including targeted interventions and treatment.

Link to Organised Crime Policy

8. While there is no intention for any of the findings to directly inform law enforcement operations, the information could be useful in adding to the picture in terms of type of drug usage. It may also allow correlations to be found between particular drug types and mixing agents. The information is unlikely to provide details of prevalence in terms of number of drug users, though it may allow reasonable estimates to be made based on 'typical' user quantity data.

Suitable sites for sampling

9. We are working with Scottish Water colleagues to assist in facilitating the proposed sampling programme. [redacted S.30(b)(i)].

Reporting

10. [redacted S.30(b)(i)]

Options Considered and Advice

11. **Option 1:** Approve the proposal to bring the Home Office drugs sampling and testing project to Scotland.

12. **Option 2:** Do not approve the proposal to bring the Home Office drugs sampling and testing project to Scotland.

Assessment of Options

13. This submission outlines a similar approach to drugs testing approved by Ministers last year. It has been discussed and agreed with Drugs Policy and Justice colleagues as appropriate and useful in aiding understanding of issues relating to illicit drug use in Scotland; for those reasons **we recommend Option 1 above**.

Bute House Agreement Implications

14. There are no Bute House Agreement implications.

Verity House Agreement Implications

15. None

Financial and Legal Considerations

16. The programme is funded to March 2024 by the Home Office but we understand that in due course they will seek to continue beyond that point.

Sensitivities

17. None. The process is assessed as robust and appropriate data sharing agreements and other protocols will be agreed and in place ahead of the commencement of sampling.

Quality Assurance

18. This Submission has been approved by the Deputy Director for Water Policy & DECC Operations.

Conclusions and next Steps

19. We recommend you **approve the proposal** to bring the Home Office drugs sampling and testing project to Scotland.

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Water Industry Policy
Ext [redacted S.38(1)(b)] Mob. [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers Copy List	For Action	For Information Portfolio interest	For Information Constituency interest	For Information General awareness
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport	✓	✓		✓
Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs		✓		✓
Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy	✓	✓		✓

Officials Copy List
DG NetZet
Kersti Berge
Jon Rathjen
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Leanne Dobson, SpAds

Officials Copy List
Jeanette Campbell, SpAds

Document D

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** zzzCabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero & Just Transition
Sent: 24 July 2023 15:50
To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; zzzCabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero & Just Transition <zzzCabSecTNZJT@gov.scot>; zzzMinister for Drugs & Alcohol Policy <zzzMinisterforDAP@gov.scot>
Cc: zzzCabinet Secretary for Justice & Home Affairs <zzzCabSecJHA@gov.scot>; DG Net Zero <DGNetZero@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Jon Rathjen <Jon.Rathjen@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Leanne Dobson <Leanne.Dobson@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Kersti Berge <Kersti.Berge@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: UK testing for illicit drugs at Scottish Wastewater Treatment Works

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team in line with SG records management policy.

Hi [redacted S.38(1)(b)],

Ms McAllan is largely content so long as appropriate colleagues are. However Cab Sec would like to know what our response was to the similar approach that the sub notes was made last year.

Many thanks

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Deputy Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero and Just Transition - Màiri McAllan
The Scottish Government | Web: www.gov.scot |Tel: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] Mob: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Email: CabsecTNZJT@gov.scot

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

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From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: Thursday, July 20, 2023 11:58 AM
To: Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero & Just Transition <CabSecTNZJT@gov.scot>; Minister for Drugs & Alcohol Policy <MinisterforDAP@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Justice & Home Affairs <CabSecJHA@gov.scot>; DG Net Zero <DGNetZero@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Jon Rathjen <Jon.Rathjen@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Leanne Dobson <Leanne.Dobson@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Kersti Berge <Kersti.Berge@gov.scot>
Subject: UK testing for illicit drugs at Scottish Wastewater Treatment Works

Cabinet Secretary, Minister

Please find a submission concerning an approach from UK Gov Home Office to include Scottish wastewater treatment sites in a testing programme for illicit drugs.

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | [redacted S.38(1)(b)] | **Water Policy and DECC Operations Division | Scottish Government | 3F South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ |** [redacted S.38(1)(b)] / [redacted S.38(1)(b)] **(m)**

I am currently working from home, my normal working hours are 07:30-17:00

Document E

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** zzzMinister for Drugs & Alcohol Policy
Sent: 31 July 2023 09:55
To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; zzzCabinet Secretary for Transport, Net Zero & Just Transition <zzzCabSecTNZJT@gov.scot>; zzzMinister for Drugs & Alcohol Policy <zzzMinisterforDAP@gov.scot>
Cc: zzzCabinet Secretary for Justice & Home Affairs <zzzCabSecJHA@gov.scot>; DG Net Zero <DGNetZero@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Jon Rathjen <Jon.Rathjen@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Leanne Dobson <Leanne.Dobson@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Kersti Berge <Kersti.Berge@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: UK testing for illicit drugs at Scottish Wastewater Treatment Works

Good morning [redacted S.38(1)(b)],

Ms Whitham is content to approve the proposal for testing waste water.

Many thanks,
[redacted S.38(1)(b)] **– Assistant Private Secretary to Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy – Elena Whitham**
Scottish Government | St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG | Email: MinisterforDAP@gov.scot

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Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Justice & Home Affairs <CabSecJHA@gov.scot>; DG Net Zero <DGNetZero@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Jon Rathjen <Jon.Rathjen@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Leanne Dobson <Leanne.Dobson@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <Jeanette.Campbell@gov.scot>; Kersti Berge <Kersti.Berge@gov.scot>
Subject: UK testing for illicit drugs at Scottish Wastewater Treatment Works

Cabinet Secretary, Minister

Please find a submission concerning an approach from UK Gov Home Office to include Scottish wastewater treatment sites in a testing programme for illicit drugs.

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | [redacted S.38(1)(b)] | **Water Policy and DECC Operations Division | Scottish Government | 3F South | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ |** [redacted S.38(1)(b)] **/** [redacted S.38(1)(b)] **(m)**

I am currently working from home, my normal working hours are 07:30-17:00

Document F

CREW CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR WATERS

Submitting Capacity Building request

Guidance for CREW's Requesting Organisations

dwqr | Food Standards Scotland | NatureScot | Scottish Canals | Scottish Government Riaghaltas na h-Alba gov.scot | Scottish Water | SEPA Scottish Environment Protection Agency | WICS | Zero Waste Scotland | Consumer Scotland

1. **Share**
   - CREW Connector **shares this guidance** and **capacity building project request form (over page)**, with relevant colleagues within CREW Requesting Organisations.
2. **Review**
   - CREW Connector **reviews and collates the project requests** and returns the capacity building request forms to the Deputy CREW Manager, [redacted S.38(1)(b)] by **8th September.**
3. **Collate**
   - CREW **collates the project ideas**, suggests grouping ideas where appropriate, and returns the information with evaluation matrix to the CREW Connectors.
4. **Evaluate**
   - CREW Connectors with their colleagues **evaluate the project ideas** using the evaluation matrix and return it to CREW by **29th September**.
5. **Select**
   - Following further joint discussion and review, CREW will then **advise on which projects will be taken forward for development**.

Capacity Building proposals

- ✓ Reflect/align with current water policy and future interests
- ✓ Current organisational priorities
- ✓ Emerging areas of interest with clear policy/strategic relevance
- ✓ Discipline based or interdisciplinary
- ✓ Follow-on projects based on findings & recommendations from previous CREW projects.

CREW work CANNOT:

- X Address operational issues, monitoring, or collection of data which are the responsibility of regulatory agencies, local authorities and/or the water industry.
- X Duplicate the activity or outputs from other research being funded by RESAS, including through the Strategic Research Programme and other Centres of Expertise*
- X Provide non-expert event or project management services or fund such activity.

*CREW **can** help with identifying synergies and avoiding potential duplication.

CREW CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR WATERS

CREW Capacity Building Project request form

Please complete and return to your CREW Connector for consideration in CREW's Summer-Autumn 2023 call for Capacity Building project ideas.

If this project idea is successful, this form is intended to be a platform to promote further discussion with the CREW Project Manager and to inform the project specification.

Requester and organisation:

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] Scottish Water

Background

1) Working **project title** (max. 20 words).

Review of psychoactive substances wastewater monitoring approaches and recommendations for how this could be applied in Scotland to prevent harms from drug use and help reduce drug deaths

2) High-level description of the **current state** to be changed.

Drug-related harms in Scotland are at record levels and drug deaths in Scotland are the highest in Europe and are several times the rate in England and Wales (National Records of Scotland, 2023)

To respond to this public health emergency, Public Health Scotland's (PHS) drugs early warning surveillance system, Rapid Action Drug Alerts and Response (RADAR), provides a structured way to collect, assess and communicate information about drugs. However, this approach currently relies on services and local communities to share real time information on drug related incidents or harms by using: reporting forms; regular use surveys; and/or the RADAR mailbox.

There is no nationwide testing programme in place to support information around dynamic changes (geographical and temporal) in drug use patterns/trends or the emergence of new drugs to inform PHS and deliver a faster response to prevent harms from drug use.

However, significant infrastructure and resources are already in place to monitor wastewater influents to evaluate treatment performance and environmental protection. Internationally wastewater epidemiology is widely used to detect the presence of psychoactive substances and their metabolites to support public health surveillance and action to prevent harms. Therefore, could more value from these resources be delivered to support a drug monitoring programme for wider public health protection in Scotland?

3) **Knowledge gap** to be addressed.

We don't know what the best approach would be for a Scottish national wastewater surveillance system that could support Public Health Scotland anticipate emerging new drugs or monitor changes in drug use patterns to develop responses to reduce drug harms and deaths in Scotland. Different techniques may be required for monitoring trends in comparison to identifying emerging drugs and we want to examine what approaches could deliver the greatest health benefits.

SW Public General

We would like to establish the feasibility and specific benefits of monitoring psychoactive substances and their metabolites in Scotland and confirm the key sources of toxicology data to compliment and strengthen surveillance developments in Scotland.

This work would build on the CREW report – Review of wastewater monitoring applications for public health and novel aspects of environmental quality. The work would help address the following knowledge gaps: what infrastructure and specialist skills are required; optimum sample frequency; analytical/methodological viability; how ethical considerations could be handled (social and ethico-political effects); how information could be used by PHS and international public health organisations to deliver health benefits and wider policy developments.

4) Please outline **policy[1]/regulatory/industry** relevance.

Industry relevance
Public Health Scotland Strategy 2022-2025 is working to support a Scotland where everybody thrives and where life expectancy in Scotland starts to improve again and the difference in life expectancy between the wealthiest and the poorest people gets smaller. Addressing drug harms and death is a key component to delivering their strategy.

Scottish Water A Sustainable Future Together has a crucial purpose to support a flourishing Scotland delivering greater value for Scotland from our activities is a key component to delivering our Water Sector Vision.

Policy relevance
European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction The Future of Drug Monitoring in Europe until 2030 supporting expansion of the monitoring and research agenda including new areas of analysis such as wastewater epidemiology

CREW Review of wastewater monitoring applications for public health and novel aspects of environmental quality supported illicit drug use monitoring as a technology ready application of wastewater-based epidemiology

European Drug Report 2023: Trends and Developments – provides current monitoring patterns and trends in drug use

The aim of the Scottish Government's national mission on drug deaths is to save and improve lives. Surveillance is a cross-cutting priority, and the main areas of focus includes learning, and improving data/intelligence gathering, sharing and access through surveillance, research, and partnership working.

Regulatory relevance
Recast Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) –Scottish Ministers wish to align as far as it is in Scotland's interests to do so with these regulatory developments including Article 17 requirements - to monitor for public health parameters in urban wastewater (list includes SARS-CoV-2, poliovirus, influenza virus, emerging pathogens, contaminants of emerging concern, others considered relevant by competent authorities).

[1] Please provide details of **specific policies** e.g., policy goals, statutory commitments, and policy decisions.

SW Public
General

Aim and key questions

5) **Overall aim**[2] of this project and how this project will achieve this aim.

To establish if monitoring psychoactive substances and their metabolites in Scotland could support a reduction in drug harms and death in Scotland and what approaches could work

6) Please provide the **key questions** you wish to be addressed.

We need to evaluate the potential targets and benefits for monitoring psychoactive substances and be able to answer the following questions: (1) what should we monitor to address the highest public health threats? *(e.g. what should we do)* (2) what is the analytical feasibility and Scotland/UK capabilities for the target drugs? *(e.g. can we deliver)* (3) what will be the usefulness of community-level wastewater surveillance data to inform Public Health Scotland action? *(e.g. is the information going to be useful)*

7) Please provide a concise summary of what you feel is **in and out of scope** for this project.

In scope – assessments of all current wastewater drug national programmes and their relevance to Scotland (e.g. European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction multi-city monitoring programme; Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission; current (2023-) and previous UK Home Office programmes with Imperial College; wider research studies. In scope – assessment of inter-laboratory validation studies or analytical proficiency testing schemes and recommended approaches. Assessment of sampling methodologies and recommendations around accepted / standard approaches and sampling frequencies. Work completed to date by the Europe-wide network (Sewage analysis CORe group — Europe (SCORE)). Out of scope – household or network monitoring for a street for example. This project needs to examine the opportunities around influent wastewater sample collection at wastewater treatment works to help maximise the value of sampler activity and infrastructure already in place. Out of scope – removal assessments of drugs in wastewater treatment and their impact on the environment.

8) Please identify **relevant stakeholders** for this project.

Public Health Scotland, Scottish Water, One Health Breakthrough Partnership, WICS

Intended impacts

[2] This should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).

SW Public
General

9) Please indicate which type(s) of impact you envisage the project will have[3].

Intended Impact		Description	Yes/No
	General awareness	Contributing to the understanding of policy issues, reframing debates (i.e., changing ways of thinking)	Yes
	Public health	Influencing the delivery (e.g., actions on-the-ground) targeting public health	Yes
	Practice / capacity building	Development of technical and personal skills, including methods	No
	Natural environment	Influencing the delivery (e.g., actions on-the-ground) targeting the natural environment	No
	Government policy	On the strategic level objectives of funders and decision makers	Yes
	Institutional policy	Influencing the development of policy, practice or service provision, shaping legislation	Yes
	Other	If the project's intended impacts are not captured in the above categories, this captures the specific project impact	No

Intended audience(s) and deliverables

10) Who are the intended audience(s) of the deliverables?

Public Health Scotland, Scottish Water, Scottish Government

11) **After the project, how** do you anticipate this project's deliverables be utilised by **the intended audience(s)**?

PHS to use deliverables to help policy development and decision making regarding drug harm surveillance in Scotland
Scottish Water to use the deliverables to help establish procedures for drug sampling and to assess if they could support analysis

[3] CREW considers impact as the longer-term change(s) resulting from the project. The icons represent generalised impact types. You can select multiple icons.

SW Public
General

Scottish Government and WICS to help determine if the benefits of this programme justify funding consideration

12) Considering the intended audience(s), please indicate the **deliverables/outputs[4] and meetings/events[5] required** using the tables below.

Deliverable/outputs	Yes/No
Database	No
Mapping	Yes
Infographics	Yes
Report (20-30 pages)	Yes
Workshop report	Yes
Policy brief	Yes
Press Release	No
Project Video	No
Other (please provide details below)	

Meetings/events	Yes/No
Wider/expert workshop (during project)	Yes
Focus Groups	?
Interviews	Yes
Dissemination event or workshop (end of project)	Yes
Other (please provide details below)	

Timing

13) Ideal date of **project completion** (MM/YYYY). Include relevant time-sensitive deadlines/events.

By end Dec 2024 but this can be adjusted if needed

Commitment

14) Please insert X to confirm:

__X_ There are sufficient resources and capacity available within the requesting organisation(s) to ensure the project meets its intended aims.

_X__ There is commitment to engage and take part in CREW's evaluation process.

_X_ CREW ensures that there will be support and commitment throughout the project lifecycle.

[4] In addition to your selected deliverables, please note all CREW projects are required to produce a plain English project summary and a website summary.

[5] Please note, Project Steering Group and intended impact meetings are held throughout the project lifecycle.

SW Public
General

Document G

Note: **National Drug Deaths IMT, 28 January 2025**

Chair: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Secretariat: **PHS ScotPHN**

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

1. Introduction, confidentiality, and conflicts of interest
2. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
3. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
4. Enhancing Surveillance
[out of scope] **Priorities for development:** Can we look at bringing data and intelligence that would be helpful? What value add in terms of wastewater surveillance – would that help? Would mapping be a helpful tool? [redacted S.38(1)(b)] advised that there are examples from other countries of mapping, but they don't address the concerns here i.e. toxicology and patterns emerging. In terms of wastewater there is some work being done and is something that could be brought back to this group. [out of scope] [redacted S.38(1)(b)] agreed to reflect on the discussion and will link with NDDIMT colleagues as required. Will discuss again at the next meeting. **Action:** [redacted S.38(1)(b)] **to reflect on discussion** **Action: Agenda item for the next meeting**
5. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
6. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
7. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
8. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
9. Future meeting arrangements
2025 – 22nd April, 19th August, 18th November – calendar invites will be issued.
10. AOCB

Minutes (continued)

NDDIMT:
22 April 2025 @ 10:30

Document H

Directorate for Population Health, Drugs Policy Division
17 April 2025

Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

RESEARCH ON WASTEWATER MONITORING FOR PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Priority and Purpose

1. This routine information note updates you on the recent publication of research by the Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW) into the feasibility of wastewater monitoring for psychoactive substances in Scotland.

Context and Issues

2. On 1 April 2025, CREW published their report titled "Review of psychoactive substances wastewater monitoring approaches and recommendations for the feasibility of applying different approaches in Scotland".

3. This research was commissioned by Scottish Water, with the support of Public Health Scotland (PHS). Scottish Government officials from Drugs Policy, Population Health Resilience and Protection, and Health and Social Care Analysis have been sighted on progress but did not lead on this work.

4. The study combined systematic approaches including literature review, evidence mapping, and engagement of key stakeholders and experts to determine the feasibility and benefits of using the current wastewater influent monitoring infrastructure to track psychoactive substances and their metabolites in Scotland.

5. The research considered the target substances which should be monitored to address the highest public health threats for Scotland and identified internationally recognised analytical strategies for all target substances.

6. The research also considered existing Scottish Water sampling infrastructure and scheduling, as well as laboratories with equipment applicable for wastewater monitoring. It was noted that additional resources would likely be required for any significant additional sampling effort.

Key Findings and Recommendations

7. The research found that there were potential benefits of wastewater monitoring in the areas of: informing a public health response; informing national policies; and understanding the use of psychoactive substances in Scotland in the international context.

8. The key recommendations made by the research were as follows:

    a. *Wastewater monitoring is used globally to augment understanding of drug use patterns. Pilot schemes should be trialled in Scotland to establish and develop practical implementation.*

    b. *Wastewater has been useful in monitoring COVID levels nationally. Existing sampling platforms should be adapted to facilitate monitoring of psychoactive substances.*

    c. *The complex nature of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) has traditionally presented an analytical challenge that may be overcome by wastewater monitoring using advanced laboratory instrumentation. Monitoring should emphasise the identification of both established and novel substances using both targeted and non-targeted analytical screens.*

    d. *At least 15 public and privately-funded research facilities in Scotland have appropriate instrumentation and expertise to undertake the relevant analyses and should be considered for pilot studies. Given the restricted funding environment, wastewater-based epidemiology trials should focus on a select number of samples/target substances prior to expansion at a national level.*

    e. *Trials should involve the major stakeholders from public health and water industry. Trials would benefit from academic and statistical input into the development of sampling regimes, optimisation of detection methods and development of data analysis pipelines.*

Next Steps

9. As Scottish Water, supported by PHS, commissioned this work, we anticipate that they will take forward immediate next steps in considering the implications of the recommendations. Officials will liaise with both Scottish Water and PHS as required.

10. While the research recommends piloting wastewater monitoring in Scotland, the public health and policy implications of such monitoring are yet to be worked through. A more comprehensive understanding of how wastewater monitoring would inform future policy, and further existing public health surveillance systems, such as RADAR, is required in considering whether to take this work forward.

11. The Home Office have funded the Wastewater Analysis for Narcotic Detection (WAND) Programme, delivered by Imperial College London, which has carried out wastewater monitoring at a number of sites across the UK, including in Scotland. Implications of this work would also need to be considered in any next steps.

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Directorate for Population Health, Drugs Policy Division
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Document I

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care 2024
Sent: 18 April 2025 14:42
To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care 2024 <CabSecHSC@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Health & Social Care <DGHSC@gov.scot>; Deputy Chief Medical Officers <DCMO@gov.scot>; Director of Population Health <Directorofpopulationhealth@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Jennie Gollan <Jennie.Gollan@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; News - Health and Care <NewsHealthandCare@gov.scot>; Deputy Director for Alcohol and Drugs Support Division <deputydirectorforadsd@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Information Note - Routine - CREW Research on Wastewater Monitoring for Psychoactive Substances - 17 April 2025

Hi [redacted S.38(1)(b)],

Mr Gray has noted.

Regards,

[redacted S. 38(1)(b)]
Deputy Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care - Neil Gray MSP
Scottish Government
E: cabsechsc@gov.scot
M: [redacted S. 38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 17 April 2025 16:50
To: Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care 2024 <CabSecHSC@gov.scot>
Cc: DG Health & Social Care <DGHSC@gov.scot>; Deputy Chief Medical Officers <DCMO@gov.scot>; Director of Population Health <Directorofpopulationhealth@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Jennie Gollan <Jennie.Gollan@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Communications Health and Social Care <CommunicationsHealthandSocialCare@gov.scot>; Deputy Director - Drugs Policy <Deputydirectordrugspolicy@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>

Subject: Information Note - Routine - CREW Research on Wastewater Monitoring for Psychoactive Substances - 17 April 2025

PS/Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care

Please find attached a short information note to update on the recent publication of research by the Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW) into the potential of wastewater monitoring for drugs. This research was commissioned by Scottish Water, with the support of Public Health Scotland.

ERDM link: Drug Surveillance - Information Note - CabSec HSC - CREW Research on Wastewater Monitoring for Psychoactive Substance - April 2025 details - Objective

Kind regards,

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Harm Reduction Team | Drugs Policy Division | Directorate for Population Health | Scottish Government
Mobile: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Email: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot |

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Document J

MINISTER FOR DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY AND SPORT

REACTIVE BRIEFING FOR PUBLICATION OF 2024 DRUG RELATED DEATHS IN SCOTLAND OFFICIAL STATISTICS

2 SEPTEMBER 2025

Briefing Contents

Annex A	[out of scope]
Annex B	[out of scope]
Annex C	[out of scope]
Annex D	[out of scope]
Annex E	[out of scope]
Annex F	Detailed Policy Briefing FMQ-style

ANNEX A

[out of scope]

ANNEX B

[out of scope]

ANNEX C

[out of scope]

ANNEX D

[out of scope]

ANNEX E

[out of scope]

ANNEX F

DETAILED POLICY BRIEFING FMQ-STYLE

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5. [out of scope]....18
6. [out of scope]....20
7. [out of scope]....22
8. SURVEILLANCE 24
[out of scope]....26

1. [out of scope]

2. [out of scope]

3. [out of scope]

4. [out of scope]

5. [out of scope]

6. [out of scope]

7. [out of scope]

8. SURVEILLANCE

BACKGROUND

- Our approach to drugs recognises the importance of knowing what is in the drug supply. This helps services respond to emerging trends and identification of new substances of concern to take place.
- [out of scope]
- [out of scope]
- [out of scope]
- We are working with PHS to consider the feasibility and possible benefits of wastewater monitoring and expect to take a paper to the National Drug Deaths Incident Management Team later in the year for their consideration. This will inform a wider consideration of surveillance priorities as we move toward the post-2026 policy landscape.
- The Home Office separately fund a Wastewater Analysis Programme to estimate drug consumption. This programme includes several sample sites in Scotland and we have regular engagement with the Home Office on this work.

TOP LINES

The ability to know what is in the drug supply and when substances of concern such as synthetic opioids appear, is vital.

- Recognising the need to understand changes in the substances people are taking, alongside being able to identify potential threats, has meant that through our National Mission we have invested in developing our surveillance abilities.
- As part of our work to develop a refreshed alcohol and drug strategic plan, we are considering how best to extend our surveillance abilities.

[out of scope]

[out of scope]

WASTEWATER MONITORING

In April 2025, the Centre of Expertise for Waters published research into the feasibility of wastewater monitoring for psychoactive substances in Scotland.

- We are working with Public Health Scotland to consider wastewater monitoring as part of our wider work to extend and enhance our existing public health surveillance systems.

[out of scope]

[out of scope]

Document K

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S6W-39679
(To be completed as necessary with any additional information)

Question Background

- [out of scope]

Wastewater Monitoring

- On 1 April 2025, CREW published their report titled "*Review of psychoactive substances wastewater monitoring approaches and recommendations for the feasibility of applying different approaches in Scotland*".
- This research was commissioned by Scottish Water, with the support of Public Health Scotland (PHS). Scottish Government officials from Drugs Policy, Population Health Resilience and Protection, and Health and Social Care Analysis were sighted on progress but did not lead on this work.
- The research found that there were potential benefits of wastewater monitoring in the areas of: informing a public health response; informing national policies; and understanding the use of psychoactive substances in Scotland in the international context. It recommended piloting wastewater monitoring in Scotland.
- We are working with PHS to consider the feasibility and possible benefits of wastewater monitoring and expect to take a paper to the National Drug Deaths Incident Management Team later in the year for their consideration. This will inform a wider consideration of surveillance priorities as we move toward the post-2026 policy landscape.
- The Home Office separately fund a Wastewater Analysis Programme to estimate drug consumption. This programme includes several sample sites in Scotland and we have regular engagement with the Home Office on this work.

Contact Name: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Ext: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Document L

MINISTER FOR DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY AND SPORT

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON DRUG RELATED DEATHS IN 2024 AND THE NATIONAL MISSION TO REDUCE DEATHS AND IMPROVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE IMPACTED BY DRUGS

Date and Time	Tuesday 2 September 2025, 14:20-14:50
Where	Scottish Parliament Chamber
Key Purpose / Message	To update the Parliament following the publication of the 2024 official statistics on drug related deaths and reaffirm the Government's commitment to tackling this issue. The statement will also include a short update on implementation of the Medication Assisted Treatment Standards.
Top Facts / Figures	In 2024, there were 1,017 drug misuse deaths registered in Scotland, an decrease of 13% (155 deaths) compared with 2023.
Official Support	[redacted S.38(1)(b)] [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Briefing Contents

Annex A	[out of scope]
Annex B	[out of scope]
Annex C	[out of scope]
Annex D	[out of scope]
Annex E	[out of scope]
Annex F	[out of scope]
Annex G	Detailed Policy Briefing FMQ-style

ANNEX A

[out of scope]

ANNEX B

[out of scope]

ANNEX C

[out of scope]

ANNEX D

[out of scope]

ANNEX E

[out of scope]

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[out of scope]

ANNEX G

DETAILED POLICY BRIEFING FMQ-STYLE

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5. [out of scope]....24
6. [out of scope]....26
7. [out of scope]....28
8. SURVEILLANCE 30
[out of scope]....32

1. [out of scope]

2. [out of scope]

3. [out of scope]

4. [out of scope]

5. [out of scope]

6. [out of scope]

7. [out of scope]

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- As part of our work to develop a refreshed alcohol and drug strategic plan, we are considering how best to extend our surveillance abilities.

[out of scope]

[out of scope]

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In April 2025, the Centre of Expertise for Waters published research into the feasibility of wastewater monitoring for psychoactive substances in Scotland.

- We are working with Public Health Scotland to consider wastewater monitoring as part of our wider work to extend and enhance our existing public health surveillance systems.

[out of scope]

[out of scope]

Document M

ANNEX L

DETAILED POLICY BRIEFING FMQ-STYLE

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3. [out of scope]..... 5
4. [out of scope]..... 8
5. **SURVEILLANCE** 10

1. [out of scope]

2. [out of scope]

3. [out of scope]

4. [out of scope]

5. SURVEILLANCE

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- Our approach to drugs recognises the importance of knowing what is in the drug supply. This helps services respond to emerging trends and identification of new substances of concern to take place.
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[out of scope]

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[out of scope]

[out of scope]

Document N

Agenda

Title: **National Drug Deaths Incident Management Team**
Date: **18 November 2025**
Venue: **MS Teams – click here to access the meeting.**
Time: **10:00 – 12:00**

Chair: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] **(SDsPH)**

all attendees are reminded of the need to maintain confidentiality of information and discussions shared during the meeting

Item	Time	Agenda Item	Lead
1.	**10:00**	**Welcome and introductions** a) Draft note 10 September 2025 & Action log update	[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
2.	**10:05**	[out of scope]	[out of scope]
3.	**10:35**	[out of scope]	[out of scope]
4.	**10:50**	**Developing surveillance** a) [out of scope] b) Waste water surveillance (paper)	[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
5.	**11:05**	[out of scope]	[out of scope]
6.	**11:20**	[out of scope]	[out of scope]
7.	**11:35**	[out of scope]	[out of scope]
8.	**11:45**	**AOB**	**All**
9.	**12:00**	**Date of next meeting & Close** • 2026 tba	[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Document O

Wastewater epidemiology of psychoactive substances & public health surveillance objectives

SBAR to National Drug Death IMT, November 2025

Situation

In April 2023, NDDIMT asked PHS to consider the expansion of pre-existing wastewater epidemiology infrastructure to include testing for psychoactive substances of concern within Scotland's drugs early warning surveillance (RADAR). Whilst findings from a feasibility study concluded a number of recommendations, practicalities of the potential public health benefits of waste water epidemiology as a source of toxicology data to strengthen surveillance developments to prevent and reduce drug harms remain uncertain.

Background

A feasibility study was developed in partnership with Scottish Water, and commissioned by Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW). The report was published online in 1 April 2025:

Review of psychoactive substances wastewater monitoring approaches and recommendations for the feasibility of applying different approaches in Scotland | CREW | Scotland's Centre of Expertise for Waters

Summary recommendations determined that a pilot to test new approaches would need established to see how things work in practice, using existing systems, focusing on both known and new drugs. Limited funding availability, a need for collaboration across health experts, the water industry and researchers were recognised, as well as suggestions on testing approaches for different drugs. Concluding that these should be prioritised based on concern for risks to health.

An existing Home Office & National Crime Agency wastewater epidemiology project from selective sites across England established for law enforcement purposes is in its third phase (beginning initially in 2021, Phase 2 ran until Sept2024 and expanded to cover Scotland). Consumption estimates from each year are compared to estimate trends in consumption of each of the following substances: cocaine, heroin, ketamine, MDMA, methamphetamine, and amphetamine. Sites were chosen to monitor drug consumption in areas involved in Project ADDER. These were independently assessed by academics leading the analysis at Imperial College London as not representative of England as a whole (catchment areas were predominantly urban, with higher levels of deprivation and higher prevalence of drug related harms than the national average).

Assessment

In considering the business case we've assessed this proposed surveillance development against the core NDDIMT questions on purpose, value to public health action, efficacy, risks to current surveillance operational sustainability and relative priority.

There are currently two conflicting purposes to wastewater analysis at UK-level, for law enforcement purposes or to support public health action. In Scotland there is consensus that this development should only be applied as part of public health intelligence to contribute to prevent or reduce drug related harms.

At a strategic level, wastewater epidemiology is not part of the UK risk assessment included by the Early Warning Assessment Group. Wastewater epidemiology is not an indicator considered within

the threat assessment (for England) completed by this UK intelligence network responsible for monitoring the emergence of potent synthetic drugs and their risk to health.

At an operational level, the objective and intended benefit of investing in expanding wastewater epidemiology infrastructure was to enhance our intelligence both of current consumption patterns at a community level and screen for the consumption of newer agents as they present in Scotland. The Home Office Wastewater Analysis Programme is still in its infancy and insights are expected to develop with time. However this project demonstrates a number of limitations relevant to specific Scottish public health objectives. For example the reliability of wastewater sample results adjusted for how much the drug metabolises in the human body or breaks down while travelling to the treatment plants where sampling takes place. This is particularly relevant when considering this surveillance development's contribution to monitoring new highly potent synthetics drugs. Their likely low concentrations will make them hard to detect. Demonstrating that wastewater testing capabilities still need some development to be of value to public health action in screening for new drugs of concern currently being monitored across other surveillance indicators.

In addition, previously the Home Office relied on insights into levels of drug use from self-reported data within the Crime Survey for England and Wales. Whereas in Scotland, we have alternative high value high impact toxicology indicators from post-mortem toxicology, hospital toxicology (QEUH in Glasgow), and drug treatment testing (oral fluid and urine sample toxicology). These data indicators have all been introduced as part RADAR quarterly reports as management information to support monitoring and response since June 2022. PHS and academic collaborators are also exploring the feasibility of using routinely collected data and statistical modelling to estimate the prevalence of non-opioid drugs.. Therefore while we welcome the development of this approach, we feel it's of limited additional utility for the quantification of the prevalence of controlled drug use or early warning of emerging substances in Scotland as part of routine surveillance.

A range of comparative waste water analyses are available at European level and these approaches could be commissioned for Scotland to research academics with specialist knowledge of both drug use in Scotland and the technical challenges associated with this type of work. This would yield more benefits to stakeholders than if the work were undertaken by PHS.

RADAR is already progressing a number of surveillance developments where the benefits are well-established. Protecting and prioritising resources to fully realise these gains is important when assessing the viability of introducing wastewater analysis into existing structures. The specific added value of wastewater analysis remains uncertain and capacity to accommodate this development may divert resources from other impactful work. This is mainly due to:

- The technical challenges of determining appropriate sampling processes (substances/frequency/timing)
- Difficulties interpreting the resulting data correctly as a result of those technical challenges
- Challenges in drawing meaningful Scottish or UK wide comparisons
- Difficulties detecting substances of concern which are likely to be present in extremely small quantities
- Risks associated with all of the above when in interpreting and communicating findings

Recommendation

From a public health system perspective, the capabilities to develop the methodological and analytical requirements appropriately do not sufficiently merit prioritisation within existing surveillance resources due to the limited added value to policy and practice.

PHS' ask for NDDIMT approval of our recommendation not to progress further with proposals for wastewater epidemiology of psychoactive substances for public health surveillance purposes.

Document P

ANNEX F

BRIEFING ON KEY ISSUES

[out of scope]

4. SURVEILLANCE

BACKGROUND

- Our approach to drugs recognises the importance of knowing what is in the drug supply. This helps services respond to emerging trends and identification of new substances of concern to take place.
- [out of scope]
- [out of scope]
- [out of scope]
- We are working with PHS to consider the feasibility and possible benefits of wastewater monitoring and expect to take a paper to the National Drug Deaths Incident Management Team later in the year for their consideration. This will inform a wider consideration of surveillance priorities as we move toward the post-2026 policy landscape.
- The Home Office separately fund a Wastewater Analysis Programme to estimate drug consumption. This programme included several sample sites in Scotland but these have recently been removed for budgetary reasons. We have regular engagement with the Home Office on this work.

TOP LINES

The ability to know what is in the drug supply and when substances of concern such as synthetic opioids appear, is vital.

- Recognising the need to understand changes in the substances people are taking, alongside being able to identify potential threats, has meant that through our National Mission we have invested in developing our surveillance abilities.
- As part of our work to develop a refreshed alcohol and drug strategic plan, we are considering how best to extend our surveillance abilities.

[out of scope]

[out of scope]

WASTEWATER MONITORING

In April 2025, the Centre of Expertise for Waters published research into the feasibility of wastewater monitoring for psychoactive substances in Scotland.

- We are working with Public Health Scotland to consider wastewater monitoring as part of our wider work to extend and enhance our existing public health surveillance systems.

[out of scope]

[out of scope]

Document Q

SYNTHETICS MEETING – 6 JANUARY 2026

Surveillance

- [out of scope]
- [out of scope]
- [out of scope]
- PHS and SG agreed that the possibility of wastewater testing would be reviewed in approximately 2 years, with SG taking forward a policy review initially.

[out of scope]

Document R

Directorate for Population Health, Drugs Policy Division
20 January 2026

Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport

HOME OFFICE WASTEWATER MONITORING PROJECT

Priority and Purpose

1. This **urgent** submission seeks your views on a proposal to contribute a small amount of funding to support the inclusion of Scottish sampling sites in a Home Office programme of wastewater monitoring for psychoactive substances for a final cycle in 2025-26.

Recommendation

2. Recommends that you: **approve** the recommendation not to provide funding of £20,675 to the Home Office to include five Scottish sampling sites in the final cycle of FY 2025-26 of the Wastewater Analysis Programme.

Context and Issues

3. Since 2021, the Home Office Wastewater Analysis Programme has taken samples from wastewater treatment plants across England and Scotland. These have been used to calculate the quantity consumed of several key illicit drug types. Since September 2024, the programme has been in phase 3, with samples collected from 50 sites across England and Scotland over a series of sampling cycles (each cycle lasts approximately two months).

4. Over recent months the Home Office have experienced challenges securing appropriate resource to continue the programme, to the extent that for the latest cycle (cycle 8, November-January) the programme has been scaled back including by removing the eight Scottish sampling sites.

5. The Home Office have now secured some funding to continue the programme for a final cycle in FY 2025-26, to take place from late-January to March. In discussion with the contractor, they have identified a reduced range of five Scottish sites which could be added back in to the programme for this cycle if the Scottish Government were able to provide funding.

6. [redacted S.30(b)(i)]

Options Considered and Advice

Option 1: Provide the requested funding

7. £20,675 has been requested by the Home Office in order to add five Scottish sites back into the programme for a final cycle in FY 2025-26.

8. Providing this funding would enable some Scottish sampling sites to be added back into the programme and data to be collected for these for a final cycle in FY 2025-26. Officials **do not recommend** this option.

Option 2: Do not provide the requested funding

9. Not providing the funding would result in the final cycle of FY 2025-26 continuing without any Scottish sites, meaning no Scottish data would be available, as was the case with the previous cycle. Officials **recommend** this option.

Assessment of Options

Option 1: Provide the requested funding

10. Scottish sites returning to the programme would enable data to be collected for the final cycle of FY 2025-26. This would help to supplement our understanding of current drug consumption patterns in Scotland.

11. [redacted S.30(b)(i)]. It would also give us further time and evidence to consider the potential benefits of the programme and what public health uses of the data there may be.

12. The funding requested is relatively small for these purposes and is affordable in the current budget (see paragraph 20). While there are limitations in the utility of this programme from a public health surveillance perspective, this would allow Scotland to remain involved in the programme and close off the current phase, while giving fuller consideration to potential outcomes on a longer-term basis.

Option 2: Do not provide the requested funding

13. If the funding is not provided, no Scottish sampling sites will be included, and therefore no Scottish data will be available, for the final cycle of FY 2025-26.

14. In April, the Centre of Expertise for Waters (CREW) published a report into the feasibility of wastewater monitoring for psychoactive substances in Scotland. The research was commissioned by Scottish Water, with the support of Public Health Scotland (PHS), and recommended piloting wastewater monitoring in Scotland.

15. Following further consideration of this report and recommendation, PHS reached the conclusion that the specific added value of wastewater analysis remains uncertain. A recommendation was made to the National Drug Deaths Incident Management Team not to progress further with proposals for wastewater epidemiology of psychoactive substances. This recommendation was accepted by the group. We have agreed with PHS that this position will be reviewed in mid to late-2027 to revisit whether there is a case for Scotland-specific wastewater testing for drugs.

16. While the Home Office programme does have a public heath aim, the benefits to date appear more in the law enforcement space [redacted S.30(b)(i)]. While Police Scotland are due to receive the data we understand that this has not yet happened and they are therefore unable to make a clear case for the programme from their perspective at this time.

17. While the funding requested by the Home Office is relatively small, it is also therefore the case that the public health benefits of this programme for the Scottish Government are limited.

Contribution to the Government's Four Priorities

18. Funding this programme would contribute towards the **improving our public services** priority.

Risks to Delivery

19. The overall programme is undertaken by an external contractor and managed by the Home Office. [redacted S.30(b)(i)]

Financial Considerations

20. This funding of £20,675 is affordable within the budget allocated for synthetics response in FY 2025-26.

Sensitivities

21. [redacted S.30(b)(i)]

Quality Assurance

22. This submission has been approved by John Nicholson, Deputy Director Population Health Strategy and Improvement Division.

Conclusion and next Steps

23. You are invited to **approve** the recommendation <u>not</u> to provide funding of £20,675 to the Home Office to include five Scottish sampling sites in the final cycle of FY 2025-26 of the Wastewater Analysis Programme.

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Directorate for Population Health, Drugs Policy Division
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers Copy List	**For Action**	**For Information Portfolio interest**	**For Information Constituency interest**	**For Information General awareness**
Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport	X			
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care		X		

Officials Copy List
DG Health and Social Care
Deputy Chief Medical Officer
Director of Population Health
Niamh O'Connor
John Nicholson
Erin Mckee
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Document S

Note: **National Drug Deaths IMT, 28 January 2025**

Attendees:

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Secretariat: PHS ScotPHN

1. Welcome and Introductions
[out of scope]
2. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
3. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
4. Developing Surveillance Initiatives – Toxicology and Wastewater Analysis
[out of scope] A proposal regarding wastewater analysis for psychoactive substances was discussed. It was concluded that, due to methodological and resource limitations, this approach would not be prioritized for public health surveillance at this time. The group agreed with the recommendation and asked that this is revisited if new resources or research opportunities arise. [out of scope]
5. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
6. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
7. [out of scope]
[out of scope]
8. AOCB

Minutes (continued)

9. Date of Next Meeting
Proposed for March 2026 (date to be confirmed).

Document T

From: phs scotphn <phs.scotphn@phs.scot>
Sent: 21 January 2026 15:41
To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (NHS Dumfries and Galloway) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (AA Population Health Research) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@aapct.scot.nhs.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@cosla.gov.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@fife.gov.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (NHS Highland) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (NHS Highland) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@scotland.police.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@scotland.police.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (SAS) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@scotland.police.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@eastdunbarton.gov.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (NHS Fife) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (NHS Forth Valley) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (NHS Grampian) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; phs scotphn <phs.scotphn@phs.scot>; phs sdph <phs.sdph@phs.scot>; policingtogethercommander <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@scotland.police.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (AA Inclusive Health) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@aapct.scot.nhs.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@prisons.gov.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] (SAS) <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@sps.pnn.gov.uk>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@nhs.scot>
Subject: Draft Note - NDDIMT 18 Nov 2025

Dear Colleagues,

For your attention, please see attached the draft note from the NDDIMT held on the 18/11/25. There is a sperate update re wastewater below for your information.

The next NDDIMT meeting is on 10 March 2026, and it would be helpful re the agenda if you could send in any reflections about positive achievements over the course of the NDDIMT to Scotphn by cop 17 Feb 2026 to include with meeting papers.

Update from [redacted S.38(1)(b)] **re wastewater surveillance**

Following agreement from NDDIMT on 18 Nov to our SBAR recommendations I needed to follow up on the group's query as to when this surveillance development might be reviewed once I had liaised with wastewater strategy colleagues.

I can confirm that we have agreed with Scottish Government that a potential review is possible in 2 years' time (circa Nov 2027) and this would be led by Government in the first instance as any further work on capabilities for psychoactive substances in future would first need reviewed from a policy perspective as to whether this is considered a priority.

This timeline is based on an expected stocktake late 2027 to inform/refresh business and strategic plans as current delivery of Scotland's wastewater epidemiology strategy is to March 2028. So any relevant business cases would need developed for 2028/29.

I did also check with colleagues on the query regarding opportunity for wastewater epidemiology to provide insights for rural and remote areas given reflections from group members about changing needs but as I conveyed, they confirmed as a pathfinder programme it isn't ready to reliably breakdown data geographically, especially at the level of treatment catchment sites.

Kind regards
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] **- Business Manager**
Public Health Scotland

ScotPHN Team

Email: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot
Mob: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

Working pattern: Thursday – Non-working day

Microsoft TEAMS username: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]@phs.scot
ScotPHN website: www.scotphn.net

Web | Twitter | Instagram

ScotPHN is the national public health network progressing public health priorities on behalf of the Scottish Directors of Public Health and is hosted by Public Health Scotland @P_H_S_Official

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Document U

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport
Sent: 26 February 2026 15:27
To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport <MinisterforDAPS@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care 2024 <CabSecHSC@gov.scot>; DG Health & Social Care <DGHSC@gov.scot>; Director of Population Health <Directorofpopulationhealth@gov.scot>; Deputy Chief Medical Officers <DCMO@gov.scot>; Niamh O'Connor <Niamh.O'Connor@gov.scot>; John Nicholson <John.Nicholson@gov.scot>; Erin Mckee <Erin.Mckee@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Urgent - Submission - Minister DAPS - Wastewater Funding - 20 January 2026

This email is for the official record and confirms a Ministerial Decision. This email must be placed in the official record (eRDM) by your team in line with SG records management policy.

Hi [redacted S.38(1)(b)],

Ms Todd is content to follow official advice (from 26/02 11:50 email) on this.

Kind regards,

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Private Secretary
Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport – Maree Todd MSP
Scottish Government, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG
E-mail: MinisterforDAPS@gov.scot
Mobile: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]

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From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Sent: 26 February 2026 11:50
To: Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport <MinisterforDAPS@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care 2024 <CabSecHSC@gov.scot>; DG Health &

Social Care <DGHSC@gov.scot>; Director of Population Health <Directorofpopulationhealth@gov.scot>; Deputy Chief Medical Officers <DCMO@gov.scot>; Niamh O'Connor <Niamh.O'Connor@gov.scot>; John Nicholson <John.Nicholson@gov.scot>; Erin Mckee <Erin.Mckee@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Urgent - Submission - Minister DAPS - Wastewater Funding - 20 January 2026

PO,

Following the Minister's request, we have liaised with Police Scotland for further advice in this space. However, their current advice remains that having not yet received any data from wastewater testing, they are unable to provide an informed view on the value of the programme at this time. They are not actively seeking the inclusion of Scottish sites at this time. Police Scotland are actively engaged in the RADAR early warning system. The public health view is that it is not clear what specific benefits wastewater testing would add beyond what is already captured by specific RADAR surveillance mechanisms. It is not clear what informed the perspective shared by ACC Houston during his meeting with the Minister.

Advice from officials is to not provide funding at this point in time, but to remain in discussions with Home Office officials and if the public health case for this surveillance increases, to return at a future date to considering Scottish sites [redacted S.30(b)(i)]. Police Scotland will still receive the existing wastewater data (once appropriate data sharing agreements are in place) and this will help to inform any future considerations about the programme.

With apologies for a short deadline, the Home Office have now confirmed that any decision on whether to include Scottish sites would need to be communicated to the supplier by 26 February. A response from the Minister today would enable this deadline to be met.

Kind regards,

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport
Sent: 23 January 2026 11:13
To: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport <MinisterforDAPS@gov.scot>
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care 2024 <CabSecHSC@gov.scot>; DG Health & Social Care <DGHSC@gov.scot>; Director of Population Health

<Directorofpopulationhealth@gov.scot>; Deputy Chief Medical Officers <DCMO@gov.scot>; Niamh O'Connor <Niamh.O'Connor@gov.scot>; John Nicholson <John.Nicholson@gov.scot>; Erin Mckee <Erin.Mckee@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] <[redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Urgent - Submission - Minister DAPS - Wastewater Funding - 20 January 2026

Hi [redacted S.38(1)(b)],

Ms Todd met with ACC Stuart Houston on Thursday morning to discuss the current drugs threat and the impact this is having on communities in Scotland. During the meeting, Stuart highlighted how important this waste water funding was for Police Scotland.

Ms Todd has since asked for advice on that side of things for her to consider before responding on the original submission.

Many Thanks,
[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Assistant Private Secretary
Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport – Maree Todd MSP
Scottish Government, Room 1E.10 St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG
E-mail: MinisterforDAPS@gov.scot

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From: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Sent: 20 January 2026 16:26
To: Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport
Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care 2024 ; DG Health & Social Care ; Director of Population Health ; Deputy Chief Medical Officers ; Niamh O'Connor ; John Nicholson ; Erin Mckee ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)] ; [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Subject: Urgent - Submission - Minister DAPS - Wastewater Funding - 20 January 2026

PS/Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport

Please find attached an urgent submission for the Minister's attention regarding wastewater testing for drugs.

The Scottish Government have received an ask from the Home Office for a small amount of funding for Scottish sites to be added back into their wastewater analysis programme. Officials do not recommend providing the funding due to the limited benefits of this work.

With apologies for the short turnaround, the Home Office have asked for an answer this week.

Kind regards,

[redacted S.38(1)(b)]

[redacted S.38(1)(b)] | [redacted S.38(1)(b)]
Harm Reduction Team | Drugs Policy Division | Directorate for Population Health | Scottish Government
Mobile: [redacted S.38(1)(b)] | Email: [redacted S.38(1)(b)]@gov.scot |