

**Management Information**

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

**Suspected drug deaths in Scotland: July to September 2022**

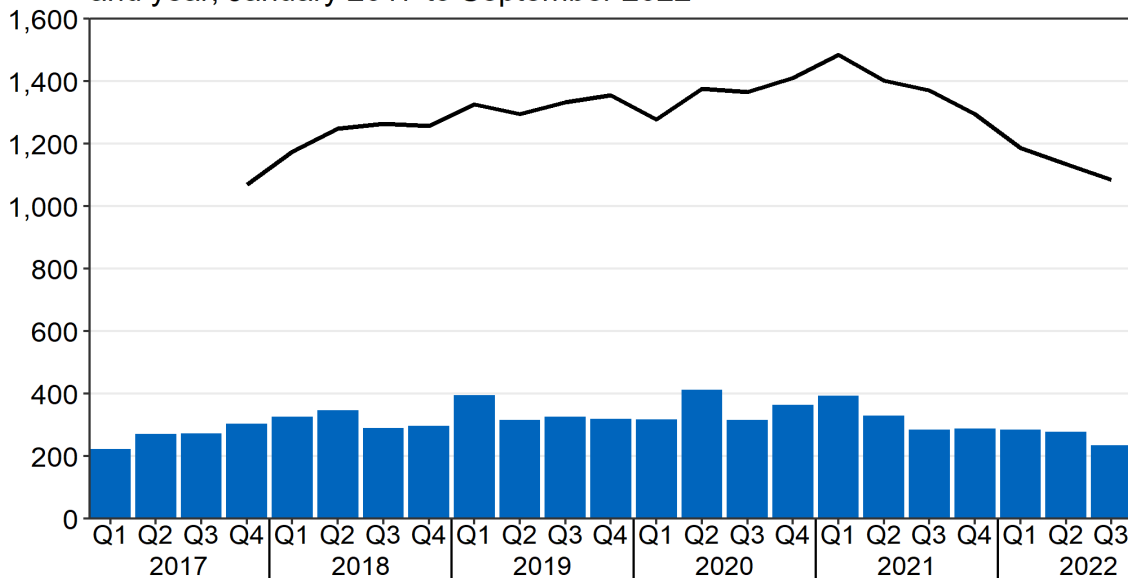
**1. Background**

The Scottish Government has a National Mission to reduce drug deaths and improve the lives of those affected by drugs. This quarterly report presents Police Scotland management information to provide an indication of current trends in suspected drug deaths in Scotland.

**2. Summary**

There were 797 suspected drug deaths during the first nine months of 2022. This was 21% (210) fewer than during the same period of 2021. There has been a downward trend in the rolling 12-month suspected drug death total, but numbers remain high.

Figure 1: Number of Police Scotland suspected drug deaths by quarter and year, January 2017 to September 2022



Note: Q1 is January to March, Q2 is April to June, etc

■ Police Scotland suspected drug deaths      — Rolling annual suspected drug deaths (sum of last 4 quarters)

### 3. Main points

During the first nine months of 2022:

- There were 797 suspected drug deaths, 21% (210) fewer than during the same period of 2021.
- Males accounted for 70% of suspected drug deaths. This compares with 72% between January and September 2021;
- There were 241 suspected drug deaths of females, a decrease of 14% (40) compared to the same period in 2021;
- A majority (65%) of suspected drug deaths were of people aged between 35 and 54. This is broadly in line with previous quarters;
- There were 43 suspected drug deaths in the under 25 age group, 16% (8) fewer than between January and September 2021;
- The Police Divisions with the greatest number of suspected drug deaths were: Greater Glasgow (148), Edinburgh City (92) and Lanarkshire (88).

For quarter 3, July to September 2022:

- There were 235 suspected drug deaths recorded, 15% (42) fewer than between April to June 2022 (277), and 18% (50) fewer than the same calendar quarter in the previous year (July to September 2021, 285 suspected deaths).
- This is the lowest recorded number of suspected drug deaths in a single calendar quarter since January to March 2017.

**Note that numbers of suspected drug deaths fluctuate from quarter to quarter. Care should be taken not to interpret movements between individual calendar quarters as indicative of any long term trend.**

There were 1,085 suspected drug deaths over the 12 months to September 2022, 21% (286) fewer than the 12 months to September 2021.

More detail on the statistics presented above is available in the workbook presented alongside [this report](#).

### 4. Methodology

The data in this report is operational information from Police Scotland who compile figures on the basis of reports from police officers attending scenes of death. This is management information and not subject to the same level of validation and quality assurance as Official Statistics. National Statistics on drug deaths in Scotland are published annually by [National Records of Scotland](#).

More information on definitions, data sources, methodology and interpretation of the data, including the historical relationship between suspected drug death figures and drug misuse death statistics, can be found in the [Methodology Annex](#).

## 5. Next update

The next 'Suspected drug deaths in Scotland' quarterly report will be published in March 2023, reporting on deaths up to December 2022.

The next annual drug misuse deaths publication from NRS is due to be released in Summer 2023.

## 6. Accessing help and support for problem drug use

If you or anyone you know is affected by drug use, support is available via the following organisations:

- [Scottish Drugs Forum](#)
- [Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs](#)
- [Know the Score](#)
- [We Are With You](#)

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