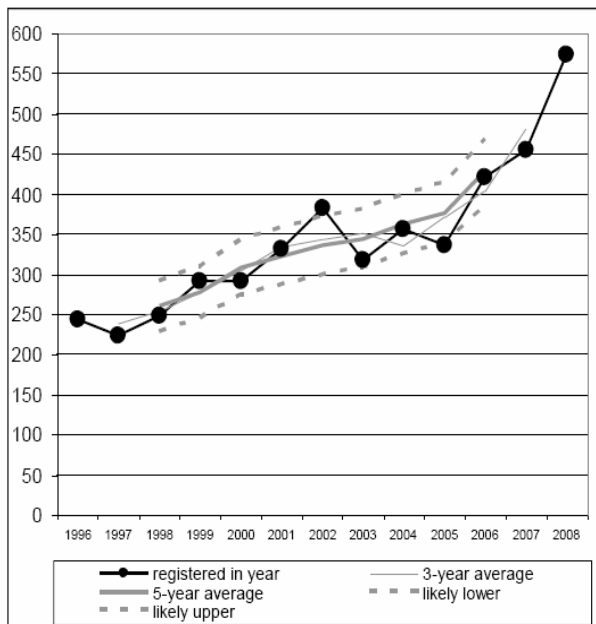


Drug-related Deaths in Scotland



Crown copyright © General Register Office for Scotland (2009)

The Scottish drug-related death rate has been increasing significantly in recent years. Despite determined and coordinated efforts by professionals on the front line there were 574 drug-related deaths in Scotland in 2008, the highest number ever.

In their first annual report published in December 2007 the [National Forum on Drug-Related Deaths](#) recommended a more systematic data collection.

One of the Key Actions in the Scottish Government's May 2008 [The Road to Recovery](#) policy document is to "Work with Information Statistics Division (ISD) to create a Drug-related Deaths Database...."

What Does The Database Do?

The database gathers information about every drug-related death that occurs in Scotland on/ after 1st January 2009. For every deceased drug user collected information includes personal circumstances, drug use history, contact with drug treatment services and GPs, medical history, substitute prescriptions, contact with the criminal justice system, scene of death, and toxicology.

The database will be linked with other existing databases e.g. SMR01 (acute hospital discharges), SMR04 (psychiatric inpatients) and the Scottish Drug Misuse Database. This linkage will enable as complete a picture as possible to be built up of deceased drug users.

Reducing Scotland's Drug-related Death Rate

From 2010 ISD will use the database to provide national and regional analysis on a regular basis.

The Scottish Government and the National Forum on Drug-Related Deaths can use any national trends and patterns that are identified during analysis to help inform policy decisions designed at reducing the Scottish drug-related death rate.

Alcohol and Drug Partnerships and drug treatment services can use both national and local indicators to inform the introduction of interventions aimed at reducing the drug-related death rate in their area.

Analysis will also help identify which living drug users are most at risk which will help interventions to be targeted effectively.