

# **STATISTICS PRESS NOTICE – DRUG-RELATED AND DRUG- MISUSE DEATHS REGISTERED IN NORTHERN IRELAND (2007- 2017)**



**9:30am Monday 4th March 2019**

## **Number of males dying from drug-related causes has almost doubled in the last 10 years**

The number of males dying from drug-related causes in Northern Ireland has increased by 98% in the last 10 years. This is one of the findings of the statistics published today by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

The statistics show that 136 of the 16,036 deaths registered in Northern Ireland in 2017 were from drug-related causes. This is sixty per cent more than was recorded a decade ago (86) but lower than the total in 2015 (144), which was also the highest on record. Drug-related deaths continue to account for less than one per cent of total deaths registered in Northern Ireland each year.

Seventy-four per cent (101) of the 136 drug-related deaths registered in Northern Ireland in 2017 were males. This is almost twice as many as recorded a decade ago (51). In contrast, female, drug-related deaths in 2017 have remained unchanged (35) when compared with the 2007 total.

As in previous years, the largest number of drug-related deaths occurred in those aged between 25 and 34 years (37%), with less than 4% occurring in those aged 65 and over.

Thirty per cent (40) of drug-related deaths had one drug listed on the death certificate, while forty-six per cent (62) of deaths listed three or more drugs. 2017 saw four times more deaths where Pregabalin was listed on the death certificate, with numbers increasing from 8 in 2016 to 33 in 2017.

Eighty-one per cent of drug-related deaths were classed as drug-misuse deaths, compared to fifty-six per cent in 2007. Forty per cent of all drug-related deaths in 2017 involved the controlled drug, Diazepam, compared with twenty-four per cent in 2007.

The statistics also indicate that there are notably higher numbers of drug-related deaths in areas of deprivation across Northern Ireland. People living in the most deprived areas are four times more likely to die from a drug-related death than those in the least deprived areas.

**NISRA  
March 2019**

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Statistics on drug-related deaths registered in Northern Ireland can be found at:  
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/cause-death/alcohol-and-drug-deaths>
2. Drug-related deaths are defined as when the underlying cause of death recorded on the death certificate is drug poisoning, drug abuse or drug dependence. Drug-misuse deaths occur where the underlying cause is drug poisoning, drug abuse or drug dependence **and** where any of the substances controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) are involved. Further information can be found at:  
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/drug-related-deaths-northern-ireland-information-paper>
3. Information on the areas of deprivation is taken from the Northern Ireland Multiple deprivation measures (NIMDM 2017) and can be found at:  
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/deprivation/northern-ireland-multiple-deprivation-measure-2017-nimdm2017>
4. All media inquiries should be directed to the DoF Communications Office:  
Telephone: 028 9081 6724
5. Further information on the statistics provided in this publication can be obtained from NISRA Customer Services at:  
Telephone: +44 (0)300 200 7836  
E-mail: [info@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:info@nisra.gov.uk)  
Responsible Statistician: Deborah Lyness