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Background

Drug-related deaths continue to rise in Scotland with 1,339 lives lost in 2020, with an additional 1,295 suspected drug deaths in 2021. Opiates are present in the overwhelming majority of these tragic deaths and increasing naloxone (the opiate overdose reversal medication) provision to those at risk of, or most likely to witness an opiate-related overdose is a Drugs Death Task Force priority.

Description

Peer delivered harm reduction interventions are effective in ways conventional approaches simply are not – due largely to the increased reach, privileged access and immediate credibility peers have with people who use drugs. It is widely accepted that people not in treatment are at heightened risk of overdose. Peer supply of naloxone is well placed to offer this lifesaving medication to precisely those who are not in treatment and therefore unlikely to be routinely supplied naloxone from a service.

Effectiveness

Scottish Drugs Forum is working with several partners across Scotland to deliver this work with projects underway or planned in 6 community settings and 5 prison settings. Crucially, this has enabled people due to be liberated to be peer trained AND supplied with intranasal naloxone in their possession the day prior to leaving the prison. In the first 4 months 134 people leaving 1 prison were trained in and supplied with naloxone, 105 had never received naloxone before. In the first 6 months of a community project 369 people were trained in and supplied with naloxone of which 179 had never before had a kit.

Conclusion and next steps

The presentation will give an overview of this work highlighting the importance of paid sessional work for all peer naloxone suppliers, progress to date with an emphasis on barriers and facilitators in initiating the project locally and the formation of the National Peer Naloxone Network.

Disclosure on interest: None