

## **HIPS/24/03 - Evaluation Of The Scale, Scope And Processes Of Overdose Response Teams And Their Impact On Drug-Related Deaths In Scotland**

Scotland continues to have high levels of drug overdoses and related deaths. As a response to this, interventions called overdose response teams (ORTs) were started in 2019/20 to help reduce drug-related deaths. ORTs primarily offer assertive outreach services for individuals who have experienced near-fatal overdoses. However, ORTs may also provide other types of support, and they usually differ in the kind of services they offer, which can include naloxone distribution, overdose awareness, or even identification of emergency accommodation when needed.

ORTs were and continue to be very well received by partners, stakeholders and those who experienced support from the service following an overdose. Further, there is some evidence from the United States that ORTs can help reduce deaths. However, these studies showed there were differences in what ORTs actually consisted of and that these differences likely affect how good they are in helping save lives. We currently do not have very good information on how many ORTs there are in Scotland, how they work, and whether they have led to reductions in drug-related deaths. Our research will answer these questions. If they are effective, we will also be able to work out whether particular features of ORTs make them more effective and whether ORTs offer good value for money for the public purse. This will help the Scottish Government and other governments across the world in making future decisions about the funding of ORTs.