

HIPS/25/19 - Mortality patterns among people released from prison: Identifying priority intervention points to prevent avoidable deaths and reduce health inequalities (RELEASE-D)

People in prison have worse health than the general population. When people are released, they are at higher risk of dying, especially in the first days and weeks.

New research is needed to understand why and when people released from Scottish prisons are more likely to die. Many people have asked us to do this research including: people with experience of being in prison, researchers, policymakers, service providers, and practitioners.

We will use a one-of-a-kind dataset which we have created. The RELEASE dataset includes prison, health, and deaths records for two groups: everyone released from Scottish prisons in 2015, and a 'matched' group of similar people who do not have prison experience.

Using the RELEASE dataset, we will do three things. First, we will work out the number of men and women who have died from different causes over four years. We will compare men and women in the prison-experienced group to the matched group, and to the general Scottish population. Second, we will find out when deaths from different causes are most likely to happen. Third, we will see if some groups have more deaths than others, e.g., people of different ethnicities.

Our research will find out which people released from prison are at the highest risk of dying from certain causes, and when they may need help most to prevent this. This can inform health service changes to give better support when people are released, and so reduce deaths and health inequalities.