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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Inverclyde Alliance Board</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 June 2019</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Margaret McConnachie, Alcohol &amp; Drug Partnership Lead Officer</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Louise Long Chief Officer Inverclyde HSCP</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475715360</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Estimated Prevalence of Problem Drug Use in Scotland 2015/16 - Information Services Division (ISD) - An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland. Published March 2019.</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Alliance Board with summary information about recent reporting of the Scottish Government's Estimated Prevalence of Problem Drug Use in Scotland study published in March 2019.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 In March 2019 the Scottish Government (Information Services Division (ISD)) published national estimates for Problem Drug Use in Scotland. The data was collated in 2015/16. The Scottish Government has commissioned an estimation of problem drug use in Scotland since 2000. Studies have been carried out every three years. The methodology used has changed over time and for this reason trend comparisons require to be considered with caution.

The full document can be located at : <https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Drugs-and-Alcohol-Misuse/Publications/2019-03-05/2019-03-05-Drug-Prevalence-2015-16-Report.pdf>

- 2.2 **Appendix 1** of this report provides a summary of key findings for Scotland and Inverclyde.
- 2.3 The estimates produced in the study relate to the population aged 15-64, data was collected for one year April 2015 to March 2016. The focus was on the problematic use of opioids (including illicit and prescribed methadone use) and/or the illicit use of benzodiazepines.
- 2.4 Data was collated from: specialist treatment services, drug related hospital admissions and criminal justice social work records.
- 2.5 The study estimated that In Scotland there were **57,000** individuals who fall within the problematic drug misuse definition which represents **1.62%** of the population aged 15-64. For Inverclyde there were an estimated **1,500 individuals** representing **2.91%** of the population aged 15-64. **70%** of the estimated problematic drug misuse population **were male**, with **two thirds** of this population being aged between **35-64 years**.

Across other local authorities in Scotland Inverclyde had the highest rate of estimated problematic drug misuse. This was also the case for young people ages 16-24.

- 2.6 Trend data reflects a considerable fall in estimated number of people with problematic drug misuse in Scotland and Inverclyde between 2013 and 2016. With the trend in prevalence **rates** for Inverclyde being consistently around double that for Scotland over the three studies which have carried out Between 2009 and 20016.

The study considers problematic opiate use only. Evidence suggests changes in the use of drugs in Scotland with a growing trend in the use of cocaine and crack cocaine. The likelihood is that across the board the impact of this change in trends means we are in a worse position in terms of the problematic use of drugs.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 It is recommended that the Alliance Board:

- a. Notes the content of the briefing note at Appendix 1 which outlines key findings from the National Problematic Drug Misuse Prevalence report.
- b. Notes the data which is specific to the Inverclyde Local Authority area.
- c. Approves the Alcohol and Drug Partnership to lead on a multi-agency response and develop plans for consideration at the October Alliance Board.

**Margaret McConnachie**  
**Inverclyde Alcohol and Drug Partnership Lead Officer**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The misuse of drugs is a significant issue in Scotland and it leads to a variety of social and health problems which impact on individuals, families and communities. People with problematic drug use are often amongst the most marginalised in society and can have multiple complex needs due to the circumstances in which they live.

4.2 The Scottish Government's Drug Misuse Prevalence Study is part of a wider needs assessment which aims to identify needs associated with drug misuse. The Scottish Government has commissioned drug misuse prevalence studies every three years since 2000. Changes in methodology used over the various studies make it difficult to make comparisons between studies.

Much of the problem drug-using population is hidden. There are many reasons for this including the illegality of the use of certain drugs and the stigma associated with drug misuse. This hidden nature of substance misuse makes it difficult to assess its extent in the population.

The prevalence study provides estimates of the national and local prevalence of problem drug use for those aged 15 to 64 living in Scotland between April 2015 and March 2016.

Drug prevalence figures can only ever be estimates, combining available data on observed cases with an estimate of the unknown population.

For this purpose of the estimates being discussed in this paper problem drug use is defined as:

- the problematic use of opioids (including illicit and prescribed methadone use) and/or the illicit use of benzodiazepines, and implies routine and prolonged use as opposed to recreational and occasional drug use.

It is important to note that other drugs can be involved with problematic drug misuse, in particular cannabis and cocaine.

The Drug Misuse Prevalence Estimates have been prepared by NHS National Services Scotland – Information Services Division (ISD). Data included:

- **Specialist Treatment Services:** Each Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) in Scotland was asked to provide data on individuals who had registered for treatment and/or were in receipt of specialist drug treatment during the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016.
- **Drug-Related Hospital Admissions:** Information was extracted from centrally held data within NHS National Services Scotland. The data relates to inpatient and day case admissions to general acute and mental health specialties.
- **Criminal Justice Social Work Reports:** prepared by Social Workers, at the request of a Court, to assist in sentencing. They include information on an offender's personal background and circumstances, their physical and mental health, alcohol or drug use, and all relevant offence-related information.

Combining available data on observed cases with an estimate of the unknown population.

### Key Findings

- The estimated problem drug use prevalence rate for Scotland was **1.62%** of the population aged 15-64. The estimated number of Individuals was **57,000**.
- The estimated problem drug use prevalence rate for Inverclyde was **2.91%** of the population aged 15-64. The estimated number of Individuals was **1,500**.
- Inverclyde was reported as the Council area with the highest problem drug use prevalence rate in Scotland.
- In Scotland **70 %** of the estimated number of people with problem drug use were **male**; for Inverclyde the gender distribution was similar.

- Inverclyde has the highest rate of prevalence for younger people aged between 15 and 24 in Scotland (for both males and females).The Inverclyde rate at **3.09%** of male population aged 15-24 is twice that for the Scotland- wide rate for this age group and gender.
- The Inverclyde rate at **0.65%** of female population aged 15-24 is twice that for the Scotland- wide rate for this age group and gender (0.33).
- Trend data reflects a considerable fall in estimated **numbers** of people with problematic drug misuse in Scotland and Inverclyde between 2013 and 2016 which follows a sharp rise in estimated numbers between 2010 and 2013. The trend in prevalence **rates** for Inverclyde have been consistently around double that for Scotland over the three studies carried out.

It is important to note that the study considers problematic opiate use only. Evidence suggests changes in the pattern of drug use in Scotland with a growing trend in the use of cocaine and crack cocaine - which is not measured by this prevalence study.

## 5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 The Alcohol and Drug Partnership has requested the Executive Group to examine in more detail the prevalence study with a view to commissioning an analysis of alcohol and drug education and prevention across Inverclyde. The ADP will bring back a report to a future Alliance Board as it is likely a whole system response will be required.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1	Legal:	None
	Finance:	None
	Human Resources:	None
	Equality and Diversity:	None
	Repopulation:	None
	Inequalities:	None

## 7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 No consultation carried out

## 8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 **Estimated Prevalence of Problem Drug Use in Scotland 2015/16** - Information Services Division (ISD) - An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland. Published March 2019.<https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Drugs-and-Alcohol-Misuse/Publications/2019-03-05/2019-03-05-Drug-Prevalence-2015-16-Report.pdf>

## Prevalence of Problem Drug Use in Scotland 2015/16 - Estimates: Briefing Note

Information Services Division (ISD) - An Official Statistics publication for Scotland. Published March 2019.

Link to Publication: <https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Drugs-and-Alcohol-Misuse/Publications/2019-03-05/2019-03-05-Drug-Prevalence-2015-16-Report.pdf>

### **1.0 Introduction**

This report provides estimates of the national and local prevalence of problem drug use for those aged 15 to 64 living in Scotland between April 2015 and March 2016.

#### ***Definition of Problem Drug Use***

Problem drug use within the report is defined as the problematic use of opioids (including illicit and prescribed methadone use) and/or the illicit use of benzodiazepines, and implies routine and prolonged use as opposed to recreational and occasional drug use.

#### **How reliable are these estimates?**

Drug prevalence figures can only ever be estimates, as drug use is often hidden. These estimates look beyond counts of individuals seeking treatment for drug problems. They combine available data on people who are known to use drugs in Scotland (specifically opioids and benzodiazepines), with an estimate of the unknown population.

#### **Prevalence Rates**

The estimates are presented as a prevalence rate, i.e. a proportion of the population, together with an associated range within which it can be reasonably inferred (with 95% confidence) that the true prevalence rate should lie. They attempt to show, with a high degree of confidence, the range of values within which the actual underlying number of problem drug users is likely to fall within the given year.

### **2.0 Background**

Estimates of problem drug use have been undertaken in Scotland every three years since 2000. Scottish Government Information Services Division (ISD) undertook the two previous national drug prevalence studies for 2009/10 and 2012/13. Prior to that, drug prevalence estimates for Scotland were produced by researchers from the University of Glasgow in a three-yearly cycle between 2000 and 2006.

#### **Caveat:**

there have been some notable changes to the methodological approach for the 2015/16 study, which mean that direct comparisons with the results from previous studies are difficult to fully interpret.

Estimates:

As much of the problem drug using population is hidden, drug prevalence figures can only ever be estimates, combining available data on observed cases with an estimate of the unknown population.

Data Source:

Three data sources that could potentially record problem drug use consistently across all Council areas of Scotland have been interrogated for the 2015/16 study, these are:

- Clients registering with specialist drug treatment services
- Drug-related hospital admissions
- Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) reports.

Data is reported at the following geographic and administrative levels:

- Scotland
- Health and Social Care Planning Regions (3)
- NHS Boards (14)
- Council Areas (32)

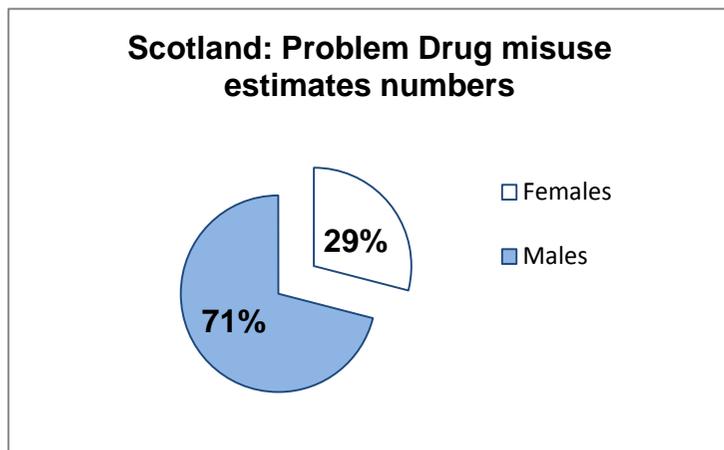
This report provides a focus on National data and data reported at local Council area level, in particular for Inverclyde.

### 3.0 Estimates: National Data

The number of individuals with problem drug use in Scotland was estimated to be in the range 55,800 to 58,900 during 2015/16. (95% confidence Interval). This represents an estimated prevalence rate and number:

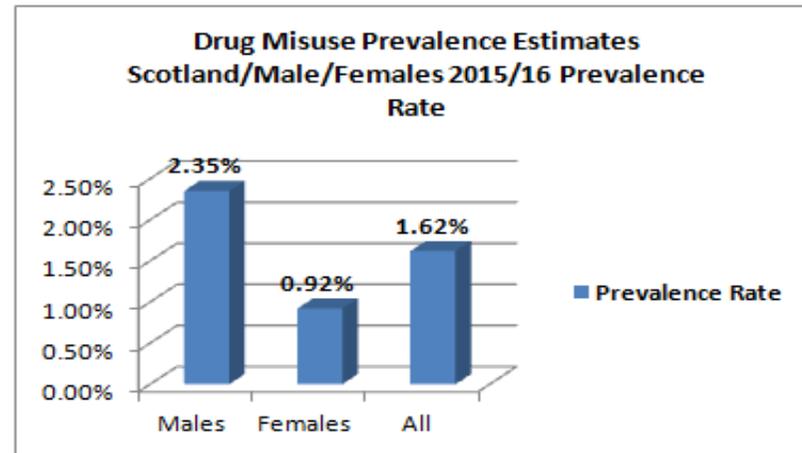
**Scotland: Estimated Prevalence Rate 1.62%. Scotland: Estimated Number of Individuals 57,000**

### 3.1 Gender



#### Numbers:

- The majority of individuals with problem drug use were male 71% of the 57,000 individuals.



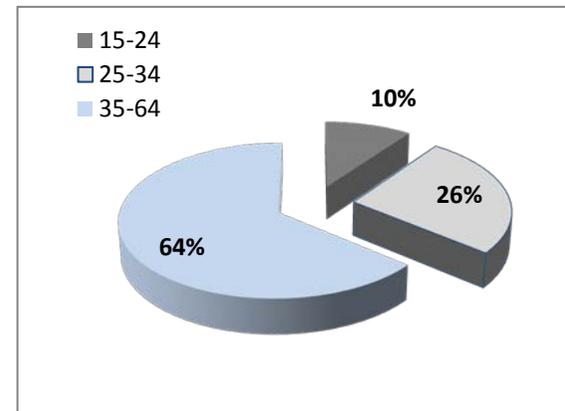
The prevalence **rate** amongst:

- males was 2.35%,
- this compares to 0.92% for females.
- 1.62% for population 15-64.

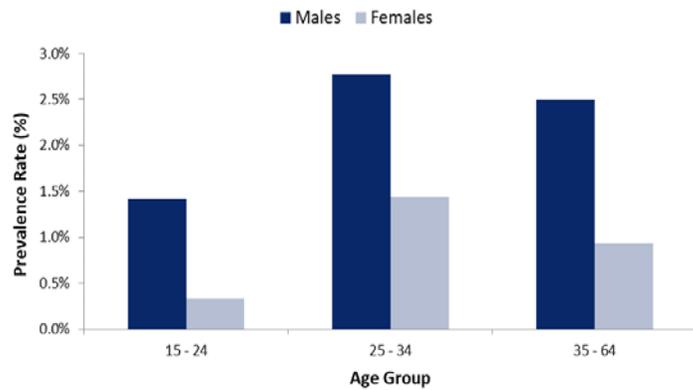
### 3.2 Age and Gender Profile

Of the estimated number of problem drug use cases in Scotland (57,000)

- Two thirds of estimated prevalence are between the ages of 35 and 64
- One quarter were between ages of 24-34
- One in 10 were aged between 15 and 24



#### Scotland : Prevalence rates by age and gender



Prevalence rates by age and gender:

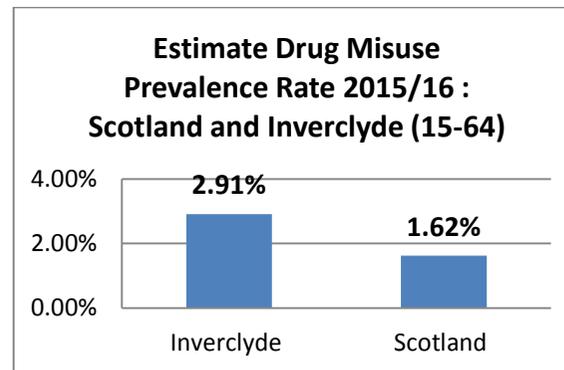
- Prevalence rates for males are higher than for women across all age groups considered:

The rate for males in the youngest category (15-24) is four times that of the rate for females.

#### 4.0 Inverclyde Data

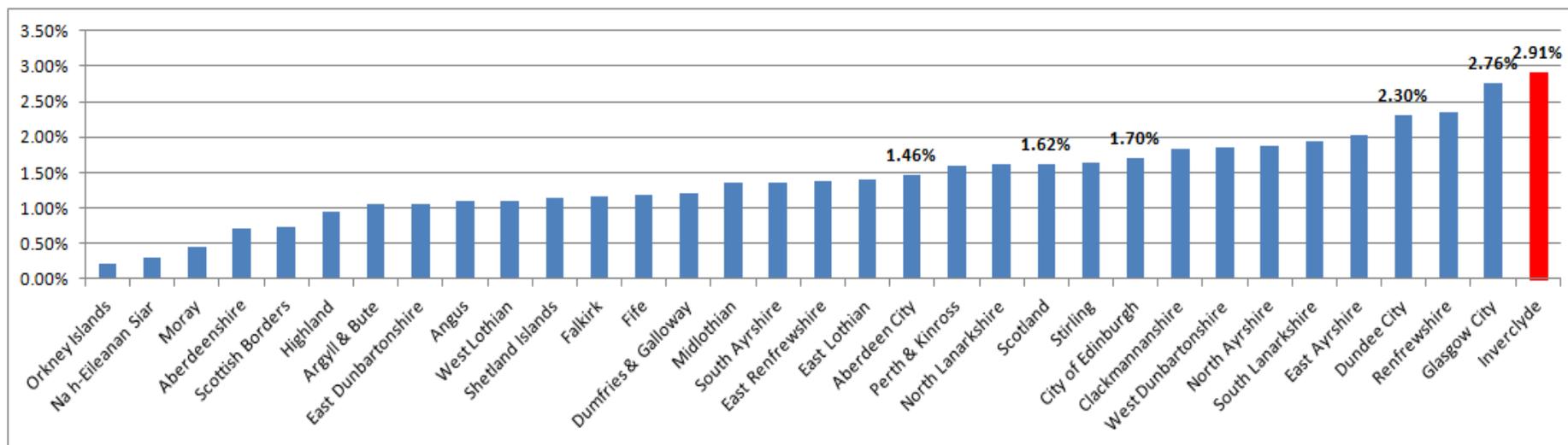
Inverclyde has the highest estimated drug misuse prevalence rate in Scotland at 2.91% and estimated 1,500 individuals.

<b>Inverclyde Estimated Prevalence Rate 2.91%</b>	<b>Scotland Estimated Prevalence Rate 1.62%.</b>
<b>Inverclyde Estimated Number of Individuals 1,500</b>	<b>Scotland Estimated Number of Individuals 57,000</b>



#### 4.1 Council Estimates

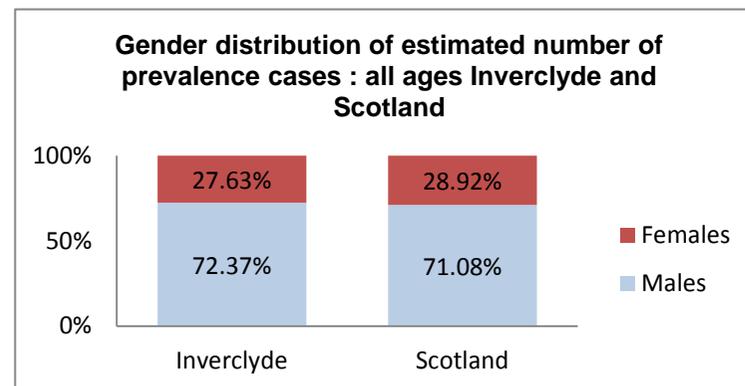
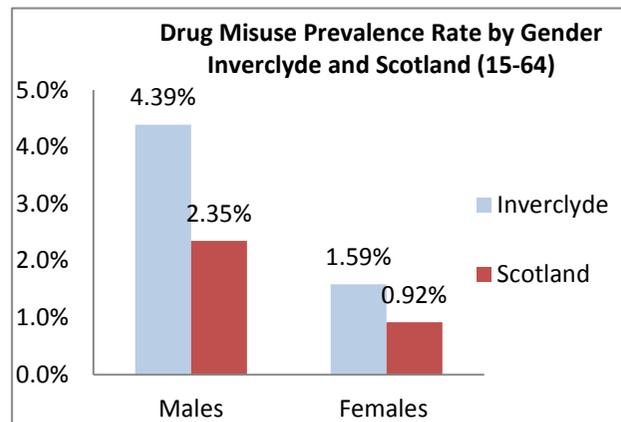
The table below ranks prevalence rates across all 32 local authorities in Scotland and includes the national rate.



## 4.2 Inverclyde Age and Gender profile

**Estimated Rate:** In Inverclyde the estimated drug misuse prevalence **rate** for males is considerably higher than that for women. The patterns in similar to that for Scotland as a whole

**Estimated Number:** The distribution of estimated **number** of cases of drug misuse across males and females in Inverclyde is similar to that of Scotland: with almost one third of the estimated numbers being female.

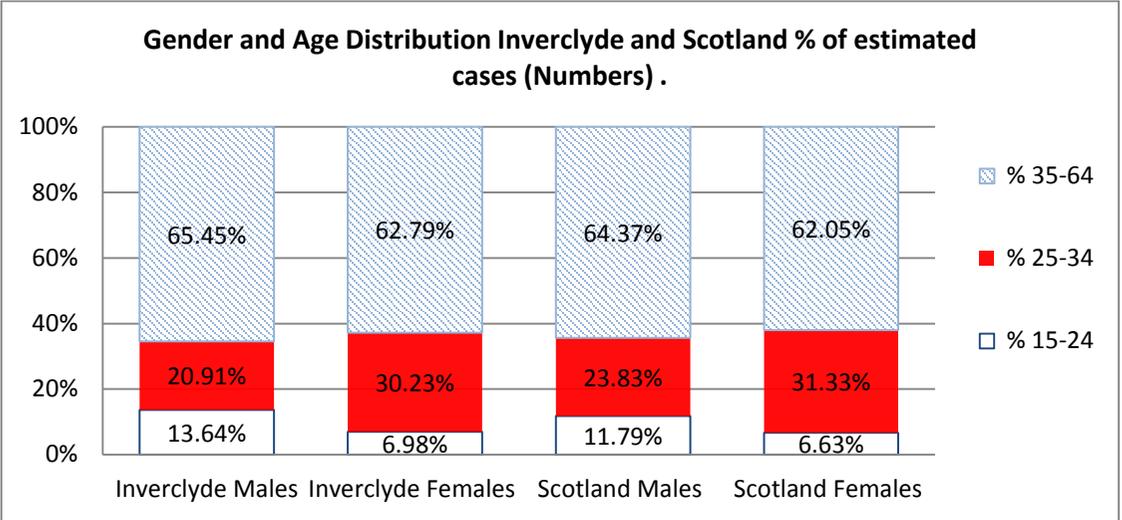
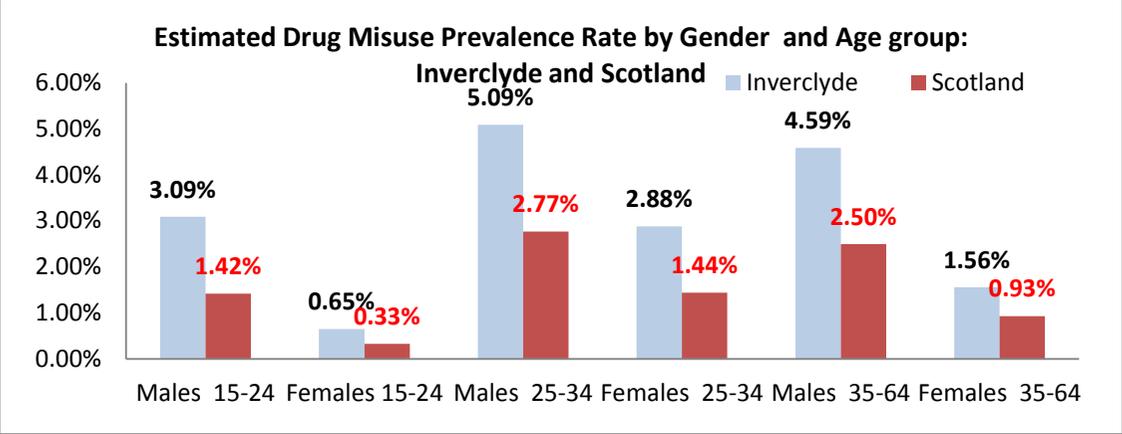


## 4.3 Inverclyde and Scotland Gender and Age Group – Rates and number of cases.

Age profile information is reported across gender groups at local authority level.

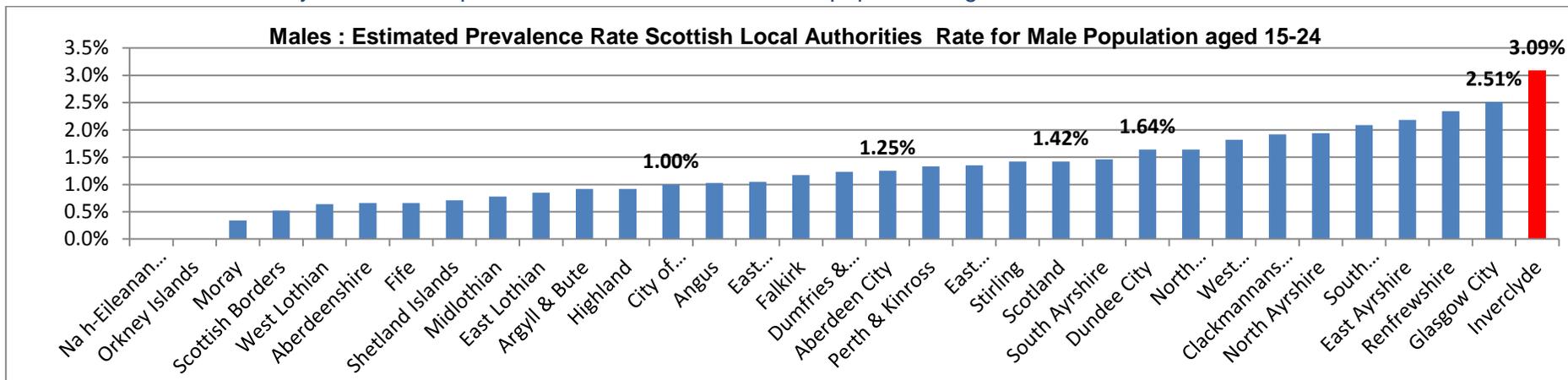
Key differences for Inverclyde data are:

- The difference in prevalence rates for both male and females within the 15 to 24 age group. Which are double the rates for Scotland.
- In Inverclyde younger males make up a higher proportion of total estimated number of males with problematic drug misuse (13.6% compared to Scotland (11.8)%
- The profile for the distribution of women (numbers) across Inverclyde and Scotland is similar.

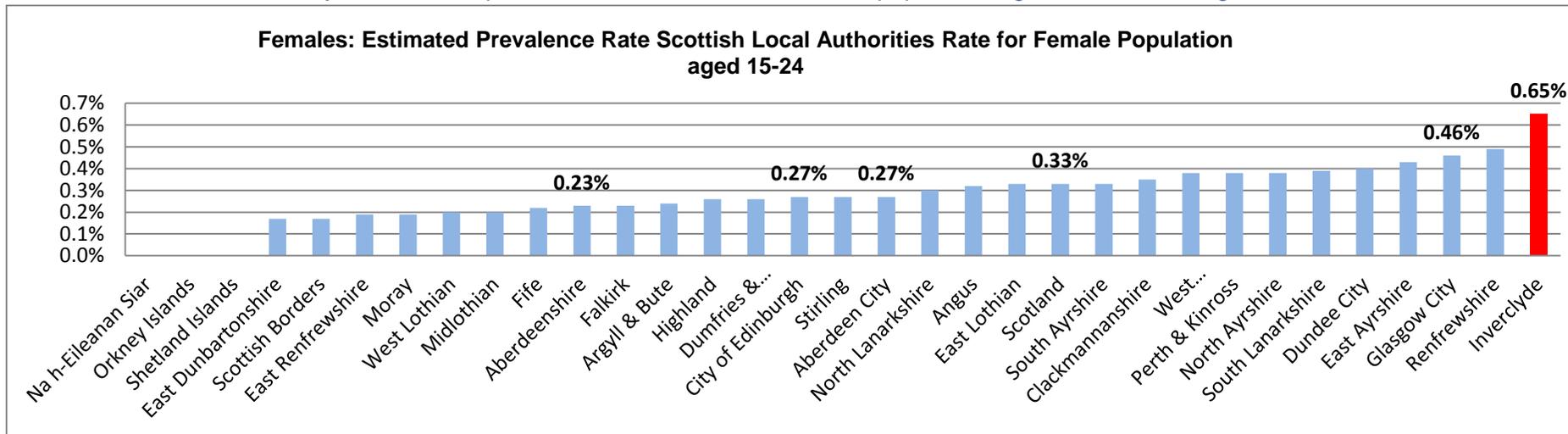


**4.4 Young People:** Inverclyde has the highest rate of problem drug use prevalence for young people aged between 15 and 24. The graph below shows the distributions of prevalence rates for this age group across all local authorities in Scotland.

- **Males:** The Inverclyde estimated prevalence rate at 3.09% of male population aged 15-24 is twice that for Scotland as a whole.



- **Females:** The Inverclyde estimated prevalence rate at 0.65% of female population aged 15-24 is the highest in Scotland.



## 5.0 Data sources: Data collection and who is included.

The following sources of data were used to establish the problem drug misuse estimates:

- Clients registering with specialist drug treatment services
- Drug-related hospital admissions
- Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) reports.

Detailed data source analysis is not yet available at Council area level. This section reports on Scotland wide profile of data source information.

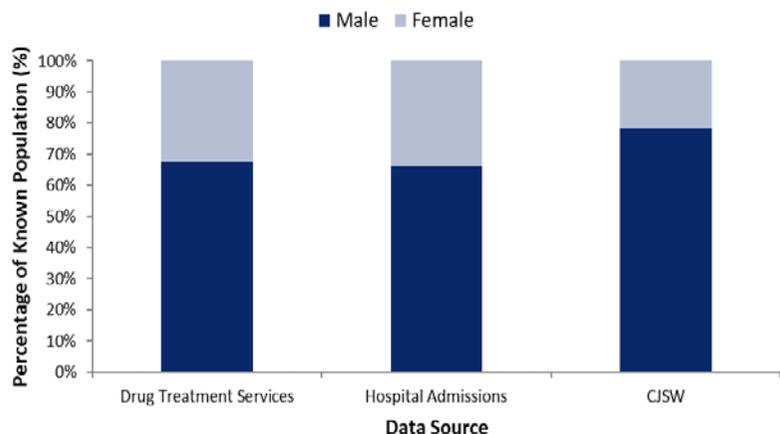
**Specialist Drug Treatment Services:** Each Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) in Scotland was asked to provide data on individuals who had registered for treatment and/or were in receipt of specialist drug treatment during the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016. Individuals were eligible for inclusion if they problematically used opioids and/or benzodiazepines. Similarly, legitimate prescribing, where the drug was being prescribed as treatment for an ongoing drug problem, including Opioid Replacement Therapies (ORTs) such as methadone, should also have been included.

**Drug-Related Hospital Admissions:** Information was extracted from centrally held data within NHS National Services Scotland (NSS). The data, which was initially sourced from NHS hospital administration systems across Scotland, relates to inpatient and day case admissions to general acute and mental health specialties.

**Criminal Justice Social Work Reports:** Criminal Justice Social Work Reports (CJSWRs) are prepared by Social Workers, at the request of a Court, to assist in sentencing. They include information on an offender's personal background and circumstances, their physical and mental health, alcohol or drug use, and all relevant offence related information. Data collection guidance stipulated that the context should be considered to establish current drug use. In general this included

- cases where the offence involved or was related to relevant drug(s) misuse
- cases where the client was in treatment for relevant drug(s) misuse
- cases where the individual's relevant drug(s) misuse had been assessed to be a problem, even if the client/offender had stated that they were not currently using drugs or they were in withdrawal or were substituting with another drug.

## Data Source: Gender and Age Profile: Scotland



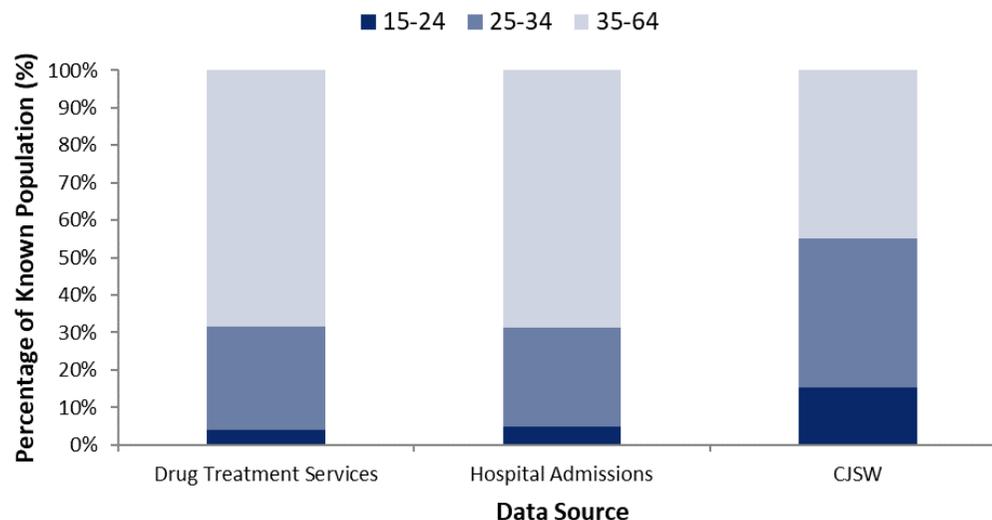
- 67.7% of the observed population receiving specialist drug treatment services during 2015/16, were male.
- This compares to 66.0% of all those identified through hospital admission records and
- 78.4% for all those identified through Criminal Justice Social Work (CJSW) Reports were male .

There is an almost identical age demographic in those identified through specialist drug treatment services and through hospital admissions:

- just over 30% were aged between 15 and 34 years.
- By contrast, more than half (55.0%) of all those identified through Criminal Justice Social Work Reports were aged between 15 and 34 years.

These data suggest that the age and gender demographic for Scotland overall is very similar for those identified through specialist drug treatment services or through hospital admissions.

The profile is different for those identified through Criminal Justice Social Work reports, **where a younger, more male dominated cohort emerges.**



## 6.0 Data Trends and Methodology

The latest national prevalence rate is lower than was observed for 2012/13. However, due to some changes to the data included for this study and the margin of uncertainty that surrounds the statistical models and assumptions, it is not possible to conclude that a real reduction has occurred. Within the limits of the methodology the trend tables below reflect:

- A considerable fall in estimated numbers of people with problematic drug misuse in Scotland and Inverclyde between 2013 and 2016 which follows a sharp rise in estimated numbers between 2010 and 2013.
- The trend in prevalence rates for Inverclyde have been consistently around double that for Scotland over the period under consideration.
- Evidence suggests changes in the use of drugs in Scotland with a growing trend in the use of Cocaine and Crack Cocaine means the likelihood is that across the board we are in a worse position in terms of the problematic use of drugs.

