

# UK Focal Point On Drugs

## Organisation

The United Kingdom consists of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. A number of powers have been devolved from the United Kingdom Parliament (Westminster) to Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. Each is responsible for health, social services and education. Scotland has a separate legal system. Other matters, including international issues, serious crime, revenue and customs, and the benefit system are not devolved and remain the responsibility of the UK Parliament.

The UK Focal Point on Drugs is responsible for providing information to the EMCDDA for the whole of the United Kingdom. The Focal Point is based at the Department of Health in London and the North West Public Health Observatory at the Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University. It works closely with the Home Office, other Government departments, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government

and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland.

The Focal Point does not have responsibility for primary data collection. A key task is to work with data providers to comply with the needs of the EMCDDA and, where possible, to combine information from different systems in each of the countries to provide UK-wide data.

### Key Partners in the United Kingdom

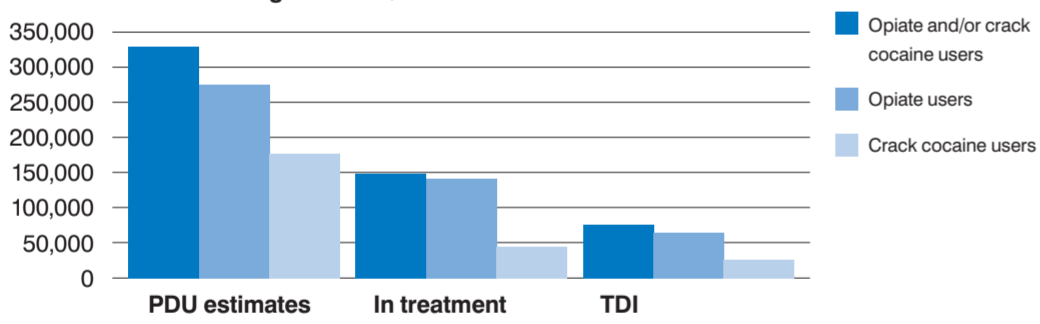
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## Key Indicators in the UK

### The Treatment Demand Indicator (TDI)

TDI data for the UK is compiled from four separate sources of information on demand for treatment in each of the four countries. In England this requires that data from nine regions is brought together. Data from the each of the three other countries is then added. The UK Focal Point has funded work to automate the process of delivering TDI data in XML format to facilitate input into the EMCDDA's data management system, Fonte. England also provides data on treatment prevalence and this, and the TDI can be considered against PDU estimates for England to provide an indication of treatment coverage.

PDU in treatment in England 2006/07



### Drug-related Infectious disease

Data on the prevalence of blood-borne infectious diseases amongst injecting drug users (IDUs) are provided by a number of sources: notifications (hepatitis B and C are notifiable diseases throughout the UK); laboratory reports; and surveys.

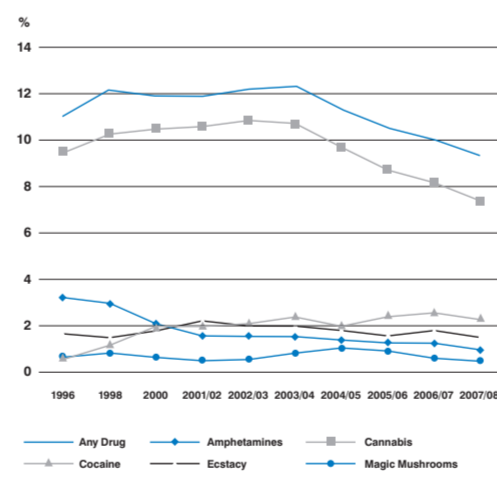
The proportions of IDUs infected with HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C have changed little over recent years at:

- around 1% for HIV
- around 20% for Hepatitis B
- around 40% for Hepatitis C

### General population surveys

Information on prevalence of drug use is provided through separate crime and victimisation surveys in England and Wales, in Scotland, and Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland there is also a drug prevalence survey based on the EMQ.

Recent drug use in England and Wales 1996 to 2007/08



While not strictly compatible with the EMQ, the survey in England and Wales has been undertaken annually since 1994.

This long trend data shows a decline in recent use of most drugs.

### Problem Drug Users

Estimates of problem drug use in the UK are undertaken periodically. In the last few years research has been undertaken in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Estimates reflect the drugs identified as problematic and the methodology used (the capture-recapture method where possible, and where not, the multiple indicator method). Estimates for the UK for problem drug use and for injecting drug use have been provided annually since 2004 and are based on the latest estimates available in the countries undertaking research.

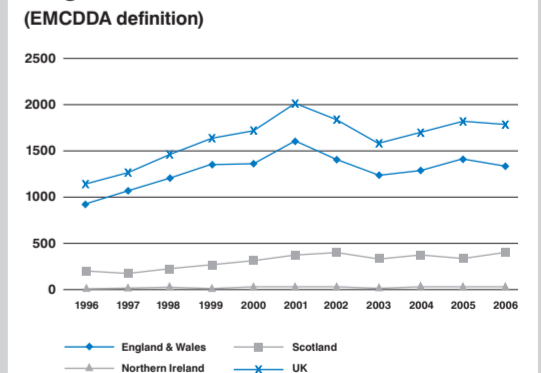
Latest estimates of problem drug use in the UK

Country	Estimate	Rate
England (for 2006/07)	328,767	9.97
Northern Ireland (for 2004)	1,395	1.28
Scotland (for 2003)	51,582	15.39
Wales (based on England)	18,480	9.97
United Kingdom	400,224	10.19

### Drug-related deaths

There are three General Register Offices in the UK which provide data on drug-related deaths; one for England and Wales, one in Scotland, and one in Northern Ireland. A Special Mortality Register is also maintained at St. George's, University of London. Two main definitions of drug related death are used in the UK. One records deaths associated with both illegal and legal drugs. A subset of this where the underlying cause is drug abuse, drug dependence, or poisonings where any of the substances scheduled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 are involved, is used to monitor UK drug strategy. Scotland also reports deaths based on the EMCDDA definition. In Northern Ireland and England and Wales, special analyses are undertaken to enable the UK to report to the EMCDDA.

Drug-related death in the UK (EMCDDA definition)



## Communication

### The Website

The UK Focal Point website at [www.ukfocalpoint.org.uk](http://www.ukfocalpoint.org.uk) gives access to UK Focal Point annual reports and data, and links to the EMCDDA and other partners.

Communicating information about the drug situation in Europe and across the United Kingdom is an important part of the role of the UK Focal Point.

#### Newsletter

The UK Focal Point now sends out a newsletter to a wide range of policy makers and practitioners in the UK. This provides the latest information on developments at the Focal Point and the EMCDDA and on the key indicators and the evidence base, including EDDRA.

#### Register of research

The UK Focal Point retains a register of research commissioned by Government and other organisations, published research and other reports, and journal articles. This is updated regularly and made available on the UK Focal Point website.

