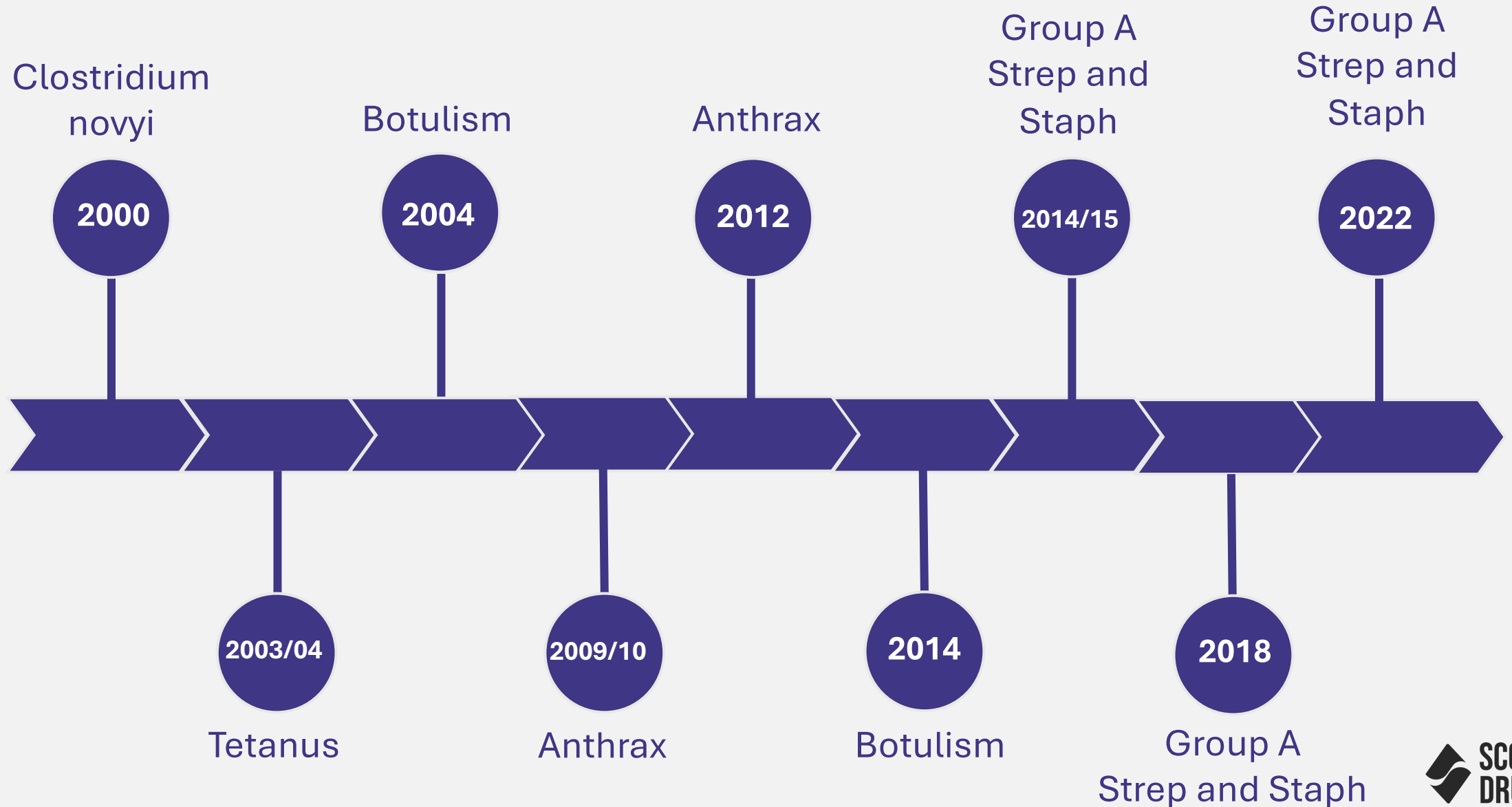


# Drug Trends & Harms

Lynn Couper

Senior Training & Development Officer – Emergency Responses

# Outbreaks of bacterial infection



In Scotland, approximately **21% of all invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS)** reports received through Public Health Scotland's (PHS) national iGAS enhanced surveillance system indicated a risk factor of injecting drug use.

This proportion has been increasing in recent years and may be **linked to a rise in stimulant use.**

**!** There has been an increase in serious skin and blood poisoning infections among people who use drugs in Scotland.

# WARNING

**G** Group A Streptococcus & Staphylococcus

- You are at risk if you: inject, smoke or snort substances such as heroin, cocaine or crack cocaine
- It is transmitted by: person to person contact, sharing equipment (including pipes) and through injecting

**A** Ask yourself, do I have...

- Weeping wounds or wounds that are getting bigger and/or redder?
- Limbs or infected sites that are swelling and are becoming painful?
- High fever/chills?
- Severe muscle / joint aches?
- Vomitting / diarrhoea?
- Unusual confusion / disorientation?

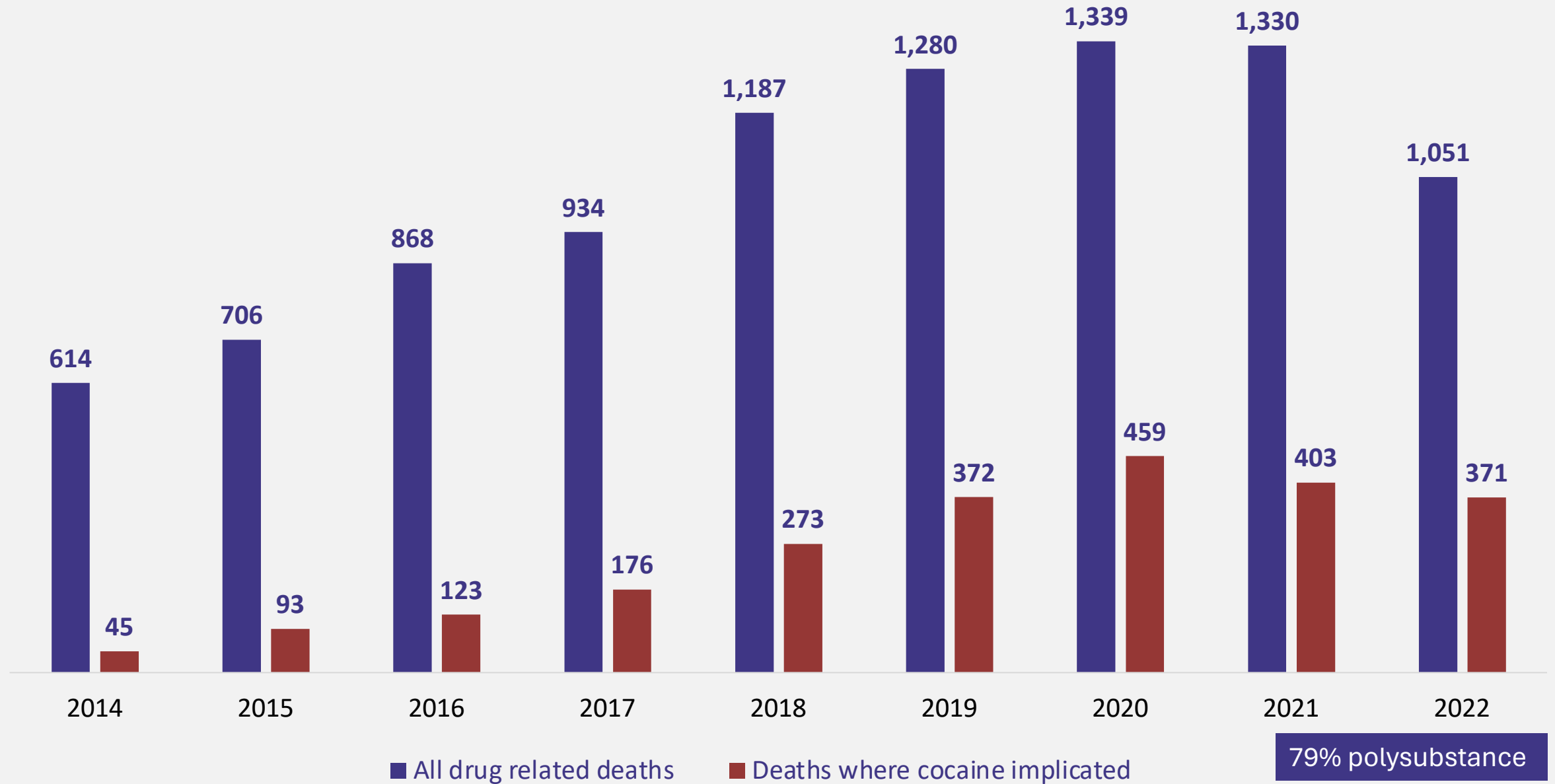
**S** Stop, Think and Seek help

- Wash hands and injecting sites before preparing, injecting and smoking
- Do not share any equipment
- Use new equipment every time
- Avoid skin and muscle popping

These infections can be life threatening, please seek urgent medical advice if you experience any of these symptoms

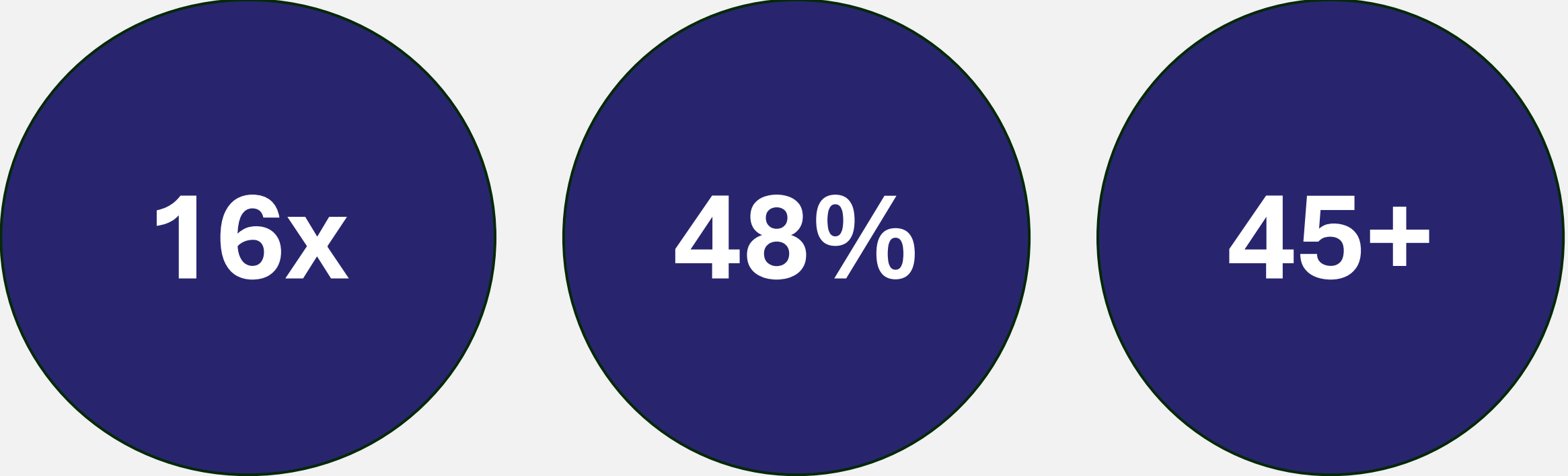
SCOTTISH DRUGS FORUM

# Drug Related Deaths (Scotland) 2014-2022



79% polysubstance

82% opiates (combined) implicated

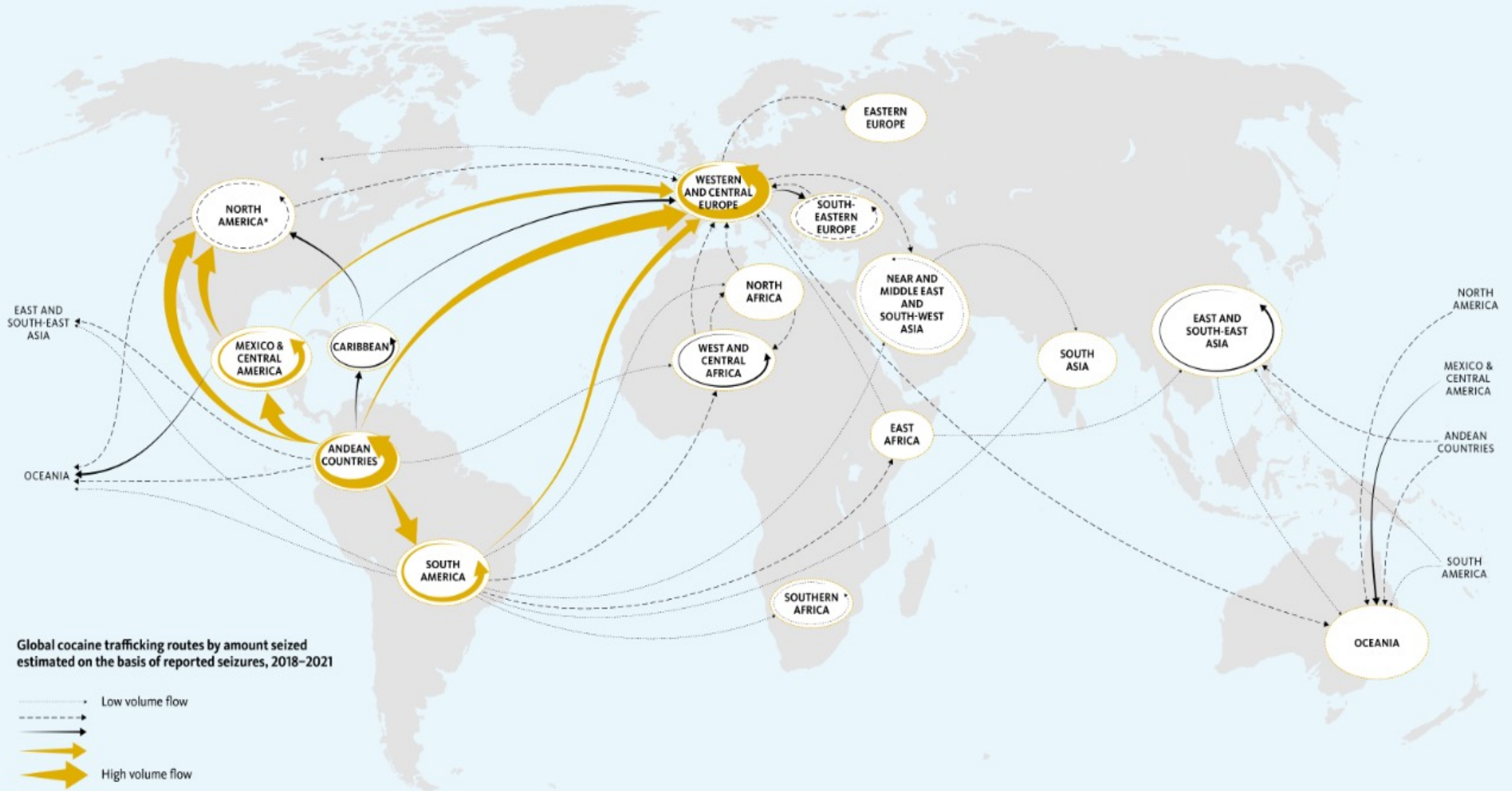


**16x**

**48%**

**45+**

## Main cocaine trafficking flows, as described by reported seizures, 2017-2021







Cocaine production, South America





Cocaine production, South America





Cocaine production, South America



Cocaine production, South America

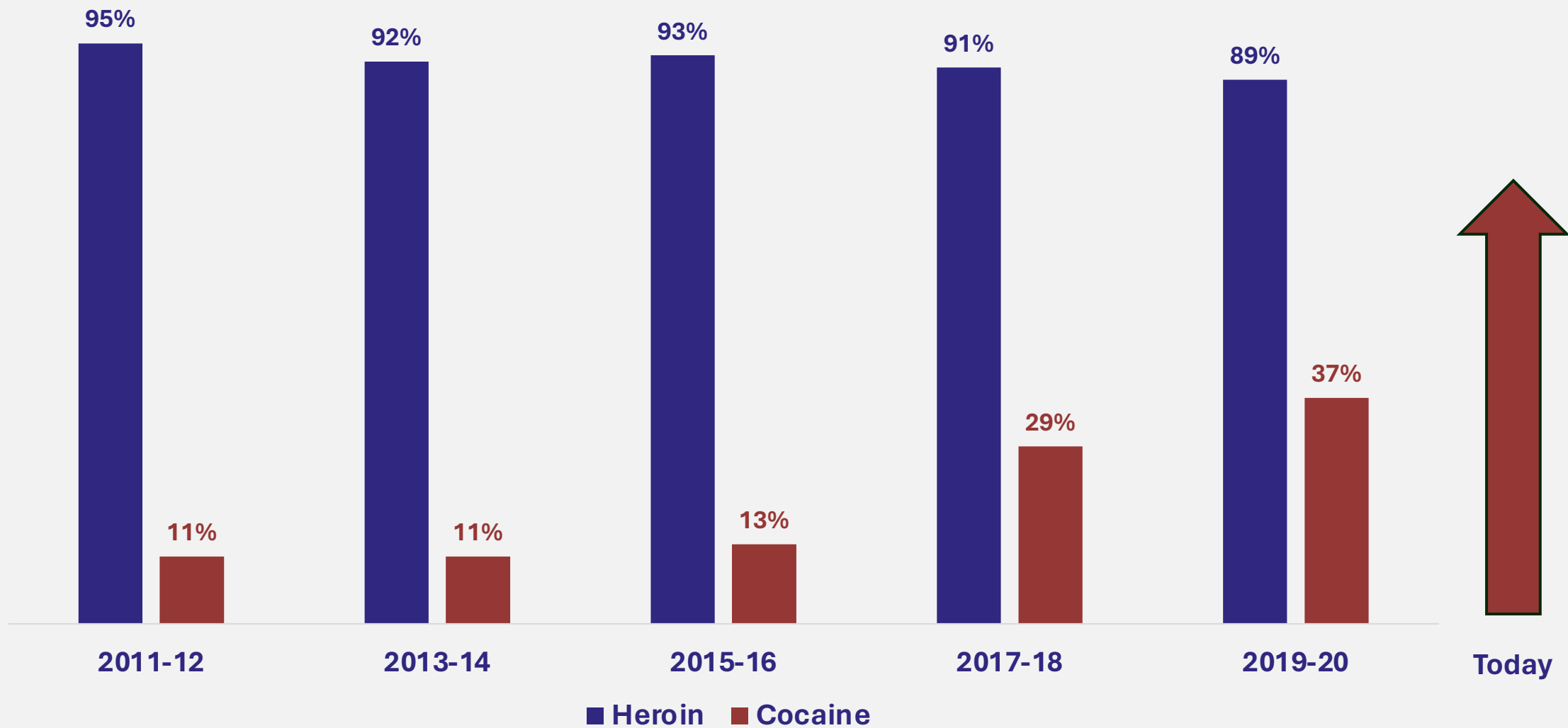




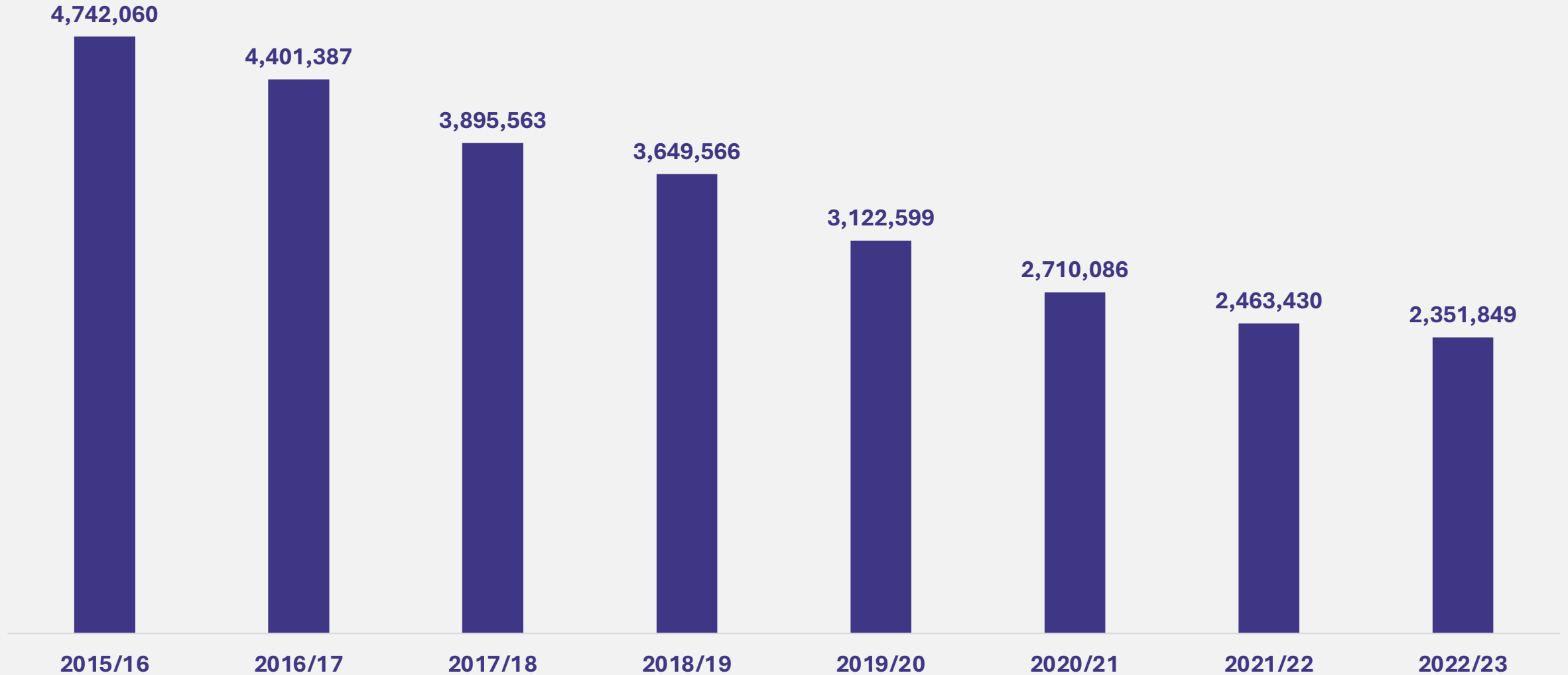
Cocaine transportation - seizure



# NESI



# Injecting Equipment Provision Distribution (Scotland)









How are things at home?

Does it feel like home or just a place you sleep?









Are you using drugs on your own?

Are you in a place where you are safe,  
supported, warm, able to wash your hands/  
body/ clothing?



## What Else Can We Do?

- Wound Care
- Safer Consumption Facilities
- Drug Checking Services
- Inhalation devices/ Pipes for smoking
- Psychosocial Interventions
- Cocaine treatment options

# Learning Available

## Bacterial Infections and Drug Use

 SDF e-learning



## 'How are your sites?'

Understanding injecting related complications

 SDF e-learning



## Cocaine and other Psychostimulants

 SDF e-learning



Drugs & Bugs – Bacterial Infection Outbreaks  
An introduction to bacterial infection in people who use drugs

Informing  
Supporting  
Representing  
Leading



A Practitioners Guide to Injecting Equipment Provision (IEP)

Informing  
Supporting  
Representing  
Leading



## Wound & Infection Risks

Informing  
Supporting  
Representing  
Leading



Harm Reduction Interventions including:  
Injecting Equipment Provision,  
Wound Awareness, and  
Emerging Trends

Informing  
Supporting  
Representing  
Leading

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A national source of expertise on drug-related issues

[www.sdf.org.uk](http://www.sdf.org.uk)  
[www.sdftraining.org.uk](http://www.sdftraining.org.uk)

## Scottish Needle Exchange Workers Forum (SNEWF)

We currently have over 100 members of the forum, meeting 4 times per year in a mixture of in person and online meetings, plus access to an MS Teams channel.

We share and influence policy and good practice, discuss challenges or trends.

We share the evidence base for harm reduction interventions and services and provide additional information via guest speakers.

Peer support and relationship building across the country.





# WHAT WORKERS NEED TO KNOW

## Wound Advice



# FACTSHEET

## XYLAZINE

### WHAT WORKERS NEED TO KNOW

www.stophedeaths.com

www.scottishdrugservices.com

# ALERT

## SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS DRUGS IN SCOTLAND ARE CHANGING

www.stophedeaths.com

www.scottishdrugservices.com

# WHAT WORKERS NEED TO KNOW

## Infections in people who use drugs: Staphylococcus aureus and Group A Streptococcus

There has been an increase in serious skin and blood poisoning infections among people who use drugs in Scotland.



#STOP THE DEATHS

# We can prevent drug deaths

# We just need to know how

www.stophedeaths.com

HOW TO SAVE A LIFE

1. Recognise the signs of an overdose

2. Call 999

3. Carry Naloxone

## National Wound Care Guide

An introduction to recognising and assessing common wounds and injecting injuries in people who inject drugs



### Worried about an injecting wound? Talk to a harm reduction or medical staff member

#### HOW DO I LOOK AFTER MY WOUNDS?

- ✓ Wash hands before changing dressings.
- ✓ Cover wounds using a simple dressing.
- ✓ Avoid touching or picking wounds.
- ✓ Free dressings are available from your local pharmacy.



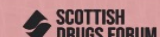
If you think the wound is getting worse, draw around the wound and watch for spreading redness. If the redness gets bigger or you are worried, seek advice from harm reduction or medical staff.

#### DOES MY WOUND SHOW ANY SIGNS OF INFECTION?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heat, redness or swelling that is getting worse | <input type="checkbox"/> Wound is getting more yellow, green or black |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More wet  | <input type="checkbox"/> Bigger or deeper                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> More painful                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad smell                                    |

If you have any signs of infection which are not getting better, and you feel unwell, talk to a harm reduction or medical staff member.

For urgent support call 111



### Self Care Advice: Looking after your wounds at home

- Always try to cover your wound using a simple dressing.
- Change every seven days unless it is leaking, has fallen off, or is stained as below.
- Dressings are available free from your pharmacy

#### ✓ Infection checklist

- Heat, redness or swelling around the wound that is getting worse
- Wetter than before
- More painful
- More yellow, green or black in the wound than before
- Bigger or deeper
- Bad smell

#### When to change your stained dressing?



If you have any signs of infection which are not getting better, and you feel unwell, call 111 for advice.

#### What we miss when hand washing



- Use soap to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds; before preparing or taking drugs and before or after cleaning or changing wound dressings.

#### Keeping your wounds clean

- Avoid touching or picking your wound.
- If it's wet, cover it up.
- If you think your wound is getting worse, draw a circle around the wound on your skin and watch for spreading redness.

- If the redness gets bigger seek advice from your GP or other health professional, like a pharmacist.
- If it's getting smaller it means it should be OK but still seek medical advice if you have any concerns.



Free wound care e-learning at [www.sdf.org.uk/training](http://www.sdf.org.uk/training)

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