



# The National Mission on Drugs: reflecting on progress and looking to the future

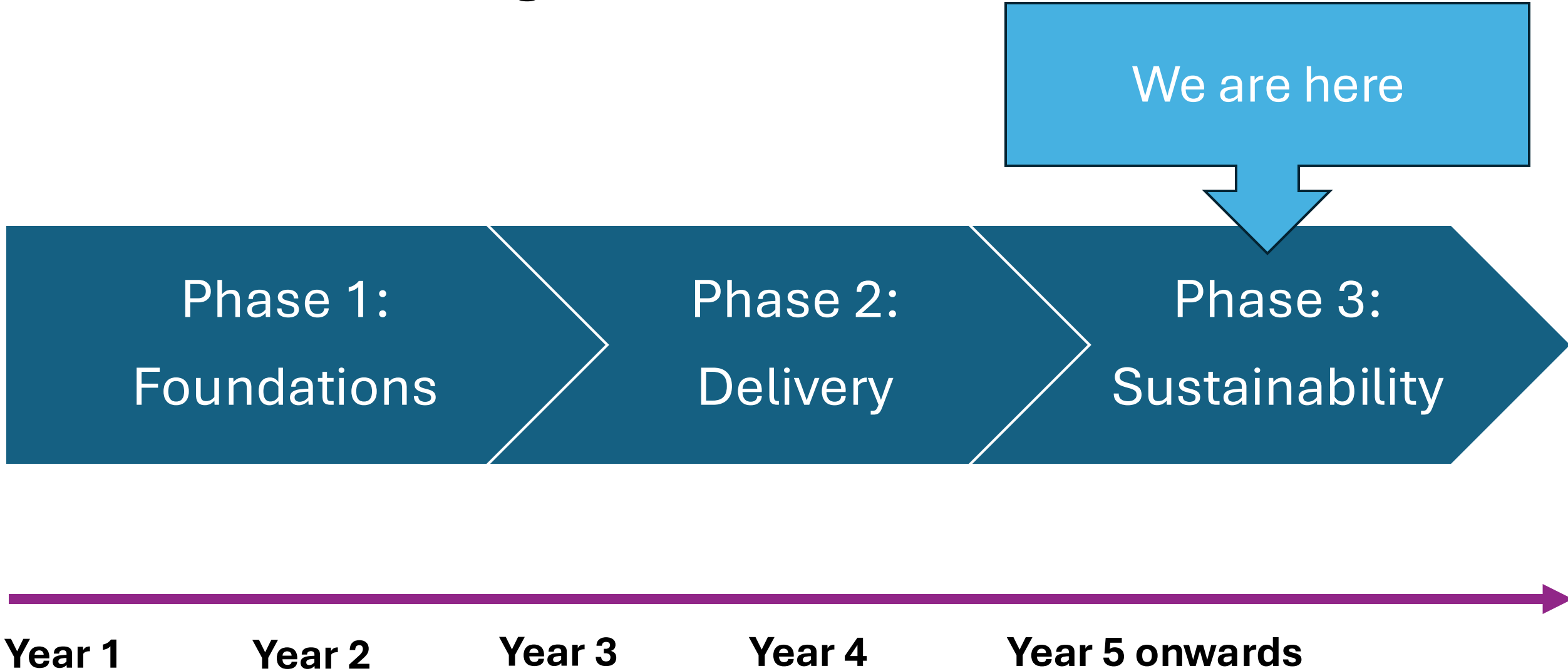
Maggie Page – Unit Head, Drugs Policy



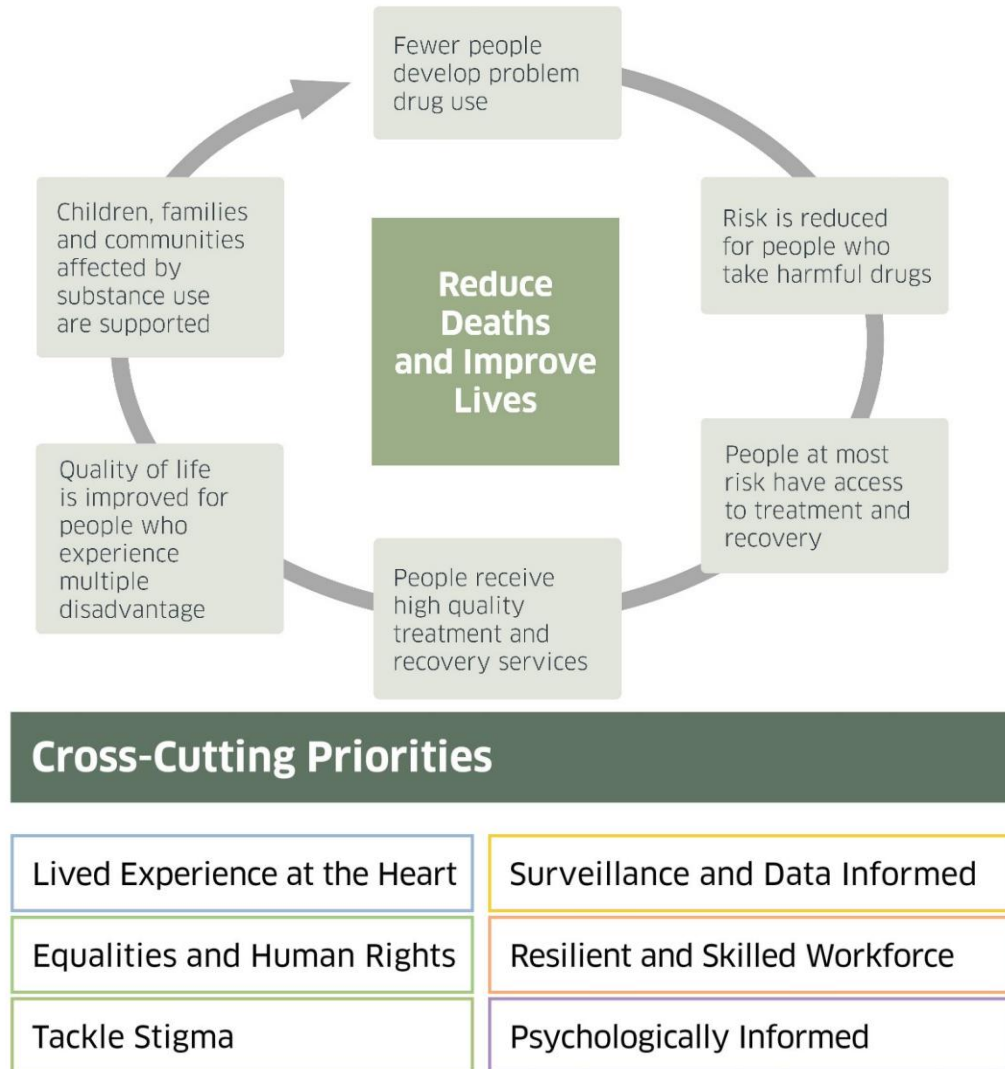
# 1. National Mission: Progress to Date

## 2. Post-2026

# National Mission Programme



# National Mission: Our approach



## Additional £250m for lifetime of this parliament

- **Harm Reduction:** focusing on harm reduction and preventing fatal overdose.
- **Improving Treatment:** through the introduction of Medication Assisted Treatment Standards and complementary treatment target and widening access to residential rehab.
- **Workforce and culture:** taking a rights-based approach to reduce stigma and support staff
- **Holistic support:** cross cutting and reliant on delivery of priorities beyond the scope of the drugs policy division.

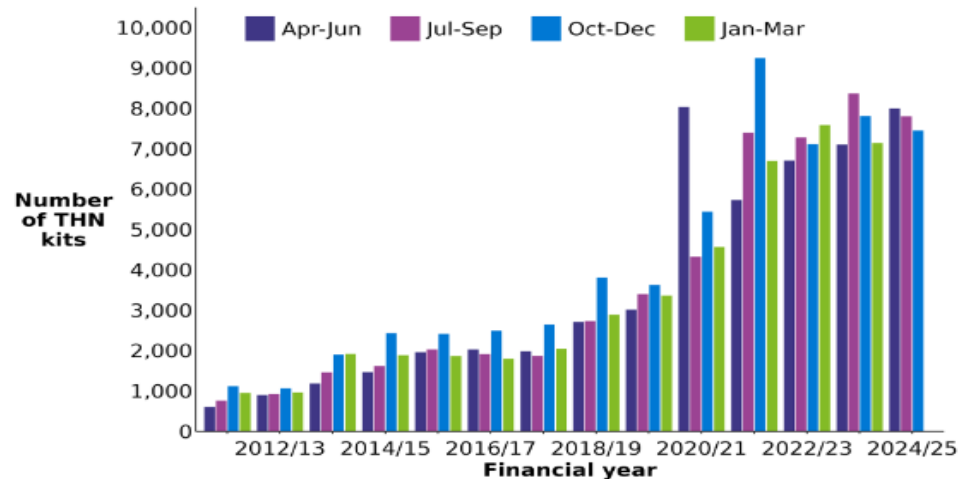


# Delivery: Harm Reduction

## Two-fold increase in the distribution of Naloxone

- New routes – click and deliver and peer supply
- Emergency service initiatives including police carriage
- Over 100k kits distributed

Number of Take-Home Naloxone kits supplied by financial year and quarter



### Alert

Nitazenes: new synthetic opioids



**Nitazenes pose a high risk of overdose, hospitalisation and death.**

Nitazenes are a group of synthetic opioids that have been widely detected in all parts of Scotland. Different types have been identified. Some are hundreds of times stronger than heroin. Nitazenes are most commonly found as a contaminant in drugs sold as heroin, benzodiazepines and oxycodone. Some examples are shown in the photos below.



## Working within the existing legislative framework

- **Safer Drug Consumption Rooms - 3468** visits from 306 people within five months of operation.
- **Drug Checking**
- **Heroin Assisted Treatment**



# Delivery: Improving Treatment

## Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards: Published May 2021

Ten evidence-based standards to enable consistent delivery of safe, accessible, high-quality drug treatment across Scotland.

### MAT standard ①

All people accessing services have the option to start MAT from same day of presentation.

**24 out of 29** ADPs completed initial MAT assessments within 1 day of presentation for 75% of people referred.

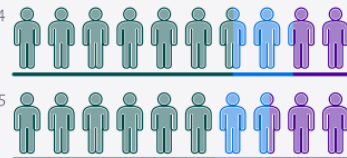


### MAT standard ②

All people are supported to make an informed choice on what medication to use for MAT and the appropriate dose.

Type of drugs prescribed changed between 2024 and 2025.

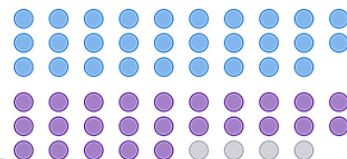
2024  
2025  
• methadone (65% to 60%)  
• oral buprenorphine (17% to 16%)  
• long-acting injectable buprenorphine (18% to 23%)



### MAT standard ③

All people at high risk of drug-related harm are proactively identified and offered support to commence or continue MAT.

**All 29** ADPs attempted first contact within 3 days for 75% of people referred and **25 out of 29** ADPs attempted contact within 1 day.



### MAT standard ⑤

All people will receive support to remain in treatment for as long as requested.

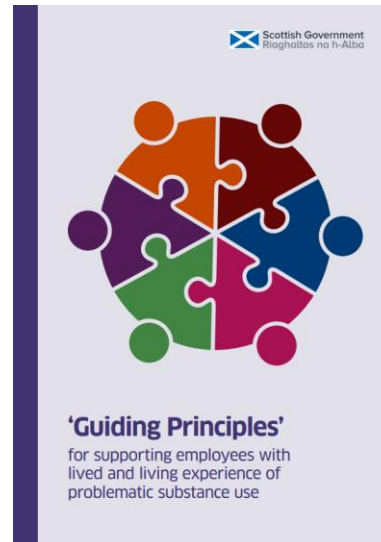
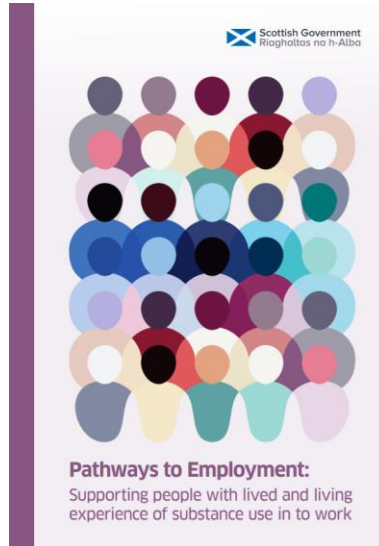
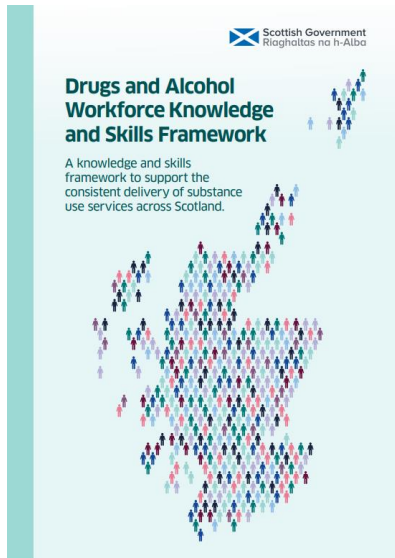
Across Scotland, **90%** of people commencing MAT continued with treatment for 6 months or more.



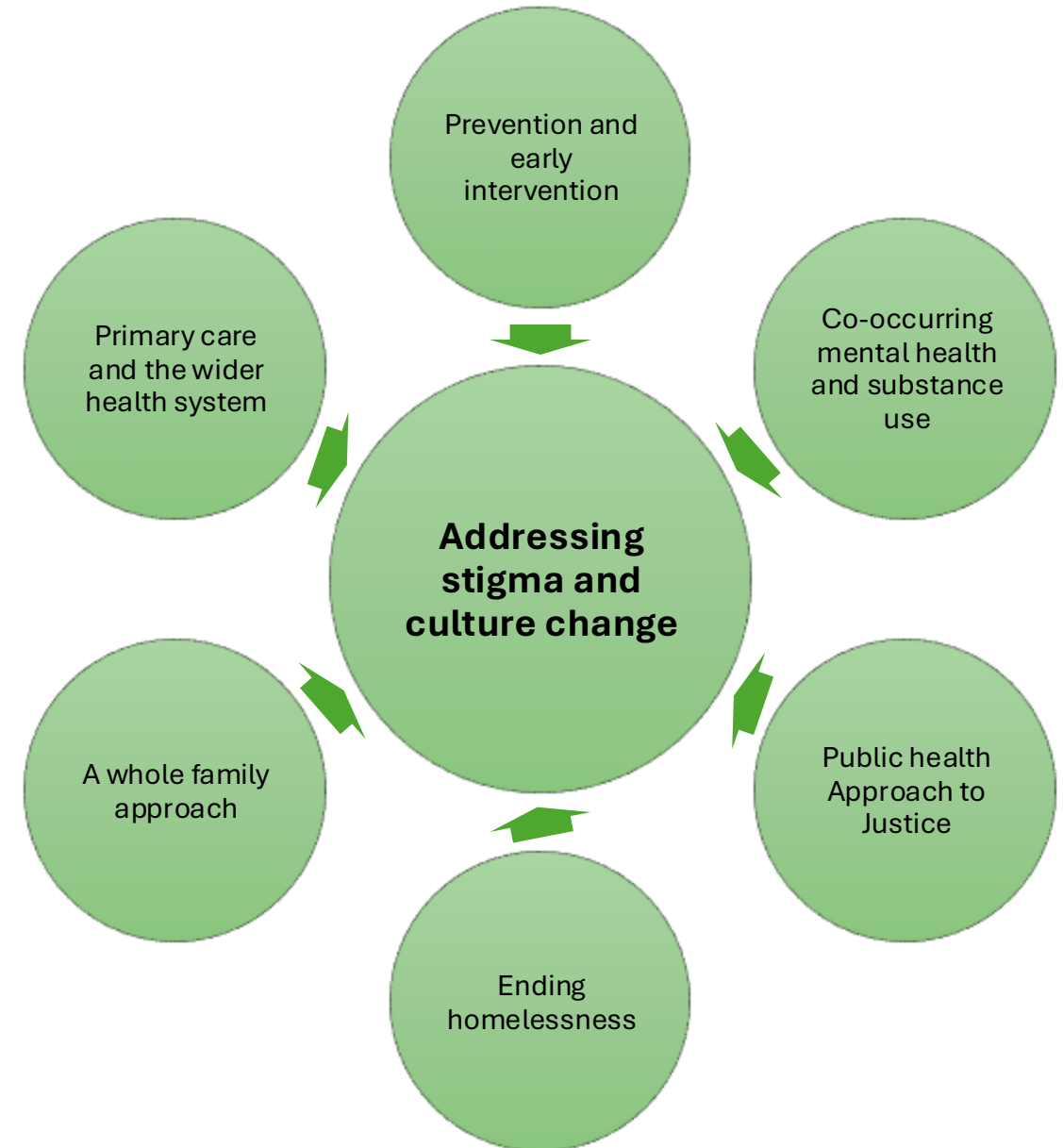
## Residential Rehab:

- Target to increase the number of statutory funded residential rehab placements to 1,000 a year by 2026
- Target to increase the number of beds to 650 by 2026

# Delivery: Whole systems



**National Collaborative: a Human Rights Based Approach** published Dec 2024





# 1. National Mission: Progress to Date

## 2. Post-2026

# National Mission Evaluation

## Evidence of impact

ADP Coordinator Survey: MAT standards perceived as already having made a positive impact by **9 in 10**

Lived Experience Survey: **7 in 10** felt support from services better than two years ago

Frontline Staff Survey: **3 in 4** agreed with at least one statement about a positive impact of the National Mission on their own practice

Key Informant Interviews: National Mission cash injection seen as a positive impact

## Areas for Improvement

Opportunities for **recovery-oriented support**: counselling and mental health support

Improved coordination of **reporting requirements** and **governance arrangements** for local areas

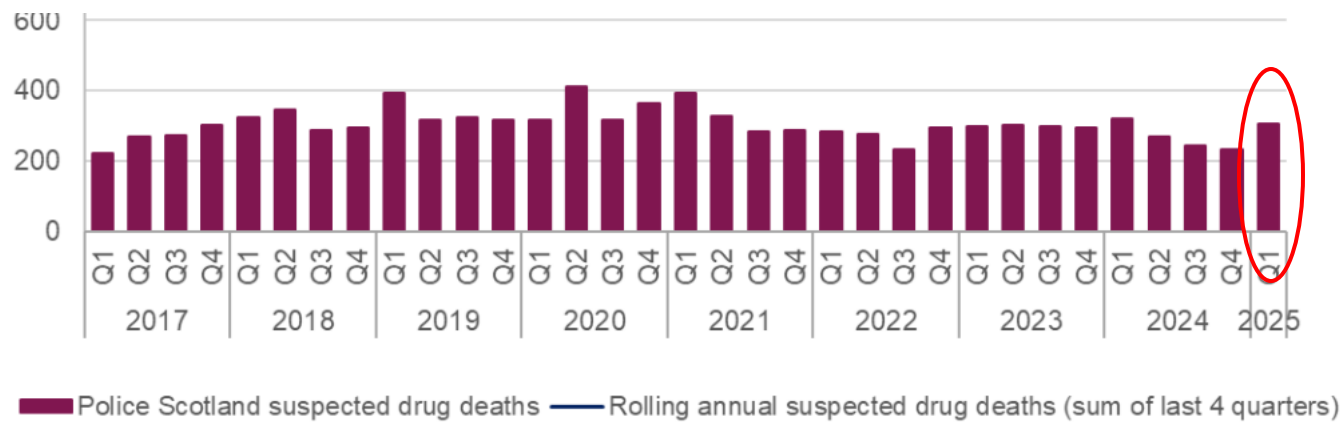
Expanding the support offer to **non-opiates, including stimulants and alcohol**

Greater focus on **prevention** and wider system throughout work

High levels of **pressure** throughout the system, including on frontline staff

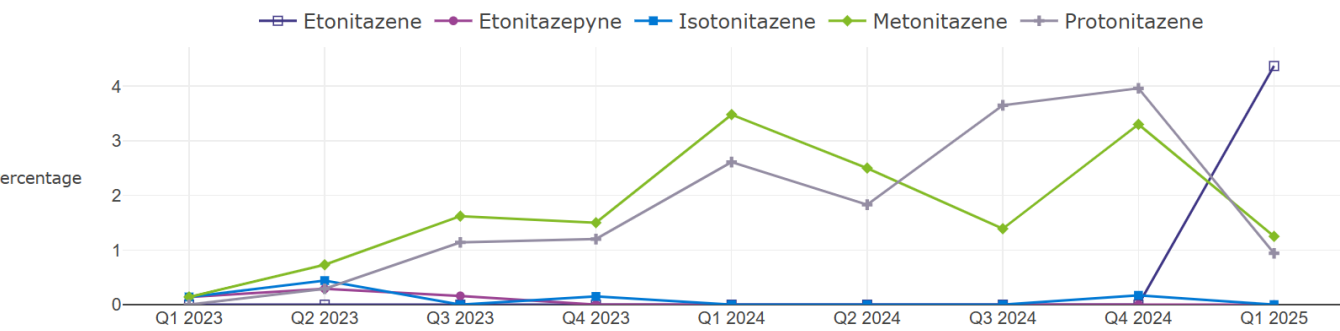
# Data and Trends

Number of Police Scotland suspected drug deaths by quarter and year, January 2017 to March 2025



Source: Suspected drug deaths in Scotland 10 June 2025

Post-mortem toxicology cases testing positive for individual substances



Source: RADAR Dashboard, Toxicology indicators, July 2025

## Post-mortem toxicology Jan-March 2025



More than one substance implicated

89%



Opiates/opioids implicated

72%



Benzodiazepines implicated

49%



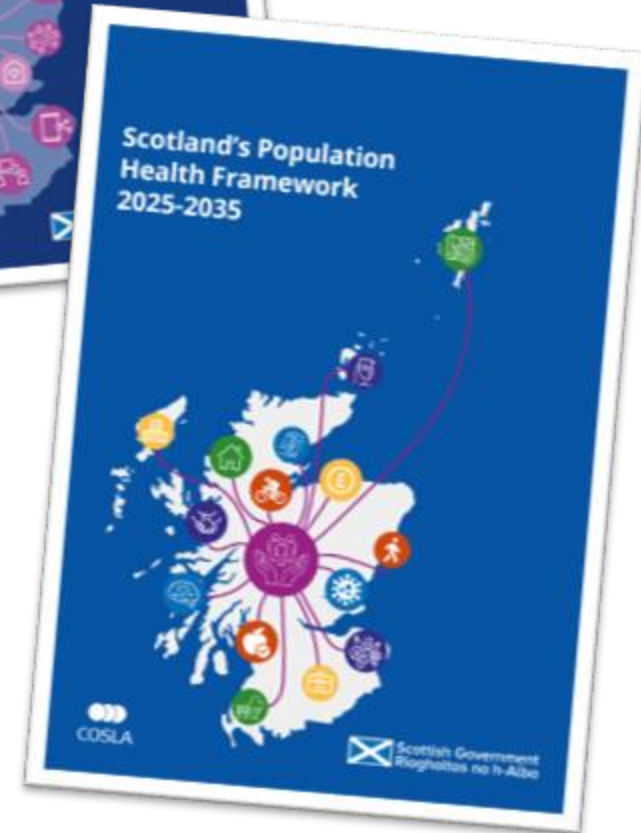
Cocaine implicated

35%

Source: RADAR 29 July 2025

# Post 2026: Next steps

- We are developing an alcohol and drug strategic plan for after the National Mission
- Over 30 stakeholder engagement sessions held, including:
  - Living experience sessions
  - ADP coordinator sessions
  - Policy specific stakeholders e.g. families, harm reduction
  - Ministerial roundtables: Inverness, Glasgow, Edinburgh and virtual.
- Expected publication is early 2026, ahead of the completion of the National Mission



# Post 26: Early emerging themes

Whole system  
approach and  
mental health  
support

Responding to  
emerging drug  
trends

Align alcohol with  
drugs

Implementation  
gap

Funding and  
sustainability

In the service  
**of Scotland**



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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