

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

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Source Christian Institute

The number of drug deaths registered in England and Wales has reached its highest level since records began in 1993, official figures have revealed.

The Office for National Statistics found a total of 4,859 drug-related deaths recorded in 2021. That is a rate of 84.4 deaths per million people, more than six per cent higher than in 2020 (79.5 deaths per million).

However, due to delays during the coronavirus pandemic, around half of deaths registered in 2021 would have happened in previous years.

Strategy

More than two-thirds of deaths (3,275) were among men, while women accounted for 1,584 deaths.

Cocaine was involved in 840 deaths – nearly eight times higher than in 2011.

A UK Government spokesperson stated that it would use its drug strategy in England to “help to prevent nearly 1,000 deaths, deliver over 54,500 new treatment places – a 19% increase on current numbers – and support 24,000 more people into recovery from substance dependency”.

Shooting galleries

In contrast, last month the Scottish Drug Death Taskforce called for so-called heroin ‘shooting galleries’ to be rolled out nationwide, claiming it would bring down deaths.

The quango was set up by the Scottish Government in 2019.

Westminster has repeatedly rejected calls by Scottish Ministers to allow the introduction of officially sanctioned rooms for addicts to inject themselves.

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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