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1 Sep 2017



A record number of people were admitted to hospital last year after overdosing on opioids, it has been revealed.

More than 2500 people were hospitalised in 2016, the highest number since 1999 when these particular records began.

It means nearly 50 people a week are rushed to hospital after taking opioid drugs, which are defined as heroin, methadone or opium.

The statistics emerged following a Parliamentary Question by shadow health secretary Miles Briggs.

They follow on from figures last month revealing record drug deaths for opioids, with 776 people losing their life in 2016.

Of the 2507 last year who were admitted after an overdose, 24 died in hospital as a result.

The Scottish Conservatives said these are the latest statistics which show the need for a new drugs strategy north of the border.

The party have repeatedly urged the Scottish Government to get tougher on dealers and suppliers who ruin lives and communities, and find alternatives to methadone for those addicts who want to give up drugs completely.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

“This is the latest set of figures which show the severity of Scotland’s drug problem, which is now the worst in Europe.

“The sheer scale of heroin and methadone use is ruining lives left, right and centre.

“We already knew Scotland was experiencing a drugs deaths rate higher than anywhere else.

“Now we can see the extent of those overdosing on dangerous substances too.

“We need a new strategy urgently to help these vulnerable people beat this

lethal habit for good.

“The only crumb of comfort from these statistics is how relatively few deaths occur directly from these overdoses, and we have to thank our hardworking NHS staff for that.”