

Scottish Borders Insights: Homeless Deaths in Scotland and Scottish Borders, 2019

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National Records of Scotland released its updated dataset: Homeless Deaths 2019, on Tuesday 23rd February 2021. This information note presents a summary of its findings, and its implications for Scottish Borders.

- Across Scotland, it found that an estimated 216 people who were experiencing homelessness died in 2019.
- This is an increase of 21 deaths when compared to 2018 estimates, an increase of 11% between 2018 and 2019.
- Almost three quarters of homeless deaths were males, accounting for 157 deaths. The average age at death in 2019 was 43 years for males and 39 years for females
- More than half of homeless deaths were drug-related.
- Scotland has the highest homeless death rate when compared to England and Wales, with a rate of 52.2 per million population aged 15-74 compared to 18.0 in England and 14.3 in Wales. These statistics included people who were in temporary accommodation at the time of their death as well as those who were sleeping rough.
- Inverclyde and South Ayrshire had the highest rates of homeless deaths per million population aged 15 to 74, with a rate of 213.2 and 120.3 respectively.
- Western Isles also had a high rate (191.4) but this was based on a small number of identified deaths.
- Scottish Borders was one of six local authorities, along with Argyll & Bute, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Moray and Shetland Islands, that recorded no homeless deaths in 2019.

It is important to note that these NRS statistics are currently experimental and the methodology is under development. However, the estimated 11% increase in homeless deaths since 2018 is reliable, and provides a starting point to understanding the sometimes fatal consequences of homelessness in Scotland.