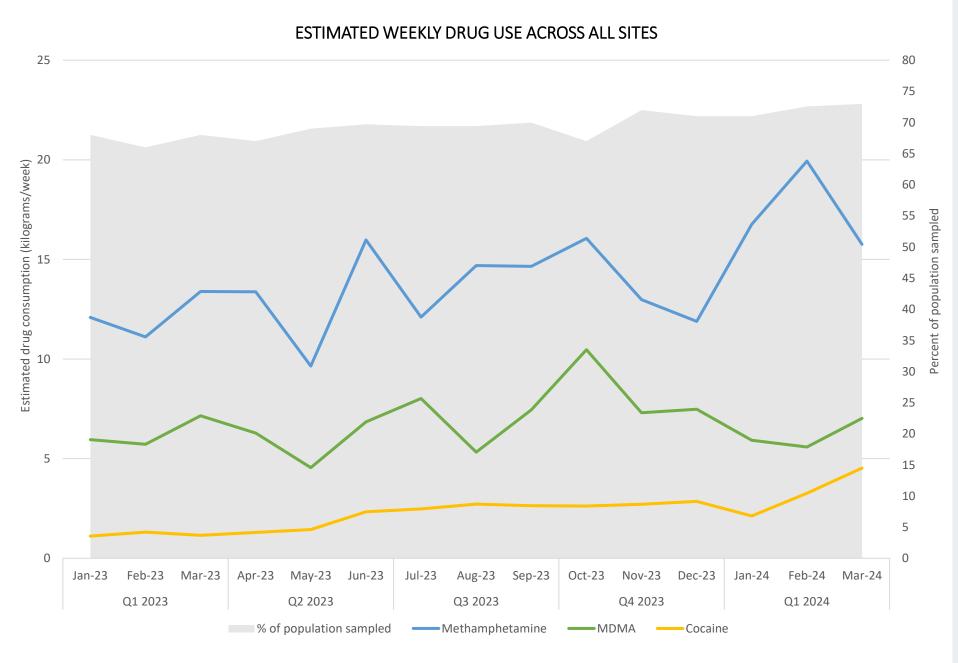


Wastewater Drug Testing in New Zealand: National Overview



Quarter One: January - March 2024

- > Wastewater testing occurs during one week each month, however the frequency of testing varies between sites. Nationwide testing started in November 2018, with current testing sites covering up to 75 percent of the total New Zealand population. While the nationwide programme tests for indicators of consumption of methamphetamine, MDMA, cocaine, heroin, and fentanyl, the three commodities routinely detected in sufficient quantities to accurately report on are methamphetamine, MDMA and cocaine.
- > Q1 2024 covers the three month period between January and March 2024 (inclusive).
- > All data is representative of the sites tested only. It is not possible to extrapolate this data to nearby communities that are not tested.
- > Drug use is calculated from the concentration of each drug biomarker detected in the wastewater. This is reflective of the amount of pure drug being consumed and does not include fillers, binders or adulterants.
- > The social harm cost estimates are derived from the New Zealand Illicit Drug Harm Index 2020 (DHI 2020). The DHI 2020 provides a conservative measure of the harms associated with the use of illicit drugs in New Zealand and considers both personal and community harms.



KEY FINDINGS Q1 2024

METHAMPHETAMINE

- Methamphetamine use across sample sites increased in Q1 2024, averaging an estimated 17.5 kilograms per week. This was above the average quantity consumed over the previous four quarters (31% or 4.1 kilograms).
- > All districts, except for Waikato, recorded above average methamphetamine use when compared with their respective average consumption rates over the previous four quarters.
- Methamphetamine use across sample sites in Q1 2024 equates to an estimated weekly social harm cost of \$19.4 million.

MDMA

- MDMA use across sample sites decreased in Q1 2024, averaging an estimated 6.2 kilograms per week. This was consistent with the average quantity consumed over the previous four quarters.
- > Eastern District was the only district to record above average MDMA use when compared with its average consumption rate over the previous four quarters.
- MDMA use across sample sites in Q1 2024 equates to an estimated weekly social harm cost of \$857,237.

COCAINE

- Cocaine use across sample sites continued to increase in Q1 2024 to an average of 3.3 kilograms per week. This remained above the average quantity consumed over the previous four quarters (52 percent or 1.1 kilograms above).
- > All districts recorded above average cocaine use when compared with their respective average consumption rates over the previous four quarters.
- Cocaine use across sample sites in Q1 2024 equates to an estimated weekly social harm cost of \$990,651.





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- > Per capita drug consumption is shown as milligrams per day, per 1,000 people. As a number of locations are tested every second month, the presence or absence of data from some sites within a district will affect the total load and per capita consumption rates reported each quarter. *District* relates to the sites tested within each district and should not be extrapolated to represent the entire district. *All sites* relates to the per capita consumption for all sites tested across New Zealand. In previous reports *all sites* has been called *National*. This terminology change has been made to improve clarity around the data and what it means.
- > The average weekly drug use pie charts show the average estimated drug use (in grams) for each commodity per district per testing week during Q1 2024. As this data is not adjusted for population, larger metropolitan areas record higher quantities of drug use per week due to the larger number of people in the catchment zone.
- > The per capita drug consumption bar charts compares each district's average consumption rate over Q1 2024 with their respective average consumption rates over the previous four quarters.

PER CAPITA DRUG CONSUMPTION BY DISTRICT: Q1 2024 Methamphetamine Consumption Per Capita (mg/day/1000 people) 800 Average 700 over last 4 500 400 200 MDMA Consumption Per Capita (mg/day/1000 people) 500 400 quarters Cocaine Consumption Per Capita (mg/day/1000 people) 250 200 Average 150 over last 4 quarters Q1 2024

AVERAGE WEEKLY DRUG USE BY DISTRICT SITES Q1 2024 (GRAMS)

