

purity-adjusted in 2011 to £49.55 in 2013. However, Shapiro suggested this was probably the “least controversial version of events”.

He said: “The issue is really: is anyone going to do anything about it and come up with a national strategy to deal with drug-related deaths? It’s not just in relation to morphine.”

Deaths involving cocaine increased sharply last year to 247 from 169 in 2013, reaching an all-time high of 4.4 deaths per million population, according to the ONS. It was the third year in a row the mortality rate for cocaine-related deaths had increased.

Rosanna O’Connor, director of alcohol, drugs and tobacco at Public Health England, described the rise in heroin-related deaths as “a great concern”.

She said: “Fewer people are using heroin but the harms are increasingly concentrated among older, more vulnerable users and those not recently in touch with their local drug treatment services. Reassuringly, overall drug use has also declined and treatment services have helped many people to recover but these figures show the need for an enhanced effort.

“We need to ensure the most vulnerable users can access drug treatment services.”

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/sep/03/uk-sees-huge-rise-in-heroin-and-morphine-related-deaths>