

Ministers need a plan for dementia as deaths soar

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The Scottish Government needs a plan to cope with increasing numbers of people living with dementia, after new figures showed a rise in deaths from the disease.

Official statistics released today revealed a 17 per cent increase in dementia-related deaths over the past year, with the illness now accounting for a tenth of all deaths in Scotland.

High profile killers such as heart disease decreased, a consequence of Scotland's ageing population.

And shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said while lower death rates among illnesses which used to plague public health was welcome, the shift brought new challenges for health and social care services.

Today's report analysed causes of all deaths registered between April and June this year.

A total of 936 people died from dementia in that time, including 570 from Alzheimer's – an increase of nearly a third from 12 months before.

However, heart disease mortality rates dropped by 5.3 per cent, while there were reductions in deaths from breast cancer and liver disease.

Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:

"It seems that gradually the high-profile killers are being reduced, and of course that is to be absolutely welcomed.

"But they are being replaced by cruel and challenging conditions like Alzheimer's.

"This reveals a major challenge facing Scotland's health and social care system.

"Longer life expectancy is good news for everyone, but we can't ignore the different challenges that brings.

"The SNP has had a decade in charge of health and social care to prepare for

this, and we need to start seeing signs that this government has a plan.”

To see the full report and commentary, visit:

<https://news.gov.scot/news/births-deaths-other-vital-events-2017-q2>