



## **Letter of endorsement from community-led organisations to welcome Scotland's launch of a new vision for drug policy and practice.**

The undersigned are community-led organisations promoting the health and defending the rights of people who use drugs in Scotland, in Europe and at the global level. We welcome and endorse the statement developed by Scottish Drugs Forum and specialists from the drugs sector.

Drug user rights organisations have been pleased to collaborate with the Scottish Drugs Minister, Government policy makers, the National Drugs Related Deaths Taskforce and the wider academic, practice and non-governmental partners, as they have worked together to reconceive drug policy and practice in Scotland. We welcome Scotland's launch of a new vision for drug policy and practice.

Our advocacy and good practice discussions with the United Nations and European Union highlights the growing acknowledgement about the need for enhanced harm reduction, humane drug treatment and full decriminalisation. This is founded on the growing consensus that our global drug control regulations have failed by any objective measure.

The Westminster Government abandoned the famed "British Drugs Model" and the move away from a comprehensive harm reduction approach has been at the expense of the lives and health of people who use drugs. Scotland's rethink is driven by painful lessons:

- In the 1980s Edinburgh was viewed as the AIDS capital of Europe when 50% of people who inject drugs in the city had HIV.
- Since 2015 Glasgow has seen a new HIV outbreak among people who inject linked to the injection of cocaine in street settings.
- Scotland has seen over one thousand drug related deaths for four consecutive years with the highest death toll since records began recorded in 2020 with 1,339 fatalities.

Scotland new approach shows that it is possible to embrace the science and engage people who use drugs as we rethink our failed drug laws and associated health issues. Community-led initiatives highlight how we are part of the solution and important strategic partners:

- Peter Krykant's mobile overdose prevention service ambulance in Glasgow showed the potential of community-led responses to step in when traditional services felt constrained by the legal environment.
- Scottish Drugs Forum have been one of the European pioneers of the peer-to-peer distribution of Naloxone mobilising people who use drugs to distribute this life saving overdose reversal drug.
- EuroNPUD's Opioid Agonist Treatment Client Guide (OAT – We Are In It Together!) provides an agreed statement of the literacy and rights of people with opioid dependence supporting therapeutic alliances and positive treatment outcomes.
- The Simon Community Scotland's peer initiative is helping to mobilise the very people most at risk in the Glasgow HIV outbreak providing low threshold services and peer support outside traditional service hours on a peer-to-peer basis.
- Recovering Justice has championed the voices of women who use drugs in policy dialogues with the Scottish Government.

The Previous Scottish Drugs Minister Angela Constance MSP and her team met with the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) at the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2023 demonstrating a commitment to listen to and engage those with living experience.

As community-led organisations, we welcome Scotland's willingness to embrace the science and work with affected communities to transform our failed drug laws.

Signed by:

- Simon Community Scotland
- Peter Krykant, Cranstoun Campaign Lead and Glasgow Overdose Prevention Centre Founder
- Recovering Justice
- Wez Steele Senior Training and Development Officer Drug Death Prevention - Peer Naloxone, Scottish Drugs Forum: Peer Naloxone Training & Supply
- Jason Wallace, Living Experience Engagement Senior Officer, Scottish Drugs Forum: Living Experience Engagement Groups
- HR Mother 2 Mother  
Respect Drug User Rights
- Hepatitis C Trust
- European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD)
- International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD)

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