

Drug Death Prevention (Scotland) Bill

About You

Q1. Are you responding as:

An individual

Q2. Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation:

1. I am a retired ex Social Worker; in my professional life, I moved on from fieldwork team management (specialist community mental health teams) to planning, commissioning and purchasing mental health - including drug & alcohol - services from non-statutory organisations for a large local authority in England, during the 1990s.
2. I should add I'm also a recovering alcoholic (twenty years sober) so have plenty of personal insight into the perils of addictions.

Q3. Please select the category which best describes your organisation:

No Response

Q4. Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

If you have requested anonymity or asked for your response not to be published, please give a reason. (Note: your reason will not be published.)

I have never been secretive or ashamed of my past problem-drinking so am quite content for my name to be published, if it helps.

Please provide your name or the name of your organisation. (Note: The name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication".)

Martyn Ayre

Q5. Please provide a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number. (Note: We will not publish these contact details.)

[Redacted contact information]

Q6. Data protection declaration

In order to proceed, please confirm that you have read and understood the Privacy Notice contained on Page 1

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used.

Q7. If you are under 12 and making a submission, we will need to contact you to ask your parent or guardian to confirm to us that they are happy for you to send us your views.

No Response

Your Views On The Proposal

Q8. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill? (please note this is a compulsory question)

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The 'avoidable deaths' data speaks for itself. The "war on drugs" approach is clearly not working so stigmatising users, treating them as pariahs (or worse) and withholding services that would make their addictive behaviour safer (for them, for families, for communities) is not a recipe for success. Not everyone suffering from an addiction is going to succeed in beating it at the first time of trying so providing safety-first models of continuing intervention until they can is a better way forward.

Q9. Do you think legislation is required, or are there are other ways in which the Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

Previous efforts at 'safe consumption' units/centres have failed for want of a solid legal basis. Legislation will help remove that obstacle.

Q10. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal to establish overdose prevention centres?

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Addicts will not stop injecting etc for want of such centres. A model which helps reduce the use/consumption of drugs in unsafe/unhygienic settings has to be better than the current status quo.

Q11. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal for a licensing regime to enable the establishment of overdose prevention centres?

Fully supportive

Please provide reasons for your response, including on the proposed conditions for licensing (see pages 12 to 14 of the consultation document) and on the proposal that health and social care partnerships are responsible for licensing and scrutinising OPCs?

Dealing with unsafe behaviours in 'managed' settings will require a licensing process that can demonstrate safety and effectiveness to the many, many people (and news media!) who will think - wrongly - the system is "going soft" on drugs.

Q12. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposal for a new body, the Scottish Drugs Deaths Council?

Fully supportive

Please provide reasons for your response, including views on the proposed functions of the SDDC (see pages 14 to 16 of the consultation document) and on how it should operate in practice.

Its independence is critical - the recent history of the UK Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs shows clearly how political/ideological interference has undermined its credibility. Recent events in its Scottish 'equivalent' just underline this.

Financial Implications

Q13. Any new law can have a financial impact which would affect individuals, businesses, the public sector, or others. What financial impact do you think this proposal could have if it became law?

some increase in costs

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including who you would expect to feel the financial impact of the proposal, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could be delivered more cost-effectively.

It is almost inevitable that setting up the units - and the independent drugs council - would incur upfront costs. One hopes that people will be able to take a longer-term view of potential benefits further down the line. so it can be seen as 'investment', not just 'expenditure'. This is why we are tax-payers.....it's a social transfer.

Equalities

Q14. Any new law can have an impact on different individuals in society, for example as a result of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

What impact could this proposal have on particular people if it became law? If you do not have a view skip to next question.

Please explain the reasons for your answer and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts on particular people.

No Response

Sustainability

Q15. Any new law can impact on work to protect and enhance the environment, achieve a sustainable economy, and create a strong, healthy, and just society for future generations.

Do you think the proposal could impact in any of these areas? If you do not have a view then skip to next question.

Please explain the reasons for your answer, including what you think the impact of the proposal could be, and if there are any ways you think the proposal could avoid negative impacts?

OPCs would provide a safer environment for users; they would hopefully reduce the potential harm of discarded paraphernalia; call me old-fashioned but I reckon a just society is one that looks out for people who are struggling to look out for themselves because of e.g. their addiction(s).