



SCOTTISH DRUGS FORUM

PEOPLE, POLICY AND PRACTICE

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2024 - 2027

INFORMING • LEADING • SUPPORTING • EMPOWERING • REPRESENTING



INTRO FROM THE CHAIR

As Chair of the board of Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) I am pleased to introduce our strategic direction for 2024/27. This demonstrates continuity with SDF's history and an approach which supports members and other stakeholders, while also setting the way forward for people, policies and practice across Scotland.

SDF has a proud history of supporting stakeholders across Scotland to respond to the challenges of developing effective drug policy and service provision for people who experience drug-related problems.

SDF has always supported a comprehensive approach to prevention, harm reduction, recovery, and an understanding of the connections amongst drug-related harms, the legal status of drugs, poverty and wider determinants of health and wellbeing. The strategic planning process also allows us to continue to be innovative in our approaches in these areas. There are exciting new evidence-based developments to this phase of work that align to SDF aims and values. The first is national funding of work SDF has previously undertaken locally and informally – ensuring the insights and experiences of people using drugs are articulated and communicated to inform policy and practice development. The second is national funding for the National Traineeship, which transforms the lives of people who have a history of drug use through their own personal development and also by enhancing service provision.

In addition, our SVQ Centre's potential will be delivered in the lifetime of this plan and this resource offers the drugs and related field innovation and increased capacity.

SDF will continue with its core business of improving culture, policy and practice.

The Board will support the CEO and the staff team to deliver the strategic plan which has been designed to support and deliver positive change for people and communities experiencing drug-related harms across Scotland.

Carole Hunter, SDF Chair



CONSULTATION PROCESS

SDF has a large membership base with over 1000 members.

In preparation for this refreshed strategic direction, we consulted with our membership and staff via a variety of avenues including surveys, one to one discussions and focus groups.

We thank everyone for their engagement in this process, the learning and feedback from which has informed our work for the next 3 years.



VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION

A Scotland free from drug-related health and social harm

MISSION

To improve Scotland's approach to drug-related issues

We influence this through our work by striving for compassionate, inclusive, evidence-informed policy and practice

VALUES

For almost 40 years, our values have been evidenced through our work as a membership-based charity

- Meaningful involvement of people with experience of drug use

Evidence from research, good practice and the real-life experiences of people affected by drug use informs our work and provides the basis for the change we advocate for and to which we contribute.

We work to ensure that the experiences and perspectives of people experiencing drug-related harms are the focus of the policy and practice developments that affects them



VISION, MISSION AND VALUES CONT.

- Policies and practice that reduce risks and harms

We recognise that the majority of people who use drugs do so without experiencing significant harms. However, evidence suggests there will always be greater risks and harms where people who use drugs are criminalised.

We advocate strongly for evidence-informed, harm reduction approaches

- Rights and equality

We take a rights-based, equalities-focussed approach so that our work empowers people who are often marginalised, criminalised and discriminated against. We promote non-judgemental, trauma-informed support within a stigma-challenging environment

- A person-centred approach

People are at the heart of everything we do and everything we advocate for. We value connection and collaboration through open and respectful discussion. We are passionate about decision making which is evidence-informed

- Dignity, respect and empowerment

Our work centres around people who experience drug-related harms, and we are firm in our approach that people are valued, treated with dignity and respect and empowered to identify and achieve their own goals



OUTCOMES

- The needs of those affected by drug use are met effectively with empathy, compassion and respect
- Drug-related harms and risks are reduced
- Drug laws, policies and practice do not increase harms
- People who use drugs can fulfil their personal, social and economic potential



INFORMING

SDF improves understanding of drug issues, drugs policy and related practice through:

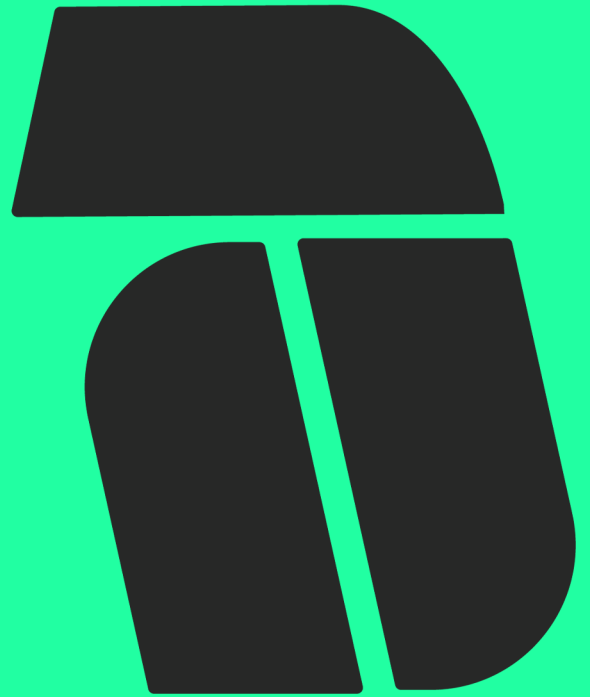
- providing opportunities for information exchange
- sharing information from links with multiple national and international networks
- providing training and research services
- communicating with members, other stakeholders and the public
- contributing to public, media and parliamentary discussion and debate



LEADING

SDF provides leadership by:

- encouraging change with new and innovative thinking and practice
- raising emerging issues of concern
- speaking independently and freely
- establishing and maintaining links to international partners



SUPPORTING

SDF supports policy and practice development by:

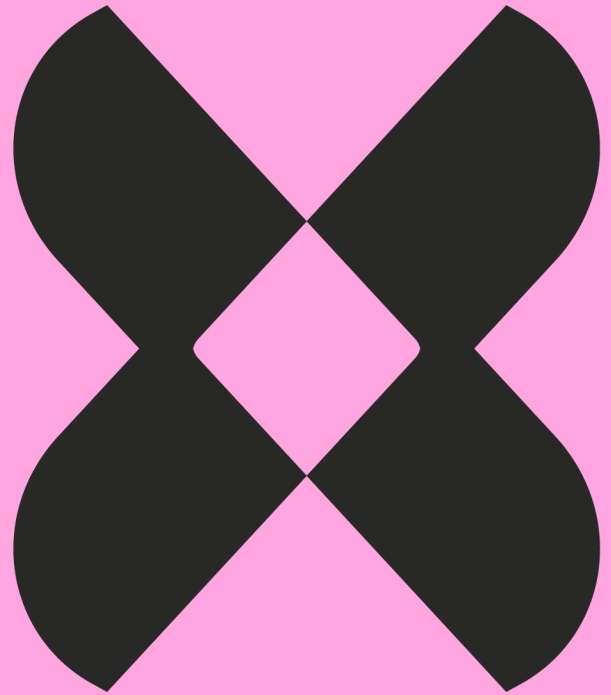
- supporting the networking and empowerment of people affected by drug-related harms
- developing policy with members and other stakeholders
- supporting individuals to make positive changes in their lives through volunteering and work opportunities
- supporting services to deliver efficiently and effectively



EMPOWERING

SDF empowers people and services to:

- become involved in discussion and decision-making processes
- appreciate, enhance and amplify the insight they have
- realise their potential in contributing to the development of policy and practice



REPRESENTING

SDF provides and supports representation in its work through:

- maintaining communication with members and wider stakeholders, especially people experiencing drug-related harms
- participating in local, national and international voluntary sector, public sector and other civil society networks
- ensuring that the opinions and experiences of those directly affected by drug use are represented in policy making and service development processes

STRATEGIC FOCUS

OUR WORK IS GROUPED INTO THREE KEY AREAS:



LIVED AND LIVING EXPERIENCE

LIVING EXPERIENCE ENGAGEMENT GROUPS

We support people with living experience to form local engagement groups which are a safe space to discuss the issues affecting them, to identify their needs and opinions and advocate for themselves and others to improve services and policy. These local groups also collaborate on a national level to influence change.

Find out more: [Living experience](#)

PEER RESEARCH

Our peer research work involves people with lived and living experience gathering the views and experiences of people who use substances, those accessing treatment or using other services. Our research and evaluation work helps inform service responses and improves the quality of services for people who use services and develops more effective policy by providing real life experiential evidence and recommendations.

Find out more: [Peer research](#)



LIVED AND LIVING EXPERIENCE CONT.

NATIONAL TRAINEESHIP

SDF's National Traineeship offers people with lived and living experience support to complete an accredited qualification and undertake work experience placements in social care. This project has existed for 20 years and has assisted hundreds of people into employment.

Find out more: [National Traineeship](#)

PEER NALOXONE

SDF supports local groups of peers in prison and community settings to become trainers in emergency responses to overdose and the distribution of naloxone. These groups also collaborate on a national level, helping to inform drug death prevention work from those with lived and living experience.

Find out more: [Peer Naloxone](#)



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

TRAINING

SDF provides general and specialist training on substance use-related issues for people who work with, or support, people who use substances.

We also design and deliver training commissioned by services or local planners for their teams and others requesting training specific to their locality. This training can also incorporate coaching and mentoring to support change in services or localities.

Find out more: [Training](#)

To view upcoming scheduled training: [SDF Training](#)

E-LEARNING

SDF's e-learning offers accessible courses that can be completed at your own pace. These can be completed as part of a formal training and professional development programme within the workplace or a personal learning experience to extend or consolidate existing knowledge and skills.

To view our available e-learning course: [E-Learning](#)



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONT.

SVQ CENTRE

SDF is an accredited SVQ Centre. We deliver Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) accredited training in Advice and Guidance, Community Development, and Social Services and Healthcare.

Find out more: [SVQ Centre](#)

LOCAL SUPPORT FUND

SDF supports small and medium sized community-based organisations to be ready to apply for funding. We also support organisations to complete the funding process. This work focuses on organisations that work with people with lived and living experience of substance use and/or their families to reduce drug-related harms.

Find out more: [Local Support Fund](#)



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONT.

DRUG DEATH PREVENTION

SDF works with local planners, commissioners and services to improve interventions that prevent drug-related deaths. With reference to national and international evidence, local stakeholders are supported to identify the strengths and weaknesses of local practice to form an action plan that improves joint working and the effectiveness and efficiency of local responses.

Find out more: [Drug Death Prevention](#)

REDUCING HARMS

We work with services to ensure staff have the knowledge and skills to provide effective harm reduction interventions. This includes injecting equipment provision, drug trends and identifying and reducing risks and harms caused by infections. This work also involves supporting services to develop adequate systems to ensure effective joint working.

Find out more: [Reducing Harms](#)



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

SDF HAS DEVELOPED DIFFERENT WAYS TO WORK WITH STAKEHOLDERS ACROSS SCOTLAND AND FURTHER AFIELD TO IMPROVE POLICY AND PRACTICE.

THE THIRD SECTOR POLICY GROUP

SDF established this group to ensure communication and coherence between third sector organisations involved in policy work. The group works together to offer peer support in policy development and ensure good communication on substance use and related policy areas.

THE SCOTTISH NEEDLE EXCHANGE WORKERS' FORUM (SNEWF)

This forum provides peer support and learning opportunities to people working in injecting equipment provision services in Scotland and has developed better practice guidance and influenced policy around harm reduction in Scotland.

Found out more: [**The Scottish Needle Exchange Workers' Forum \(SNEWF\)**](#)



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CONT.

THE SCOTTISH NALOXONE NETWORK (SCONN)

The Scottish Naloxone Network supports the development and delivery of Scotland's national programme and provides peer support between local co-ordinators and others in their work in improve naloxone supply in Scotland.

CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SUBSTANCE USE

SDF serves as the secretariat of the Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Substance Use.

The group provides opportunities for Members of the Scottish Parliament to engage with external stakeholders on issues related to substance use.

You can find out more on the Scottish Parliament website: [Parliament Website](#)



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CONT.

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

SDF serves as the Scottish Focal Point for the Correlation European Harm Reduction Network and are members of the International Drug Policy Consortium. This work helps ensure we are continually able to share the latest evidence, good practice and emerging themes to inform Scotland's response and likewise share national approaches with partners.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

SDF works with SDF members to develop responses to consultations by Government and others on new policy or legislation.

Find out more about SDF membership: **SDF Membership**

#STOPTHEDEATHS

The Stop the Deaths initiative is launched each year to support stakeholders' understanding of their own and others' role in preventing drug-related deaths in Scotland. The website serves as a resource bank of materials related to the initiative and information on emergency response to overdose including naloxone.

Find out more about #StopTheDeaths: **www.stopthedeaths.com**



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CONT.

MATSTANDARDS.SCOT

The MATstandards.scot website provides resources on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards in Scotland – for people who are in treatment; people who care, support and advocate for people in treatment and for people who work in treatment services.

Find out more about MAT Standards: www.matstandards.co.uk

THE SDF E-BULLETIN

The SDF e:Bulletin offers a regular comprehensive update on developments in Scotland related to substance use policy and practice as well information on trends, alerts and other news from around the world.

To join the SDF mailing list: [SDF Newsletter](#)

MEMBERSHIP

The best way to engage with SDF is to take out an individual or an organisational membership

To find out more about membership: [SDF Membership](#)



KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE CONT.

DRUGS UNCUT PODCAST

Our Drugs Uncut podcast offers a space for informal but informed discussion on drug-related issues. The podcast features guests with different perspectives and insights.

Listen Now: [Drugs Uncut Podcast](#)

EVENTS

SDF organises a programme of online and in-person events which allow participants to share insight and perspectives, and network.

To find out about forthcoming events: [SDF Events](#)

To view recordings of previous events: [Previous SDF Events](#)

WWW.SDF.ORG.UK



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