

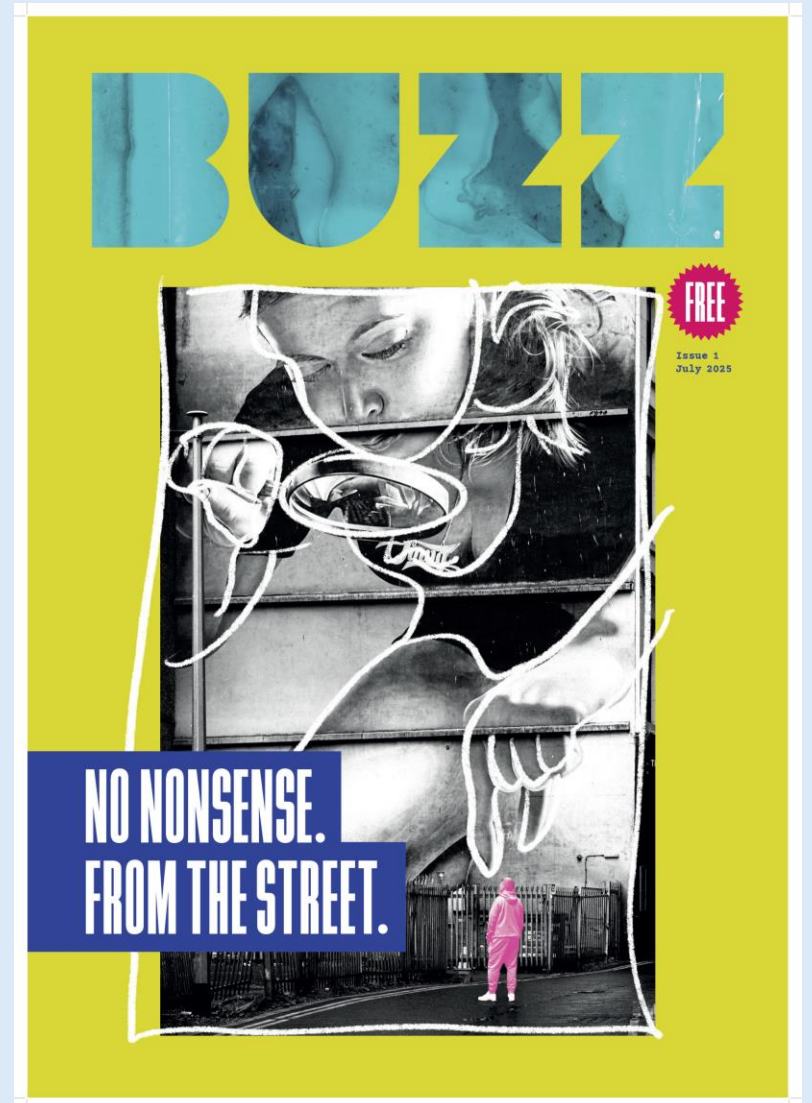
BUZZ

MAGAZINE



What is *Buzz*?

- Independent peer-led magazine
- Storytelling, tips and resources, harm reduction focus
- Distributed among living experience networks, services and beyond





Why?

'WE WANT TO HELP OUR PEERS KEEP THEMSELVES SAFER WHILE PUSHING FOR CHANGE IN SCOTLAND'S DRUG POLICY, SERVICES AND CULTURE.'

- Push back against sensationalised reporting on drug-related issues
- Challenge stigma
- Speak up about discrimination
- Amplify peer voices and help them build new skills





Peer editorial board

- Assembled from across Scotland to keep it nationally relevant
- Regularly meet to plan mag content, review and edit pages, direct design
- Conducting interviews, writing stories, researching & newsgathering in communities

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Hannah Westwater

Steven McGowan



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Challenges

- Making sure storytelling is honest while protecting peers too
- Building trust between community and magazine
- Ever-changing drug trends and national picture



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE THISTLE?

Around 250 people had used The Thistle by May, taking more than 2,000 injecting episodes off the streets and into the Hunter Street hub, where healthcare staff give tips on safer injecting, supply fresh equipment, and watch for emergencies.

While there's been a media frenzy around The Thistle, people who were initially wary told Buzz they've had good experiences injecting there. Overdoses have been prevented and lives saved.

"I didn't want to like the place but it's been brilliant," one service user told Buzz. "Staff are dead informative about what's happening on the streets, and I've been able to do washing when using the services. I genuinely felt safe in the building."

"It's been great for me," another said. "I've had multiple overdoses – not sure I'd be alive if I didn't use it. I've started on treatment since going to The Thistle."

Buzz asked people across Scotland with experience of drug use what questions they still had about The Thistle – some had already used it, others wondered what this kind of service might look like in their area.

I'm interested in using The Thistle but have been too nervous to go so far. Do you have any advice?

It can be daunting to walk into unfamiliar clinical spaces for the first time, especially for people who might have faced trauma in healthcare settings.

The Thistle was designed with that in mind, with input from people who use or used drugs advising on everything from colour schemes to how rooms are named.

You're welcome to visit anytime just to see the place – you don't need to use any services.

Do you have to be using facilities like this to inject, or can you go along for a chat with the staff if you need other help?

There's help on-site, from healthcare like GPs and wound care to housing and benefits advice. Staff can also link you to treatment if that's what you want.

You don't need to inject to access support – just walk in. There are also showers, laundry, and a clothes store available at The Thistle.

I found it jarring to have staff come over and speak to me when I was in the using space, almost like I was going to get in trouble, even though they were nice. Is that normal?

Nursing staff are there to keep everyone safe and offer support – if you want it. You might ask for help using the Accuvein device (which helps find a vein) or tips on safer sites.

But if it still feels strange to use in a new setting, remember you can ask for a privacy screen.

The Thistle is open 9am-9pm, 365 days a year at 55 Hunter Street, Glasgow, G4 0UP



Hannah Westwater

Billy McKay



Looking forward

- Plans in progress for NPA qualification in journalism
- Evolving mag: more stories from the ground, more humour, widening distribution
- Multimedia presence: podcasts, social and more

buzz.scot

