

ScottishdrugsForum

Annual Report 2008 > 2009

Director's Report

It has been a very significant year for SDF on a number of fronts. Much effort continues to be placed on repositioning SDF so that we can respond to the changing environment within the field as the Scottish drugs strategy begins to make its influence felt. Work in this area has been helped significantly as a result of the Scottish Government's external review of our organisation, which provided important recommendations on how SDF should move forward.

We are now working to complete a new strategic plan for 2010-2013. One key aspect will involve SDF in looking closely at how we engage with our membership and how we represent those views effectively to policy makers at different levels.

In her report overleaf, SDF Chair Anne Thomson also highlights the areas where we consider we can make the most impact. These include: **supporting frontline services** through our new Quality Development Programme: **enabling users** to make their views, needs and wishes listened to and acted upon more effectively; building upon our acknowledged expertise in the effort to **tackle drug-related deaths** and promoting sustainable **routes out of drug use** through partnership working on employability and housing issues.

We will also actively support the **early intervention** agenda in its widest sense. This will mean focusing on child and family support issues but also continued participation in the effort to prevent and tackle **blood borne viruses**. We will also take forward work spotlighting **older drug users** to encourage a better response to their present and future needs. Determined efforts must be made to **prevent long-term dependency** which, as confirmed by our latest research, severely diminishes the quality and length of life among drug users in their 30s, 40s and over.

The year is also characterised by the loss of several key personalities from SDF ranks. Our Chair, Anne Thomson, steps down after 10 years in the position and it is impossible to adequately express the extent of my sincere gratitude for the skill, energy, wisdom and commitment she has given to us, voluntarily and selflessly, over the period. The past year has also seen the departure of three key members of staff – Graeme McArthur, as East of Scotland Regional Manager; James Egan, former Head of Policy and Practice, and John Campbell, our National Training Officer. All three have played exceptional roles in advancing the important work of SDF and I remain grateful and indebted for their invaluable contribution to this organisation.

David Liddell

Chair's Report

THIS is my final report as chair of Scottish Drugs Forum.

After 10 years in this position, I know that our wide membership base and networks across Scotland and beyond gives SDF a unique overview and depth of understanding of the drug problem at all levels. This, in turn, allows us to speak with a genuinely authoritative voice on what is likely to make, or stand in the way of, much-needed progress.

SDF's influence has been wide and varied, yet the nature of our role as an intermediary body can mean our innovative ideas and contributions go unrecognised once they have been transformed into practical and routine realities.

Some key areas deserve to be mentioned.

Influencing large increases in national investment in Scottish treatment spend: When National Treatment Outcomes Research identified £1 spent on treatment services would save £3 elsewhere, Scotland lagged behind England in making the additional investment necessary for treatment. SDF played a major role in influencing the eventual decision in Scotland to increase investment in the treatment and care route, as a result of significant **briefing and networking** with MSPs and Ministers.

Championing the holistic response to treatment and rehabilitation: SDF has consistently argued strongly that investment is also needed in wider support issues at all stages of problematic drug use, including the establishment of sustainable routes out. SDF was significantly involved in the early stages development of an **employability** programme funded by Scottish Enterprise. This led to the creation of the **New Futures Fund** which had tangible success in helping people with greater obstacles to employment develop skills and confidence in preparation for the job market. A direct example of demonstrating that theory can be translated into practical reality is our own award-winning and highly-praised **Addiction Workers Training Project**, a multi-agency supported programme devised and managed by SDF which employs former drug users for careers in substance use services and the wider social care field.

Tackling drug-related deaths: Figures showing yet another record high for drug-related deaths - breaching the 500-barrier for the first time ever, in 2008 - prove the overwhelming need for action to save lives. SDF's pioneering **Critical Incidents Training** programme - funded by the Scottish Government since 2004 - has now become a core feature of the national response to prevent drug deaths across Scotland despite reservations among the Government of the day about the initial proposal. Similarly, SDF argued strongly for the introduction of the opiate-reversal drug **Naloxone** at a time when most agencies and Government were deeply wary of this approach. The extension of Naloxone provision across Scotland owes an incalculable amount to SDF, which was responsible for proposing the idea in Glasgow, undertaking the **early development work** and generally paving the way for the highly successful local pilots now being followed up across Scotland.

Giving a voice to drug users: Enabling drug users to have a meaningful say in the design, development and delivery of drug treatment and care has been a fundamental objective

of SDF since its inception. **User Involvement (UI)** has now been adopted as an approach not only in the problematic drug use field but also in other areas of health and social care, although this was certainly not always so. Harnessing the insight of users in helping to determine what works - and what doesn't - is a matter of human rights and common sense, and is an approach which must not become an empty gesture.

Improving quality standards: Efforts to tackle Scotland's drugs problem will be critically undermined if drug users are not receiving the best possible services when, where and how they will be most effective. SDF produced fledgling Treatment Quality Standards guidelines in Scotland in 2001 which helped drive the ensuing development and implementation of official national Treatment Quality Standards published in 2006. Looking ahead, SDF has just embarked on a major **National Quality Development Programme for Drug Services**, with the aid of nearly £1 million from the Big Lottery. This will provide practical help and assistance for services so they are better placed to aid individuals trying to overcome drug dependency. Our continuing work as the sole British participant in pan-European research into the **needs of older drug users**, aged 35 plus, is giving clear indications that specialist drug services and wider support agencies must address the particular needs of older people so they are given the hope, motivation and practical assistance to overcome their specific difficulties.

Highlighting underlying causes - poverty and deprivation: One area of which I am particularly proud is SDF's continuing efforts to explore the all-important links between drugs and poverty. In pre-recession days, tackling poverty became largely sidelined in favour of a focus on treatment. It is good to see the debate has been expanding because SDF considers that tackling **income inequality** is, and always will be, integral to the success of social and clinical responses aimed at preventing and treating problematic substance use.

And so we turn to the future.

Latest figures showing there are more than 55,000 problem drug users in Scotland and drug death statistics - all higher than ever before - underline the pressing imperative for effective implementation of the Road to Recovery drugs strategy, focusing on the need to make the individual's route to recovery at the centre of the national response.

This should bring an end to what SDF has always considered the false and meaningless divisions between abstinence and harm reduction in favour of ensuring that whatever works is what matters.

However, it will take a titanic effort to fulfil the strategic vision as the pressures on highly disadvantaged individuals and communities increase in line with those on the public purse.

I take my leave at difficult times, but I move on knowing that SDF is placed better than ever to inspire, innovate and deliver on key aspects of drugs policy and service delivery so that we can all make a difference.

Finally, I must thank the SDF staff, volunteers and SDF Board Members without whose contribution and support my task would have been far more difficult.

Anne Thomson

Highlights of 2008-2009

Improving quality standards

- Established a National Quality Development Programme with the help of nearly £1 million in Big Lottery funding over the next five years. It will support treatment and care services across Scotland
- Undertook the first study in Scotland to explore the scale of older drug users aged 35-plus. The work, part of a wider European study, has examined the views of service users and professionals on this group's current and future needs, with reports to be published in December 2009. The aim is to produce a set of voluntary but influential guidelines to aid service development in Europe, with specific versions for Scotland, Austria, Germany and Poland in mid-2010
- Launched a national project to increase awareness of Hepatitis C prevention in non-drugs voluntary sector organisations which work with vulnerable young people – this focus on early intervention is receiving wide support in the field.

Involving drug users

- Established a new National User Involvement (UI) Group to help improve service quality through peer research, presentations and focus groups. Work to date includes a major study of user views on access to treatment within a Lowlands Health Board area; input to the forthcoming National Needle Exchange Guidelines and also to the 2009 Audit Scotland report into the effectiveness of spending on drug treatment services in Scotland
- Facilitated and supported the National Forum on Drug-related Deaths Service User Forum work on an information leaflet to help those bereaved following a drug-related death
- Gave pro-active support for the appointment of two members of the Edinburgh User Involvement group to the high-level Lothian Drug and Alcohol Strategy Programme Board
- Achieved service user/carer representation on Perth and Kinross Alcohol and Drug Partnership
- Worked in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Drug and Alcohol Action Team/Alcohol and Drug Partnership to set up two new UI groups, based in Stranraer and Dumfries. They are already helping local services formulate local protocols for substitute prescribing
- Supported the work to recruit, train and support a group of nine volunteer peer researchers for a survey on behalf of Glasgow Addiction Service on several National Quality Standards issues

- Provided support to a service user-organised conference on recovery in Lanarkshire
- Supported Lanarkshire User Involvement Group in a locally-commissioned study of substitute prescribing.

Preventing overdose and drug-related death

- Secured a ground-breaking critical incidents training partnership with the British Red Cross (BRC) in Scotland to train first aid "community educators" on overdose prevention and emergency life-saving help to an overdose victim. This is the first national agreement brokered by BRC with a national agency (SDF) to deliver a standardised community-based First Aid training package throughout Scotland
- Broke new ground in providing drug users overdose and suicide risk management training to police custody suite staff in Fife – the content to become part of their training programme
- Contributed overdose prevention and intervention training input as part of a new admissions package for prisoners entering the Scottish Prison Service
- Highlighted links between drug-related deaths and suicide and the need to explore this issue – resulting in membership of the Scottish Government's National Suicide Prevention Strategy Review Group
- In partnership with the Salvation Army, oversaw the delivery of a pilot overdose training project in Perth and Kinross. Service users were involved in the training delivery over six events – 26 parents with drug problems being among those attending
- Played a key role in the establishment of work which will lead to the introduction of a opiate-reversal Naloxone pilot in Edinburgh and Lothians early in 2010.

Promoting routes out of drug use

- Organised the largest intake of trainees - 21 people - for the award-winning Addiction Workers Training Project in 2009 and extended recruitment to include Inverclyde. 15 trainees completed the 2009 intake over the course of the year, with 12 now working in care and other fields.

Supporting parents and families

- Secured Fairer Scotland Fund funding on behalf of Community Health and Care Partnerships in Glasgow for a positive parenting programme (PPP) for drug-using parents and kinship carers
- Helped to develop a carer peer support group now active in Perth and Kinross.

Training and capacity building

- Supported the capacity of voluntary and statutory agencies in Glasgow and Clyde to develop UI practice through support to the area's Service User Involvement (SUI) Partnership. SUI Networks have been created among Community Alcohol Support Services in Glasgow City Council areas and for all treatment services in South East Glasgow Community Health and Care Partnership. Project funding to SDF has been extended for a further year
- Delivered a 'training the trainers' programme to form a network of critical incidents trainers across Edinburgh and the Lothians, developed in partnership with key statutory health agencies and the police
- Delivered research training sessions to peer researchers embarking on new pieces of work, covering research methods, data collection and research planning
- Developed a package of training sessions in partnership with Glasgow Addiction Service, on reducing the harmful risks of drug use.

Conferences, seminars and information

- Developed a paper for the Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Homelessness and Substance Misuse with recommendations for the prevention and alleviation of homelessness among problem drug users
- Organised an inter-agency and service user event in Lanarkshire on the impact of sexual abuse in childhood in developing pathways into substance use
- Hosted a series of highly successful events to highlight latest research, and provide practical workshops on substance use and homelessness – held in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh
- Unveiled latest patterns and trends on drug use in Scotland at our conference in March
- Explored the need for greater links between treatment and responses to drug-related offending at our Drugs and Criminal Justice conference
- Organised a briefing for MSPs on recovery pathways for people with drug problems
- Published a printed mini-version of the online Directory of Scottish Drug Services www.scottishdrugservices.com, directing more people to this website database. A new feature of the online information identifies which treatment services offer mental health support.

Summary of Accounts

	2008 £	2009 £
Total Income	1,242,998	1,282,546
Total Expenditure	1,216,538	1,269,040
Increase/Decrease in Funds in Year	26,460	13,506
Total funds brought forward from previous year	378,692	405,152
Total Funds as at 31 March	405,152	418,658
Allocated as follows:		
Restricted Funds	161,268	170,180
Unrestricted Funds	243,884	248,478
	405,152	418,658

SDF is a member of:

- Scottish Government National Forum on Drug-related Deaths
- Scottish Government National Suicide Prevention Strategy Review Group
- Scottish Government Hepatitis C National Advisory Group, Needle Exchange Guidelines Development Group, Hepatitis C Education, Training and Awareness-Raising Network
- Scottish Government Substance Misuse and Homelessness Working Group and Recommendations sub-group
- Scottish Government Substance Misuse Education Steering Group
- Scottish Government Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIO) Working Group
- Scottish Training on Drugs and Alcohol (STRADA) Project Advisory Board
- European Federation of Professionals Working in the Field of Drug Abuse (ERIT), which supports the work of the European Union
- Correlation – the European network aiming to increase access to health services to marginalised social groups
- European Civil Society Forum on Drugs
- International Drug Policy Consortium
- 10 Drug and Alcohol Action Teams/Alcohol and Drug Partnerships
- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Drug Death Monitoring and Prevention Group
- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Hepatitis C Prevention Network
- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Preventing Risk of Overdose in the Vulnerable Group (PROVE)
- Glasgow Naloxone Pilot Steering and Evaluation Groups
- Glasgow City Drugs and Alcohol Planning & Implementation Group's Communities, Community Planning and Employment, Education & Training sub-groups
- Lothian Drug and Alcohol Strategy Programme Board
- Edinburgh and Lothian Drug and Alcohol Action Team Officers Group
- Edinburgh and Lothian Naloxone pilot steering group
- Edinburgh and Lothian Agency Managers Group
- Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership Joint Commissioning Group
- Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership Local Strategy Group
- Fife Voluntary Sector Managers' Group
- Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Network
- North Lanarkshire Partnership Board
- Joint Services Management Group (Alcohol and Drug Services) South Lanarkshire
- Dumfries and Galloway Naloxone Working Group
- Tayside Drug Related Deaths Group
- Perth and Kinross Drug and Alcohol Forum
- Perth and Kinross Substance Misuse Strategy Implementation Group
- Perth and Kinross Practitioners' Forum Social Work (Vice Chair)

SDF chairs:

- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Voluntary Sector Drug and Alcohol Agencies (co-Chair)
- National Forum on Drug-Related Deaths Service User Forum
- Perth and Kinross Drug and Alcohol Forum's Drug Related Deaths, Service User and Carer sub groups

SDF Director, David Liddell is Joint Secretary to the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Alcohol and Drug Misuse. He sits on the UK Government's Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) and is a member of the Independent Enquiry into Maximising the Recovery from Dependent Drug Use in Scotland.

SDF also co-ordinates, advises and/or facilitates a range of working groups and forums on drug-related issues. These include:

- Coalition of Alcohol and Drugs Agencies in Lothian (CDAAL)
- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Service User Involvement Partnership (SUIP) Steering Group
- National Forum on Drug-related Deaths Service User Forum
- Scottish Needle Exchange Workers Forum

Board members 2008-2009

Chair	Anne Thomson
Treasurer	Gordon Armour
	Alan Glauch
	Audrey Park
	David Johnston
	George Allan
	George Wilson
	Jane Jay
	Liam Wells
	Mary Hepburn
	Maureen Woods
	Oliver Aldridge
	Peter Kelly
	Stephen Birrell
	Stephanie Morrison
	Valerie Corbett

Scottish Drugs Forum staff 2008-2009

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Sean McCollum
Stephen Malloy
Susan Dean
Vicky Anderson
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Scottish Drugs Forum would like to thank the following organisations for their financial support during the year:

Scottish Government

Dumfries and Galloway Drug and Alcohol Action Team
Fife Drug and Alcohol Action Team
Greater Glasgow and Clyde Alcohol and Drug Action Teams
Highland Alcohol and Drug Action Team
Lanarkshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team
Perth and Kinross Drug and Alcohol Action Team

NHS Fife
NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
NHS Highland
NHS Lothian
Glasgow City Council

Big Lottery Fund
Fairer Scotland Fund

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