

# ScottishdrugsForum

## Annual Report 2005 2006

SCOTTISH Drugs Forum is the national voluntary sector membership-based drugs policy and information agency working in partnership to reduce drugs harm in Scotland through:

- Improving awareness and understanding of drugs use issues among all sections of the community
- Developing, promoting and influencing improvements to the range and quality of services to all drug users

SDF networks across a vast spectrum of organisations in Scotland, the UK and Europe in order to learn and assess information on best practice for harm reduction and develop consensus on how best to respond to areas of concern.

This is achieved through:

- membership of organisations such as local Drug Action Teams
- liaison with MSPs, civil servants and all political parties
- participating in and organising of conferences, seminars and working groups
- engaging and empowering drug users and communities affected by drug use
- regular briefings and consultations with our wide membership base

# Chair's Report

It has been a year of contrasts for Scottish Drugs Forum, marked by ground-breaking activity in several areas of our fieldwork but also by depressing indications of a return to a more punitive climate of opinion on issues relating to drug-related harm.

The external debate has been characterised by continuing and very determined attempts to polarise discussion on the drugs response in Scotland to one of abstinence versus harm reduction. This distracts from an important issue – the need for a full range of services which are accessible to people where and when they need it – and does a great disservice to those either seeking help or working very hard in frontline services.

Even more alarmingly, the narrow focus of this manufactured debate has also given unjustifiable succour to the increasingly evident trend of locating the blame – and solutions – for deep-rooted social problems wholly at the door of individuals.

Too many appear to avoid recognising the massive role played by our response to issues much wider than drugs – global economics, post-industrial decline and unemployment – in creating the conditions which allow issues such as problematic drug use to prevail.

We are now seeing the emergence of a culture of “recovery impatience”: the demand for people to move quickly to a drug-free lifestyle while denying the significance of other factors – such as low income and life in neglected communities – which make rapid achievement to a drug-free life impossible for the majority. The links between poverty and problematic drug use were explored in Scottish Drug Forum's major conference of the year, marking the 20th anniversary since our organisation came into being.

The combination of totally unrealistic expectations, along with the demonisation of drug users, is having a trickle-down effect on practice, with “firmer” responses becoming more acceptable.

We are in danger of harking back to the days when those seeking treatment were labelled as feckless and chaotic, deemed as having given up their right to be involved in their own treatment or to be treated with the dignity, respect and quality of care afforded other vulnerable groups in society.

However, we should not lose sight of progress and my thanks go to the Board, staff, volunteers, members, partner agencies, supporters and all who help us in our work.

The development of national quality standards for drug and alcohol treatment in Scotland, the facilitation of ground-breaking user involvement in the National Forum on Drug-related Deaths and the work of the new Social Work Inspection Agency, our guiding role in pioneering work to pilot the distribution of opiate-reversal kits to users and their families, and input to ensure improvements to needle exchange practice were included in the Hepatitis C Action Plan, are among the particular highlights of a year of many other working achievements for SDF detailed elsewhere in this Annual Report.

Nevertheless, the current overall sense is one of defending advances already made, rather than forging ahead with innovative practice. There are early signs of a small but potentially significant rise in HIV rates among injectors being seen in Scotland, England and Ireland – an indication of the danger which lies ahead if we return to the woefully ineffective “Just Say No” battle cries of yesteryear.

What is desperately needed is a little more light and a little less heat on the subject, although this may well be a forlorn hope as the political stakes increase in the run up to the Holyrood elections in 2007. We can but hope otherwise.

**Anne Thomson**

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# Director's Report

CHALLENGING and intensive – these were the watchwords for Scottish Drugs Forum's activities in our 20th anniversary year.

SDF continued to spearhead debate and action on a wide variety of issues throughout what has been an almost unprecedented 12 months in terms of range and volume of policy and field work.

It is of great satisfaction that SDF, now widely-regarded as a key player in driving forward the response to Scotland's drug problem, is seeing so many of our ideas and suggestions being translated into tangible projects which we hope will be of benefit to all those involved in providing and receiving treatment and care.

Key bodies of work undertaken by staff and SDF user involvement volunteers and adult trainees during the past year included:

- undertaking the fieldwork consultation element on behalf of the Scottish Executive's Review of the Role of Methadone in Treatment
- organising the first-ever service user consultation element of the Social Work Inspection Agency's first thematic inspection of substance misuse services in Gampian
- taking part in a Scottish Executive pilot of the new Quality Service Standards through a service user evaluation of five voluntary organisations in Glasgow to examine how the new Standards could be used in practice

We also:

- **drove forward the effort to prevent deaths through overdose via:**
  - lead work on development of opiate-reversal (Naloxone) pilots for users and carers in Glasgow and Lanarkshire
  - festive overdose prevention campaigns in NHS Greater Glasgow and the former NHS Argyll & Clyde areas
  - the continued roll-out of overdose prevention training among frontline workers, users and carers across Scotland
- **continued the focus on routes out of problem drug use through:**
  - the success of SDF's Glasgow-based Addiction Workers Training Project which prepares former problem users for careers in the social care sector
  - exploring the possibility of extending the project to Edinburgh
  - our latest publication, Methadone at Work: Guidance for Employers

- **negotiated the expansion of the User Involvement philosophy through:**

- managing the input of a Service User Forum to the National Forum on Drug-related Deaths
- initiating discussion on establishing a User Involvement Group in Edinburgh
- assisting the establishment of a new User Involvement Development Officer in Perth and Kinross
- stimulating debate and highlighting important issues of concern in key policy areas via high profile media activity

One of our main highlights was our keynote conference which looked at the links between poverty and drugs. This theme has underpinned the policy focus for SDF since its inception in 1986 but we felt it appropriate to re-examine the issues surrounding probably the single biggest root cause for the scale of Scotland's drug problem.

It is rewarding to note that others have warmed to this theme – for example, the National Drug Treatment Conference, the foremost event of its kind in the UK, will explore Social Exclusion, Poverty and Drugs in March 2007. SDF will continue this strand of work in conjunction with key partner agencies throughout the year ahead too, including Scotland's Futures Forum, which seeks to stimulate public debate on how to prepare for the future challenges.

Aside from our positive contribution to the recently published Hepatitis C Action Plan, SDF developed innovative training for frontline workers dealing with needle exchange (NX) functions, in conjunction with NHS Greater Glasgow Health Promotions.

With no formal education or qualifications on safer injecting techniques currently available, this work helps tackle a significant gap in training and should be an important tool in the battle against deaths through bloodborne viruses acquired through injecting drug use.

A key challenge for the coming year will be to support the momentum of the new service quality standards as they are implemented. So too will be continuing the effort to counterbalance the widespread prejudice against problem drug users which, at both national policy and local service delivery levels, has such a detrimental effect on reducing Scotland's drug-related harm.

**David Liddell**

# Summary of Key Activities 2005-2006

## Policy development

- Initiated refreshed focus on links between poverty and problem drug use which will lead to further public policy discussion in 2007
- Proposed and led the management of multi-agency planning for the first overdose-reversal (Naloxone) pilot in Glasgow, due to start early 2007, including arranging a fact-finding trip to a similar project in Chicago, USA
- Supported the successful proposal for a Naloxone pilot in Lanarkshire in 2006
- Appointed to the National Forum on Drug-related Deaths
- Involved in the Aberlour Child Care Trust Think Tank which examined child welfare issues arising from problematic drug use among parents
- Attended key conferences to promote early intervention, intensive social support and improved inter-service linkage to reduce harm among families impacted by problem drug use
- Held membership consultations on the proposed Home Office limits on thresholds for possession of drugs and on the proposed Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Bill for Scotland
- Took part in the international consultation on how the EU and Civil Society Green Paper – how the EU should engage better with non-government agencies and individuals
- Contributed to the UK Drugs and Health Alliance Group's discussion on approaches to the UK drug strategy

## Treatment and care

- Played key supporting roles leading to the establishment of the first Quality Standards for drug and alcohol services in Scotland
- Appointed to the new Hepatitis C Action Plan Working Group and its sub-committees on Prevention, and Education, Training and Awareness-raising
- Devised and delivered innovative training on safer injecting and needle exchange work for frontline needle exchange staff and pharmacists, within the Glasgow area
- Devised an overdose awareness campaign delivered to service users across Glasgow and Argyll and Clyde over the 2005 festive period, in conjunction with local statutory and voluntary agencies. Preparations have been made for a follow-up event in Glasgow for the 2006/2007 festive season

## Involving users and carers

- Facilitating Service User Forum input to the National Forum on Drug-related Deaths
- Began the evaluation, through peer research interviews, of the effectiveness of colour-coded syringe markers for Glasgow Addiction Service's pilot scheme to reduce blood-borne viruses
- Assisted in the creation of a User Involvement Development Officer post in Perth and Kinross
- Undertook 50 peer interviews as part of the Draft National Quality Standards to evaluate the measurability of the proposed standards

- Undertook research with local service users for, and presented findings to major agencies, on two surveys – the Easter Ross Needle Exchange Survey, in partnership with NHS Highland Needle Exchange Services and Highland Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Inverness Service User Consultation Report
- Assisted continued user involvement representation at Inverness and Nairn Drug and Alcohol Forums
- Service users facilitated workshops at separate SDF and NHS conferences on the links between Public Health, Poverty and Substance Misuse
- Provided a user group presentation featuring local service user research to a multi-agency event in the Highlands focusing on how to offer a holistic approach to those accessing drug and/or alcohol services

## Promoting routes out of drug use

- Supported a second intake of students for the Addiction Workers Training Project. Nine trainees have moved on to employment and seven have completed SVQ 2 Health and Social Care and are moving on to SVQ 3
- Published Methadone at Work: Guidance to Employers, to dispel myths and provide information to employers who employ, or are considering employing, someone on a methadone programme

## Engaging communities affected by drug use

- Assisted the Scottish Network for Families Affected by Drugs through mentoring the work of its new Co-ordinator
- Completed a peer research exercise in Drumchapel exploring the factors that contribute to poor mental health in young people
- Helped establish Drumchapel Drug and Alcohol Forum, providing development training days and running a community football event
- Assisted in the creation of the West Glasgow Grandparents Support Group
- Assisted the Dumbarton Road Corridor Addiction Week in June 2006
- Assisted Dumbarton Road Corridor Addiction Forum to achieve full charitable status
- Assisted in the Safe Highlander 2006 community safety event, attended by approximately 1800 Primary 7 children from across Highland

## Training and capacity building

- Provided drug information, awareness and drug policy training to more than 800 individuals through more than 88 events – including training for staff on the Know The Score helpline
- Topics include Drugs and Young People, Working with People who use Drugs, Barriers to Employment, Cocaine Awareness, Groupwork Skills, Basic Drug Awareness, Dual Diagnosis (mental illness and problem drug use) and information on Methadone
- Delivered overdose prevention and emergency first aid training sessions to family and carer groups and around 200 service users in Community and Residential Rehabilitation Services, Homelessness, Hostel and Supported Accommodation services, Drug Testing and Treatment Orders schemes, a Residential Drug Crisis Intervention Unit and employability projects

- Arranged training-the-trainers sessions for trainers to cascade information on preventing overdose and emergency first aid. These have been delivered to the Scottish Prison Service, nearly 70 criminal justice workers in North and South Lanarkshire, voluntary and statutory treatment services in Aberdeen, Drug Treatment and Testing Orders staff in Lanarkshire, Fife and Inverclyde and drug workers in Glasgow and Edinburgh
- Delivered 16 educational events to hard-to-reach young people from the Princes Trust and young people excluded from school
- Supported the successful extension of service provision for Information and Communications Technology Capacity Building for voluntary sector drug agencies in Glasgow
- Started work on the development of a training-the-trainers manual to help deliver overdose awareness training sessions
- Developed and installed databases used by all major voluntary drug services projects in Glasgow – to produce Waiting Times information, Purchased Services Monitoring Data and individual service Management Information
- Developed and installed membership/call recording databases for family support groups
- Provided ongoing IT infrastructure support for email, web sites, hardware /software purchasing and installation to voluntary sector drug agencies in Glasgow
- Submitted proposals to the Scottish Executive for SDF to assist in the expansion of IT capacity building to voluntary sector drug agencies across Scotland

## Conferences, seminars, briefings

- Held three major conferences which examined the links between drugs and poverty, drug users 'resistant' to treatment and the heroin-prescribing issue, and latest trends and responses to the rise in cocaine use in Scotland
- Organised the field consultation element – through focus groups of families and carers and open meetings – of the Scottish Executive's Review of the Role of Methadone in Treatment in Glasgow, Inverness, Dundee, Edinburgh, Fife, Dumfries, Lanarkshire and Kilmarnock
- Supported the initiation of a series of seminars led by Glasgow Addiction Services and Ayrshire and Arran Alcohol and Drug Action Teams to raise awareness of developments within the drugs field for voluntary and statutory sector managers and directors

## Research

- Provided analysis and presentation of SDF user research work for the Easter Ross Needle Exchange Survey and the Inverness Service User Consultation Report which looked at service accessibility locally
- Assisted in a study of nutrition and dietary needs in Drumchapel to examine their links with drug and alcohol problems
- Undertook a major literature review as a springboard for development of further work to understand links between drugs and poverty

# Summary of Accounts

	2005 £	2006 £
Total Income	1,134,695	1,221,586
Total Expenditure	1,184,244	1,156,784
Increase/Decrease in Funds in Year	-49,549	64,802
Total funds brought forward from previous year	165,281	115,682
Total Funds as at 31 March	115,682	180,484
Allocated as follows:		
Restricted Funds	85,088	88,545
Unrestricted Funds	30,594	91,939
	<b>115,682</b>	<b>180,484</b>

## SDF is a member of:

- Scottish Advisory Committee on Drug Misuse (SACDM)
- National Forum on Drug-related Deaths
- The Hepatitis C Action Plan Co-ordinating Group
- Scottish Executive Substance Misuse and Homelessness Working Group
- Quality Standards Steering Group for Substance Misuse Services in Scotland
- Scottish Executive National Communications Group
- Drug Treatment and Testing Order National Steering Group in Scotland
- Social Work Inspection Agency Steering Group for multi-agency Substance Misuse Services Inspections
- UK Drugs and Health Alliance Group
- 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
- International Drug Policy Consortium
- Greater Glasgow Drug Death Monitoring and Prevention Group
- Greater Glasgow and Clyde Hepatitis C Action Plan Working Group
- 14 Drug and Alcohol Action Teams
- South and North Lanarkshire Joint Futures Implementation Group
- Lanarkshire Naloxone Pilot Working Group
- Lanarkshire Homelessness Strategy Team Steering Group
- Fife Overdose Intervention Training Group
- Tayside Overdose Awareness Training Development Group

## SDF chairs:

- Policy Development Group of Action on Alcohol and Drugs in Edinburgh
- Greater Glasgow Drug Death Working Group Preventing Overdose Campaign sub-group
- Scottish Arrest Referral Workers Forum
- Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Network
- Glasgow Voluntary Sector Drug Agencies
- Drug and Alcohol Independent Sector Ayrshire

SDF Director David Liddell is Joint Secretary to the Scottish Parliament's Cross-Party Group on Alcohol and Drug Misuse. He is President of ERIT, an association of umbrella organisations working in the drug field in Europe.

SDF has observer status on the Scottish Association of Drug and Alcohol Action Teams (SADAAT) and also co-ordinates and advises a range of working groups and forums on drug-related issues, including:

- National Forum on Drug-related Deaths Service User Forum
- Scottish Needle Exchange Workers Forum
- Scottish Network for Families Affected by Drugs
- Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Network
- Lothian Coalition of Drug Agencies
- National Voluntary Sector Forum

## Board members 2005-2006

Chair	Anne Thomson
Treasurer	Gordon Armour
	Angela Roberts
	Dana O'Dwyer
	Ellen Donnelly
	George Allan
	George Wilson
	Liam Wells
	Lucy Cockayne
	Mark Cresswell
	Mary Hepburn
	Max Cruickshank
	Peter Anderson
	Sarah Harris
	Sean McCollum
	Stephen Birrell
	Thomas Munro
	Valerie Corbett

## Scottish Drugs Forum staff

April Shaw  
Biba Brand  
Catriona Gibson  
Claire Giblin  
David Liddell  
Eleanor McDermott  
Graeme McArthur  
Graham Mackintosh  
Irene Hendry  
Isabel Dunsmuir  
James Egan  
Joan Currie  
John Campbell  
Katharine Ronald  
Ken Butler  
Lisa McKibben  
Michael Griffin  
Nina Semple  
Pat Greenhough  
Patrick McVey  
Stuart Anderson  
Susan Dean

## Scottish Drugs Forum would like to thank the following organisations for their financial support during the year:

Scottish Executive

Fife Drug & Alcohol Action Team  
Greater Glasgow Drug Action Team  
Highland Drug & Alcohol Action Team  
Lanarkshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team

NHS Fife  
NHS Greater Glasgow  
NHS Lothian

Glasgow City Council

Big Lottery  
Robertson Trust  
British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership Community Regeneration Fund

**ScottishdrugsForum**

Registered Charity Number: 106295

Scottish Drugs Forum [www.sdf.org.uk](http://www.sdf.org.uk)  
Glasgow: 91 Mitchell Street, Glasgow G1 3LN Tel 0141 221 1175  
Edinburgh: 139 Morrison Street, EH3 8AJ Tel 0131 221 9300