



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

16 January 2018

Dear Home Secretary,

Safer Drug Consumption Facility (SDCF) Pilot

As a cross-party group of Scottish MPs, we have grave concerns about the escalating problem of drug injecting on Scotland's streets, and the associated public health impacts.

Glasgow saw a significant increase in HIV cases in 2015, with 47 diagnoses compared to an annual average of 10, for those who inject drugs. In addition, there are thought to be around 500 people actively injecting drugs in public places in Glasgow City Centre on a regular basis. This is not just a problem for those taking drugs; rising drug consumption on our streets has a detrimental effect on the general public through discarded needles, drug paraphernalia and associated public disorder.

It is clear that the drug injecting population – such as those in my own constituency of Glasgow Central – face a number of barriers in accessing health services. What is required therefore is a solution that has been developed at the front line, by those who deal with issues relating to drug misuse and drug litter on a daily basis. Proposals for a Safer Drug Consumption Facility (SDCF) are just that, having been cultivated by a range of experts, including medical professionals at Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership (GCHSCP).

SDCFs are a safe and clean environment where people can consume drugs under the supervision of trained medical professionals. Their aim is to reduce the damaging effects associated with drug use, whilst assisting people to access appropriate support services to meet their needs. The model proposed by GCHSCP would incorporate both allowing people to bring in their own drugs and Heroin-assisted treatment (HAT), which involves providing prescribed heroin under strict supervision to people with long-standing addictions who have not been able to stop using drugs.

Alison Thewliss MP

SNP Member of Parliament for Glasgow Central

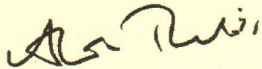
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There are now more than 90 SDCFs in operation worldwide, and there is a large body of evidence to support the notion that these facilities, along with HAT, help to reduce the health and social consequences of public injecting. In addition, SDCFs and HAT have been shown to reduce the sharing of needles, improve access to addiction services, and reduce criminal activity associated with public injecting.

There were 170 drug-related deaths recorded in Glasgow in 2016, and a record total of 867 across Scotland, making it plain to see that the situation for drug users and the wider public is not an improving picture, and that an innovative solution is required. To this end, we are writing to you today to urge you to consider an amendment to the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act, to allow for the introduction and evaluation of a SDCF / HAT pilot in Glasgow City Centre, to help address the multifarious burdens caused by public drug use.

The cross-party consensus on this issue patently demonstrates that there is a real desire for meaningful action, and we very much hope you will give this request the serious consideration that it deserves.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Thewliss MP

Hannah Bardell MP

Mhairi Black MP

Ian Blackford MP

Kirsty Blackman MP

Deidre Brock MP

Alan Brown MP

Joanna Cherry MP

Ronnie Cowan MP

Angela Crawley MP

Martin Docherty MP

Stephen Gethins MP

Patrick Grady MP

Neil Gray MP

Drew Hendry MP

Christine Jardine MP

Stephen Kerr MP

Ged Killen MP

Chris Law MP

David Linden MP

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Ian Murray MP

Gavin Newlands MP

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Jamie Stone MP

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