

INTERNATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH 2018: OUR PROCLAMATION

We are losing friends, family members and colleagues to addictions and suicide. In 2017, 934 people died from drug use related causes, 1,235 people died from alcohol related causes and 680 people died from suicide in Scotland. This is not acceptable. While these deaths represent only the tip of the iceberg of our collective distress, so many more people are living lives of quiet desperation and mental distress, society and services are struggling to respond.

The organisations and Individuals that support this proclamation realise that many of the major health challenges we face are, in fact, not separate issues but different manifestations of our collective distress. We know we numb our distress with alcohol and drugs. We know that overwhelmed emotional and physical coping mechanisms result in mental and physical health problems. We know that our quiet desperation is often soothed with smoking and overeating. We are neither criminals nor weak minded; we are human beings having a very human response to the growing tragedy of personal traumas exacerbated by alienation from power, and disconnection in the community.

We believe we need not feel disempowered in the face of these public health challenges but that we need to radically widen the scope of our efforts to address them. The very individuals that are affected by these challenges have been taking action to create parts of the solution themselves. We have been reclaiming our feeling lives. We have been creating more vibrant and compassionate relationships with each other. We have been building supportive community groups to help us all cope, get stronger and more resilient. There are now over 120 visible addiction recovery community groups and uncounted numbers of community wellbeing groups, led by citizens with personal experience of the recovery journey.

We have joined together as addiction recovery and mental health communities in order to draw the public attention to the number of people we are losing. We want people to make a direct and feeling connection with the scale of loss. We also want to equip the public to challenge the stigma attached to addiction and mental health problems that directly contributes to these deaths. On the occasion of International Recovery Month 2018, we make the following urgent requests of the people of Scotland and their elected representatives, we ask:

- Scottish Government to declare a public health emergency- the scale of loss to substances and suicide is a crisis for all of us, not just government organisations. It will take community and government working together to extend the scope of our responses. We all need to be equally empowered in creating ways forward.
- Everyone to rebel against hatred and stigma. We must take personal responsibility for developing our kindness and compassion. An atmosphere of greater kindness directly improves everyone's well being, not just those of us affected by alcohol, drug and mental health problems.
- That you join the rebellion of compassionate communities; help us change stigma to respect by walking in solidarity and friendship with us at Recovery Walk Scotland 2018, on September 15th in Glasgow.

Proclamation Supporters

Forth Valley ADP

Highland ADP

Jericho Houses

Scottish Families

Landed Peer Education Service

Scottish Health Action On Alcohol Problems

The Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland

Scottish Prison Service Chaplaincy Service

Triratna Buddhist Community: Glasgow

Change Grow Live in Scotland

FASS

Recovery Films CIC

Salvation Army Centre for Addiction Services and Research

Minority Communities Addiction Support Services (MCASS)

Whiteinch Transformation

Families Affected by Murder and Suicide (FAMS)

Drugs Research Network

Addaction Scotland

PARTNER

Alcohol Focus Scotland

Forth Valley Recovery Community

Rosemount lifelong learning family links women's group

CrossReach

CREW 2000

Phoenix Futures

First For Fife

Serenity Café (Comas)

CORRA Foundation

Glasgow East Alcohol Project

Recovering Justice

Restoration Fife

Drink Wise Age Well

Edinburgh ADP

Camglen Radio

Recovery Walk Scotland

Scottish Recovery Consortium

Partnership for Action on Drugs and Alcohol in Scotland
- Communities Sub Group

Scottish Drugs Forum

Happy and Healthy Rutherglen and Cambuslang

Argyll and Bute ADP

South Lanarkshire ADP

Recovery Ayr

