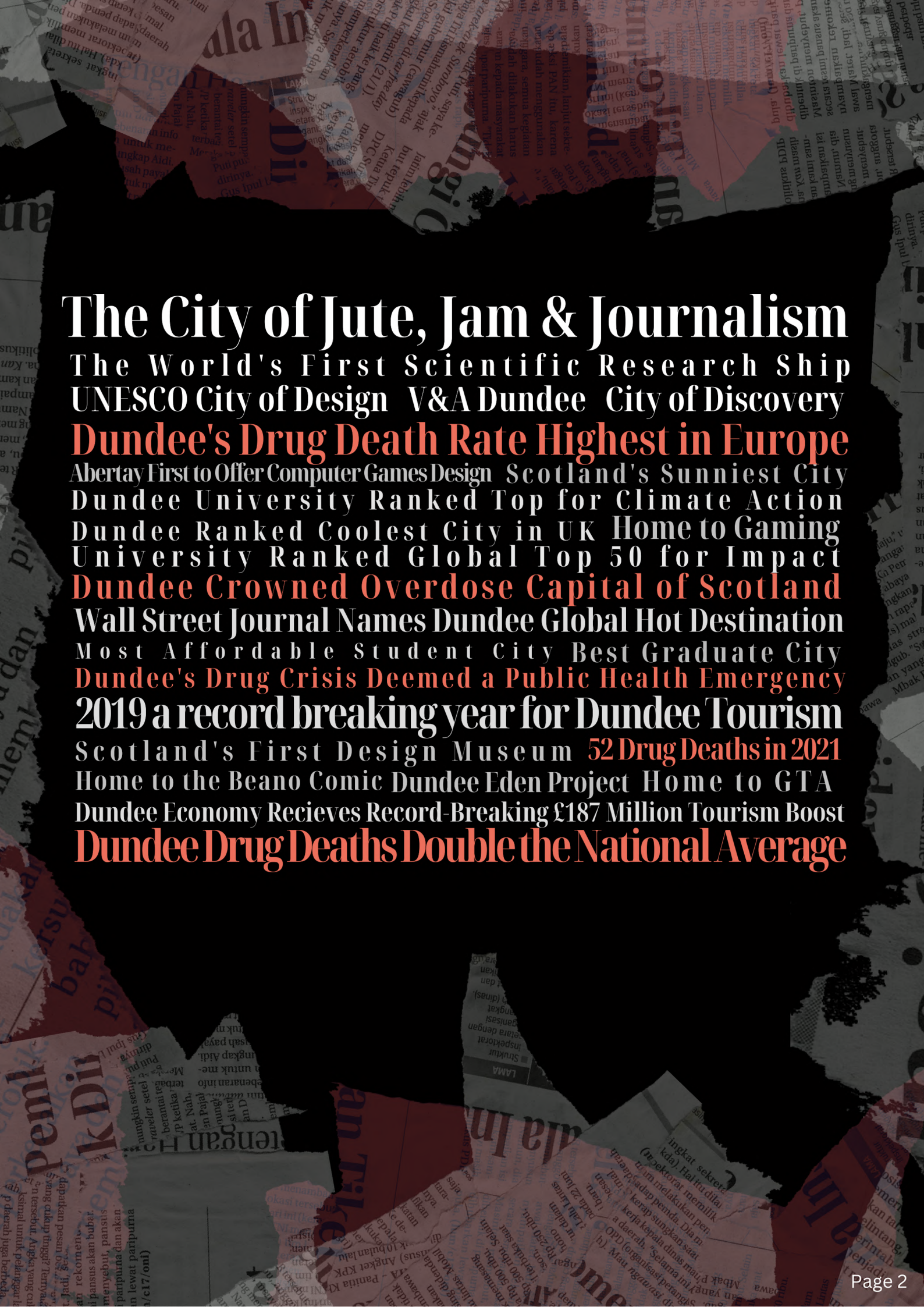


A UNIVERSITY WITH **SOCIAL PURPOSE**: A CITY IN **SOCIAL CRISIS**

Presenting a framework for the future that harnesses our institutional potential to advance progress in overcoming the drug crisis in Dundee and beyond.

Drafted by Cameron Irons | Drug Crisis Student Working Group | 2023


The City of Jute, Jam & Journalism
The World's First Scientific Research Ship
UNESCO City of Design V&A Dundee City of Discovery
Dundee's Drug Death Rate Highest in Europe
Abertay First to Offer Computer Games Design Scotland's Sunniest City
Dundee University Ranked Top for Climate Action
Dundee Ranked Coolest City in UK Home to Gaming
University Ranked Global Top 50 for Impact
Dundee Crowned Overdose Capital of Scotland
Wall Street Journal Names Dundee Global Hot Destination
Most Affordable Student City Best Graduate City
Dundee's Drug Crisis Deemed a Public Health Emergency
2019 a record breaking year for Dundee Tourism
Scotland's First Design Museum 52 Drug Deaths in 2021
Home to the Beano Comic Dundee Eden Project Home to GTA
Dundee Economy Recieves Record-Breaking £187 Million Tourism Boost
Dundee Drug Deaths Double the National Average

CONTENTS TABLE

CONTENT DISCLAIMERS.....PAGE 5

INTRODUCTION.....PAGE 6

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....PAGE 8

RAISING AWARENESS.....PAGE 9

ONGOING WORK.....PAGE 12

ADVANCING THE PROGRESS.....PAGE 15

FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE.....PAGE 16

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS.....PAGE 19

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.....PAGE 40

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT.....PAGE 41

CHARITABLE PARTNERSHIPS.....PAGE 59

STUDENT COMMUNITY.....PAGE 60

STUDENT VOICE.....PAGE 63

STUDENT ACTIVITY.....PAGE 83

DUSA RECOMMENDATIONS.....PAGE 86

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.....PAGE 95

OTHER UNIVERSITIES.....PAGE 97

DUSA STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT.....PAGE 99

SHORT-TERM REQUESTS.....PAGE 105

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.....PAGE 106

RAISING AND GIVING.....PAGE 107

CONCLUSION.....PAGE 109

STUDENT WORKING GROUP.....PAGE 110

RESOURCES.....PAGE 111

The way drug addiction is treated is disturbing, the way we have dehumanized drug users. It is such a heart breaking story for so many, and it is a crisis that people suffer deeply and endure alone. Drug addiction may still be an offence on paper, but inaction, indifference and ignorance is the true crime.



CONTENT DISCLAIMERS

Use of Drugs

Please be advised that under no circumstances do we condone, encourage or support the use of illegal substances. This project and our recommendations are not designed in a way that suggests drug use is acceptable. Whilst much of our content and the resources highlighted focus on recovery and harm reduction, it is still important to note that drug possession, dealing and misuse remains a criminal offence under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and other statutory frameworks across the United Kingdom.

Content Warning

Some content within this paper and our campaign material has potential to cause emotional distress and upset. Our content showcases certain statistics and quotations from real people across society that some readers may find alarming or emotional. It is not our intention to cause these feelings, but if you are negatively impacted, we kindly welcome feedback or invite you to contact our working group for support.

Support Available

If you or someone you know is struggling with drug misuse and addiction, or if you have been impacted by drug abuse in any way, there is a wide range of support services that can offer advice and support. Below is a list of some services and organisations that can assist you or someone you know.

With You Dundee

Recovery UK

Favor UK

NHS Inform

Scottish Families

University Student Services

DUSA Advice and Support



INTRODUCTION

There seems to be two sides to the city of Dundee. This is certainly a commonly shared perception. One side that is thriving, regenerating and full of exciting prospects. The other side is much more harrowing. A devastating drug epidemic that cuts deep and gives Dundee a sinister accolade on a European scale. Drug addiction is an illness, a crippling desperation, and it often brings a sense of emptiness – leaving people devoid of hope for the future and fulfilment. There is quite simply nothing more sad. There are of course a range of factors contributing to drug addiction, some of those factors are clear, but others are far deeper and beyond our immediate considerations.

Despite wider and historical perceptions, drug addiction is simply not a choice. Society is mercifully, albeit slowly, beginning to take this view, but we are far from where we need to be. I maintain a vehement position that drug addiction is an illness - it is a personal crisis like no other. We urgently need to move towards a kinder, more compassionate, and more hopeful society if things are to ever change for good. These victims of drug abuse are our neighbours, our friends, our loved ones, and they ultimately deserve better.

With Dundee in particular, there are renewed calls to action. A call for collaborative leadership and revived services with kindness, compassion, and hope as the central focus. A prioritisation of better services, a commitment to eradicating stigma and evolving the culture we live in. For those of us who know of the devastating drug crisis within our Scottish communities, you will know this is a heart-breaking and sombre period in Scottish history. You will also know we are behind in the progress towards ending this crisis and addressing root causes. I acknowledge this is an issue rarely touched upon in university settings. Some may argue this is not relevant to a university. To put it plainly, this should be our problem. This ought to be everyone's problem across every corner of society. This is a national crisis that plights our country beyond belief, and so, this is a national mission that demands widespread effort and compassion from all of us. That effort and responsibility, in my view, must extend to students and universities much more than we have ever seen before, particularly in Dundee.

I envisage the potential of our student community and surrounding universities taking a more leading role in directing much needed focus towards this crisis. I fundamentally believe the University of Dundee are best placed to rise to this challenge. We already have a social responsibility as a higher education institution, as a civic society actor, and we already have strong links embedded within Dundee. We have already taken steps in this space as a University, but it has been in a decentralised fashion. We have done so in scientific and psychological fields, analysing and contributing to the issues around addiction and overdoses. We have also seen national progress; but we have also seen frustrated third sector activists calling for more action and quicker action. We have seen the documentaries, the news reports and we have had the taskforces, the forums and the partnership groups.

The question then must be...what more can be done? To convey the University mission in the way that I understand it, we are a community that strives to transform lives through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge. We do this with a core focus of having genuine social purpose in everything we do. Whilst our institutional impact is far reaching, we still identify ourselves as a University of the city, but crucially, for the city. Through examining this strategic wording, one can reasonably conclude that we must do more for the community around us. We have a duty to do so. We have a strategy that enables it.

Our community action project focuses on this very concept. We are a University with social purpose, and our city is in social crisis. This is not a mere awareness campaign either, and whilst we do intend on raising more awareness than ever before amongst students and higher education communities, we are proposing a framework of recommendations that goes beyond this. We have spoken to our community, we have examined what measures are achievable, we have assessed potentially impactful ideas when looking upon every element of progress being made internally and externally. These are recommendations for future consideration, and we are imploring academics, senior managers, students and the wider public to continue this work and maintain crucial momentum. We genuinely hope these proposals and our messaging is embraced by the stakeholders that can make our calls to action a reality. There is a clear gap to be filled, there is a chance for progress to be advanced, diversified and widened through harnessing the power of institutions like ours. We have the means, the people and the potential to make that difference.

We have also dedicated recommendations for our own student community in a separate strategy, and around rather different issues with drugs. We firmly believe much more can be done around drug harm reduction and fostering a culture of support and safety for students - unique to our population. We have an incredibly able students' association (DUSA) that can and should open up conversations around drugs, to encourage safe use where use is inevitable, and many other new initiatives. There is also no reason why this independent student organisation cannot assist the wider cities efforts, to augment our University proposals and work in collaboration with external partners.



Cameron Irons
Project Director & Report Author
Postgraduate Diploma Student in Legal Practice

This is a project founded on the values of kindness, compassion and hope, but we will drive it forward with social purpose and cross-collaboration. It is time for us to be genuinely open to new ideas and truly realise our Universities talent and purpose like never before.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE CRISIS



The extent of the national and local drug-death crisis is harrowing. It is a human tragedy that cannot go ignored. Every drug death is a needless death. Dundee itself is the drug death capital of Europe, and we have double the rate of overdose deaths than the Scottish average, with the Scottish rate being four times higher than the rest of the UK.

THE PROGRESS

Dundee progress has been somewhat promising in recent years. We have had a government sanctioned drug death taskforce, two commission reports and various partnership forums look to address our unique challenges. That being said, Scotland are well behind in progress and the problems are still very much prevalent.

ADVANCING PROGRESS

We truly believe our University and student community can work with each other and partners across Dundee to advance progress in a plethora of ways. Our framework of recommendations will not eradicate drug deaths, but they can contribute to advancing progress and showcasing our social purpose.

THE STUDENT COMMUNITY

Students have a responsibility to society beyond their academic journeys. Our students are richly diverse and enthusiastic about community outreach and getting involved in societal causes that matter to them. We should utilise this power and start those much needed conversations, raise awareness and make genuine cultural change. We must also seek to focus on a harm reduction within our own student population.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

UNIVERSITY FOCUS

- **Development of a University Drug Crisis Oversight Committee**
- **Development of an Inter-Disciplinary Drug Crisis Research Network**
- **Development of a Community Education Programme**
- **Introduction of a Voluntary City Outreach Scheme**
- **Introduction of an Annual University Week of Remembrance**

DUSA FOCUS

- **Introduce an Official DUSA Harm Reduction Policy**
- **Develop Online and Physical Resources on Drug Safety and Support**
- **Support All Student-led Drug-Safety and Harm Reduction Campaigns**
- **Offer Educational Events on Various Aspects of Drug Harm Reduction**
- **Help Raise Rwareness on the Dundee Drug Crisis**

RAISING AWARENESS

> Dundee hailed drug death capital of Europe

Whilst Dundee hold the longstanding title of Europe's drug capital, the drug crisis is very much a national health emergency. The true extent of the pain and suffering this crisis inflicts on our society cannot easily be presented through a statistical lens, though the summary below presents the harshest of facts that need to be known by all of us.



Scotland's drug-death rate is the

Worst in Europe

with Dundee's' drug-death rate highest in Scotland

The Scottish drug-death rate is

4 Times Higher

compared to England & Wales

65% of victims aged between **35 and 54**

Dundee drug-related deaths **more than twice** the Scottish average

Scottish drug-related hospital admissions **trebled** in last 20 years

60% of Dundee's drug victims **died alone**

People in the most deprived areas of Dundee are

15.3 times more likely

to die from drug misuse

> Recovery activists have been telling us for years, 'you keep talking, we keep dying'. Tragically, to our shame, they are right -Scottish MSP

52

human lives lost to drug addiction in Dundee in 2021

They're not junkies, they're our neighbours

Across Scotland

934 lives lost to drugs in 2017
1,187 lives lost to drugs in 2018
1,264 lives lost to drugs in 2019
1,339 lives lost to drugs in 2020
1,330 lives lost to drugs in 2021

Behind every statistic is a real person, someone who was loved and valued, someone who needlessly died



RAISING AWARENESS

Rationale

Raising awareness and pursuing greater education are powerful methods of bringing about change. As an integral starting point, more people across our society need exposed to information on the drug challenges, the realities and the root causes. This will inevitably work to change alter perceptions, reduce prejudice and harmful attitudes towards those who suffer with drug addiction. We believe that greater awareness around the many issues relating to this crisis will work towards a kinder, more compassionate and more hopeful society. Local and national authorities recognise the problem, but the wider population need to join this fight and establish a culture that accelerates progress and brings about lasting reform.

Outcomes

The more we talk about these issues, the more we end stigma and form a culture fit for the times we live in. If students and the wider community alike open discussions, consider the factors and analyse the complex issues, we can stimulate more solutions and deeper passion. As things stand, this topic remains uncomfortable and misguided. If a university community like Dundee comes together and harnesses our cross-boundary potential, the outcomes are immeasurably promising and could genuinely make a difference in transforming lives. We can raise this awareness in many ways, including new methods not yet trialled. What is clear, however, is we need to start from the ground up. This will take years, but the time to start raising awareness and ending stigma must start now.

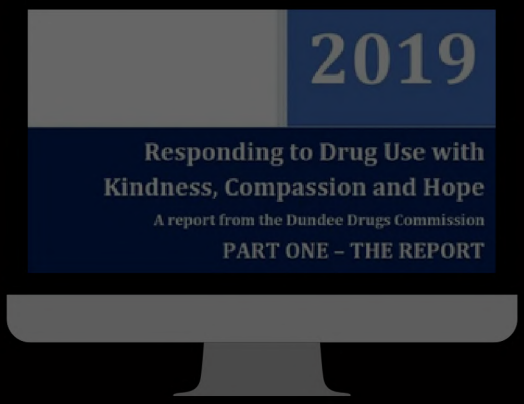
By applying a term like 'junkie', we strip people of their individual humanity. We're freer then to disengage from our usual human empathy... We cast drug addicts out of that web of 'guid-neeborliness'. It must be a cold city to be in, once you've crossed that line.

Sourced from an opinion piece by Alistair Heather
Columnist | The Courier



DUNDEE DRUG CRISIS ONGOING WORK

Now more than ever, local and national bodies are recognising that after decades of this shameful epidemic, it is now time for the values of kindness, compassion and hope to rest at the forefront of this challenge. These core values are intended to apply to every corner of the work involved in addressing this crisis, including within health and social care, recovery services , third sector activity and community and media engagement.



Dundee City Council convened an expert commission to address the worsening drug-death crisis. The 2019 report called for radical reforms to treatment and support, with a focus on the surrounding stigma and cultural barriers. Their proposals highlighted the need for strong leadership, but admission was made to the fact that national policy and legislation would need to change for the outcomes to be fully realised.

Notable Recommendations

Recommendation 2: Challenge and eliminate stigma towards people who experience problems with drugs, and their families, across Dundee to ensure that everyone is treated in a professional and respectful manner.

Recommendation 3: Language Matters: People who experience problems with drugs are part of our communities - let's make them feel like that.

Recommendation 6: Learning from the things that have gone wrong - attention to continuous improvement to benefit others who are vulnerable.

Recommendation 14: Address the root causes of drug problems.



Fathers, mothers, sons and daughters are dying as a result of drugs. As a father, i can't think of a greater pain.

John Alexander
Leader of Dundee City Council

DUNDEE PARTNERSHIP FORUM

In 2019, the CEO of Dundee Council hosted 132 delegates that formed the 'Dundee Partnership Forum'. The forum was made up of community representatives, people with lived experiences, family members of those with lived experiences, voluntary and private sectors, public staff, councillors and MSPs.

> ***A community approach and active involvement with all stakeholders is the key to real change.***

The Need for the Forum?

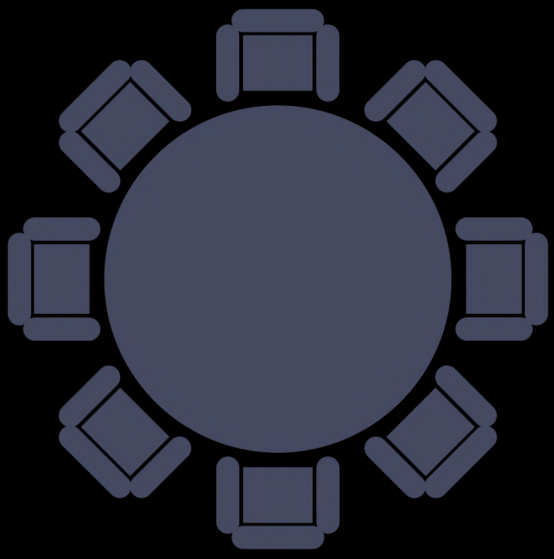
In the mind of the Council Leader, John Alexander, there were three core reasons why the Dundee Drugs Commission were formed.

- **The current situation is simply unacceptable, with too many people experiencing suffering.**
- **The dehumanization of people suffering is needing changed.**
- **Dundee alone has seen (at that time) over 400 drug deaths between 2009-2019.**

Roundtable Discussions

What is it like living with addiction in Dundee?

- **Stigma was found to be a big factor.**
- **There is difficulty in accessing services.**
- **There is no 'one door' access.**



Most participants within the roundtable discussions felt there was a lack of progress as a whole. Some participants of the delegation found vision and leadership was lacking. Some felt the action plans did not feel bold or brave. Participants also affirmed there was a need for leadership responsibility at all levels.

Enabling a cultural change was a prominent theme underpinning these conversations. Participants felt this should take priority alongside reducing stigma. Suggestions on how we achieve this included strengthening community action. This tied into the Dundee Drugs Commissions emphasis on the reality that language matters, and everyone in the community needs to be part of the elimination of stigma and dehumanisation of drug victims. This in our view extends to the University sphere.

KINDNESS
COMPASSION
HOPE



Two years on from the initial report, the commission released a review that examined the progress that was made, and what more was needing done. To provide an example, in response to the Drugs Commission's recommendations, the Dundee City Council formed a new Drug Treatment and Recovery Hub in 2020. This hub provides a range of services, including medical treatment, counselling, and social support, to help people overcome drug addiction and achieve long-term recovery.

View Full Report

The Dundee City Council also increased funding for addiction services in recent years. Between 2019 and 2020, the council allocated over £6 million to drug and alcohol services, including funding for residential rehab services, harm reduction services, and outreach programs. Moreover, the Dundee Council now works more closely with a variety of partners to address the drug crisis. This includes partnerships with the NHS, Police Scotland, and third sector organizations to improve access to treatment and support services, reduce harm, and tackle drug-related crime

One cannot deny that the City Council has taken a number of important steps in addressing the drug challenges in the city, including establishing a drugs commission, establishing a new drug treatment and recovery hub, increasing funding for addiction services, and working in partnership with other organizations to improve access to support and reduce harm. That being said, the review did not hesitate to emphasise much more leadership and resources were needed.

> **We remain of the view that with determination, clear communications, and a willingness to work in true partnership, particularly with the third sector and those with lived experience and living experience and an acceptance that support is required, then Dundee can effectively address the Public Health crisis of drug deaths... It is also time for more focused, coordinated and combined action to deal with this crisis.**
>
> - Robert Peat, Chair of the Commission (March 2022)

“

A few hundred yards from its new museum, Dundee is grappling with the fallout from another V&A: valium and addiction.



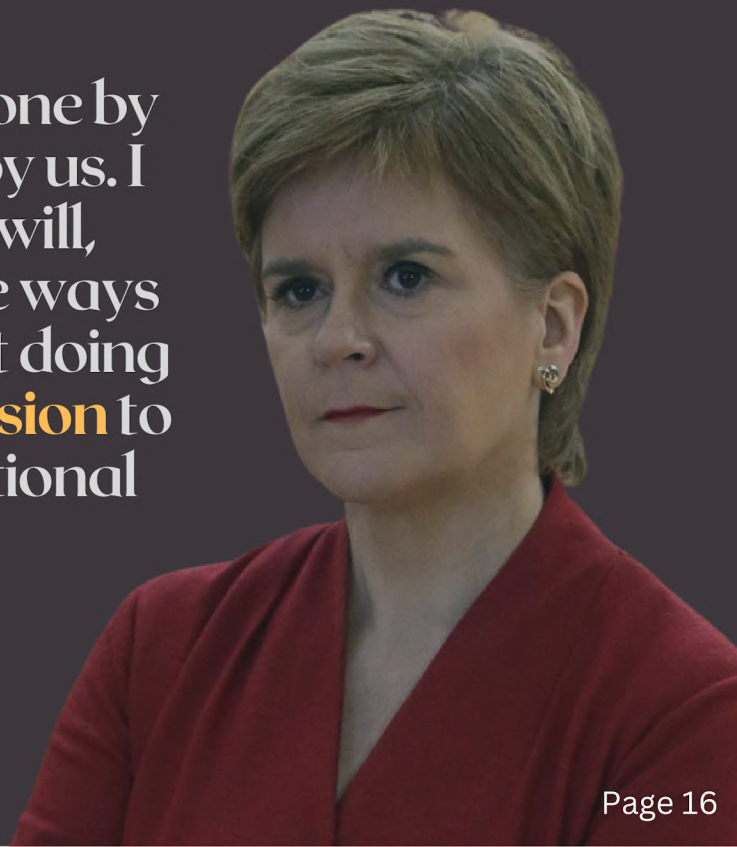
ADVANCING THE PROGRESS

The University community can be part of the national mission to address what is happening around drug addiction and the wider crisis. Even with the combined work of local and national authorities, together with the work of third sector organisations and scientific research from many universities, it cannot be understated progress is not yet at a reasonable stage. Much more is needing done, and it has already been recognised that greater leadership and collaboration is needed to combat the challenges around Scotland's unique problem with drugs.

Our University can assist in this progress. This is the fundamental rationale behind our recommendations. We may not be able to solve key issues or save lives, but we can raise awareness, we can conduct ground-breaking research across many inter-connecting disciplines, we can foster a better culture and we can push for greater kindness, compassion and hope. Any action as a University and any initiatives operated by our student community will in itself be a massive step in the right direction.

We have been somewhat idle in acting in a collaborative way, we have been somewhat reluctant in facing this crisis and we can sometimes detach ourselves from it entirely. Such detachment and reluctance cannot exist if progress is to be made. Our University commitment could indeed be the start of a wider national movement, and we may well demonstrate to other colleges and universities that they too can act on their civic responsibility and join the national mission.

> Those who died in years gone by were, in some way, failed by us. I believe that if we have the will, we can and we will find the ways to stop this happening. But doing so **requires a national mission** to end what is currently a national disgrace.
>
> Nicola Sturgeon
> First Minister of Scotland (2014 - 2023)



FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE



As is the case with any University-wide projects, our proposals will take several months to examine and plan. That is why we are presenting this as a framework for the future, and not something we expect to be addressed immediately. There will inevitably need to be several consultations and decisions around this proposal, and it could be the case that the University and DUSA wish to carry out their own research and student feedback before any measure is planned.

Several students, including those within our working group, have expressed a willingness to continue this work. Moreover, some incoming DUSA Executive Officers have also expressed a commitment to leading this framework with colleagues in the coming academic session of 2023/24. It is vital, however, that students, academics and leaders involved are interested and passionate in the work we propose.

Below is a summary of the potential process that parties follow in terms of building upon this framework over the longer term. This is by no means a conclusive recommendation.

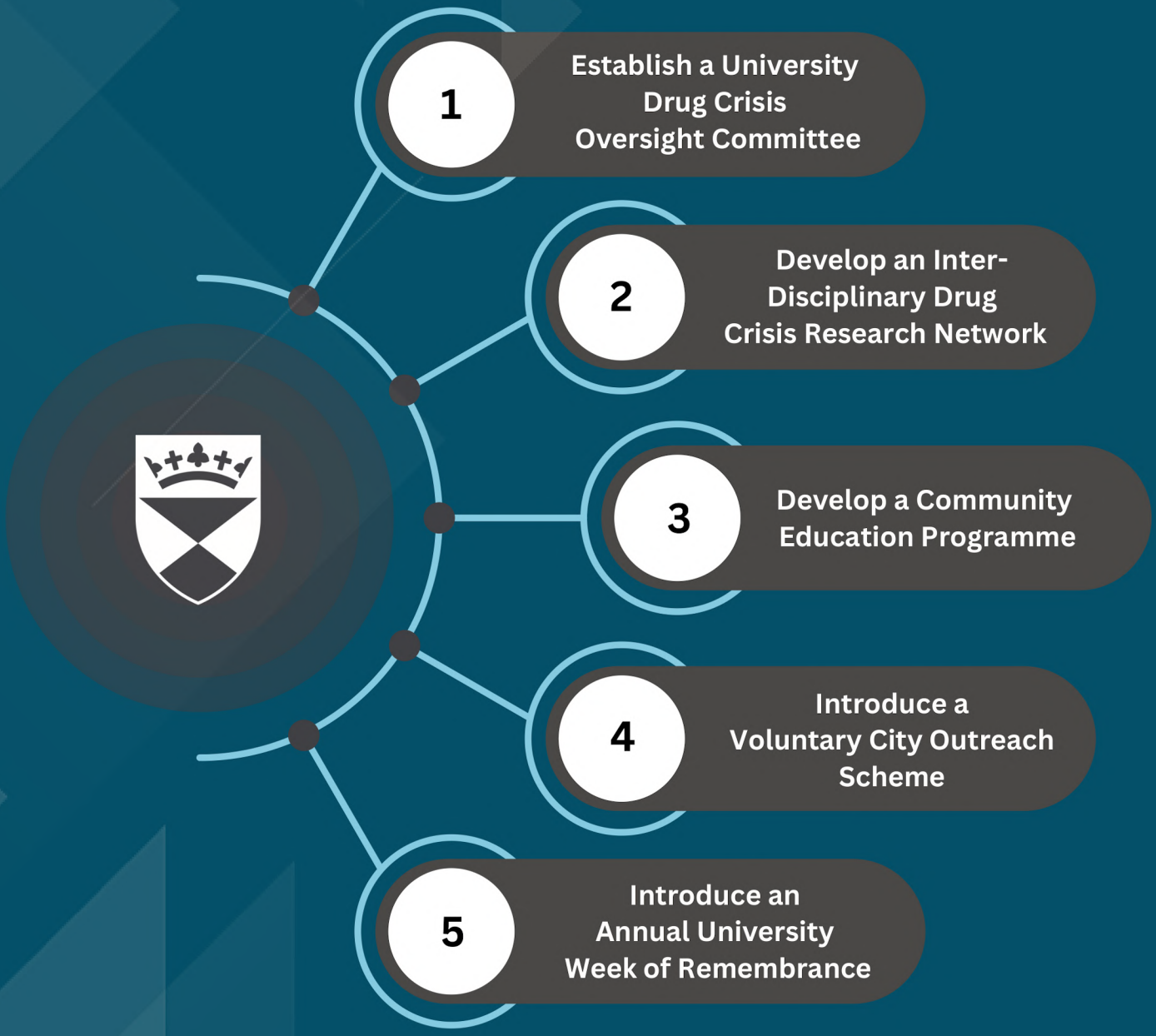
1	**Report Review and Project Board**	23/24	This paper will take time to review and discuss. A project board could be formed, acting as an interim version of the proposed drug crisis oversight committee.
2	**Sub-Committee Delegations**	23/24	Once plans have been deliberated and agreed upon, the board could divide into seperate teams to work on different areas.
3	**Project Planning**	23/24	The sub-committees would ideally plan their measures, campaigns and programmes independently, with oversight from the board.
4	**Implementations and Launches**	24/25	The different teams would launch and deliver these projects at varied times, but all within the scope of the wider project.
5	**Permanency and Oversight**	24/25+	Plans should be put in place to ensure continued progress and longevity of the proposed activity.

OF DUNDEE
FOR DUNDEE



UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The University of Dundee is not just an educational institute. We are a charitable entity, a civic society actor, an international stakeholder, a large business, an influential partner and a significant employer of the city. One of the core aims of our project pertains to the active role that this University ought to play in addressing the Dundee Drug Crisis. In harnessing our revitalised social purpose agenda, through utilising our influence, our plethora of resources and our immense range of talent in a collaborative effort, thereby making the University truly of, and for, Dundee. These recommendations are not exhaustive, but these are the core proposals to ensure we can help lead the way in this continuing crisis. The diagram below is a summary of our key recommendations.



UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a University Drug Crisis Oversight Committee



Proposal for Consideration

We propose that the University consider establishing a drug crisis oversight committee. This group would have general responsibility over all initiatives and actions pertaining to University involvement and engagement with the drug crisis. The committee would be directly linked with the proposed research network, and may lead the other community outreach and community education schemes. The oversight committee would ideally provide the key decisions and directions in fulfilling some or all of the recommendations made, and design any further measures in the future.

Rationale

The formulation of such a committee would be the first and clearest action that demonstrates our Universities willingness to take a more active and innovative step in making our social purpose real and harnessing what we can do as a community to transform lives and make a genuine difference in the city. There is a need for robust leadership over any university-wide activity, particularly due to the fragmented and decentralised nature of our individual academic schools and student cohorts. A combined oversight committee, a dedicated task force that ensures the work remains collegiate, impactful and collaborative. This committee may change in purpose and composition over the years, but the initial model could act as the project board in the first few months or years to develop the measures and make the initiatives ready to be effective and meet the goals in the best possible way.



A UNIVERSITY WITH **SOCIAL PURPOSE**: A CITY IN **SOCIAL CRISIS**

UNIVERSITY-WIDE COLLABORATION AND LEADERSHIP. A MULTIPURPOSE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

A University Drug Crisis Oversight Committee

Composition

We propose that the oversight committee be made up of individuals from senior management with responsibility over strategic planning of the university, those involved in public engagement, external relations and partnerships with the wider community. This committee would also benefit from having student representation, including students involved within this project and future DUSA Executive Officers. The committee could also have academics and PHD researchers involved in drug addiction and drug death research, particularly those already working in this area across the University. This includes medical cohorts, forensic science and the drug discovery unit. It might also be very worthwhile and impactful if we have external contributors sitting on the oversight committee, including personnel involved in third sector organisations related to drug recovery and addiction. It is important that the oversight committee is diverse in their backgrounds, their skills and their motivations, but everyone ought to share the common goal of truly realising our social purpose and advancing progress with the national drug crisis.

Governance

The proposed oversight committee could be governed by a nominated chairperson. Ideally, this chairperson would stay in the post for at least two academic years. The chairperson could delegate particular duties to other individuals to oversee different initiatives within the wider project. For example, members of staff within the community education discipline might take leading roles over the development of the proposed community education programme. Another person may take responsibility over the proposed annual week of remembrance - perhaps someone within the chaplaincy centre. This oversight group would be the main point of contact for all drug crisis-related activity and all sub-committee operations. A representative could also update other governing groups across the University, including the UEG, the Student Experience Oversight Committee and any public engagement and strategy teams.

Strategic Goals and Relevance

It would be important for the oversight group to establish its own strategic agenda and to set out a timeline with measurable targets. The group may wish to refer to this report to better understand what ideas could be implemented. It is also important for the group to maintain strategic relevance with the wider University vision. This also extends to the objectives of DUSA. This group may benefit from individuals who are involved with strategic planning and academic governance.

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop an Inter-Disciplinary Drug Crisis Research Network



Proposal for Consideration

We propose that the University consider developing an inter-disciplinary drug crisis research network. This research network could be a cross-boundary network of academics, students and external stakeholders with a unified focus on drug addiction, drug-related deaths and wider issues that factor into the local and national crisis. This would be a vehicle for passionate individuals with a common interest to share work and pursue a set of priorities over a long-term period, and they could be given a space on campus to meet, collaborate and set tasks.

Rationale

The proposed research network would demonstrate our commitment to harmonising and strengthening our ongoing work with drug addiction, drug deaths and the wider social factors. This measure would introduce a means for different groups to work together purposefully to bolden our community impact and demonstrate how powerful our contributions can be when we work together. This research network will be a platform for the creation and sharing of knowledge that could well have a lasting impact. We recognise this measure is complex to implement and multifaceted, and we accept this initiative will take several academic years before it becomes fully functional with measurable impact. That being said, this is a necessary initiative that will bring the rest of our recommendations together. This could offer academics and students an exciting and challenging opportunity to work together on various projects and research activity that makes our institutional social purpose real.



A UNIVERSITY WITH **SOCIAL PURPOSE**: A CITY IN **SOCIAL CRISIS**

AN INTER-DISCPLINARY DRUG CRISIS RESEARCH NETWORK

Inter-Disciplinary Drug Crisis Research Network

Composition

The proposed network could comprise of a diverse range of individuals, including staff, students, external partners, professionals and others. Social science disciplines such as law, politics, psychology and geography could work closely with individuals and activity within the life and health sciences, whilst also engaging with medicine and community education. This diversity of expertise and interest would allow for new and cross-boundary research and projects that harness the talent and motivations of many themes. The complexity and diversity of our University research activity raises the need for an established network, particularly around the drug crisis, to allow for effective communication, streamlined operations and the avoidance of duplicated efforts.

Potential Operational Framework

There are various ways in which this collaborative research network could operate. For the purposes of this paper, only examples will be detailed as this would require robust planning from experienced academic professionals who better understand research networks and delivering effective outcomes.

As mentioned, the network could benefit from being offered a space within campus that allows for physical research activity or meetings. Equally, the network could primarily interact amongst themselves online, allowing the network members to virtually collaborate without necessarily knowing each other personally. Individuals could post resources, findings and project material that the entire group can access and engage with. This could also be reported back to the proposed oversight team.

Potential Research Areas

Leverhulme Centre for Forensic Science projects into recovery and prevention

---

Legal research into legislative reform and the criminal justice challenges on drugs

---

Psychological studies into drug addiction, root causes and behavioural issues

---

Scientific research projects into overdose prevention, addiction and treatment



Inter-Disciplinary Drug Crisis Research Network

University research networks are exciting and innovative collaborations between researchers from different disciplines (or indeed institutions) who work together on specific research topics or projects. The specific structure and operation of these networks may vary depending on the research topic and the goals of the network, hence why we have not provided extensive detail as to the markeup or operation of the proposed measure. We strongly believe this is a necessary and achievable proposal. For those who are not as aware of such networks, below is a brief outline of some benefits.

Collaboration: It can lead to new and innovative research projects that might not have been otherwise possible or foreseeable.

Increased Access: By working across the institution we can share resources, such as equipment, facilities, and funding, that might not be available to them individually. This could make any potential work more prosperous and more efficient.

Information Sharing: Research networks obviously provide a platform for sharing knowledge and expertise between researchers. This could help identigy research gaps that need to be addressed.

Visibility and Awareness: A successful and innovative university research network, and with participating researchers can increase their visibility within their field and gain recognition for their work. On top of this, greater awareness of the issues involved would occur and hence the wider objectives of the network. This could potentially lead to more collaborations, funding , and other benefits.

Impact and Social Purpose: University research networks can have a significant impact on society by addressing important research questions and advancing knowledge in a particular area. This can lead to the development of new technologies, policies, and practices that benefit society as a whole.



ONE STEP FURTHER

The Potential for a University-Run Recovery Hub or Research Clinic?

Scotland now have a variety of Drug Recovery Hubs, which are community-based services dedicated to providing support for people with drug addiction. They are a part of the Scottish Government's strategy to address drug addiction, known as "**Rights, Respect and Recovery."** These hubs offer a range of services, including assessment, counselling, medication-assisted treatment, and support groups. They aim to provide a safe and supportive environment where people can access treatment, build positive relationships, and crucially, connect with other services in their community.

Given how these hubs are a fundamental element of Scotland's nationwide recovery from the drug crisis and related harms, it would be an innovative step for the University to consider developing their own hub - similar to the current operations we have. This may bring further benefits to the University and indeed the local community we have a responsibility towards. This may also create a plethora of research opportunities that intertwine with the proposed research network, it may give partners acorss Dundee and beyond more evidence-based recommendations, it may allow students and researchers to interact more intensely and effectively with those suffering from addiction, gaining further insight and allowing our academic community to be a further support service.

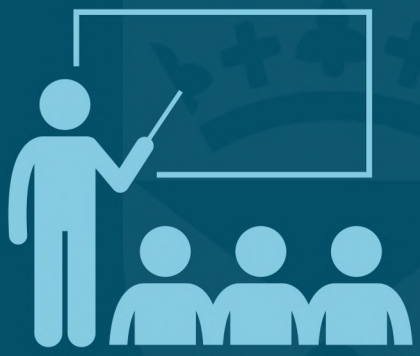
We appreciate this is a heavily complex suggestion and relative to the rest of our recommendations, it would be the least feasible to achieve, hence why we have negated to include it in our core framework. That being said, there are many exciting, impactful and aligning opportunities that could arise from any model of this nature.

Student Placements **Research Output**
Innovative Service **Testing Potential**
Real Community Outreach **Support Network**
Treatments and Counselling
Public Engagement



UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a Community Education Programme



Proposal for Consideration

We propose that the University consider developing, or assisting in the development of, an innovative and engaging educational programme designed to educate young people, students and the public on issues surrounding drug addiction and the wider drug crisis. The educational initiatives could be University led, but delivered in partnership with secondary education schools around Tayside.

Rationale

Education is a powerful catalyst for change and an effective means of raising crucial awareness to all generations. This initiative could be student led, utilising our talents in the likes of community education to reach out to the public, students, academics and surrounding high schools. Educational workshops will not solve the challenges, but there is a need for a stronger focus on promoting drug safety amongst young people, whilst also fostering and integrating a renewed culture of harm reduction, of compassion and bringing about greater awareness of the drug problems in Scotland.

Our University strive to transform lives through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge, and with social purpose at the core of everything we do. We have an immense opportunity to be at the heart of sharing knowledge around the drug crisis on our very own doorstep. We recognise the need to be more permeable and innovative, and with this in mind, we can and should be leading the way in educating our internal and external communities, showcasing the extent of this drug crisis, exploring solutions and presenting our progress in the fight to defeat this social tragedy.



A UNIVERSITY WITH **SOCIAL PURPOSE**: A CITY IN **SOCIAL CRISIS**

A DRUG CRISIS COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Developing a Community Education Programme

Potential Initiatives for Development

Community education initiatives have great scope for making a real difference and help drive our broader ambitions as a University of community outreach and engagement, including assisting our cities desire to respond to drug challenges with kindness, compassion and hope. If we stay silent on these issues, we will find it increasingly difficult to be conscious of the issues. Students and staff alike can work together to build a package of initiatives that engage with many different groups - including our internal community. We are proposing a multi-faceted programme of innovative measures that do not necessarily have to be implemented all at once. This will likely take several months to plan and deliver, though it is something that could be led by a nominated person within the Drug Crisis Oversight Group.

Annual Public Lecture Series



The proposed community education programme could include a series of open lectures and panel-style talks that centralise around the drug crisis, harm reduction policies and general issues of addiction. These series could be held over a week, similar to that of other annual lecture series we do as a University. There is scope here to include students, academics, government bodies and third sector organisations.

Secondary School Presentations and Workshops



The community education programme could also entail projects that engage with secondary schools across Tayside. Students and staff could collaborate to develop presentations and workshops that can be delivered to younger pupils, and focused on issues around drug addiction, drug safety and other connecting issues. This initiative would inevitably require detailed planning and trials before any formal partnerships could be established.

Public Engagement Ambassadors and Information Campaigns



The community education programme could also comprise of individuals who take on the role as ambassadors for the city. These individual volunteers could liaise with partners across the city, and help organise the initiatives mentioned above. This could include public information campaigns, similar to that of the local 'Stop the Deaths' campaign or the UK-wide 'Catch it, Kill it, Bin it' campaign. These public endeavors would be aligned with the wider strategy of the proposed oversight group and the general ambitions of raising more awareness, ending stigma and fostering a culture of harm reduction with kindness, compassion and hope.

Community Education and Social Purpose

Community education is about working towards positive social change, developing communities, transforming lives and making a lasting impact on others. These goals are symptomatic of the Universities wider focus on social purpose and local outreach.

A Drug Crisis Community Education Programme could closely reflect what our own community education disciplines work on. Upon future development, there is also space to allow for micro-credentials and accredited projects that could be directly aligned with this proposal.

These confident proposals show the University's social purpose and provide an excellent opportunity for students and staff to work together. The integrity that Community Education can provide in co-creating knowledge with those who use drugs will transform lives and be critical in making the Dundee Difference between a useful project and an excellent project. Our high performing community will make the City of Discovery passionate about population health and equity and inclusion. Community Education specialises in raising the voices of ignored people. Too often the lived experience of people who use drugs are silenced or ignored in service delivery and policy formation. Students and staff have wide experiences of collaborative working with many communities and service providers in Dundee. We are ideally placed at facilitating important conversations across Dundee and ensuring this project works with, not on, the people it is designed to help.

Eamonn Custance
Community Education Student
Vice President of Community Education



Community Education: Staff Endorsement

The University of Dundee Community Education team has a long history of providing opportunities for the professional formation of students and practitioners working in the most marginalised, excluded and vulnerable communities in the city. Our Community Education courses have trained hundreds of practitioners, all of whom have engaged in transformative practice during their studies and after graduating with a professionally qualifying degree. Many of our staff, students and graduates have worked – and continue to work with – individuals, groups and communities affected by the drugs crisis in our city. We are committed to continuing our work with partners across the city to tackle the issues around drugs use and their consequences, and welcome the opportunity to support this proposed Drug Crisis Community Education Programme in any way we can.



Dr Martin Purcell
Lecturer in Youth And Community Work

Dr Purcell has over thirty years' experience as a Community Education practitioner, having worked in various community development and youth work roles throughout the UK. He has become involved increasingly in a voluntary capacity in various roles for community organisations and charities. Since his return to Dundee – where he was engaged in community regeneration and anti-poverty work for four years in the mid-1990s – Martin has continued to develop links with local community organisations, where he continues to work in voluntary roles.

Community Education Programme Planning

Developing a community education program based on drug addiction and safety will be complex and requires robust planning, but there are a variety of core steps that may help the University and relevant stakeholders properly achieve this measure.

Identifying the Target Audiences

Whatever committee or group that take ownership of this proposed programme will first want to determine the specific community or group that they want to educate about these issues. This would ideally include members of the public, students in secondary (and indeed primary) education and students themselves. There is also scope to engage with relevant third sector charities. This could also extend to involving healthcare providers, community members, and other specific demographic groups.

Defining the Scope of the Programme

This programme could easily be extensive and cover a range of mini-measures. It will be important for the planners to determine the specific topics they want to cover in the programme. This could include the science of addiction, the signs and symptoms of addiction, the physical and mental health effects of addiction, and strategies for prevention and treatment. It may also want to include wider national campaigns, the work of the University (which may be more appropriate for professional stakeholders) and more 'user-friendly' content that is appropriate for younger generations.

Developing Content and Resources

This aspect of the planning will be the most labour intensive. It will be important to develop educational materials such as handouts, videos, and presentations that convey the information in a clear and engaging way, particularly if some of the initiatives will be presented in schools. The planning groups will need to ensure that the materials are culturally sensitive and appropriate for the target audiences. There is, however, plenty of material already developed by organisations such as the NHS and the Drugs Forum that could be utilised. That being said, it would be beneficial and more impactful if our resources and content comes from this University, thereby showcasing our innovation and passion for social purpose and community development.

Delivery and Evaluation

Delivering the program successfully and with impact is of course the main objective. We can do this through the aforementioned means, through workshops, seminars, or other formats that are accessible to the target audiences. For schools, we can use interactive activities and group discussions to facilitate engagement and learning. We should also evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes by collecting feedback from participants and stakeholders. We will then use this feedback to improve the programmes for future iterations.

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a Voluntary City Outreach Scheme

Proposal for Consideration

We propose that the University consider developing a voluntary city outreach scheme, similar to the proposed community education programme, though this initiative would be less educational and more focused towards practical support. A voluntary outreach scheme across Dundee would be a way to demonstrate our University's commitment to direct societal action. We see on a daily basis, through student society activity or student political activism, the sheer extent of what students can achieve. A voluntary city outreach scheme would operate in harmony with the rest of our proposals, and will be a measure that showcases we are not just about academia and research. This is direct and impactful action.

Rationale

Previous student activity in the local community has shown genuine promise and impact. The drug crisis is a social challenge, and thus, on-the-ground support might be prudent to help those on a more face-to-face basis. Overall, this is a chance for our University, and our students, to give back to the community we are embedded within. This will also work towards truly realising our social purpose.

Supporting the DUSA Volunteering Network

In showing its commitment to this proposal, **the University might consider funding the new and fast-growing volunteer network operated by DUSA**. Funding would allow this network to expand its outreach and assist in delivering much of the University-level proposals within this paper. So far we have seen great engagement with the network, who are continuing to help run the campus pantry, the free breakfast club and undertaking campus-wide litter picking.



A UNIVERSITY WITH **SOCIAL PURPOSE**: A CITY IN **SOCIAL CRISIS**

A VOLUNTARY OUTREACH SCHEME OPERATED BY STUDENTS, FOR THE COMMUNITY

Voluntary City Outreach Scheme

Potential Initiatives for Development



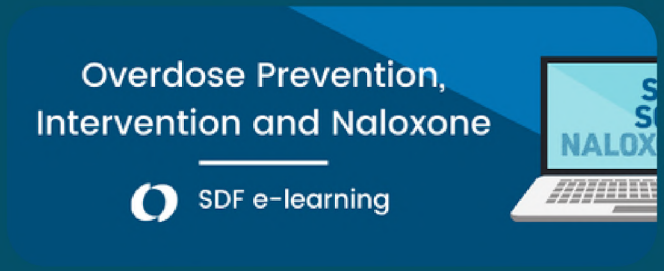
The University, in working in close partnership with DUSA, could consider developing a 'soup kitchen' styled stall around Dundee. This would not only provide warm food to those in need, but it would offer vulnerable people, including those suffering from addiction, a chance to interact with friendly faces and be listened to. Student groups in the past have operated similar initiatives, but with University support (particularly around health and safety) we can make such an initiative truly impactful and meaningful.

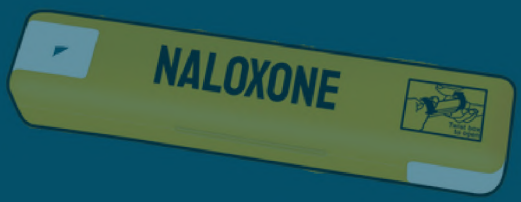


As part of this voluntary outreach scheme, students or participants could also take part in city 'patrols' or operate as community outreach volunteers that engage with vulnerable people around the city, and possibly act as a signposting service to third sector or public health providers. Volunteers could also assist with public information campaigns as previously mentioned, but crucially, there is potential for these volunteers to be trained in preventing overdoses and providing lifesaving treatment. More information is provided below on this matter.

Community Outreach Volunteers

Anyone in Scotland who is likely to find someone experiencing an overdose in their family, their community, their workplace or in a public place can request a naloxone kit and be trained in its use. All drug treatment services and GP practices are able to supply naloxone for free to people at risk of an opioid overdose, their families and others likely to witness an overdose. People can also get free naloxone kits from participating pharmacies and injecting equipment providers, from many outreach services and homeless services





Our students and volunteers who get involved with any proposed outreach scheme should make use of this training, which is irrefutably a life-saving kit that can be the difference between life or death. This scheme could also reach out to the Scottish Drug Forum and offer assistance with their incredibly important 'Stop the Deaths' campaign to champion their mission and raise further awareness.

Voluntary City Outreach Scheme Planning

Partnering with DUSA Volunteer Network

DUSA have recently established a dedicated network of volunteers who admirably give time to assisting with various initiatives and operations - including our campus foodbank and breakfast club. The team have also undertaken campus wide litter picks and are now looking to expand their operation. This network demonstrates DUSA's unique commitment towards community welfare.



University Support

As mentioned, the University could support the development of the proposed volunteer city outreach scheme by providing spaces, funding and resources to this newly established network. This team of students could be actively involved in the drug crisis community outreach initiatives, and could be provided with the likes of naloxone training, which could be facilitated by the University. Similarly, this network of volunteers could be wellbeing champions across the city, and operate soup kitchens or hot drink stands during the night. This network could easily be expanded to allow other students, particulary those passionate about community wellbeing and social justice, to get involved and grow the whole operation.

Safety Considerations

As these initiatives will potentially involve dealing with members of the public, and some operations may occur during late hours in the city, there may need to be reviews into the safety of volunteers and any procedures that need to be considered. This will be a matter for both DUSA and those engaged with safeguarding in the University. Training will be essential before any community-level activity can officially take place.





“As the facilitator of our brilliant DUSA Volunteer Network, I have no doubt that, with University support, we can expand our activity to truly contribute to the community around us. The drug crisis is a tragic injustice on our doorstep, and I believe our team of volunteers would be more than willing to play their part and join this voluntary city outreach scheme.

Dumindu Nukulasooriya,
DUSA Executive Assistant

Voluntary City Outreach Scheme Planning

Developing a volunteering outreach project for something relevant to the drug crisis will be a challenging task, albeit incredibly worthwhile. Extensive prior planning will also be crucial, and below is a basic framwork that could assist whichever group take ownership of such initiative.

Determining the Need and Cause

Any potential planning group ought to identify the community or group that needs assistance and determine the specific needs of that group. In this instance we are referring to those suffering from poverty and addiciton. It might be worthwhile to research existing programs and initiatives to avoid duplication and identify gaps that the outreach measures could fill.

Setting Out the Objectives and Making a Plan

We already know we want to be more socially helpful and be a helping hand of hope to those in need, but we will need to set out clear objectives. We also need a detailed plan as to what activities we will undertake, and the resources and funding required. The University and DUSA could liaise with each other on these matters. The plan should also include a marketing strategy to invite volunteers and oppurtunties involved.

A Strong Volunteer Recruitment Strategy

A recruitment strategy will be clearly needed, one that targets the desired audience and outlines the benefits of volunteering with the project. We might need to consider collaborating with external volunteer organizations and community groups to recruit volunteers. That being said and to reference information in the above section, we could utilise the existing DUSA Volunteer network, should the University assist in providing resources and funding to make this measure a success.

Training and Preparation

As mentioned before, training and orientation for any volunteers will ensure they understand the goals of the project, their roles and responsibilities, and any necessary skills and safety considerations. Ongoing support and feedback will be helpful to ensure the outreach initiatives run smoothly and volunteers remain engaged and effective.

Evaluation

Just like the community education proposal, it will be important to measure the success of the scheme against the goals and objectives set out in any plan. We would ideally collect feedback from volunteers, partners, and the community to help improve the initiatives for future iterations.

Specific | Measurable | Achievable | Relevant | Time-Bound

#STOP THE DEATHS

WOULD YOU RECOGNISE THE SIGNS OF AN OVERDOSE?

#STOP THE DEATHS

IF A PERSON IS UNRESPONSIVE AND HAS ANY OTHER SIGNS CALL 999



IMPORTANT

WE CAN PREVENT DRUG DEATHS. WE JUST NEED TO KNOW HOW.

SNORING



SHALLOW BREATHING



PALE SKIN



BLUE LIPS

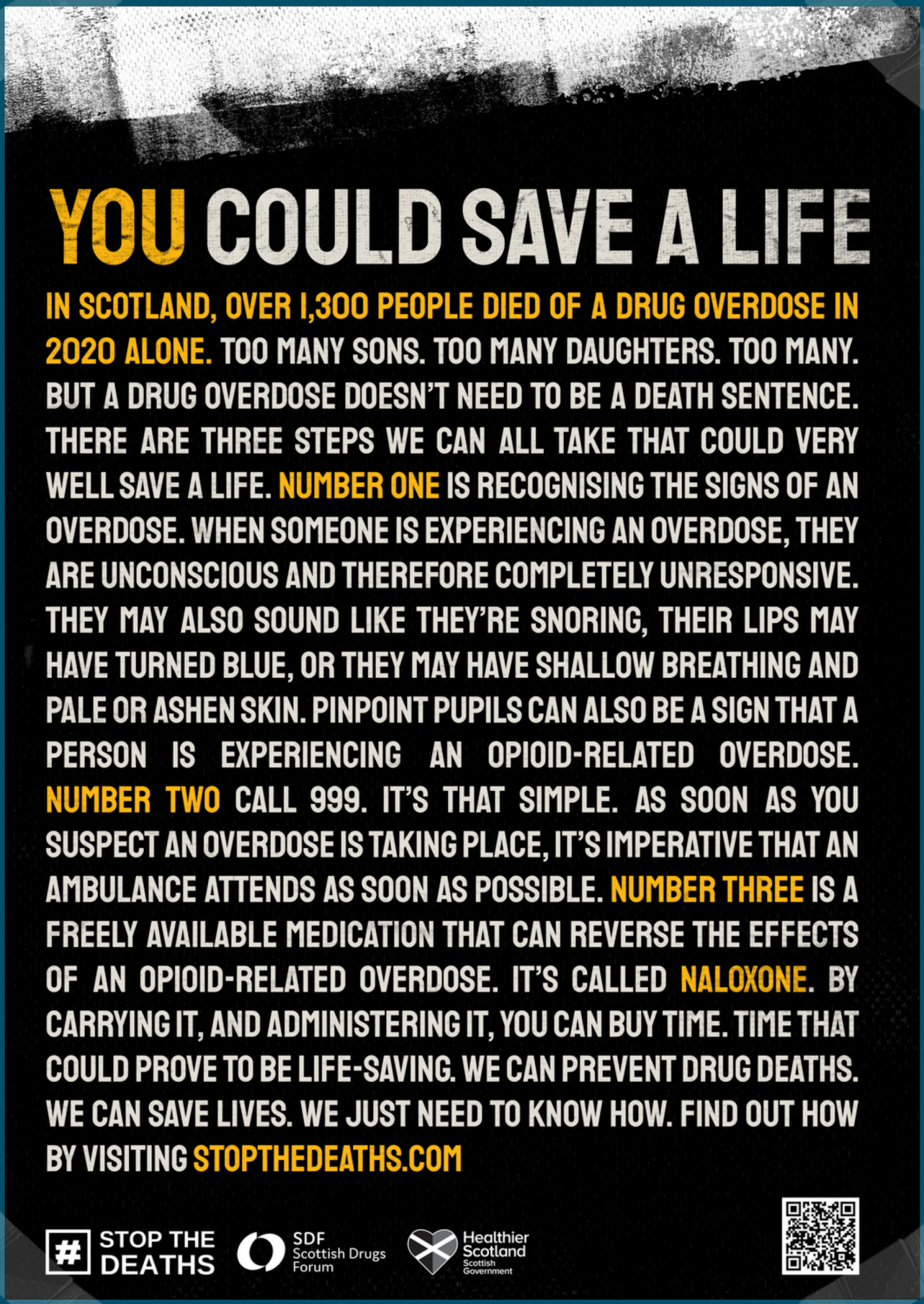


PINPOINT PUPILS



CARRY NALOXONE NALOXONE REVERSES THE EFFECTS OF OPIOIDS, IT CAN HELP SAVE LIVES

SDF Scottish Drugs Forum



www.stopthedeaths.com

UNIVERSITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduce an Annual University Week of Remembrance



Proposal for Consideration

The University should have their own unique remembrance week dedicated to those who have died from addiction across Dundee and the wider population. This annual week of remembrance would not be constructed in a politically or socially significant way as such. This would be a commemorative week hosted by the University community and pertinent to the city. This would send a strong message that we are of, and for, the city we are embedded within. Demonstrating kindness, compassion and hope, even for a week, is a very easy step, but it is a step worth taking.

This would ideally be a student and staff week of remembrance, involving a series of institutionally wide events and messaging for Dundee and us, a tribute to our cities profound suffering and a reflection on addiction and the lives it has impacted. A simple, yet powerful, commemoration to those who have died from drugs, to those who continue to suffer from addiction, to those bravely battling recovery and to those who have lost their family or friends to drugs.

Rationale

Very few reasons stand in the way of making this initiative happen. The University champion various other causes throughout the year, and we also hold remembrance ceremonies and vigils for other causes close to the hearts of students and the institution. This need not be a politically motivated initiative either. Any series of events or measures dedicated to remembrance should not be viewed as token gestures without meaning, but rather, a step towards more compassion and acknowledgement from an institution and its students, groups who would rarely be seen to pay such attention.



A UNIVERSITY WITH SOCIAL PURPOSE: A CITY IN SOCIAL CRISIS

A UNIVERSITY-LED ANNUAL WEEK OF REMEMBRANCE

Potential Initiatives for Development

Any annual week of remembrance would need to be carefully coordinated with a clear schedule that is prepared in advance. A set week would ideally be decided so that the week of remembrance is held at the same stage of every academic year.



University wide internal communications, news articles and social media schedules dedicated to the remembrance week and raising awareness.



Campus wide artwork displays and graphics dedicated to the subject. This can be an annual project, competition or volunteering initiative.



Key information, links and stalls for various drug recovery charities, with promotions around volunteering with the charities if possible.



In collaboration with other campaigns, a chance for all student societies and sports clubs to unite and affirm their alliance to the cause across Scotland.



A chaplaincy service for any student, staff or member of the public of all faiths or none, to remember victims of drug deaths across the city of Dundee and beyond.



Posters and banners across campus detailing campaigns, statistics and support services, thereby raising the profile for these initiatives and services.

It will be important to consider the emotional and personal impact this might have on those directly impacted by these issues. Great care ought to be given to providing appropriate support to students and staff, not just during this period, but throughout the year.

A University of Kindness, Compassion and Hope



If the University were willing to embrace these proposals around remembrance, they could consider erecting a permanent vigil or plaque dedicated to drug victims across Dundee. This would send a powerful message and will continuously raise awareness on campus and amongst students.



Similar to what the University do for LGBTQ+ history month, they could light the tower building in purple - which commonly indicates feelings of grief and compassion. This would raise awareness and showcase leadership with genuine empathy.

Wear Your Heart on Your Sleeve Campaign

The "Wear Your Heart on Your Sleeve" campaign is a public health campaign in Scotland that aims to destigmatise drug use and encourage empathy and support for people who use drugs. This was initiated in 2019 in response to the ongoing drug crisis. The campaign **encourages people to wear a heart-shaped badge on their sleeve** to show support for people who use drugs and to raise awareness of the human cost of drug use. The badge features a purple heart, which symbolises the loss and grief experienced by families and communities affected by drug use. This is part of a broader effort to address the drug crisis, which includes initiatives to **expand access to treatment** and **harm reduction services**, **increase funding for drug services**, and **reform drug policy**. The campaign is a powerful example of how public health campaigns can help reduce stigma and promote empathy and support for people affected by drug use. The saying "wear your heart on your sleeve" means to openly display one's emotions or feelings, without concealing them or trying to appear indifferent.

FAVOR-UK: The Faces and Voices of Recovery

In 2012, FAVOR-UK created the purple heart of recovery as their charity's emblem to represent the bravery & courage required & practiced daily, by people in recovery & their families, friends & allies. Honouring all those lost to addiction, & those seeking & sustaining their own recovery journeys, It has quietly made its mark across the UK over the years. Over 6000 of these purple badges have now been distributed & their purple heart has become synonymous with the recovery movement. The charity implores those have the badge to wear it all year round, but especially with pride during Recovery Month in September.



Learn More

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a University Drug Crisis Oversight Committee

We propose that the University establish a leading committee that oversees all of the projects, measures and activities included within this proposed framework. This committee would comprise of a diverse range of individuals, both staff and students and internal and external partners.

Develop an Inter-Disciplinary Drug Crisis Research Network

We propose that the University establish an inter-disciplinary research network that pulls together all of the ongoing and potential research activity within the realms of drug addiction, harm reduction and the wider crisis. This would be a cross boundary platform that harnesses the talent and intuition from a range of disciplines that have a stake in these issues.

Develop a Community Education Programme

We propose that the University develops a drug-related community education programme, one that involves stakeholders from associated disciplines and to also allow students, volunteers and staff to co-design the content and structures. The programme could consist of public annual lecture series', internal awareness workshops and presentations hosted across Tayside secondary schools.

Introduce a Voluntary City Outreach Scheme

We propose that the University introduce a voluntary city outreach scheme, allowing our university community to truly give back and offer a helping hand of support. The University should allocate funding and resources to plan how we best develop a network of trained volunteers that carry out a wide range of community-based activities in efforts to support vulnerable people suffering from the associated harms of drug addiction and the crisis overall.

Introduce an Annual University Week of Remembrance

We propose that the University run an annual week of remembrance across campus and online. This would be a week dedicated to remembering those who have tragically lost their lives to addiction and showing solidarity with those in recovery and the families who suffer from the drug crisis. This would be a means of showcasing our commitment to changing the current culture, ending stigma and raising crucial awareness.

UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT



What Dundee was set up to do was, of course, to deliver outstanding impact on its local community, to have a real civic reach as a University, and that triple intensity; of excellent research, excellent teaching and real community outreach and making a difference...they need to completely underpin who we are.

Professor Iain Gillespie
Principal & Vice Chancellor



UNIVERSITY STRATEGY

We need to be more permeable - open to new ideas, understanding changing needs, collaborating across boundaries, widening access to education, and fully realising the breadth of people who have a stake in what we do.

Professor Iain Gillespie
Principal & Vice Chancellor



Strategic Vision

The Universities core mission is to transform lives through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge. The University envisage themselves to be globally renowned for their social purpose agenda, which is to be delivered through their intensity and excellence in research, education, and engagement. The University seek to focus on where they can most effectively transform lives, and **they want their student community to be recognised as talented contributors to the work that is urgently needed to address the most pressing problems facing the world**.

Future Focus

The University have the human, financial and physical resources needed to deliver an even stronger and more vibrant university. **The University have both the appetite and capacity to embrace positive change.** The University seek to focus on our internationally recognised excellence in the likes of health, whilst also reinvigorating their competitive strengths in the likes of law and social sciences to meet local and global challenges of the modern world in addressing social problems.

University Identity

The University identity themselves as **an institution that is passionate about their social purpose**, as it inspires and drives everything they do. The focus is on reaching excellence to make a difference, and though the University reach is global, **they are of Dundee, and for Dundee**. The University are not afraid to act purposively and resolutely in pursuit of making a genuine difference in the world.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

Population Health and Wealth

In delivering the University mission to transform lives, they are striving to create better health outcomes for people around the world and those who live locally. In undertaking this mission, the University also want to help to improve other social and economic factors amongst the population. This priority is a cornerstone of their institutional identity, and with that in mind, the drug epidemic that scourges Scotland must be embedded within that prioritisation. We are a University renowned for our outstanding research in the likes of life sciences and medicine. If population health is a strategic priority, then the recommendations proposed in this project are in harmony with that vision. This also means that no matter the timeline, this will remain the priority for years to come. The University community have already made ground-breaking advancements that will indeed improve health across the world, and the potential we have within this space is immeasurable. This success makes the prospect of our proposed framework all the more possible.

University of Dundee Research aims to solve Neuropathic Pain mysteries

Dundee stroke expertise to save lives across the world

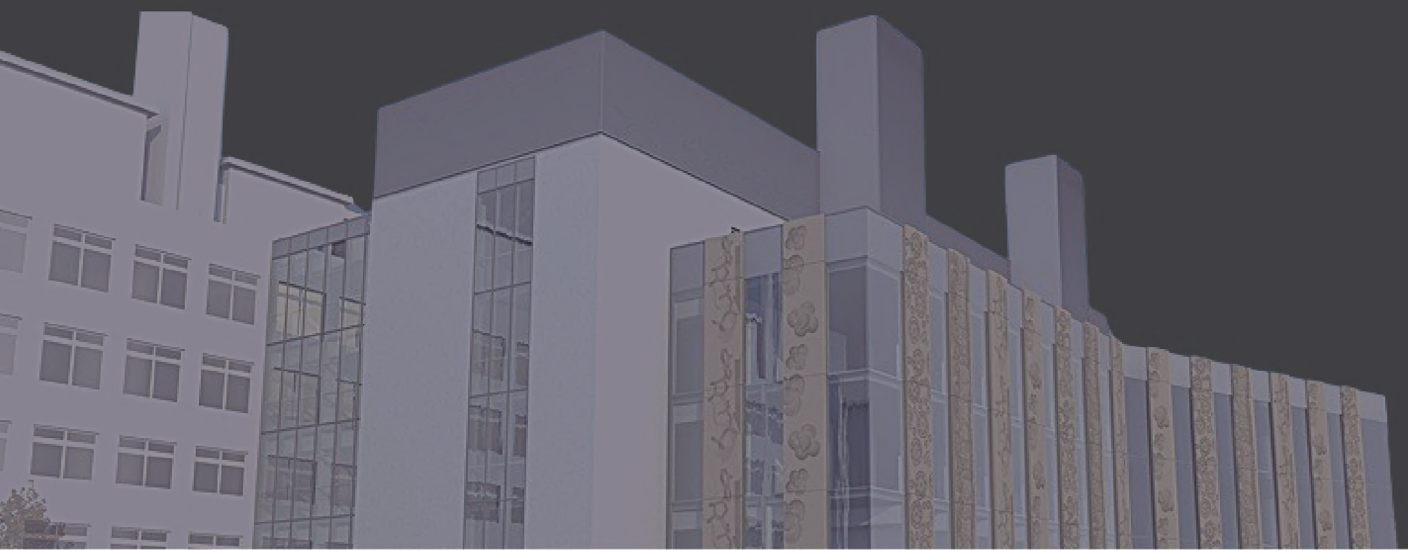
New approaches to drug discovery

Repurposed drug shows potential as leukaemia treatment

New drug treatments and diagnostics for Neglected Tropical Diseases

A new effort to tackle tuberculosis

Clinical trial for potential Covid-19 treatment



STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Our Project Mission

Our community action project has a variety of core objectives, but we are clear in our desire for the creation and sharing of information and resources to help a cause bigger than just ourselves. The Dundee drug crisis is one of the most harmful social crises in the city, so there is no doubt that University-level action and commitment would demonstrate our social purpose, delivered by community engagement and excellence in research and teaching.

Much of the University focus is around population health, and continuing to achieve world class status through our highly regarded life science disciplines. We are also committed to utilising our strong social science subjects like law, and focusing on social issues around us. This project and these proposals are in complete harmony with this future focus.

Our project and recommendations are a demonstration of what social purpose can mean for the University and the city. Our work has been heavily driven by our desire to help society and make a lasting impact. This is a project born from the University of Dundee, but fundamentally, this is for Dundee and our communities. This project includes measures that have genuine purpose and innovation. There will inevitably be obstacles along the way, and mistakes will be made, but the time is right to be bold and aspirational to make a difference through excellence, engagement and community outreach.



We have a huge opportunity to build on the social contract we have in our University and with our city to advocate for our values, and to grow capacity to transform lives. As we succeed, we will ensure we remain: of, and for, Dundee.

Professor Iain Gillespie
Principal & Vice Chancellor

SOCIAL PURPOSE MAKING IT REAL

As our very own Vice Chancellor puts it, Dundee can again provide leadership for others in Scotland and beyond. The University understand the need to be more permeable and willing to adopt new initiatives to grow and make their social purpose real. Our cities' drug-death epidemic is a stark social crisis, and we as a University have a responsibility to play our part in driving change, in changing culture and securing hope for the future. There are many ways we can do this.

We are undoubtedly a beacon of knowledge and innovation; we are a central organ of the city with a wide outreach and forward-thinking ambition, but it is imperative we do not forget who and where we are. We simply cannot claim to be of Dundee and for Dundee if we sit idly by and ignore Dundee's internal struggle with the drug crisis. We can and should do more, we can and should make our social purpose real, right here and right now in Dundee.

The University seek to transform lives in a multitude of ways and across the world, but there is nothing to suggest why this cannot apply to our local community. Community engagement is core to delivering social purpose and truly making a difference. Our project seeks to harness our knowledge, resources and power to truly make a difference in our surrounding society, to tackle local challenges and make our social purpose renowned, respected and ultimately real.

We fundamentally believe that our proposals will take this University forward in our journey to becoming a University of genuine social purpose. Not only do the recommendations have potential to drive progress, but they exemplify our commitment to community outreach, be that through engagement, learning or research.

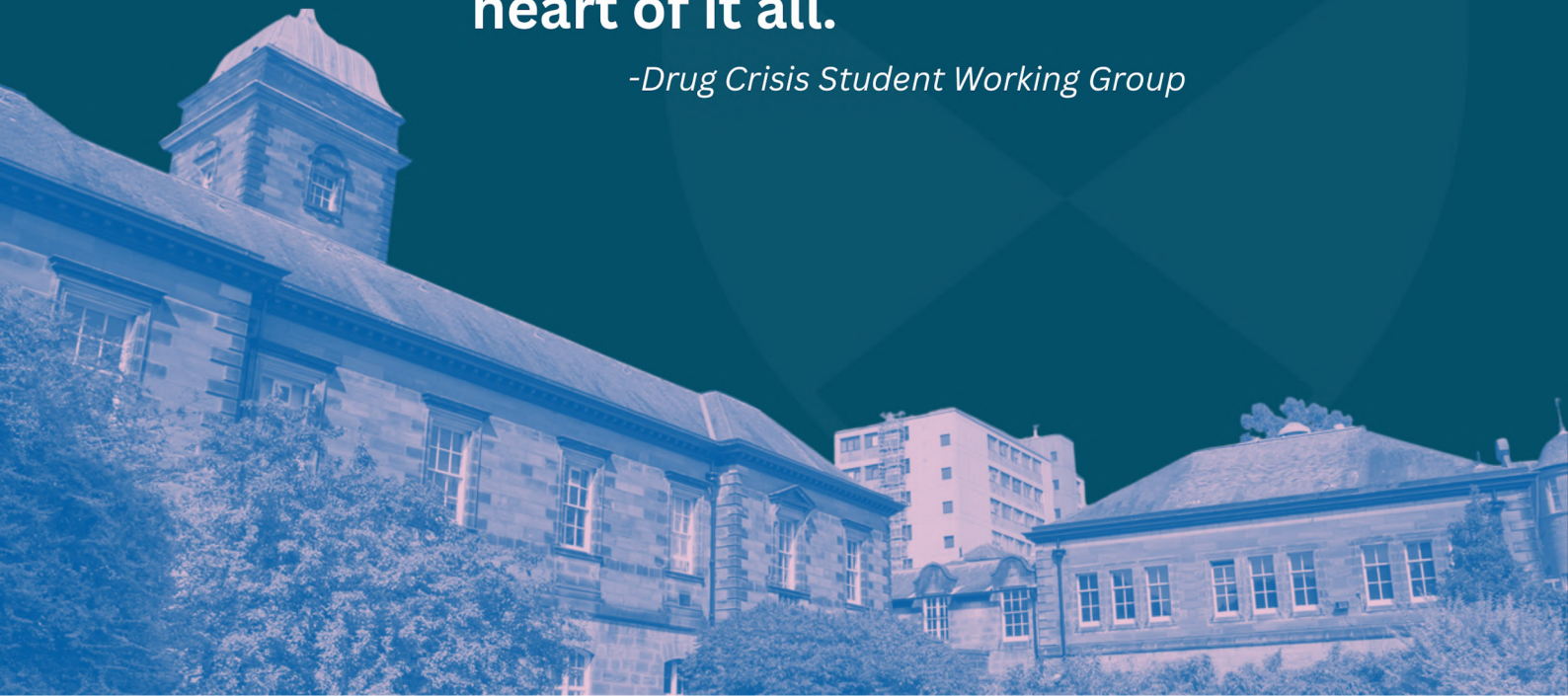


We all know very well the challenges here at home in Dundee, once we go North of the Kingsway

Professor Iain Gillespie
Principal & Vice Chancellor

We need to harness the best of this University and direct it towards our cities most profound crisis. We have the potential to make a real difference and bring greater hope to the darkest side of Dundee. It is our duty as leaders, it is integral to our social contract within the community, it is intertwined with who we are. As local and global agents of change, this should be our vision. Our institutional mission could not be clearer, to transform lives with social purpose at the heart of it all.

-Drug Crisis Student Working Group



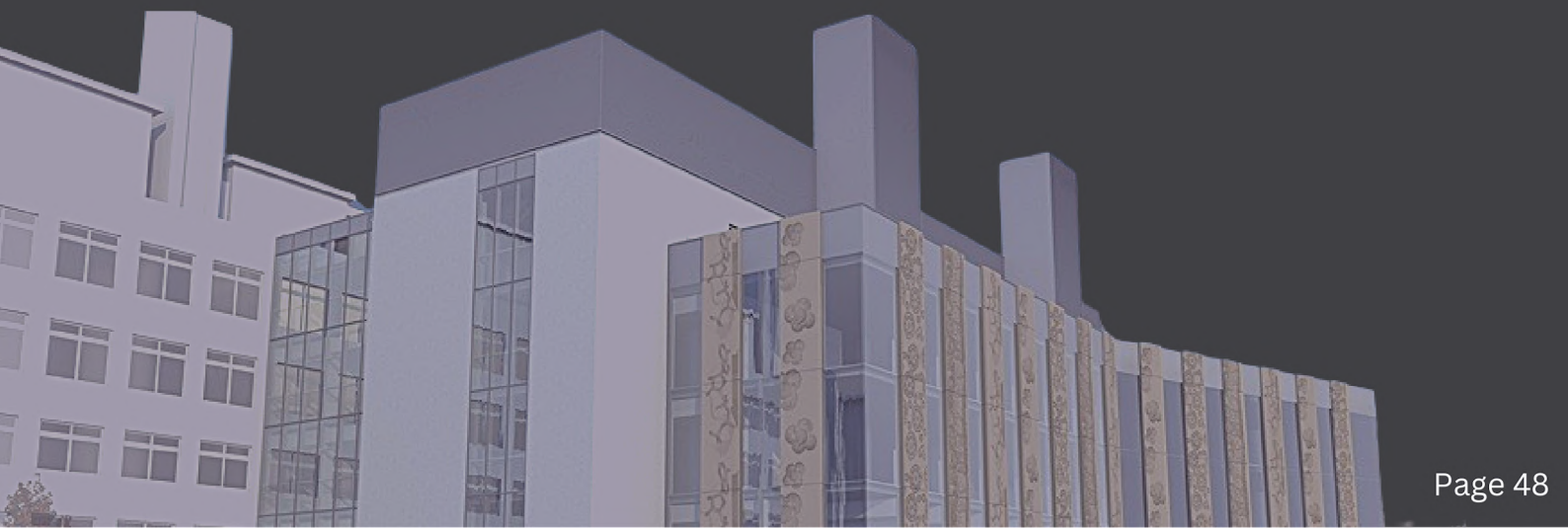
UNIVERSITY RELATED-ACTIVITY

Drug Deaths Taskforce funds psychology research into reducing the risk of drug overdose | August 2020

Part of an allocation of a £1 million research fund, there was a successful bid in 2020 that worked to ensure that the Scottish Government, the Drug Taskforce and other partners have access to the best available evidence on how to further understand and act to reduce drug-related harms. One of our very own psychology PHD students led this initiative, and the core focus was on behavioural change intervention, thereby working to reduce the risk of drug overdoses. This project, and the research fund more generally, aims to fill the gap in scientific evidence around the drug crisis. This is a brilliant example of the potential we have within our institution, and if we can **collate this potential under one umbrella mission**, we will bring the wider progress a step closer to overcome the drug epidemic.

Scientists reveal blueprint for getting Hepatitis C treatment to people who inject drugs | August 2021

This is another key example of our University potential and the combined skill we already possess to make genuine change. Our scientists collaborated with other universities across Scotland to develop a framework that explains how to best get Hepatitis C treatment, particularly for those who inject drugs, often due to addiction. An element of the blueprint of recommendations indicated that we need to recruit professional peer workers who understand drug culture, bringing them close to the research work and maximising every corner of society who have a stake in the challenges. This is directly reflective of the current understanding that collaborative partnerships are critical in tackling the wider drug problems. This is the very essence of our request for an inter-disciplinary drug crisis research network.



UNIVERSITY RELATED-ACTIVITY

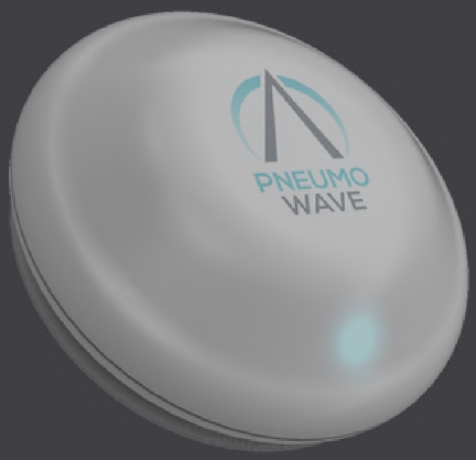
Investigating new psychoactive substances and emerging drug threats | July 2017

The Leverhulme Research Centre are a wide-ranging and highly specialist team that conduct a series of research projects in partnership with many public bodies into the likes of drug abuse, fingerprint analysis and investigations of fires. This project was focussed on monitoring illicit drug markets to quickly identify growing threats by applying various scientific methodologies to trace chemicals and conduct a series of tests. This work is in the wake of over 900 psychoactive substances emerging in recent years, which essentially mimic the effects of traditional drugs, but are causing vulnerable communities a great deal of harm - particularly Scotland.

Wearable device aims to cut overdose deaths | Feb 2022

Currently, there is no ability to detect an overdose and use of naloxone relies on discovery of those affected by chance or coincidence. One of our University academics, Professor John Dillon, **led a clinical trial of a wearable biosensor that could trigger a signal to emergency services in overdose situations**. PneumoWave are the supplying company, and have been working with the University to investigate the physiological effects of illicit substance abuse. This data will augment the biosensor tech company which could ultimately save hundreds of lives in preventing overdose deaths - particularly where there is no naloxone readily available. This is an outstanding example of our University impact.

“The bare statistics about drug-related deaths are there for everyone to see, but these do not tell the whole story – that of the many tragedies and lost opportunities that lie behind them and the heartbreak that they bring to families and loved ones. I am hopeful that this device will become a tool to contribute to the efforts to prevent these senseless losses.”



UNIVERSITY RELATED-ACTIVITY

Series of comics exploring links between drug use and oral health

A group of artists, dentists, public health experts and addiction workers collaborated in 2022 with people with lived experience of drugs to create a series of comics that examined the impact of drug use on oral health. Our University, NHS Fife and the Scottish Drugs Forum joined forced in a mission for the **Oral Health Improvement for People with Experience of Drugs (OHIPED) project**. The comics they produced form part of a series of resources that will be used to deliver oral health mentor training to addiction workers and to raise awareness of the issues highlighted to improve access to services for drug treatment. The involvement of people with a history of drug and alcohol use was central to the project and they related their experiences with the help of the University-based Scottish Centre for Comics Studies.



A major concern is that when dealing with significant toothache or other problems, individuals may be tempted to take more drugs to deal with the pain. This is more likely to happen when people are disconnected from services and could increase the risk of overdose.

All resources produced as part of the project will be used as part of a training programme to enable addiction workers to be advocates for oral health. Training was delivered to trainee addiction workers who provide care in recovery hubs, justice settings and homelessness support centres. The project partners also sought to develop the capacity of volunteers with a history of drug and/or alcohol use to undertake research. Previous public educational comics, created by writers and artists at the Scottish Centre for Comics Studies, have helped raise awareness of a range of conditions and issues including heart disease, coeliac disease, grief, and organ donation.

This project is a prime example of the potential within public information projects, and the use of inter-disciplinary talent that can help raise crucial awareness, as well as offering invaluable training to a variety of service providers involved in drug recovery.

PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS



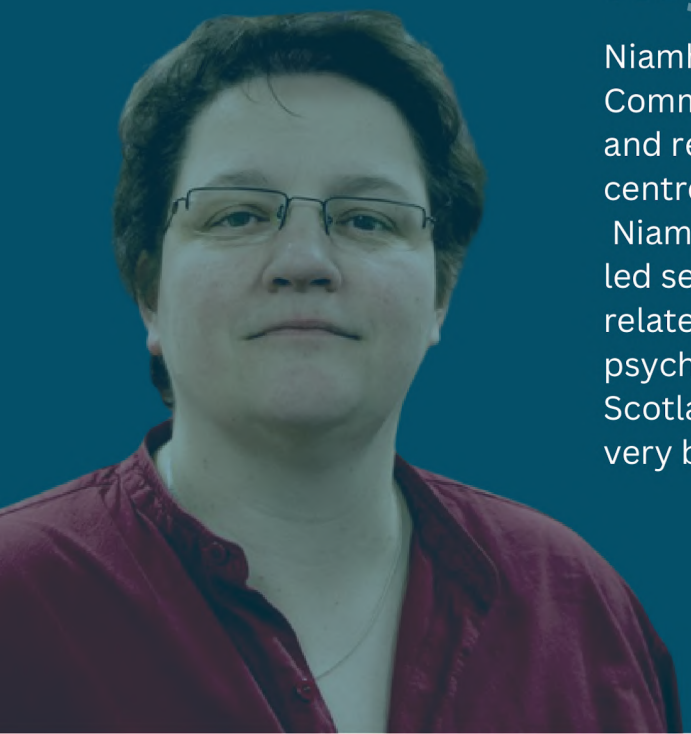
Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science

The Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science (LRCFS) is funded by the Leverhulme Trust. They are an inter-disciplinary research team, the largest in the UK, dedicated to the improvement of the robustness and quality of the science underpinning evidence presented within the criminal and civil courts. LRCFS is a ten-year £10 million project with the remit to disrupt positively the current forensic science ecosystem. They set aside conventional ways of thinking, embrace new opportunities from across the broad academic research and industry landscape and work with practitioners from the crime scene to the court room to explore new ways of resolving old challenges and develop future opportunities. The Centre has a vibrant, dynamic and agile team blending together public engagement, statistics, natural sciences, social sciences and legal domains together to solve real world problems.

The centre have had recent focus on the increase in the production of illicit psychoactive substances which is a huge challenge facing forensic drug chemists, law enforcement agencies, the prison services and those involved in policy making.

The involvement of this centre, within our proposed framework, would be an invaluable asset. They have a broad range of relevant expertise that could make our work within the inter-disciplinary drug crisis research network a huge success, as well as direct leadership within our proposed oversight committee.

Key Project Stakeholders



Niamh was the Vice-Chair of the Dundee Drug Commission, which was the team that led the report and recommendations into a new era of measures centred around kindness, compassion and hope.
Niamh is the current Director of the LRCFS and has led several scientific research endeavours closely related to drug use and investigating new psychoactive substances that contribute to Scotland's problematic record. Niamh would be a very beneficial partner to our work moving forward.

Professor Niamh Nic Daeid
Director of LRCFS

PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS



The Drug Discovery Unit (DDU)

The DDU is very unique within the UK, they are a drug discovery research lab at the centre of our University campus who bring together assay development, screening, cell biology, medicinal chemistry, structural biology, computational chemistry and Drug Metabolism and Pharmacokinetics (DMPK), all into one integrated facility. One of their main areas of activity is anti-infectives drug discovery with a particular focus on low income nations. Their work centralises around finding new ways for drugs to work and making drug development cheaper. There may be an oppurtunity for the DDU to be involved in our framework. The full extent of their potential involvement goes beyond the scope of this paper, and it would be more appropriate for such considerations to take place at a later stage in planning.

University Public Engagement Team



Our University have a Public Engagement Team who support community, cultural and public relations across our institution. The team support staff and students in their engagement journey, and seek to foster links with the community and the wider public sector.

The team can support students find funding through signposting to many sources of funding bodies, including research grants. The team also support students in running their events, including assisting people in finding venues, planning the target audiences and setting tangible goals.

This is a very key stakeholder in many of the proposals we seek to bring to the forefront of University life. Having the direct involvement and advice from our Public Engagement Team would be incredibly beneficial to the overall success of our framework.

> **The University of Dundee aims to transform lives in our city, region and around the world. These social and cultural benefits can only be realised by working with others. We also share our research, teaching and professional practice. The pathway to realising these benefits is known as public engagement. We are passionate about embedding public engagement in all that we do.**

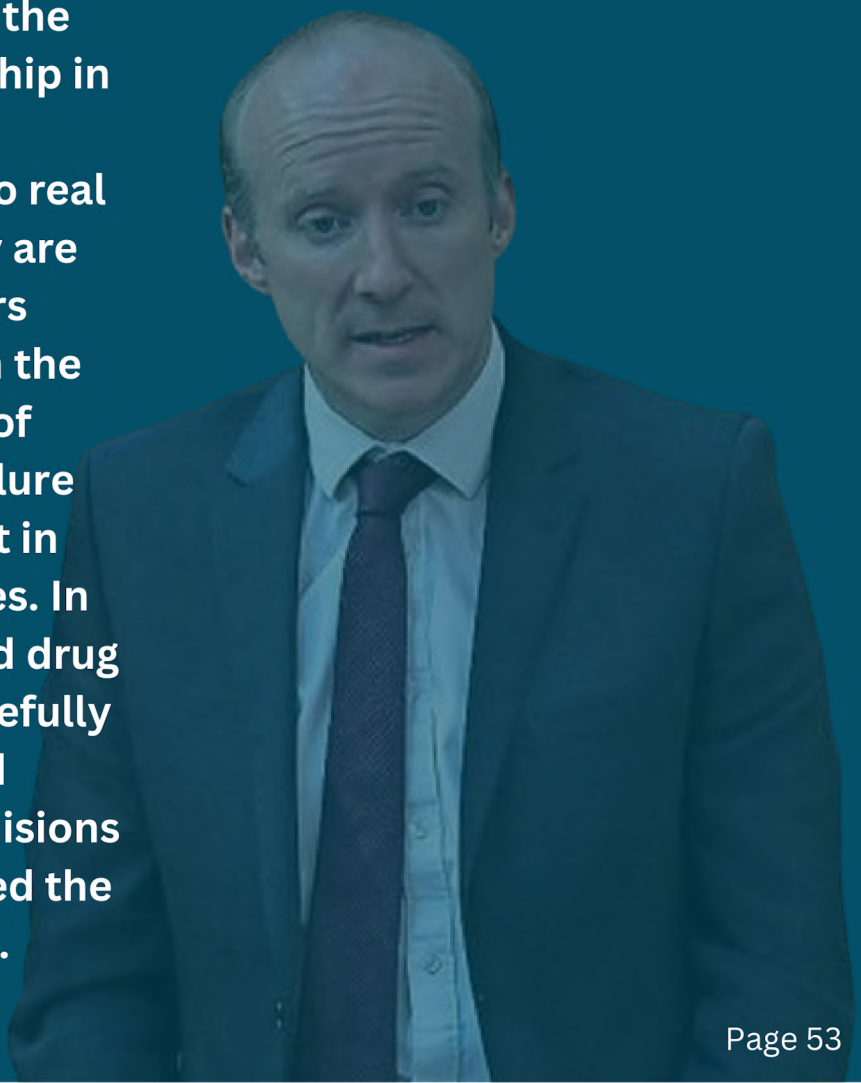
PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Political Parnterships

The University are fortunate to have close relations with local and national politicians as well as various public policy bodies. This project could strengthen our activity and relations with crucial law and policy makers who can make a real difference to society. If we utilise these stakeholders, there is then an opportunity for them to champion our causes - including this framework. If politicians and councillors around Dundee are involved, be it through sitting on the proposed oversight committee, or helping to raise awareness, it increases the likely success of our project overall. Members of the Scottish Parliament, such as Michael Marra MSP, is also a former member of staff within our community, and he has proven himself to be a passionate advocate of local issues, particularly the drug death crisis. Michael and the likes of John Alexander (leader of Dundee City Council), also a Dundee alumnus, would be pivotal stakeholders in any actions going forward.

Sadly these figures confirm the total failure of local leadership in Dundee on our drug death epidemic. There has been no real reform of the services thatv are central to keeping drug users alive and to setting them on the path to recovery. The pace of change is glacial and the failure to act is being measured out in lost lives and broken families. In Dundee and across Scotland drug and alcohol services are woefully underfunded... We have had years now of reports, commisions and taskforces - now we need the Scottish Government to act.

- Michael Marra MSP



UNIVERSITY POTENTIAL

This report will unavoidably shine light on tragic realities. But there is no doubt that our University have made seriously impactful strides in revitalising Dundee, in fostering strong partnerships and truly realising our social purpose. There is still a long way to go for this city, and indeed for our University, but only time and bold action will tell. There is real potential to transform lives that we would otherwise overlook, real potential to champion social justice and cultural reform.

Our Universities Role in Establishing V&A Dundee

The University has been closely involved since the beginning of the V&A project. The original idea was born at the University, which led to us making the first pitch to the V&A to consider why Dundee was the best location for it. We are a founding partner of this globally renowned design museum, and the links remain strong. The University mission is to transform lives, through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge. V&A Dundee is a project that has been showing it can help transform a city, with a growing awareness and changed perception of Dundee around the world. The very fact that this University helped make the V&A happen, only emboldens the notion that this University can help make other things happen - particularly the drug death crisis that scourges our community. Throughout the V&A project development, it was frequently asked - '**Why Dundee?**' The University response was affirmative - '**Why not?**'.

> **It was an ambitious proposal from the city, but the time was right to be bold and that gambit paid off.**

This University and this student community should take radical and forward thinking steps to further tackle the wider drug crisis, both at home and across the country. Some might ask **'Why Dundee?'** The answer to that question should receive the same answer to the V&A pitch - **'Why not?'**. It was time to be bold then, it is certainly time to be bold again.

The V&A Dundee has been viewed as an innovative and socially remarkable initiative. It has indeed put Dundee on the map for all the right reasons. Nevertheless, this success story does not negate from the harsh reality that Dundee remains on the map for another reason - the worst drug death record across an entire continent. It can and should be our responsibility, our societal duty, to work towards removing that dark accolade, to be bold in transforming lives in a way like never before.

UNIVERSITY POTENTIAL

Our Universities Role with the Eden Project Dundee



The Eden Project in Dundee is planned to be designed on the old gasworks beside the River Tay. This innovative project is likely to create hundreds of new jobs for the city and local businesses, and is likely to attract over half a million visitors each year, and could also bring well over £20 million in economic impact each year. The Eden Project in Cornwall attracts about one million visitors a year. David Harland, chief executive of Eden Project International, said: "The former Dundee Gasworks site is by far the best location for our Scottish home and we're delighted to have a formal agreement in place to start working on a detailed plan." Our University are highly likely to be an investor and longstanding parnter with Eden project Dundee, which will further strengthen our bond with the cities exciting regeneration.



The Eden Project provides the opportunity for us to develop our city as a beacon for social and environmental sustainability, bringing the benefits of a just transition for our citizens to a society more in tune with our local and global environment. Dundee can again provide leadership for others in Scotland and beyond.

UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITY

Our Civic Responsibility

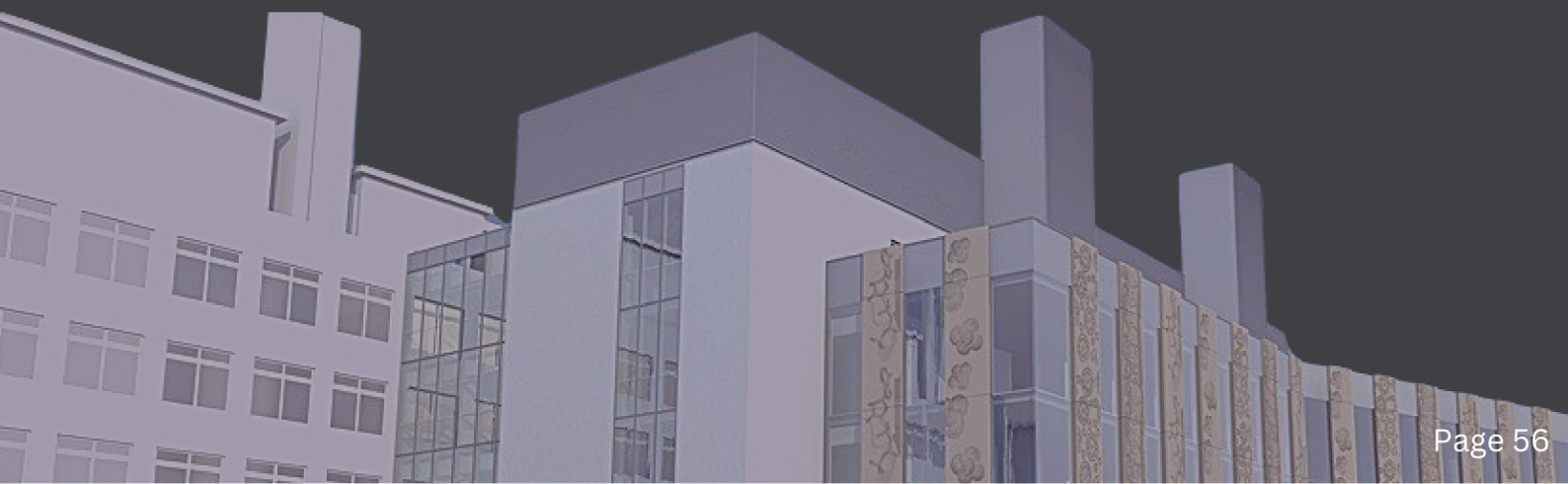
If we are to truly be of, and for, Dundee, then we must embrace these recommendations and commit to working together and taking genuine responsibility as an institution within our city. We have a strong civic reach and potential to contribute to addressing the drug crisis in innovative ways. Our reach is one thing, but our civic responsibility is crucial. There exists two clear sides to Dundee, and these recommendations within this framework strives to remove this unhelpful contrast and bridge the gap in progress and leadership.

A Partner of the City

As mentioned, the University have longstanding connections with Dundee City Council and many other local institutes. These external relations are powerful assets to allow for greater change and direct action. We are an established and respected University across the city, and we ought to utilise this position to our advantage and to the cities benefit. We have been an active partner in many key activities and achievements in our city, so we already have a track record in displaying leadership with civic responsibility. Our parnership with our community can be so much more, and this project can be part of this ambition.

Our Influence

There is no doubt that should we deliver any of these measures, they would be far more impactful if they had the power of the University behind each of them. Our inflence with partners across Dundee, and indeed Scotland, could mean our ongoing and future work will spread further with more success. University-level support for a multfaceted project like this would raise much more awareness and help change attitudes like never before. We ought to recognise our influence more, especially now that we have a renewed passion for social purpose.

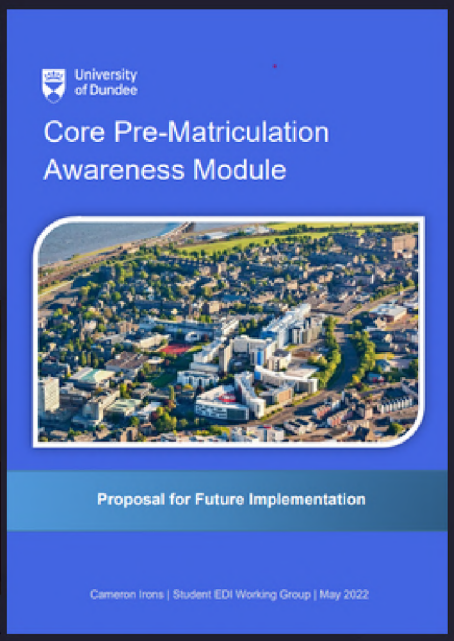


DUNDEE DIFFERENCE

Active partnership is a distinctive aspect of the University. They have a proven track record of demonstrating their commitment to working with students and responding to their voice. The partnership between staff and students and between the University and DUSA is fundamental to who the University are as an institution. Our community are distinctive through the combination of these links. This is the Dundee Difference. In recent years we have seen various student-led initiatives that the University have embraced and agreed to work on with students. The University Executive Group have been particularly enthusiastic about the student voice and have recently strengthened their commitment to the student partnership agreement. Below are examples of projects that the University have accepted and worked on with students. We hope these examples build a stronger case as to why they should closely examine, welcome and commit to the recommendations made within this student-led project.







[Learn More]

During the academic restructuring project involving three schools, a team of School Presidents led a multi-school consultation that seen over 300 class representatives and focus groups provide course-level feedback and recommendations. The data and feedback was subsequently reviewed and responded to by the New Combined School Leadership Board. This project ensured the student voice was upheld and transmitted during a controversial period of uncertainty and opposition.

[Learn More]

Amidst the challenging periods of the wider cost of living crisis, students worked in close partnership with the University Executive to develop a series of support measures to assist students suffering economic hardship. After negotiations between students and the University, it was agreed that DUSA would introduce a free campus foodbank and a free breakfast club that would be funded by the University. Additionally, it was agreed that a further £100,000 would be allocated to the student hardship fund.

[Learn More]

During 2021/22 , a group of students developed a University-wide proposal for enhanced pre-matriculation training for all students. The proposed training covered areas including Gender Based Violence and Consent, EDI, Climate Action and Academic Integrity. Widespread consultations and campaigns were held in the lead up to the final report, involving over 1000 students and various staff. The University accepted the proposals, with the training now being developed in partnership with students.

DUNDEE DIFFERENCE

Dimitris Vidakis served as President of the Dundee University Student Association during the 2021/22 academic year. Dimitris was integral to the shaping of the new University strategy, and one of his primary goals was to align DUSA's strategic future with that of the Universities. He was emphatic that whilst we have a new strategy, direct action is necessary to bring it to life. He also recognised that social purpose was what was going to pave the way forward, and this new ambition was a direct call to action on students to make a real impact on the world around us. Below, Dimitris provides his thoughts on this project and the University and DUSA's part to play.

“This drug crisis framework for the future exemplifies the power of what our students and this University can achieve when they work together. This was exactly what was intended when we drafted our new strategic priorities. I believe that both DUSA and partners across the University can make a real difference around the tragedy that is the Scottish drug epidemic. This is a University of social purpose, and that must be demonstrated with passionate community engagement. I fully support these innovative proposals, and whilst this is just the start of something big, so much can be achieved with it.



CHARITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

There are a wide range of charities across Dundee and Scotland that are heavily involved in drug recovery, harm reduction and supporting vulnerable families and drug victims in times of need. These organisations are the voices for those who lack one, and are also active campaigners for better treatment, reforms in the justice system and changes in cultural attitudes. Such organisations would be more than willing to support our proposed framework and we could similarly raise more awareness of their causes and activities.

Potential Partnerships

With You is a charity that provides free, confidential support to people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health. They also use their expertise to deliver support and raise awareness around these issues. With You work with people on their own goals, whether that's staying safe and healthy, making small changes or stopping an unwanted habit altogether. **Visit**

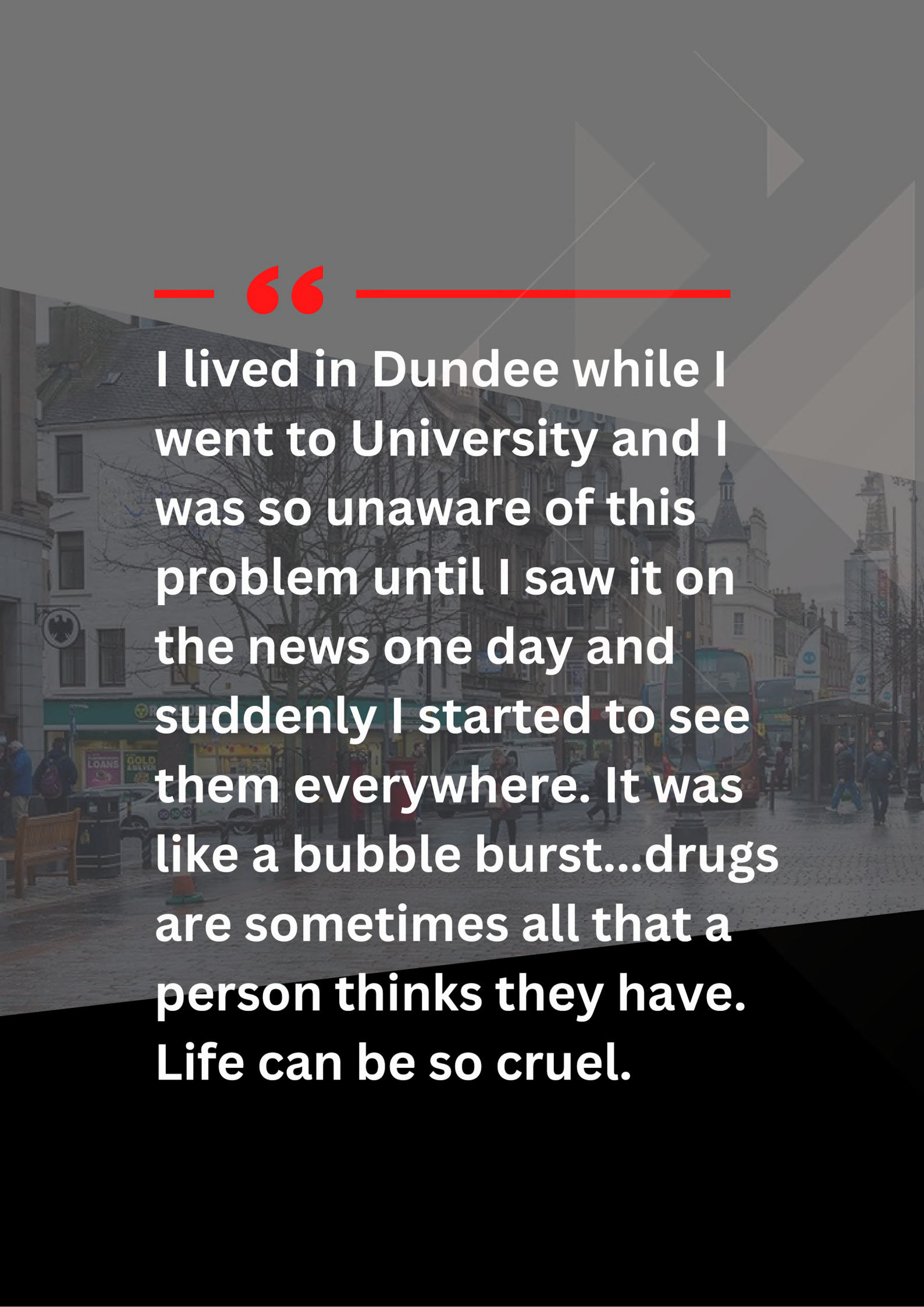
Recovery are an organisation who help people find the best treament at one of many recovery centres across the UK. They have a team of fully trained addiction counsellors with a 24 hours advice service on both NHS and private treatment. Their 'Addiction Helpline' is 100% free to use and all calls are confidential. **Visit**

Crew is a national Scottish charity strongly committed to harm reduction. They have a skilled team of volunteers who support and enhance the work of Crew, who conduct widespread outreach initiatives, educational training and also provide a qualified counselling service. They have recently delivered a workshop to students of the University of Dundee. **Visit**

It would be highly effective should the University and DUSA strengthen their relations with these organisations. They are external partners who could sit within our propsoed oversight committee, they could work closely with our proposed research network, our proposed education programme and voluntary city outreach scheme. Close relations allows for collaborative leadership and, crucially, a better informed University on the wider societal challenges and the third sector perspectives. A unified network of charities with our University at the centre would also reaffirm our social purpose values.

STUDENT COMMUNITY





I lived in Dundee while I went to University and I was so unaware of this problem until I saw it on the news one day and suddenly I started to see them everywhere. It was like a bubble burst...drugs are sometimes all that a person thinks they have. Life can be so cruel.

A STUDENT FOCUS

It's no coincidence that this project appeared at the same time as a multiple of student campaigns for drug harm reduction on campus. Students are waking up to the reality that the way drug use has been treated both in their own community and the wider community creates stigma and increases risk associated with drug use. Our University and DUSA are in the unique position to provide support, education, and physical resources to reduce these risks for all through a harm reduction-based drugs policy. We have to accept that drugs are here to stay, and I hope the project is the beginning of a conversation, and action, to improve the wellbeing of our students on and off campus.



Adam Robertson
Deputy Project Director (Student Affairs)
Undergraduate Philosophy & History Student

Adam has led some of the student aspects of this project, including championing harm reduction and distributing drug testing kits, overdose prevention information and leading various society initiatives. Adam joined forces with the wider working group to raise greater awareness on this work and make it campus and city wide.

STUDENT VOICE

The student voice is fundamental to university life. It allows for effective learning and teaching, and ensures the very best student experience for all. The student voice goes further than this though. It is an effective tool to convey how students feel on wider social and cultural issues. The University of Dundee take the student voice seriously, and have a proven track record of acknowledging student opinion and valuing their wishes - especially with societal and campus-specific issues. We needed to ensure that every relevant stakeholder who is capable of making impactful decisions can understand what student's think and feel. All data presented has been summarised and anonymised. We are happy to share the full details around the methodology of seeking feedback, and the integrity of it.

Types of Feedback

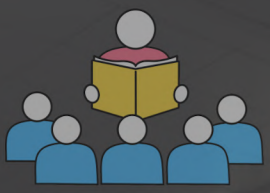
Project Survey

We launched a 15-question survey and circulated it around a diverse range of students over the course of a week. We received 1042 student responses. Some students provided us with open text feedback. We received over 230 open text comments.



Focus Groups

We ran some focus groups with students from a variety of backgrounds and levels. These focus group meetings had set agendas that seen a diverse range of opinions and suggestions.



Interviews

We conducted a handful of interviews with individuals with experience in these topics, lived experiences or simply an interest in our work. This data was somewhat more personal than our focus groups.



Online Debates

We gathered data from a variety of sources online, including social media debates and comments from students on different platforms. We also gathered data and opinion from external online resources, including documentaries, news articles and public comments.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do you know about the local and national drug-death crisis? *
2. As a student in Dundee, do you feel the drug crisis is at all relevant to you? *
3. Do you think the University have a social responsibility to the community? *
4. What issues do you think the University have, or should have, a responsibility over across society?
5. To what extent do you agree that the University can advance progress in dealing with issues surrounding addiction, drug deaths and the related social and cultural factors?
   (Thinking in terms of research, education, awareness and public engagement).
6. Please indicate your support for the following recommendation *
   A University-Run Drug Crisis Oversight Committee.

   A leading forum comprising of students, academics and external partners to monitor and drive all University-wide initiatives aimed at addressing drug-related challenges locally and nationally.
7. Please indicate your support for the following recommendation *
   An Interdisciplinary Drug Crisis Research Network.

   A platform for various disciplines across campus (including the life, health and social sciences) to share, collaborate and innovate on a variety of projects and investigations focused on the social, psychological, legal and scientific challenges surrounding the drug crisis.
8. Please indicate your support for the following recommendation *
   A Drug Awareness Community Education Programme.

   A series of educational initiatives developed within our community education and social work disciplines. Measures including open public lectures, awareness workshops and primary/secondary school presentations.
9. Please indicate your support for the following recommendation *
   A Voluntary City Outreach Scheme

   A network of student volunteers who partake in community-level support, soup or hot drink stalls, public information campaigns and fundraising projects.
10. Please indicate your support for the following recommendation *
    A University Annual Week of Remembrance

    A campus and community wide week dedicated to remembering those who have lost their lives to drugs in Scotland and beyond. Initiatives include art displays, vigils, multi-faith chaplaincy services and online information campaigns.
11. To what extent do you agree that DUSA should assist and contribute to the following proposals for the student community.
    A Harm Reduction Policy | Online and Physical Drug Safety Information | Educational Workshops | Wider Drug Crisis Campaigning | Drug Testing Kits
12. Do you any have comments, feedback or opinions regarding our project, recommendations or the subject-matter in general?
13. Please state your student status *
14. Final Questions: Please indicate your level of study *
15. Final Questions: Please indicate your school of study *

SURVEY RESULTS

Total Respondents: 1042

Internal Circulation Only

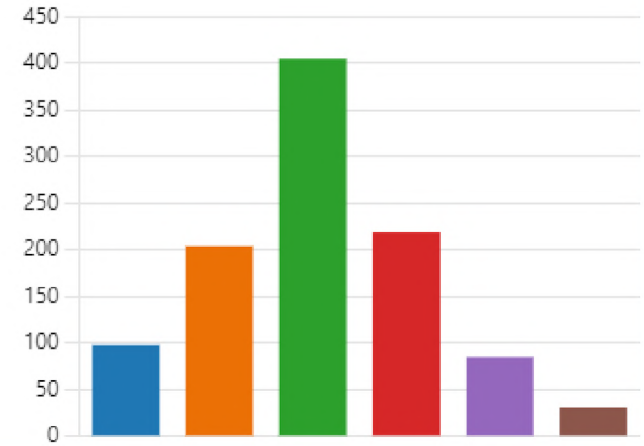
Open 27/04 to 02/05

We initially sought to understand current levels of awareness around the drug crisis both locally and nationally. This data will help inform us as to what information is readily available to our community, and what more can be done to raise awareness.

1. To what extent do you know about the local and national drug-death crisis?

More Details

Very Knowledgeable	98
Knowledgeable	204
Aware	405
Somewhat Aware	219
Unaware	85
Very Unaware	31



We also thought it would be useful to understand how relevant these issues are to students. This illustrates potential engagement and interest from students moving forward, as well as show us that these issues mean something to our community.

2. As a student in Dundee, do you feel the drug crisis is at all relevant to you?

More Details Insights

Yes	536
Maybe	319
No	153
I don't know	34



From examining both the awareness and the relevance to students, it can be concluded that a large proportion of students are aware of the drug epidemic, and do feel like it is an issue relevant to them. Accordingly, our project is indeed one that students will likely engage with in the future and they do feel it is an important matter.

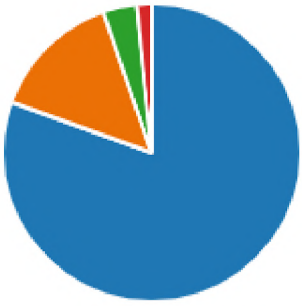
SURVEY RESULTS

Before asking any project-related questions, we wanted to see how students felt about our University and its connection with the surrounding society. This question might also inform potential engagement with students around our institutions social purpose and public affairs activity.

3. Do you think the University have a social responsibility to the community?

More Details Insights

Yes	839
Maybe	148
No	38
I don't know	17

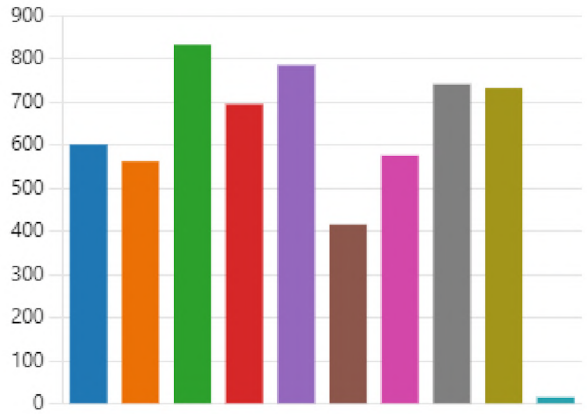


We also thought it would be relevant to seek student opinion on what they perceive our University are meant to be responsible for across society. We offered students a broad selection of issues to consider what was the highest priority to them.

4. What issues do you think the University have, or should have, a responsibility over across society?

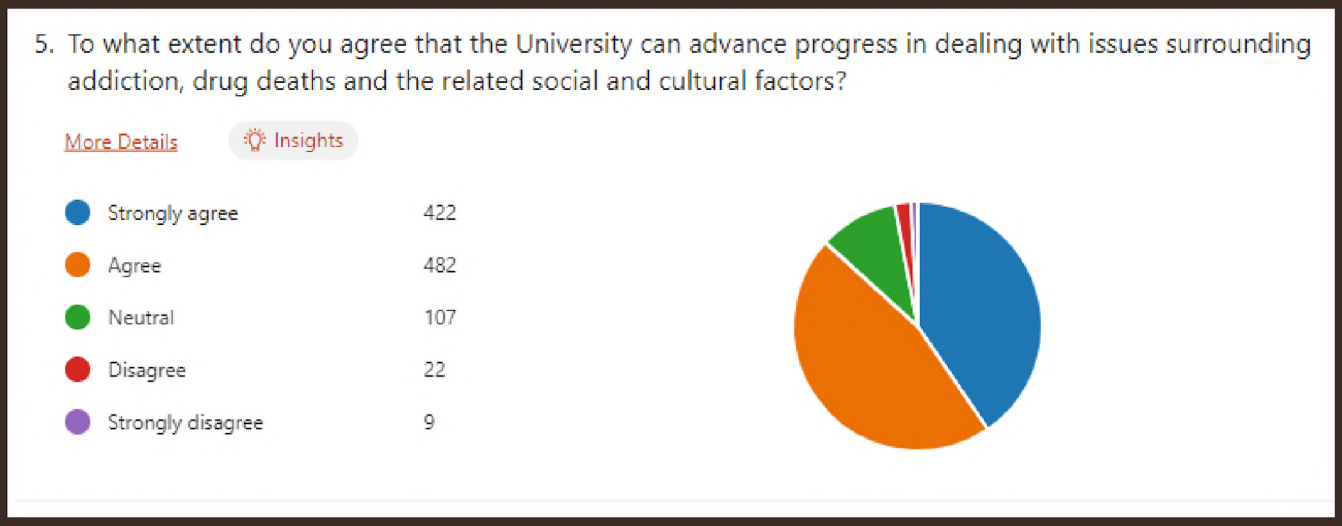
More Details

Social Justice	602
Population Health	563
Scientific Research and Discovery	833
Sustainability	695
Diversity and Inclusion	785
Public Policy	416
Economic Impact	576
Public Engagement	741
Charity and Activism	732
None	16



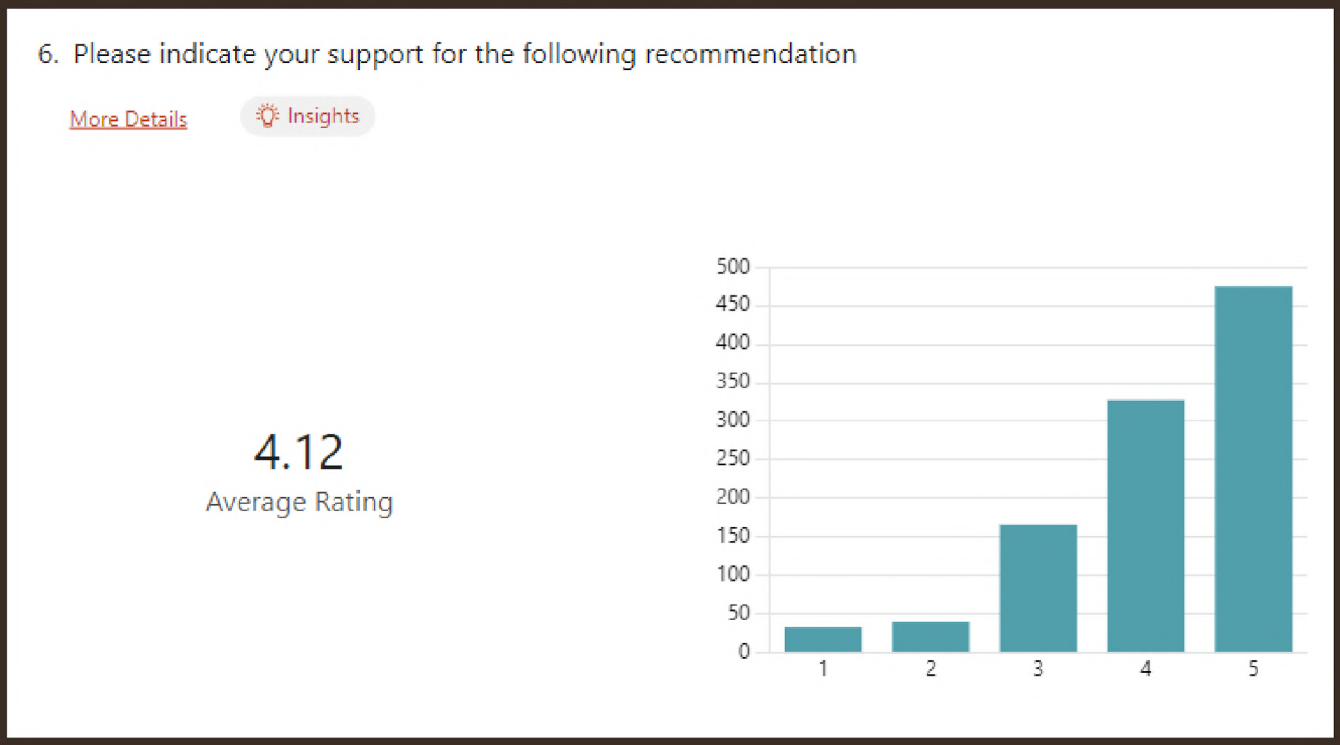
SURVEY RESULTS

This question was designed to gather insight into general student support for the basis of our entire project. It was positive to recieve an overwhelming majority of students in agreement that we, as a University, can indeed advance progress.



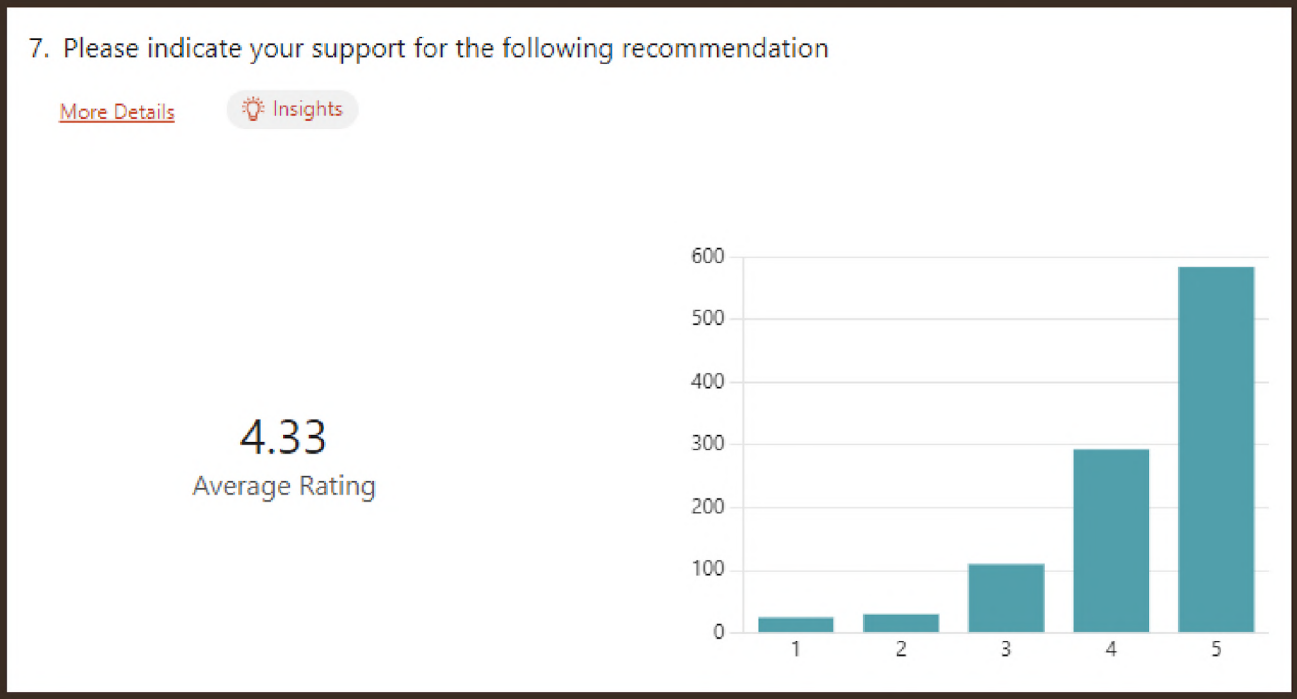
Recommendation Ratings

Students were asked to indicate their support for the proposed Drug Crisis Oversight Committee. With regards to this proposal, just over 800 of the surveyed students ranked this proposal at either 4 or 5 stars.

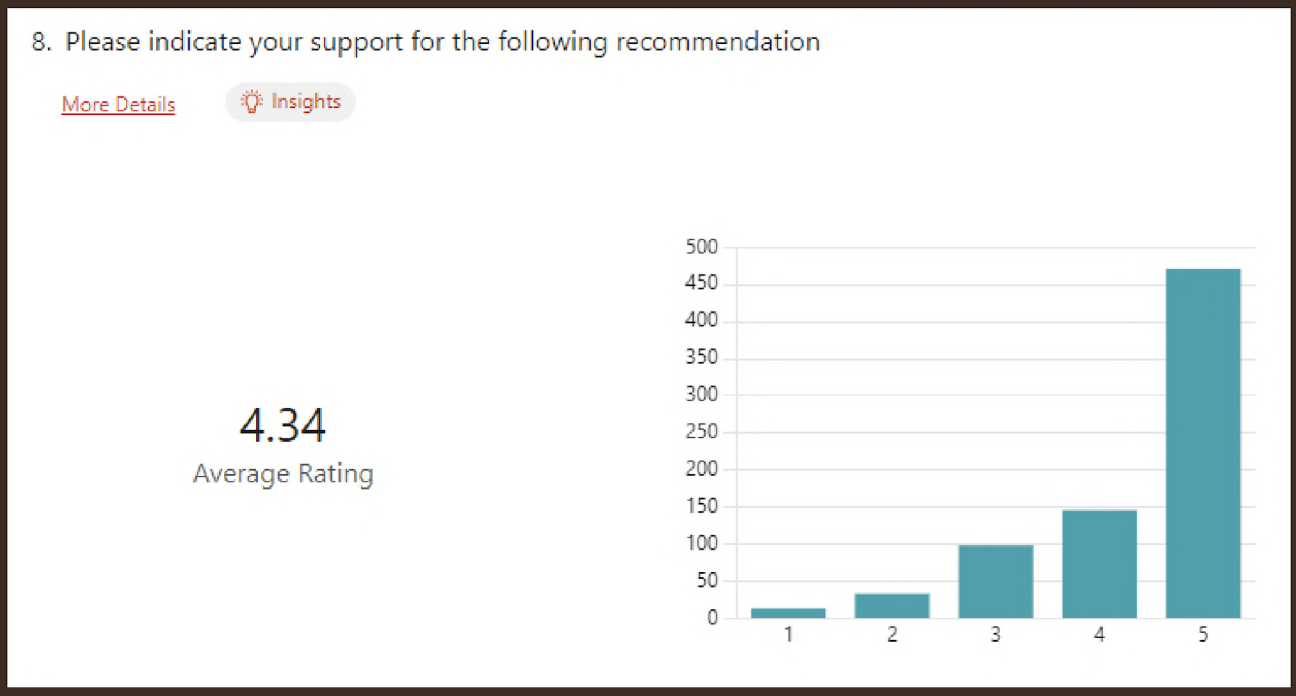


SURVEY RESULTS

Students were asked to indicate their support for the proposed Inter-Disciplinary Drug Crisis Research Network. Over 800 students rated this recommendation at 4 or 5-stars. This received more 5-star ratings than the oversight committee idea.

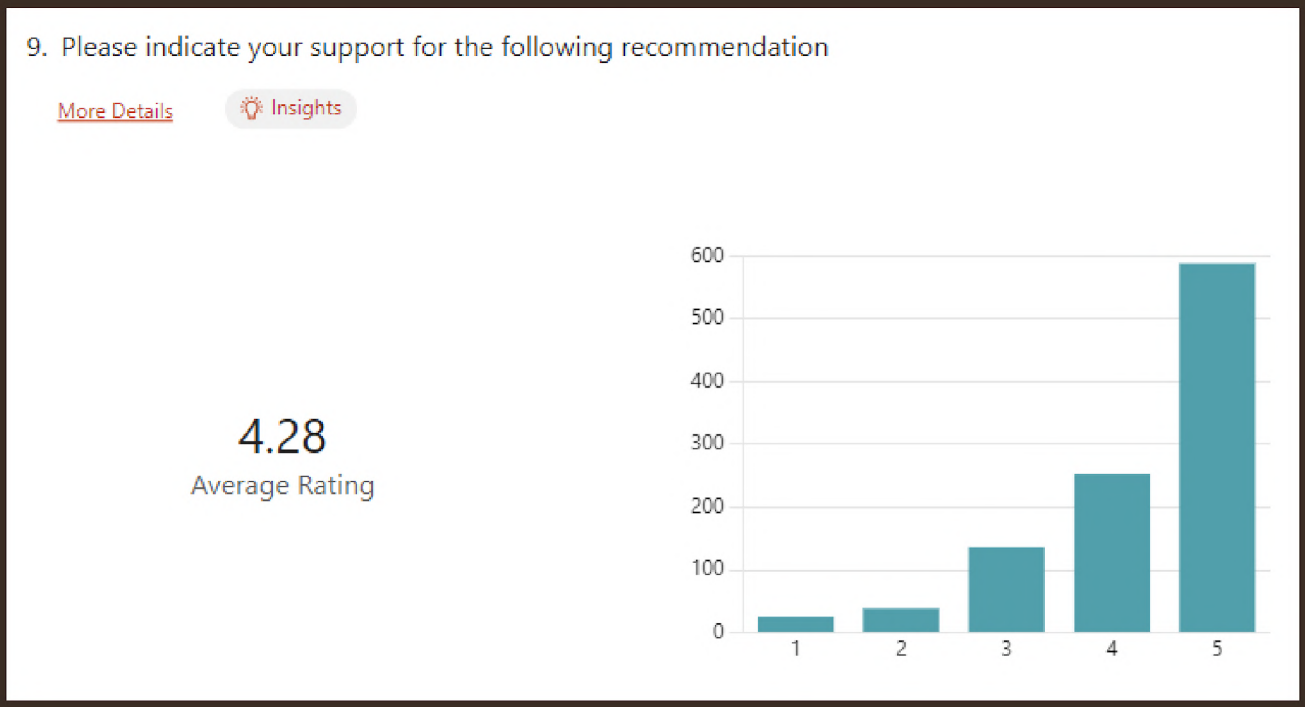


Students were asked to indicate their support for the proposed Community Education Programme. This proposal recieved the most 4 or 5-star ratings than any other proposal. Over 850 students rated this recommendation at either 4 or 5 stars.



SURVEY RESULTS

Students were asked to indicate their support for the proposed Voluntary City Outreach Scheme. This proposal also recieved a signifigant number of 5-star ratings. Over 800 students ranked this idea either a 4 or 5-star.

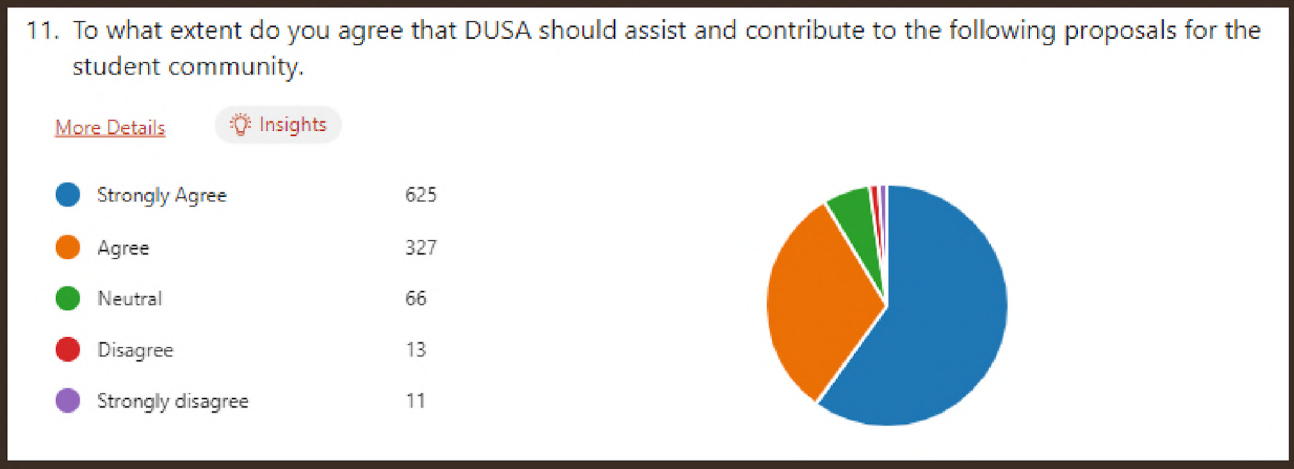


Students were asked to indicate their support for the proposed University Annual Week of Remembrance. Over 600 students ranked this proposal either a 4 or 5-star rating.

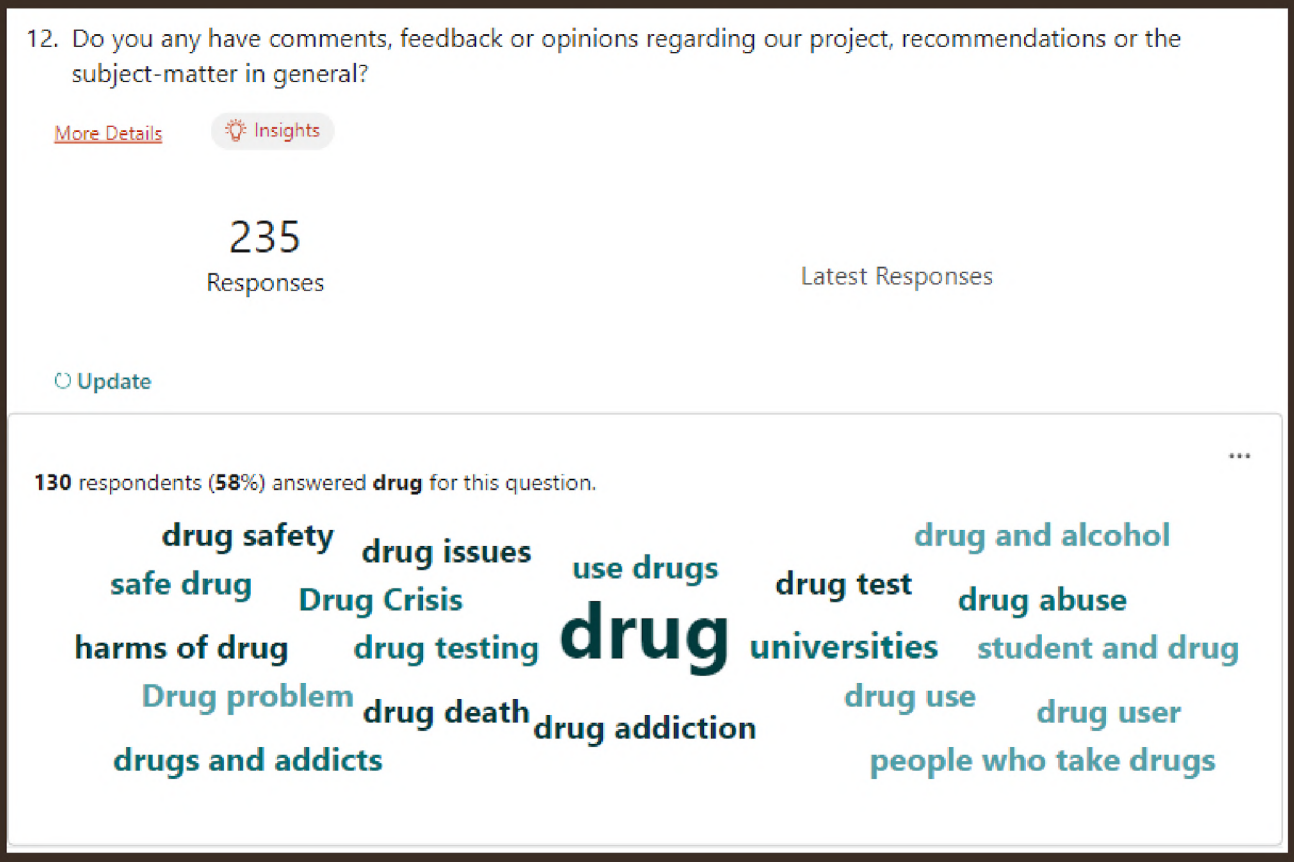


SURVEY RESULTS

Students were asked to indicate their support for the potential DUSA-related proposals, namely introducing a harm reduction policy, offering safety information on the use of drugs, offering educational workshops and providing drug testing kits. In terms of general student support, these proposals were the most favoured.



Students were also offered an opportunity to provide open-text feedback or opinions on the recommendations and the topic in general. We received a total of **235 responses.** The following pages provide a sample of various comments made by student respondents.



PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THE FOLLOWING CONTENT MAY CAUSE READERS UPSET OR ALARM

SURVEY RESULTS

Open Text Comment Samples (Community Focussed)

Great project! I feel this project can both promote harm reduction when using recreational/party drugs, as well as drug related deaths and addiction. It would be beneficial to consider both of these and how they relative to students, as well as the local community. I hope this project finds a balance of raising awareness of harm but also not villianizing drug use.

I wasn't aware of how bad it was in Dundee until i got this email.

The availability of Naloxone kits and training could be effective - this could be particularly beneficial throughout the wider community. Outreach to community/recovery centres - having guest speakers who have experienced drug dependancy/addicition as guest speakers. This would be highly impactful in delivering the mesasage of the realities of addiction.

Advocate and commit funding into more research of safe consumption and decriminalization. Become more integrated with the actual population, focus may not necessarily be solely on students.

Projects should be focussed locally instead of nationally due to Dundee's specific issue of drug related matters.

As a Dundonian, UoD graduate, MFA student, prison peer support worker and an addict in recovery from a heroin addiction for eleven years, my feelings are that the university needs to take a more proactive role in tackling the drug death crisis in Dundee and nationally. The proposals being put forward are a good step in the right direction, but given Dundee's label as the drug death capital of Europe, the university should be at the forefront of these developments!

Think this is good. Really like the idea of collacting across the courses in a network to exchange ideas and proposals. Really think drug awareness is needed across student body too. Dangerous stuff but needs spoken about.

I have lost 2 family members to drug overdoses. I am particularly passionate about this and strongly support the work you are doing.

Outreach and education are important, criminalising addicts can make things worse.

The voluntary outreach scheme is a good idea and could help with addressing inequalities faced by people who use drugs in Dundee. University funding such activities would be helpful... The annual week of remembrance is also an excellent idea.

SURVEY RESULTS

Open Text Comment Samples (Student Focussed)

As a student and drug user i am very pleased to hear about these initiatives. Drug safety and harm reduction policies are absolutely the right way to go.

Harm reduction is unlikely to be seen as anything except a condoning of drug abuse. People use drugs as a way of escaping everyday life, because often everyday life is unkind and difficult.

I lost the boy i loved to drugs last summer, and i know it affected me and many others. I think the university has a responsibility to help their students be more educated on the topic and offer support to those affected.

Harm reduction should be a priority.

I feel like students have lots of privellage being at uni or in halls and so many of us take drugs that its very disengenous to think we are not part of the problem of drug epidemic. We can't advocate for safe drug use among students if we don't reach out to those in Dundee community who might not have our privellage.

The university should focus on effective harm reduction in its student populations well as the wider community.

It could be argued, that for many students, safe drug use (education and test kits) produce a wider and more reasonably beneficial impact than abstinece (which has proven failed). In terms of drug abuse in the wider community, the university has innumerable volunteers as its disposal to aid the crisis. The only gripe is knowing where and how to deploy them.

DUSA and the Uni are in a position where they can make a real difference. Tragedy is already and will continue to occur and the longer they sit and wait the longer they are complicit in the harm both to students and the community.

DUSA in itself can be quite harsh when it comes to drugs in a way that doesn't make students any safer. Students are going to do drugs no matter what - by having drug tests and not threatening students with the police if they are caught with drugs, it could help students stay safe while taking.

SURVEY RESULTS

Open Text Comment Samples (General)

The drug prevalence in Dundee makes the city feel less safe due to the associated repercussions. This makes non-campuses based night outings feel less safe.

The fact that it takes a school wide survey and student lobbying to get the drug death capital of Europe's university to even start thinking about handing out drug testing kits is embarrassing, to be honest. This is long overdue.

I think this sounds like a brilliant project and very much needed. Fife also has quite a high rate of death as a result of drugs so clearly there is an issue.

Just make sure not to demonise drugs and drug use because that can also be alienating.

Don't provide drug testing kits, i agree with all other elements above though.

It will be a good project for the university and for the general community as drug addiction is alarming in this city.

University actions could tip the balance towards a more positive response to the drug crisis in Dundee.

Having lived in Dundee for many years and worked in very deprived areas wih a lot of drug issues i think most problems are outwith the university remit. I do welcome any attempt to improve the situation though.

I think education is the most appropriate means of approaching this issue.

My personal experience with students smoking or taking illicit drugs in the residences itself. The university should strongly look into this and take measures. The residences have become a nightmare with students indulging in such activities.

I think its hugely admirable that this action is taking place. I am a student about to graduate and will soon work within the NHS.

An amazing initiative! Change indeed begins at ground level and considering that most drug addictions start during teenage, awareness in high schools and university may prevent the start of it.

Having lost a sibling due to a drug overdose in Dundee, i fully support any initiatives in the city to address this head on. Also, in my opinion there needs to be more work done to reduce the stigma and harmful messages surrounding drug users.

SURVEY RESULTS

Open Text Comment Samples (General)

I think alot of people would want to get involved in these projects, they all seem like very good initiatives.

Changing institutional approaches to drugs and drug harm (zero tolerance does not work) and then connecting with the wider Dundee community would be an oppurtunity for the university to really take the lead, pushing for national change.

I think it's a wonderful idea and strongly support, however sometimes sheltered 'well-off' students not from Dundee may see it as an oppurtunity to feel better about themselves, instead of primarily focussed on helping others. I thnk people need to be seriously brutally educated on the situation before being allowed an oppurtunity to engage with the wider community or anyone who may have vulnerabilities in the matter, but i am still in strong support!

Maybe the university could take strategic research to investigate changes in social policy, harm reduction techniques or perhaps decriminalization, with the goal of supporting societal, legal and governmental changes to reduce overall harm from drug abuse.

Please ensure those who have directly experienced aspects of the drug crisis are included in research and discussions of these initiatives going forward. They are the experts of this matter and effective research, progress and action cannot be taken without them. What also needs to be addressed in Dundee is poverty, it is inextricably linkd with the crisis and is intesnyfing. The drug crisis must be considered with regards to other social issues in Dundee, and included in research and activism.

It scares me when i really think about how many lives are lost every year and i think that fear being the only real emotion around the subject that makes it hard to talk about or act. The suggestions made, i think, could help open up discussion in a way that changes those emotions around drug deaths, hope and solidarity.

I think this is a long time coming and it is about time the university publicly recignise its socio-political surroundings. Dundee plays a huge role in our student experience and this is a clear bridge of thr growing gap between Dundee's deep issues and Dundee's profiting, closed-off academia. This is a clear sign of initiative in the right direction - a university truly involved and invested in the city. Real change, real issues, real people. Thank you for organising this. I fully support.

SURVEY RESULTS

The last questions cover student-specifc data that may be of interest to parties.

13. Please state your student status

More Details Insights

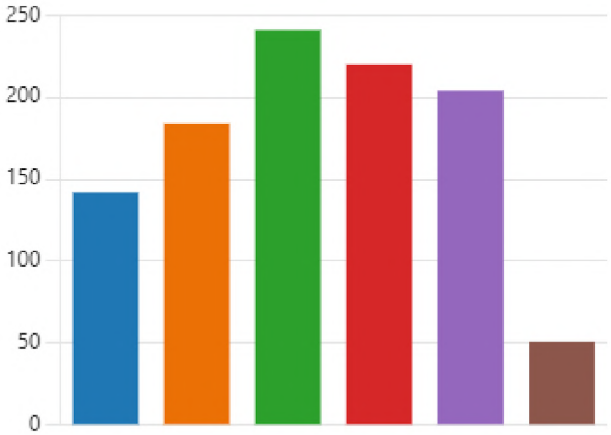
Scottish Student	625
(Rest of UK) Student	131
EU Student	100
International Student	169
Prefer Not To Say	17



14. Final Questions: Please indicate your level of study

More Details

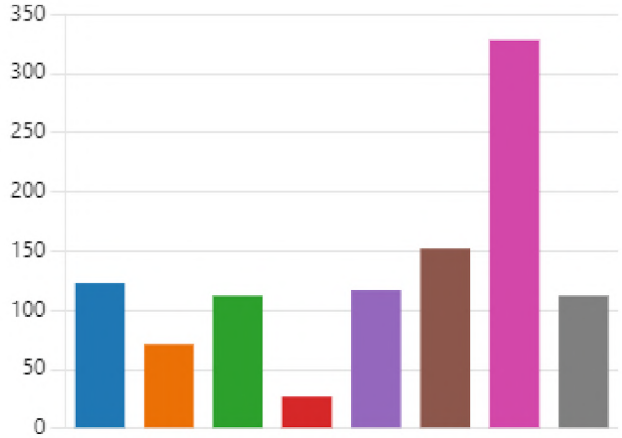
Level 1	142
Level 2	184
Level 3	241
Level 4	220
Masters/PG	204
PHD	51



15. Final Questions: Please indicate your school of study

More Details Insights

Life Sciences	123
Health Sciences	71
Medicine	112
Dentistry	27
Business	117
DJCAD	152
Humanities, Social Sciences and ...	328
Science and Engineering	112



GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Having lived in Pakistan my whole life, i never really knew of Scotland or Dundee's problem with drugs and alcohol. I read about it upon arriving here, and i did find it really sad. When i first heard of this student initiative i immediately wanted to help. Despite my time in this University being short-lived, i personally do think we have a moral obligation to do more and be active in helping those less fortunate and vulnerable. Whilst this is a local challenge, it would be warming to see involvement from students, in this project, from around the world. This is our university and our community, and as such, this should also be our fight, no matter where we come from. Dundee City is a really special place full of warmth and kindness, and they deserve our empathy and commitment now and forever.

Muhammad Hamza Liaqat,
Masters Student in Business Analytics,
Drug Crisis Project Working Group Support



Hamza has been actively involved in our project working group, assisting us in analysing data from our internal surveys and focus groups, whilst also helping us conduct research into the university strategy.

STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS



Focus Group A Summary | 8 Students | Levels 1-5 | Home Students

This group demonstrated in-depth insights into the drug crisis. Most believed that the people who have directly or indirectly been affected by the drug crisis should be included in the initiatives. When it comes to students, the first years and international students should be educated more as they are more vulnerable, moving to a new city and would be more prone to getting involved in drugs. One student said safe drug use could result in a more beneficial impact rather than abstinence. A student expressed how common drug use has become at night outs, to the point that students are not even trying to hide it and at a certain point in the night, 'the only logical thing to do would be to do a line.' Also stating that young people do not feel the side effects immediately so many of the awareness campaigns would be brushed aside as they would not apply to them. One student suggests aiming at the problem that cripples the city the most, also aiming at reducing alcohol consumption as it leads to violent crime and abuse at a much higher rate. A student who is also a drug user states that they are incredibly pleased to hear about this and strongly believes that harm reduction policies are the way to go. Emphasis was placed on peer support meetings, be it for students or the local community, as they have proved to be useful for recovery.

Focus Group B Summary | 8 Students | Levels 1-5 | Overseas Students

This group consisted of overseas students from India, France, Pakistan, Portugal, and China. All the students supported the recommendations put forward in this research and shared their insights from the experiences. One of the students had already worked in a Drug Research Committee and emphasised the need to remove the stigma around drug addiction as that is the first significant barrier an addict comes across, to be able to talk to someone about their addiction. The student from Portugal shared that since Dundee is a relatively small and close-net community, the proposed Outreach Scheme would be effective compared to doing that in a bigger city, therefore if done right, that would make it have a better impact. Also, decriminalising drugs has been proven to be efficient in Portugal as well. All the students expressed that the week of remembrance would create a ripple effect in terms of creating awareness andmaking the addicts and their families feel more part of the community and that there is someone looking out for them, and they are not left alone. Another international student shares that they have never seen drugs on university campuses, but sees a lot of it around the city. They believe alcohol addiction leads to drug addiction and their suggestion is to stop the sale of alcohol on campus and no bars or clubs within 250 meters radius of campus.

PEER TO PEER CONSULTATIONS

Interview Conducted with Member of Public | Born in Dundee | Aged 23

The consultee expressed the crisis was bad and very worrying. He said he did not know the causes, but mentioned chronic poverty was a likely factor. After explaining the potential recommendations and the overall proposal framework, the consultee questioned the rationale and suggested there might not be a place for the university to get involved. He also suggested this was a matter for the police and politicians, and not a university. The consultee did however highlight that the proposed community education programme and annual week of remembrance made the most sense and were positive proposals that could somewhat make an effective difference. The consultee said, as a dundonian, that he has always known of the crisis but people around him and colleagues across Dundee never really discuss it. The consultee did comment on the benefits these proposals could make in terms of strengthening partnerships with the city, and it might improve the institutional reputation, something he said was currently poor in Dundee.

Interview conducted with Member of Public | Born in Dundee | Aged 51

The consultee was very optimistic about the drug challenges becoming a more prominent student movement, and he indicated this will likely cause other student communities across Scotland to speak up and lobby for action. He did raise caution that we would need to be careful in our engagement with the community so as to not come across as condescending and naive. He said this problem is easily addressed when we include expert partners across Dundee to help drive our recommendations. He also expressed some levels of concern around this being too close to home for many, but did say those who have lived experiences or those who have been directly impacted by a drug-death, would appreciate our work nonetheless. He further added it would be worthwhile offering a space on campus or online to allow students or staff with similair experiences to come together - almost acting as like a private support space. These main emotional concerns were linked with the proposed annual week of remembrance.

PEER TO PEER CONSULTATIONS

Interview Conducted with Member of Public | Born in Dundee | Aged 55

The consultee thinks the drug crisis has definetly got worse in recent times. There are more people visibly under the influence around the city centre, and part of this was the problematic locations for methodone treatment. She said there were two clear groups of drug users, those who genuinely want help for their addiction, and those who are too far gone and are problematic with most services they engage with. She was not too aware of the responsibility of the University, but did comment on the potential for public education and raising awareness, and that we were well placed to do this. She also commented that we seemingly do a lot of work around medicinal research, and that should extent to illicit substances and addiction. She did highlight the student body could also be more aware of drug safety, and they also said education and engagement with these issues must start with younger generations. More publicity and determination in their view was an obvious driving force for change.

Interview conducted with Member of Public | Born in Dundee | Aged 30

The consultee also expressed the local drug challenges were always known to him and others around him growing up. He said the drug crisis is something many in Dundee come to accept as 'part and parcel' of the city, and that it ultimately boils down to legal reform and government policy. He did however express a positive reaction to the potential for awareness raising, being a more compassionate community and simply talking about the drug problems we have. He said in doing these things, we can create a culture of support, decency and forward-thinking. These factors are as important, in his view, to any legal or political change. He also thought school-level awareness and education was crucial. Younger generations need not be scared away from these topics, but rather, invited to discuss the key issues and understand the need for understanding and safety. He thinks there is great potential for the community outreach proposal as this is a way in which the University can partner with younger educational cohorts.

ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

Below are some sample comments and opinions posted on various social media outlets, and some have been drawn from other public resources. These are anyonymised for the protection of the commenters, and we have attempted to present a balanced overview including both negative and positive comments.

I understand how it lines up with the uni values and strategy, but those are just words and this might be asking too much of UoD.

I cant see many negatives around wanting to do more to help those in desperation and facing addiction. This is fair proposals.

This will help burst the academic bubble we all live in - including for academics. This is long overdue and it needs to happen soon.

This could be perceived as a very patronizing approach. Students are on a pedastal and they will never understand the real world.

The Uni will never cooperate. They hide the drug crisis and that aspect of Dundee for recruitment purposes. They won't want this.

I think its pretty refreshing and it could work over time. The University and students can definitely do more with this.

Student should be the priority. Drug addicts are a wasted focus they are criminals and made that choice. They are dangerous.

Its imperative we work with the council and NHS on this. Collaborative approaches. This could change an entire movement.

I get the premise behind wanting to help as a uni body, but i am not sure much can be achieved. This is more of a legal/policy issue

There is already loads of work going on across courses, including the medicine department. They should be heavily involved in this.

PROJECT-SPECIFIC **COMMENTS**

Some students, staff and members of the public were asked to provide a short comment on their views of the recommendations and the project overall . These comments have been anonymised but each person has indicated a willingess to consult further upon request.

Students have a responsibility that goes beyond gaining knowledge and skills for a professional career. We have a duty to be active in their communities, to dedicate their time and resources to social and political causes. They're the future of society and the workforce, their actions have power to create a better world for future generations.

I appreciate why you'd want to do this work, but drug addicts make a choice and if they actually wanted to stop they would seek help and change. There is a danger here of the University and students stepping over a line and causing issues that are not ours to deal with. Again, i get the premise I'm just not sure there is space to make this work.

It is fundamentally right that they want to help Scottish society with the drug crisis. It is a pressing issue, and they have the passion and will to make a lasting impact. They have not been viewed as a key player in this national challenge, but they are undeniably instrumental to this issue.

I think if the University reject this work it would be testament to the problems around the drug crisis more widely. We cannot keep avoiding the situation and we need to be more public about it. If they are worried it would impact student recruitment, they should really be looking at how this will actually enhance the university reputation.

To be honest, this is a wider issue that goes beyond university involvement. This is a problem entrapped within legal and policy issues. However, any initiative that focusses on real life research, real life education and a chance for volunteering across the city, that does fall within the university remit. It might actually steer progress along.

It is no secret that now more than ever, students are calling for a new approach to drug policy and a desire for a modern focus on harm reduction and safety. DUSA recognise that this is not about condoning drug use, and we have always been open to reacting appropriately to the wants and needs of our ever-changing student demographic. DUSA is all about enhancing the student experience, and as a former Executive Officer, I believe our impact can be far reaching across the community too, including playing our part in addressing the drug crisis and other social injustices. The potential is limitless.

Kellie Ioannou
DUSA Business Support Manager
Vice President of Student Activities (18-20)



Kellie offers expertise and insight into many aspects of DUSA and its relations with the University, particularly student activities and the wider governance and policies of the organisation. Kellie will be an integral stakeholder in ensuring that the DUSA Board are effectively informed about this project framework, as well as supporting DUSA Executive Officers lead many of the initiatives included within the proposals.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

The most recent and notable student activity around drug awareness and harm reduction campaigning is the creation of the Dundee University Drug Awareness and Harm Reduction Society (DDAHRS), which is a student group officially affiliated with DUSA. DDAHRS seek to provide the student community with the most recent drug safety information, of which is being consistently updated by on-going research around the world. DDAHRS provide specific safety leaflets, drug test-kits and mix charts. DDAHRS also seek to spread awareness of the extreme dangers of mixing different types of drugs, particularly alcohol. This links in with the wider Scottish problems with poly-drug use. DDAHRS are not endorsers of illicit substances, but rather they aim to provide vital education about such substances and the safe use of them. Moreover, DDAHRS also hope to help campaign for the decriminalisation of drugs in Scotland, similar to the likes of Portugal, Uruguay and the Netherlands. The main barrier for DDAHRS is funding.



Daniel Tarrant
DDAHRS President



Jack Headley
DDAHRS Welfare Officer



Katie Bates
DDAHRS Treasurer



Dylan Franco
DDAHRS Vice President



Calum Gare
DDAHRS Social Secretary

DDAHRS are willing to work with DUSA and the University around the recommendations cited within this framework proposal. In light of our campaigning and proposals, we believe DUSA in particular, can and should, do more to support their activity going forward.

DUNDEE UNIVERSITY DRUG AWARENESS & HARM REDUCTION SOCIETY

DDAHRS are committed to continuing the development of this proposed framework. Many of the society committee are remaining in Dundee during the academic year of 23/24.

STUDENT ACTIVITY

January 2023, DDAHR Society and Dundee University Socialist Society joined the Drug Crisis Student Working Group

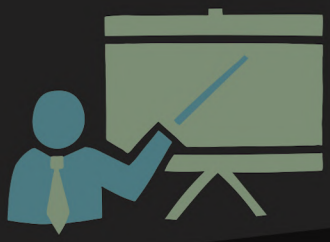
Alongside the formation of DDAHRS, this year has seen the expansion of the 'Help Not Harm' campaign in Dundee. This was originally started by the Stirling University branch of the Scottish Socialist Youth (SSY) in 2020. In May 2022, the University of Dundee Socialist Society joined the campaign along with societies from Heriot-Watt University and the University of Glasgow, with the primary aim of pushing harm reduction in campuses across Scotland.

This campaign has similar aims to those mentioned by DDHARS - for universities and student associations to adopt non-judgmental, harm reduction policies and approaches to student drug use, and to promote the free supply of drug safety testing kits to students.

In Dundee, this campaign has seen the organisation of stalls to hand out reagent drug safety test kits to students, free workshops on peer support and drug safety, and fundraising quizzes. Members of the campaign also attended the Annual Student Drug Policy Conference in Leeds organised by 'Students Organising for Sustainability (SOS)'. The group networked with a variety of organisations and other students, and they discussed our work and how we can make these proposed initiatives have a wider reach. Throughout the year these student activisits have continously focussed on core ambitions of harm reduction across the board, more resources on drug safety ansd support, and crucially more educationally orientated events.









Further Information on the Help Not Harm can be found on the SSY's site: https://www.scottishsocialistyouth.net/campaigns/help-not-harm/

SCOTTISH SOCIALIST YOUTH

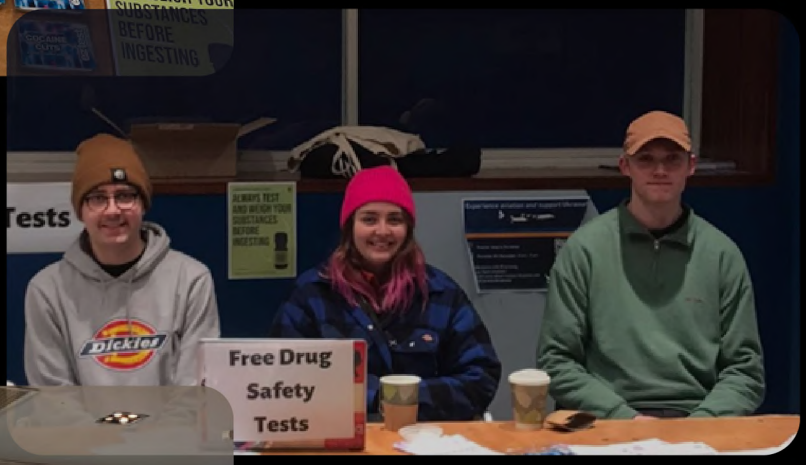
STUDENT ACTIVITY



Supply of Free Drug Tests Kits

with 100% of each batch taken by students

Society Support and Advice





Harm Reduction Workshops



Harm Reduction Social Quizzes



UK-wide Drug Policy Conference

attended by Dundee students in Leeds this April.

DUSA RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section outlines the proposed measures that Dundee University Students' Association should adopt in our efforts around the Dundee Drug Crisis Community Action Project. We appreciate that DUSA are restricted in their ability to prioritise particular societies and projects, though we are confident that our student association will rise to this challenge and join forces to meet our common objectives. DUSA are the central organ of student life in this University, and that is why it is imperative for the organisation to support our initiative over the long-term, ensuring these issues remain prominent and relevant. The diagram below is a summary of our key recommendations.





DUSA RECOMMENDATIONS



Create an Official Harm Reduction Drugs Policy

DUSA's only policy on drug use is contained within its zero-tolerance disciplinary policies relating to possession and use of drugs. To reduce stigma and help students feel more comfortable approaching support services, this needs to change. This can take the form of a full policy in partnership with the University, as seen in the University of the West of England or Keele University. It may take the form of a statement with simpler sets of internal practices, as is done by the Bristol Student's Union or Stirling Student's Union. This should first involve a review of current guidelines on drug use. This is to reflect on situations where the attitude and current policy may have created stigma or incidentally increased harm or risk to students. Historical and recent data should be examined to augment the drafting.

Policy Development

Creating a harm reduction policy for DUSA itself is a process that should involve students, relevant societies, and potentially external charities with expertise such as Crew 2000, or 'Students Organizing for Sustainability UK' (SOS UK). DUSA should acknowledge the following factors:

1. **Students are likely to come into contact/proximity with drugs including alcohol during their time at university.**
2. **Abstinence or 'just say no' causes harm through stigmatisation, denial of access to facilities and more.**
3. **This is against a backdrop of a drugs crisis in Scotland and Dundee. This is more likely to affect marginalised groups (working class, disabled, LGBTQ+ and other people).**
4. **The best approach to drugs is one based on health, wellbeing, respect and non-judgement. This is the very essence our student union's own strategic vision and identity.**

A harm reduction approach neither condemns or condones drug use, but rather accepts it happens. It involves the provision of information, resources, support, and awareness to those who are seeking it. Our recommendations illustrate some, but not all, of the ways which can be a part of a harm reduction policy and environment. This policy should be be continually reflective, active, and proactively communicated to students. Students will continue to do drugs and patterns of substance use will change. The policy, practices, communication, and reception from students, should be continually reviewed and altered to meet student's needs. DUSA ought to lobby for the University itself to adopt a policy reflecting our potential new policy. As detailed in this report, this is something already happening across universities in the UK. Our University could be the first university in Scotland to take this admirable and much needed step.

DUSA RECOMMENDATIONS



Develop Online and Physical Resources around Drug Safety & Support

Online Resources

It is encouraging to see that DUSA already have signposted some organisations on their website which relate to drug support. However, the section on the webpage is difficult to locate. There is no information on the types of support these organisations can offer, and there is no information regarding local organisations. Steps must be taken to make this section more visible and accessible. There are many organisations in Dundee and the East of Scotland that offer specific resources around support and information relating to drugs, and also linking to other issues affecting young people.



For instance, 'Positive Steps' offer various services including support for young people struggling with accommodation and other issues, including harm reduction-based support to drug use. 'Crew 2000' are an Edinburgh based charity who offer various services relating to support for young people. This includes a free and confidential text service for young people wanting to seek advice or support about drug related challenges, and sexual or mental health guidance. They also have extensive information on their website about safety around many different kinds of drugs.

These organisations and related information should be signposted by DUSA with proper descriptions on its online platforms. Conversations can be held with these organisations and others on how these can be further advertised to students. The most important factor is that these resources need to not only be expanded and updated, but proactively targeted to students as well. This section can also outline resources which are specifically aimed at marginalised groups. For instance, Bristol University Student's Union have a section which discusses specific support for LGBTQ+ people.

Develop Online and Physical Resources around Drug Safety & Support

Physical Resources

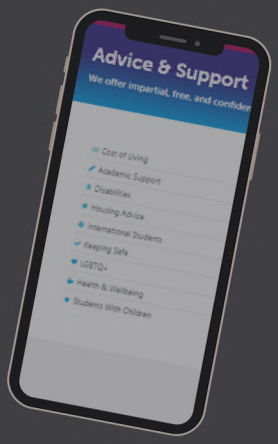
Some physical resources also relate to DUSA's advice and support service, as the more widespread these services are seen in various forms by students, the more likely they are going to be visible. This means that DUSA's internal support services, if they aren't already, should be adequately prepared to deal with students approaching them with issues around drug use. However, DUSA ought to still give students the option and visibility to seek external support services. This is just as important. Whilst the actions listed within our framework should help decrease stigma around people reaching out for support, some may feel more comfortable, or those who they need more specialised help, in settings external to DUSA. Services such as Crew 2000's or Positive steps should therefore also be advertised physically - through leaflets and posters. Furthermore, Positive Steps have leaflets, which were designed by University of Dundee medical students, that list various local support services in Dundee.

Leaflets, booklets and posters can be made or acquired which cover other aspects of harm reduction. For example, detailed booklets on drug safety for specific drugs, leaflets with basic drug safety tips as has been made by DDAHRS, leaflets on consent, information on recognising the signs of overdose and more. These should be distributed as widely as possible around the DUSA building and could even be included in welcome packs for students moving into university accommodation. There is capacity here to include such info in the annual DUSA Fridge magazine that is sent out to freshers. Physical harm reduction materials should also include supplying students with Drug Safety Tests. DUSA already provides harm reduction materials freely and discretely around the building, particularly contraception like condoms. Further methods for handing out these materials can be explored, but it is vital that the University and DUSA are proactive and communicate with students to start changing the stigma around drug use.



As the DUSA Advice and Support Team lead, I fully support any project that seeks to increase access to support around addiction. Crucially, this extends to alcohol problems too. I hope this project is a success, as it has a real potential to open up conversations, reduce stigma and create a kinder and more healthy student community that are not reluctant to seek advice and support.

Candy Preater
Advice and Support Coordinator



DUSA RECOMMENDATIONS



Support All Student Led Drug Safety and Harm Reduction Campaigns

We propose for DUSA to officially and enthusiastically support all student-led drug campaigns. We recognise DUSA already support student initiaitves in some fashion, but there is nothing stopping more tailored support and the provision of better resources.

Rationale

Students in Dundee, and nationally, are showing their desire for a new institutional approach to drug use. The same move advocated in this paper - from the punitive, abstinence approach, to a health-based, harm reduction approach. As well as implementing the other recommendations included in this section, DUSA can encourage this by officially supporting all student-led campaigning around drug-safety and harm reduction-based campaigning, be that through societies or other groups and individuals. This support can involve the use of DUSA facilities for free, whether the campaign is hosted by a society or not, proactive support in helping advertise related events, supporting students involved in harm reduction as part of their course, such as some Community Education students or some Medicine students, and so on. This can also involve including these campaigns in discussions related to actions or policies that DUSA wish to carry out, or wish to seek student opinions on.

Student Potential

As already mentioned, all of the drug harm reduction work up until this point has been predominetly student-led. We have seen successful campaigns through the Drug Awareness and Harm Reduction Society - a group of students who only became established this academic year. The 'Help Not Harm' campaign, which the Socialist Society organised, collaborated with societies across four Universities: Stirling, Dundee, Heriot Watt, and Glasgow. We have also seen other societies in Dundee organise events relating to harm reduction. The Mycology Society hosted a Psychedelics Safety workshop and one of the most popular new societies, Dundee Electronic Music Society (DEMS) assisted in the promotion of drug safety test kits in a sponsorship deal with EZ Test Kits. We have also seen multi-society campaigns such as 'Girls Just Wanna Be Safe' which has been gathering women and gender non-conforming student opinions and feelings on how they would feel safer at nightclubs around Dundee.

Supporting All Student Led Drug Campaigns

The Power of Campaigns

Campaigning around social causes has always been central to student life. It is an integral facet of the learning journey, and is a means for the University to have a real community outreach. Campaigning is a powerful tool to start engaging debate, discuss fundamental principles and bring about tangible change. DUSA have a clear duty to support its members in all of their campaigns, and that does indeed extend to all harm reduction, drug safety and drug death-related campaigning.

How DUSA Can Help

DUSA have an abundance of knowledge and resources that can make student-level campaigning far more impactful and robust. DUSA have a representative and pastoral support team who could do more in assisting campaigning. DUSA have shown their potential in this space in recent years. They helped a student group lobby and campaign for core pre-matriculation training for all students, and have recently set up a community action forum.

Community Action Forum

The Vice President of Community in 2022/23 set up a community action forum to provide a network of support to student campaign projects. We propose that DUSA scale-up this forum and provide it with an online portal and greater funding. This forum is a pivotal opportunity to harness student issues as well as local causes. This forum have supported this very drug crisis community action project, and we hope this group continue to drive progress around it.



Relevant Campaigns in Need of DUSA Support

Help Not Harm is a non-partisan campaign led by young people and students who want to see the adoption of a Help Not Harm approach to drug use. Help Not Harm is a call to public institutions, inlcuding Universities and Student Unions. They want help and support for people who use drugs, not harm that is a direct result of their stigmatisation and persecution. We truly believe DUSA need to further support this work and campaigning.



www.scottishsocialistyouth.net/campaigns/help-not-harm/

DUSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Offer Educational Events on Various Aspects of Drug Harm Reduction

We propose that DUSA work in collaboration with the University-level drug crisis groups and student activists to develop and promote educational workshops and training events on drug harm reduction. Thus far, students have begun to run similar events, but if these were to be spearheaded by our association, engagement could be broadened and the issues would gain much more attention. Such a measure would also raise further opportunities for students to get involved in community development and issues that pertain to social justice.



Potential Initiatives for Consideration

DUSA could start various blog initiatives, inviting students or members of the public to write material that could be shared with the DUSA community. The blogs and articles could potentially feature lived experiences, advice and support and general information around drug culture, safe use and harm reduction.



DUSA could utilise their wide range of venues and spaces to host educational workshops, similar to that of the proposed measures within the community education programme at a University-level. These could be society-led, DUSA organized or be developed by external organisations, such as Crew2000.



DUSA could make use of their prominent social media and online presence. They could promote various campaigns and the proposed measures, detailed in this framework, throughout each academic year. DUSA also have advertisement capacity, so they could easily raise crucial awareness, have engaging web content and make use of their large social media following as mentioned.



CREW2000 WORKSHOP

In semester two of this academic year, Crew2000 visited DUSA to lead a workshop for students on identifying key harm reduction strategies, looking at trends in drug use, presenting the typical effects and side effects of key drugs, and discussing how we best recognise the signs and symptoms of drug overdoses. This was a well attended event, and it demonstrates the potential success of events akin to this.



Key Topics of Discussion

It was highlighted to attendees of this workshop that the increasing drug-related harm across Scotland can be linked to the increased use of cocaine and benzos, and particularly the risks associated with polydrug use (mixing of drugs). Another key talking point was the need to break stigma and discuss drug abuse more often and freely. This correlated with the position of the DUSA Advice and Support team.

Drug Testing

Crew2000 also cover how people can safely and reliably test their substances, should they be using them. The need for drug testing is crucial, particularly because many drugs in circulation are cut with a mix of other unknown chemicals and products, which itself can cause users serious harm. Crew2000 feature www.wedinos.org as a useful resource and service.



Legislation

It was highlighted to attendees of this workshop that there is challenges around the current legal framework. Crew2000 explain that the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 bans substances by name, prohibits paraphernalia and makes health interventions such as drug checking and safe consumption facilities difficult to exist. The law is criminal justice orientated - not health focused.



Trends

Crew2000 also discussed and recalled trends in drug use amongst young people and the wider public. The question of why people take drugs was explored, as was what drugs are most prominent at events. Some of the material also explored where people are most exposed to drugs, with examples such as social media, friends, TV and nightlife being discussed.



DUSA RECOMMENDATIONS

Help Raise Awareness on the Drug Crisis

We propose that DUSA work in close partnership with the University and all society-related parties to assist in raising awareness around the wider drug crisis challenges across Scotland. If both the University and our student union worked together in raising more awareness, it will further empower our calls for more campaigning and could advance our own internal progress in implementing the other proposed measures.

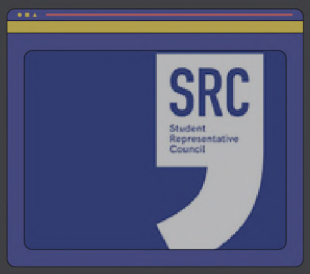


Awareness on any issue brings greater education and light to the complexities of the issues. With greater education comes a more tolerant and open-minded society. DUSA have a big part to play, just like the wider institution.

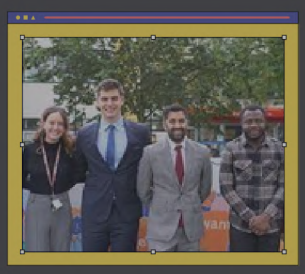
Potential Initiatives for Consideration



DUSA can help to raise awareness through the likes of society fresher events and setting up stalls during key events. Any oppurtunity like this is an engaging way to expose freshers to the crisis, making more of us attuned to the challenges of this crisis.



DUSA can have conversations around the drug crisis through platforms such as the Student Representative Council (SRC). DUSA have a relevant connection to the city we are within, and with that in mind, it can and should be a student talking point more than it has been. Honest conversations are critical.



DUSA Executive leaders can do more to raise awareness on the crisis. These officers have a unique oppurtunity to engage with the city council, politicians and third sector organisations. Key representation on these issues from the top is critical.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Create an Official Harm Reduction Drugs Policy

We propose that DUSA develop an official harm reduction drugs policy. We believe this policy should be designed with student and external participation. We want to see a policy reflective of modern attitudes, and in light of student support, it is the duty of our student representative body to fulfil student wishes.

Develop Online and Physical Resources on Drug Dafety and Support

We propose that DUSA develop both physical and online resources around drug safety and support, utilising our signifigant digital platform, as well as making effective use of our capacity with human and physcial resources. Safety and support are integral priorities of DUSA, and as such, much more is needing done in offering important information on safe use, harm reduction issues and the dangers of drugs.

Support All Student-led Drug Safety and Harm Reduction Campaigns

We propose that DUSA do more to support any campaigns centralised around harm reduction and drug safety. This extends to any future work undertaken by individual students, societies or general student groups. Campaigning is a fundamental facet of student life, and as such, DUSA must do more to facilitate, amplify and support student campaigns of this nature.

Offer Educational Events Relating to Various Aspects of Drug Harm Reduction

We propose that DUSA develop a series of different educational events and workshops for students, focussed on the key issues of harm reduction and safety. As a University community, education is at the core of who we are. DUSA must recognise this and facilitate creating a more educated student body.

Help Raise Awareness on the Dundee Drug Crisis

We propose that DUSA work in close partnership with the University and other partners to raise crucial awareness around the wider challenges with drugs. We ask that DUSA commit to maintaining frequent awareness posts and circulate information in efforts to create a more understanding, compassionate and educated community.

Our student association must offer support to its community in every way possible, and that extends to drug safety and working towards a culture of harm reduction. I also look forward to the wider proposals that make sure this University live up to their social purpose theme. I truly believe in this framework of recommendations, and that is why i commit to seeing them come alive in the year ahead.



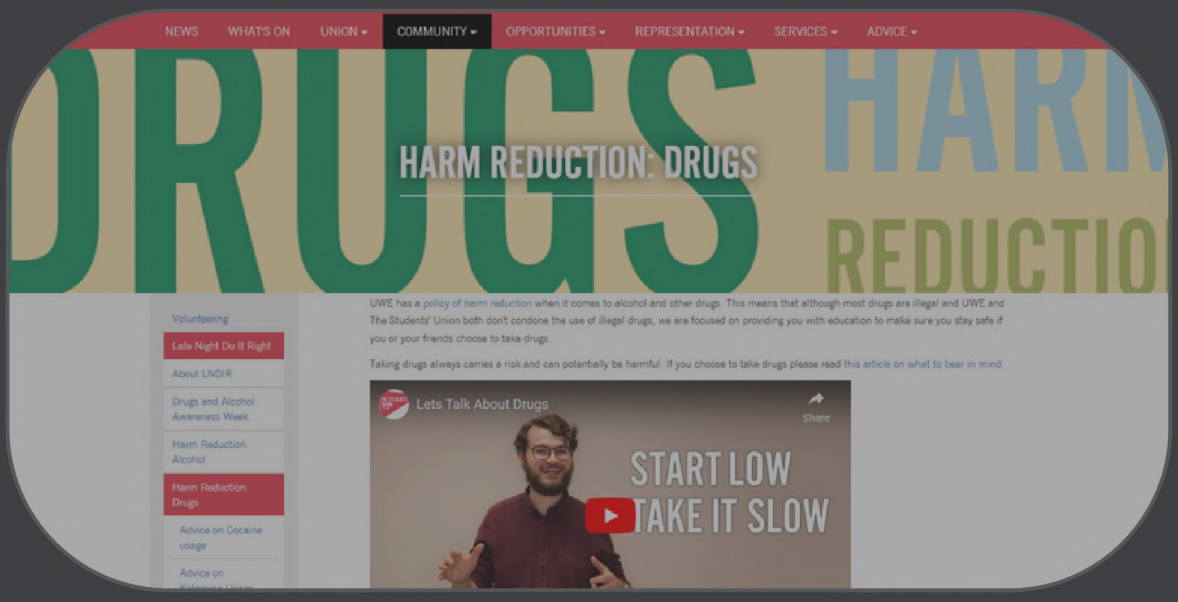
Nyasha Mutembwa
President of DUSA (22-24)

OTHER UNIVERSITIES

University of the West of England

UWE have a harm reduction policy that recognises students come into contact with drugs and that disciplinary action can stigmatise and be detrimental. Their policy focusses on their duty of care as an institution. This policy is also influenced by the need to tackle inequality, mainly due to the fact drug abuse or addiction affects marginalised groups more, and can affect them in different ways. Notably, their policy centralises around support and wellbeing, thereby prioritising and protecting the individual. Disciplinary action within UWE only relates to behaviour of the individual (they will not be punished for taking drugs, unless they do something detrimental to the community for example). Naturally, there are continuous debates and reviews on this university-wide policy position.

You can access the UWE policy by clicking here.



UWE Student Union

In partnership with their university, the UWE Student Union was awarded the National Drug and Alcohol Impact Accreditation (an SOS UK award whereby the accreditation is carried out by students of that university. This SU run various video campaigns in efforts to raise awareness of basic drug safety tips, which were launched in their welcome week and tailored to harm reduction support for students. This SU do not supply drug testing kits, but do indeed recommend EZ Test Kits and partner with a local organisation 'The Loop' who collaborate with the SU at events around drug safety testing. This union also have a dedicated web page containing specific harm reduction information on, among other things, various types of drugs, testing information and the associated dangers of polydrug use.

Visit their Site

https://www.thestudentsunion.co.uk

OTHER UNIVERSITIES

Keele University

Keele University began a process towards drug harm reduction in 2020 by joining the Drug and Alcohol Impact accreditation scheme and achieved it in 2022. Though not perfect (still grounded in some aspects of zero-tolerance and reliance on disciplinary methods) their new policy framework was a move towards reducing harm, increasing health and encouraging support based services. They moved much more away from disciplinary action towards a framework of education and encouraging conversations around drug use. They engaged in university-wide consultations to hear concerns from staff and students.

Keele developed an action strategy in partnership with their student union, and sought to develop specialised and targeted support to indivduals, as well as introduce online resources with signposts to external support. They introduced staff training, developed a drug and alcohol awareness week and are continuously proactive in communicating about drug safety both internally and externally.

Keele University and their union also distribute drug testing kits (the same ones trialled by our student activists and societies. They provide such kits alongside envelopes containing a selection of informational leaflets on safe use. In the last 6 months they have distributed 150 units. Keele conducted research into student opinions on the fear of punishment and judgement. Those feelings feel from 18% to 4%, with fear of police punishment falling from 24% to 4%. Student unawareness of drug support services readily available fell from 30% to 7%. This demonstrates the immense impact such a policy approach can have.

Stirling University Students Association





Within their association, a motion was passed at a general meeting officially recognising a particular NUS survey that indicated over 50% of students will do drugs whilst at university, and that there was a significant need for a non-judgmental environment with support and services being the best practice. Stirling Union commit to harm reduction, and have recently amended a rule that excluded students from societies, events and premises. The Stirling Union continue to lobby for University-wide harm reduction policies, as well as continue supplying free testing kits. DUSA ought to follow this example, among the others provided. We are irrefutably behind.

DUSA STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT



OUR FUTURE

1 Vision

A kinder, greener, diverse global student community, creating lasting impact for generations to come.

2 Mission

DUSA exists to represent students and provide innovative and excellent services that transform their lives.

3 Values

DUSA are committed to creating an environment in which all staff, volunteers and members are supported to continuously develop their talents, skills, and knowledge.

Core Values

- Dignity and Respect
- Community
- Honesty and Integrity
- Innovation

STRATEGIC GOALS

1 Increase influence and Impact

Increased engagement with students and becoming more representative of our diverse student population, building on our strong student voice and representative network. Improving the learning and teaching and overall student experience.

2 Develop community

Improve equality, diversity and inclusion through development of community and sense of belonging amongst students from different backgrounds and cultures.

3 Create opportunities

Through providing students with volunteering, fundraising, employment, social and extra-curricular activities to build support networks.

4 High quality student support

Through providing students with advice, advocacy, guidance, support and representation on housing, welfare, wellbeing and academic issues.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1 Develop physical and virtual spaces

which help to achieve our strategic goals and are relevant to our diverse, global student population.

2 Quality products and excellent services

through developing our café culture, retail, events and support services, to meet the needs of our diverse, global student population.

3 Build Capacity

of our students, volunteers and staff through developing collaborative leadership. Improving policies, training and systems that support inclusion and innovation, enabling our people to fulfil their potential.

4 Improve sustainability

by being ethical and environmentally conscientious, in all that we do.

5 Create partnerships

which are mutually beneficial with University of Dundee, local businesses and community groups.

KINDER GREENER DIVERSE

Our project recommendations and all of the potential achievements that arise from them are in direct harmony with the future of our student association. DUSA have been a rapidly changing organisation that is continously evolving to meet the needs of the students of today. DUSA's representational capacity has been reinvigorated like never before. DUSA's social and community-based activities have also expanded to meet the needs of all, and not just a select few. DUSA have adapted to a post-covid era whereby a new and necessary focus has been directed towards wellbeing and student development. With these points in mind, DUSA can and should embrace the recommendations put to them via this project, and also endorse the University-level actions being asked of them.

DUSA Core Values

DUSA believes in championing dignity and respect, with a strong focus on community and encouraging innovation. Our project and the ten recommendations that we have presented satisfy and advance each of these values. We have designed a framework of measures that centralise around community outreach and fostering a more respectful, compassionate and dignified culture.

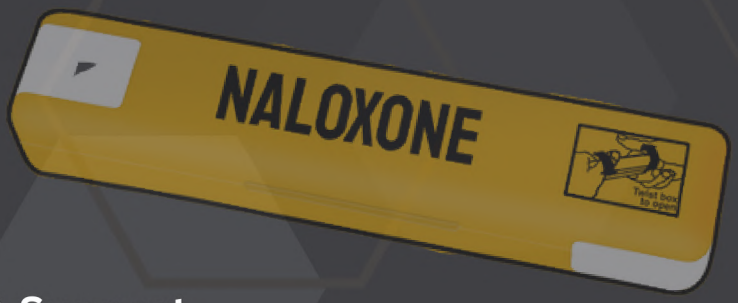
Strategic Goals

DUSA seek to develop student oppurtunities. This can easily be fulfilled with our voluntary city outreach scheme and the University-level research network. DUSA also want to develop high quality student support, which would also be achieved if we included an extended service that championed harm reduction, safe drug use and more targeted support for substance abuse.

Strategic Priorities

DUSA also seek to develop spaces to ensure they can achieve their goals. They want to offer excellent services to their students, particularly support services. As mentioned, this is in harmony with our calls for greater support and advice around harm reduction and drug safety offerings to students. Moreover, DUSA seek to build capacity of their student body in offering volunteering opportunities and collaborative leadership positions. Many of our proposals will allow such capacity to be developed. They also want to improve their policies and training, which we can also facilitate in pushing for drug safety training, naloxone training, introducing a harm reduction policy and creating innovative campaigns and support services.

KINDER GREENER DIVERSE



Evidence of Previous DUSA Support

Dundee University Student's Association (DUSA) staff have been learning how to administer a life-saving medicine to counter a suspected opioid drug overdose. Frontline staff are now able to access and administer Naloxone. As previously stated, naloxone is a safe and easily administered medication which can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It is not a controlled substance and has no effect on anyone who has not taken opioid drugs.

Ongoing Commitment

This recent DUSA initiative demonstrates they do have the capacity and the will to take a forward-looking and frontline position on these drug challenges. As previously stated, we have the potential to extend this naloxone training to a wider network of volunteers as part of the proposed volunteer outreach scheme, to which we seek University support and funding to develop.



"This is an important step in helping to prevent deaths by drug overdosing and I welcome the training given to staff. We haven't had any overdose incidents within DUSA, however this is another service that, whilst we hope we never have to use, could mean the difference between life or death and staff now feel positive about their competence and readiness to intervene should the need arise."

Cheryl Ann Cruickshank
Chief Executive Officer, DUSA
(Sourced from DUSA News)

COLLABORATING AND PARTNERING

There is great potential for our University to collaborate with the likes of Abertay University and Dundee and Angus College to truly realise our social purpose ambitions through sharing resources, in combining forces and working as a Dundee-level network of higher education institutions, each of whom have an equal responsibility to the community around them. This would also allow for greater human resources, as well as potential monetary requirements and student volunteering.

Abertay University

With well over 3000 students, Abertay are another integral institution that can indeed work with the University of Dundee in all that we propose. They have a vast array of disciplines and innovative practices that could greatly benefit our proposed work. We know there is capacity for such collaboration, not least because our very own project working group has two Abertay students within it who are equally as passionate as us.

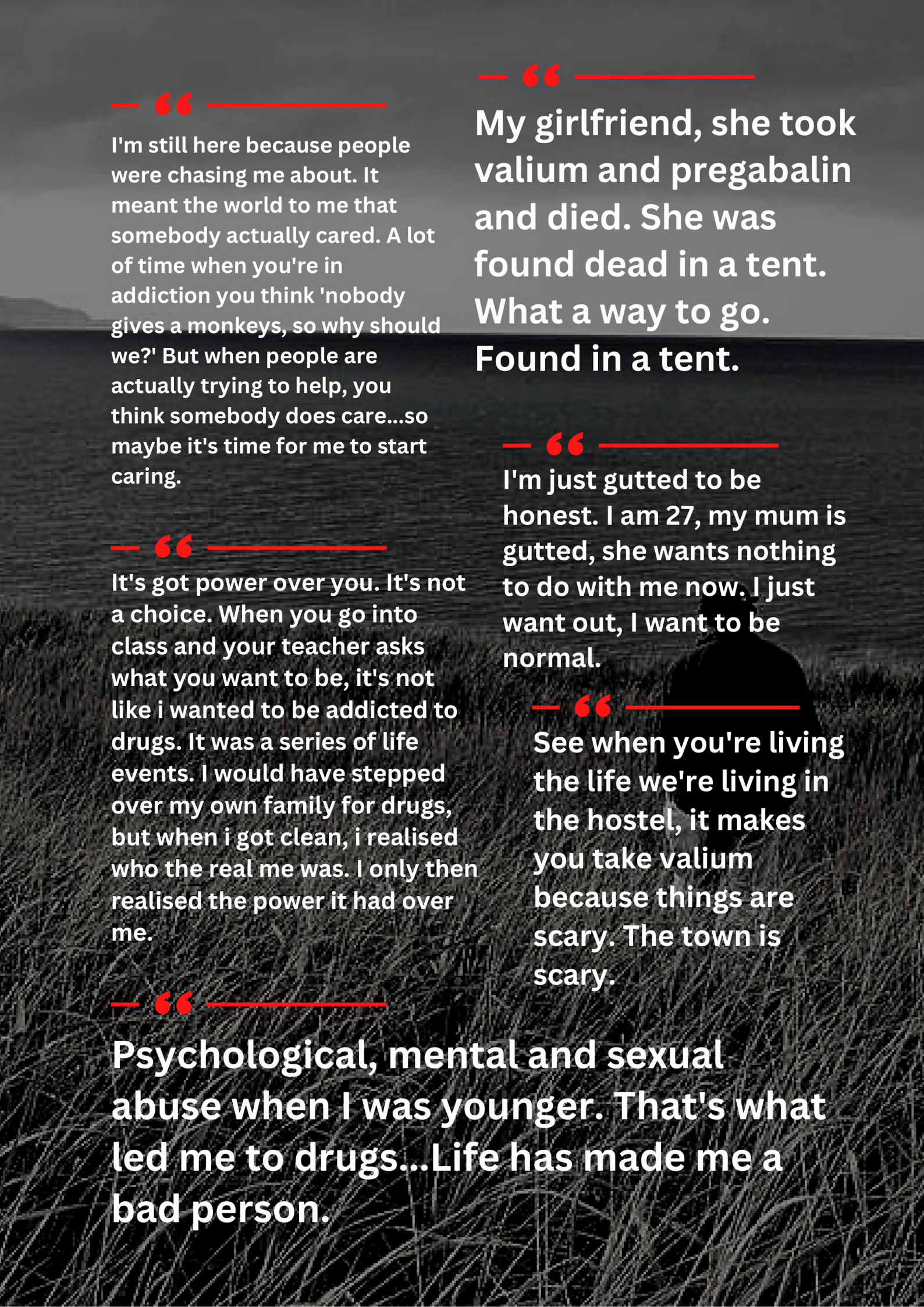
Dundee and Angus College

The city's main college could also collaborate on our project recommendations in a multitude of ways. They offer a wide array of courses and have different activity and goals that could work in harmony with our own talent and resources.

NATIONWIDE POTENTIAL

There is also exciting potential for nationwide collaboration, with our University at the forefront of this mission. All universities have a social responsibility to their communities, and with that in mind, they each have an institutional duty to advance progress in helping to end the drug epidemic unique to Scottish society. Once the University of Dundee have implemented a coherent framework, we can seek wider consultation and partnerships with neighbouring universities and colleges. There is no reason why this could not be a national effort from higher education partners.





I'm still here because people were chasing me about. It meant the world to me that somebody actually cared. A lot of time when you're in addiction you think 'nobody gives a monkeys, so why should we?' But when people are actually trying to help, you think somebody does care...so maybe it's time for me to start caring.

It's got power over you. It's not a choice. When you go into class and your teacher asks what you want to be, it's not like i wanted to be addicted to drugs. It was a series of life events. I would have stepped over my own family for drugs, but when i got clean, i realised who the real me was. I only then realised the power it had over me.

Psychological, mental and sexual abuse when I was younger. That's what led me to drugs...Life has made me a bad person.

My girlfriend, she took valium and pregabalin and died. She was found dead in a tent. What a way to go. Found in a tent.

I'm just gutted to be honest. I am 27, my mum is gutted, she wants nothing to do with me now. I just want out, I want to be normal.

See when you're living the life we're living in the hostel, it makes you take valium because things are scary. The town is scary.

SHORT-TERM REQUESTS

1. Provide the working group proposers with an initial response on their position.
2. Release a statement of intent to work with relevant stakeholders, students and DUSA.
3. Form an interim project board to oversee the planning of the proposed measures.

1. We request for the DUSA President to release a statement of intent and support.
2. We request the DUSA Board of Trustees to review and provide an initial response to the proposals.
3. Include our proposed framework within the DUSA Executive Manifesto for 2023/24 session.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY



We are all part of this national mission. Your actions matter.

Educate Yourself

One of the most important things that individuals can do to help end stigma and change attitudes towards addiction is to educate themselves about the issue. This can involve reading up on the science of addiction, learning about the experiences of people who have struggled with addiction, and becoming informed about the various treatment and recovery options that are available.

Speak Up

It's important to speak up when you hear someone making derogatory comments or jokes about addiction or people who use drugs or alcohol. This can be difficult, but it's an important way to challenge stigma and change attitudes. You can also speak up by sharing your own experiences or those of people you know who have struggled with addiction.

Show Compassion

People struggling with addiction often face judgment and stigma from others, which can make it harder for them to seek help and begin the recovery process. By showing empathy and compassion towards people who are struggling with addiction, you can help reduce stigma and encourage others to do the same. This involves our word choice and labels.

Advocacy

People can advocate for change by getting involved with community organisations or advocacy groups that work to support people with addiction and reduce stigma. This can involve volunteering, participating in campaigns or lobbying efforts, and raising awareness about the issue through social media or other channels.

Support Recovery

People can support the recovery process by offering support and encouragement to those who are struggling with addiction. This can involve helping to connect people with treatment and support services, offering emotional support, and celebrating their successes along the way. By supporting recovery, we can help reduce stigma and create a more supportive and understanding culture.



RAISING AND GIVING



"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted

If any student or reader wishes to kindly donate to any charity focussing on addiction and recovery, below we have provided some charities close to the hearts of many. They each do oustanding work in transforming lives and lobbying for lasting changes. These charities are all potential partners of the University and DUSA. We hope to see such relations form in the coming years.

With You Dundee

How your money makes a difference. Every time you make a donation, we have the opportunity to change someone's life for the better. £8.40 can pay for one support session with a trained advisor through our Webchat service. £18 can save someone's life by providing a naloxone kit which can reverse the effects of an overdose. £40 can pay for us to deliver prevention work in a school assembly or workshop.£100 can pay for a course of vaccination for Hepatitis B.

www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/dundee/

FAVOR-UK

Every year people generously donate their own money and take part in fundraising activities on our behalf. Whether you're in recovery yourself, a recovery service provider, family or friends of someone in recovery, or simply want to help, there are many ways in which you can get involved and support our work. Scroll down to see all the ways in which you can support our work.

www.facesandvoicesofrecoveryuk.org

Dundee Survival Group

Dundee Survival Group from time to time seek household furniture and goods to provide service users with basic goods to start a home, we welcome donations of such items particularly new Bedding (duvets, pillows and covers) this also includes toasters and kettles, kitchen utensils and occasionally beds, we do not have a storage facility, therefore, keep a look out on our Facebook page where we may advertise what we need. THANK YOU for your kind support.

https://dundeesurvivalgroup.org

Crew 2000

Love Crew? Love what we do? Help fund our work with a much appreciated donation using one of the options below! Donations can be made by Card or PayPal. They also accept cash if you prefer. To donate online please visit their Just Giving. You can donate on your phone by Texting 'MINDALTERING' (and then your donation amount, up to a maximum of £20) to 70085, for example "MINDALTERING 10".Cheques can be sent us a cheque by making it payable to "Crew 2000 Scotland" and send it to:

www.crew.scot

Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs

Alcohol and drug use affects families from every community in Scotland, but much of this harm remains hidden from view. Families feel isolated, ashamed, stigmatised and often don't know where to turn. All donations, no matter how small, help us carry out our work and reach more families.

www.sfad.org.uk

ALCOHOL ADDICTION

*Scotland's rising alcohol deaths needs '**emergency response**'*

An Equally Important Battle

Whilst our campaigning and framework concerns drug addiction and the national crisis, it is equally important for us to highlight the other national health crisis we are dealing with in Scotland, namely alcohol abuse. This was also a point raised at the 2019 Dundee Partnership Forum. As is the case with drugs, Scotland has a historically high rate of alcohol consumption, and alcohol abuse remains a significant public health issue in the country.

According to the latest statistics available from the National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland, released in 2021, there were 21,019 alcohol-related hospital admissions in 2019/20. The NHS reports that in 2019, there were 1,020 alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland, which is an increase of 2% from the previous year. The rate of alcohol-specific deaths in Scotland is higher than the rest of the UK.

Stigma is also a challenge around alcohol addiction. People ought to **consider their language**, particularly the use and perception of the words 'alcoholic' or 'alky'.

A **change in culture** is desperately needed, and there is progress being made, particularly through the likes of legislative restrictions, licensing frameworks, public health campaigns and general focus being directed towards non-drinking habits.

Students could also be part of this cultural change and destigmatisation.

Some Support Services

Dundee Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (DDARS)

Hillcrest Futures: Drug & Alcohol Services

Support and Connect Dundee

With You Dundee

Alcoholics Anonymous UK

We must remember that people with a substance use problem are family members, neighbours, friends and colleagues. By addressing stigma, and the silence and alienation it causes, we make it easier for people to seek help and that is to the benefit of each and every one of us.

-Angela Constance, Drugs Policy Minister (2021) referring to alcohol challenges.

CONCLUSION

We are a University with social purpose. Our city is in social crisis. Drug addiction and our nation's devastating record with drug-related deaths is a national tragedy that demands a nationwide effort if it is to ever be eradicated. This is a responsibility that rests with all of us. This civic duty must extend to institutions like ours - the University of Dundee. The need for kindness, compassion and hope must extend across the student sphere like never before. This is a long overdue call to action.

Our University community have made great strides in research and partnering capacities. We have a ground-breaking drug discovery unit, a globally respected forensic science centre and a truly committed school of medicine that have proven there is potential to truly serve society and make an impact on population health and societal crises like the drug epidemic. That being said, there is most certainly a need for a more unified approach across the University. There is a need for wider institutional presence and cross collaboration. There is a need for further engagement with the city and there is a strong need for more compassionate connections with the community around us. Just like our progress, there is also national and local progress, and that cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, progress can be advanced, and we are making the case that we are the key player to do so.

Our framework is not going to end the drug crisis. It will not solve the vast array of complexities and hurdles that face our unique national challenge. However, our framework is a series of measures that allow us to simply do more, to care more and work towards ending stigma, starting hard conversations, contributing to fundamental scientific challenges, as well as social and legal issues. Our framework is a blueprint of initiatives that seek to harness the talent, good will and intituition of our community.

With this exciting potential in mind, we must also acknowledge this will require widespread commitment and proactive leaders. We call upon the University Executive and the DUSA Executive to take notice of the student opinion, to examine our recommendations and accordingly commit to making our ambitions a reality. We implore researchers, city stakeholders, influencers, academic leaders and anyone with an interest to get involved. We invite students to continue this work, to keep the flame burning and maintain the momentum we have triggered.

Be in no doubt of our University impact, our potential and our future focus. We are the University of Dundee. We are the University for Dundee. We have transformed lives in the past. We are transforming lives today. We will transform lives in the years to come. Let this framework be a demonstration of our bold and brave community.

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It is ultimately right that the public that funds this great institute should see University projects that impact the community, the wellbeing, the hopes, the quality of life and the benefit of the whole world.

Stephen Fry (2012)
Former Rector

