

# Proposed Right to Addiction Recovery (Scotland) Bill

## Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to enable people addicted to drugs and/or alcohol to access the necessary addiction treatment they require.

The consultation runs from 7 October 2021 to 12 January 2022.

All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document.

Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) require an answer.

All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response.

Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded.

Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here:

[Consultation document](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice which explains how my personal data will be used.

On the previous page we asked you if you are UNDER 12 YEARS old, and you responded Yes to this question.

If this is the case, we will have to contact your parent or guardian for consent.

If you are under 12 years of age, please put your contact details into the textbox. This can be your email address or phone number. We will then contact you and your parents to receive consent.

Otherwise please confirm that you are or are not under 12 years old.

*No Response*

## About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.  
Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

an individual

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

Member of the public

**Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation:**

I am a prescription medication addict who has been trying to get help for 4 years. I also know people that suffer with addiction. The services for people suffering from addiction are awful at best. There aren't any ways for someone suffering from addiction, and at crisis point, to receive any urgent care. One of my good friends died from his addiction disease as the help out there is simply not efficient, effective or fast enough to actually work and truly benefit the patient. I have so much experience with the drug and alcohol addiction teams. They are so uneducated on addiction and are frighteningly ignorant towards their patients. 4 years of my life have been wasted due to the atrocious, horrific experiences I've had from my local Community Addiction Team. The pure ignorance has been disgusting, appalling and down right shocking. There should be no stereotyping when it comes to addiction, even in general, but I experienced this several times at my local CAT team. Patients shouldn't be running out of the place in hysterics, crying, but I seen this too many times as I was waiting in reception. People should be walking out feeling heard and have a bounce in their step because they know they are going to be well looked after and feel comfortable with their worker's knowledge on addiction and, also, content that they are going to be well looked after and that their addiction disease is soon going to be a thing of the past. But this is the complete opposite of how things go down with the current addiction services. There needs to be A LOT more people working in our addiction services who are recovered addicts who understand what their patient is going through and A LOT more people who are much better educated on addiction, who have compassion and empathy for people suffering from this awful disease and A LOT more publicly available rehab beds in cities like where I live (Glasgow). 4 years of my life have been unfairly taken from me after putting my trust in my local CAT team. I had applied to do a degree in Psychology 4 years ago but was unable to do it as I was such a mess from the CAT team's "help" and treatment of me. I have lost 4 years of my life due to the inadequate help out there for addicts, I should have had my degree in Psychology by now and have moved on to my masters degree, I should be out there helping others who suffer from addiction by now and so many other things have been taken from me due to the shockingly terrible services out there. I've lost 4 of the prime years of my life and I am still struggling every day with my addiction. I am currently watching so many people I care about wither away due to this disease and it absolutely breaks my heart. Something needs to happen SOON for the sake of all these people, and myself who is a very intelligent person who was an academic until addiction unfortunately came my way. It is an absolutely despicable state of affairs and I demand change NOW.

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

*No Response*

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Heather Lewis

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number.

We will not publish these details.

## **Aim and Approach - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").**

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

Partially supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response. We would welcome comments on any experience you have had of accessing, or trying to access, addiction treatment.**

Because it makes me hopeful that the addiction services in Scotland are going to get better as soon as possible.

Q2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the proposed Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

I think legislation should be required in order to have the same approach to addiction as is in Portugal, as their approach to addiction and helping addicts actually works and has been proven to do so. Doctors have classed addiction as a disease as it meets all of the criteria of a disease, therefore, people shouldn't be criminalised for suffering from a disease that people, and the government, are so ignorant towards.

Q3. How do you think the right to treatment established in the Bill would be most effectively implemented and enforced? Tick all options that apply.

Duty on Scottish Ministers

Duty on Health Boards

Duty on Integration Joint Boards (IJB's)

Established targets/standards

Requirement for the Scottish Government to report progress on duty

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your view of creating a specific complaints procedure, in addition to the existing NHS complaints procedure?

Fully supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response. We would welcome comments on any experience you have had with the existing NHS complaints procedure.**

I fully support this as it is well needed. Being an addict myself, I don't feel there is anywhere I can go to complain regarding my own treatment for addiction. There are so many examples I could write about where I know that a person should have a right to complain about their addiction treatment to a separate complaints procedure which specialises in addiction only. It is a shame as it is too late for my friend who died from his addiction not long ago, and probably many others, who did not get this chance.

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of allowing those suffering from addiction to choose a preferred treatment option, and for them to receive that option unless deemed harmful by a medical professional?

Fully supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response. We would welcome suggestions about how this could work in practice.**

I am 100% fully supportive of this as this is a big part of the reason I, and many others, have unsuccessfully made it into full recovery. No one knows better than yourself in how you are feeling and what you feel will be of best and effective help to you when it comes to addiction. I could be a recovered addict, a qualified Psychologist, doing my masters, continuing my own intense research into addiction and other areas of mental health, out working and helping other addicts if I had been given the opportunity to choose a preferred treatment 4 years ago - but no, I am still seeking help and waiting and waiting for help while I sit at home simply existing when I know I am capable of so much more.

Q6. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill seeking to prevent treatment being refused?

Fully supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response. We would welcome suggestions about how this could work in practice.**

Treatment should never be refused to an addict. If they are seeking help it means that they are in crisis and urgently needing help. In practice, things massively need to speed up in terms of how long it takes from the patient entering whichever addiction support clinic they go to until they are actually receiving treatment. A lot more funding needs to be given to addiction services and even more needs to be spent on creating more rehab beds (this is crucial). I think audits should be taken place in CAT teams to find out and show if patients are being treated as promised. I think detailed surveys should be posted out to everyone who is under the care of a CAT team or who has been in the last 5 years. This should give some good answers as to how addicts feel their local CAT team could better meet their needs.

Q7. Which of the following best expresses your view of requiring the Scottish Government to establish a national funding scheme?

Fully supportive

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

I have thought this for a long time as through my own experience and the experiences of people I know, it

Q7. Which of the following best expresses your view of requiring the Scottish Government to establish a national funding scheme?

is vividly clear that there isn't enough funding being put towards addiction whatsoever. Enough money means enough and better services out there for addicts, which then leads to significantly healthier people in the country (people in recovery), which leads to much less people seeking benefits and the need for other costly health care, more people in work and living happier lives, really contributing towards the country, a happier Scotland.

## Financial Implications

Q8. Taking into account all those likely to be affected (including public sector bodies, businesses and individuals etc), is the proposed Bill likely to lead to:

a significant reduction in costs

**Please indicate where you would expect the impact identified to fall (including public sector bodies, businesses and individuals etc). You may also wish to suggest ways in which the aims of the Bill could be delivered more cost-effectively.**

I believe that if the bill is followed through adequately then there will be a significant reduction of costs in all of these areas. There would be less people causing chaos on the street, less graffiti on businesses, less stealing for drugs, less emergency services required for people who have overdosed, less hospital admissions, less people begging and sleeping on the street outside people's businesses, less need for people having to, again, to seek help for addiction, less crime levels meaning less need for police involvement, less holding people at police stations leading to less court involvement and costs, happier people being able to contribute to the community and hold jobs leading to much less people seeking benefits. Decriminalising drugs, like how Portugal have done, will encourage more addicts to seek help thereby freeing up police resources and creating healthier, working people, not seeking benefits from the government or any other financial help. Less naloxone, methadone, buprenorphine etc would need to be bought if people are able to get into residential rehab quicker and easier. If this bill went through, so much could change for general individuals. Some people would be less fearful of people and family members stealing from them in order to buy drugs, less children will be asking their parents why there are people asleep on the streets and begging, roads and streets would be nicer to walk around, people wouldn't need to be so worried about being harassed for money from people in the street, people would feel safer at night, less fear of attack and stolen money or goods. With less alcoholics roaming the street and causing a scene in all different areas, people would be more willing to visit the shops, restaurants etc where they would usually be. With more people getting clean from drugs and alcohol, their health will be better meaning less doctors and hospital visits and less pharmacy prescriptions needing paid for. I could go on and on but I think I have made my point. There are so many costs that would dramatically lower for the public sector, businesses and the general public if addicts had fast access to the treatment of their choice, especially residential rehab (which is what I am currently waiting on a bed for. I know I would make a great change to what I will do in life ie. finally get my second degree, stop needing all of the government benefits I receive/need, I would be able to help others find the right path to recovery, I would be able to continue my research into addiction, the brain, mental health and how to look after our minds and bodies naturally instead of relying on prescription drugs, I would be able to start my own businesses like I have always wanted to, I would be able to spend my money on things like going to the gym etc again (putting more money into businesses pockets again, instead of needing to waste money on drugs) and this is just one person's results of recovery).

## Equalities

Q9. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Positive

**Please explain the reasons for your response. Where any negative impacts are identified, you may also wish to suggest ways in which these could be minimised or avoided.**

It will have a wonderfully positive impact on equality as addicts will now be seen as people again, and feel like they more than just exist anymore. They will finally be able to get help just like someone with any other condition does. They will finally feel valued as part of a community again and will be able to do the things in life like create a business or start a family, things they previously were unable to do before recovery. The only negative impact I think there will be is that the council will have less people to do community service!

## Sustainability

Q10. In terms of assessing the proposed Bill's potential impact on sustainable development, you may wish to consider how it relates to the following principles:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting effective, participative systems of governance
- ensuring policy is developed on the basis of strong scientific evidence.

With these principles in mind, do you consider that the Bill can be delivered sustainably?

Yes

**Please explain the reasons for your response.**

I feel I have answered these questions in my previous answers.

## General

Q11. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

No, I cannot think of anything else at the moment, just that great things will happen if addicts, like myself, manage to get the help they need when they need it. I think the Bill is excellent and well overdue! It will save and change lives and relationships. All I would say is to take note of how Portugal deal with drugs and addiction if/when it is implemented. I apologise that my answers haven't been as full closer to the end of the survey. I am starting to get really tired. I hate that part about my addiction (well, one of them!) as I love to write, especially about what I'm most passionate about. Best of luck with this Bill :) I am very excited about it!