

# 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.

on behalf of an organisation

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".)

*No Response*

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

**Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).**

The Shetland District of the Methodist Church has been involved in offering support to people affected by addiction through our Food for the Way Project since early 2019. With support from the Methodist Church in Britain we are exploring the possibility of establishing a small residential facility with a programme of support for people looking to sustain life beyond addiction. This response was discussed by a meeting of the Synod of the Shetland Methodist District.

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).

Shetland District of the Methodist Church.

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?

Fully 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.**

Although our context is very different from some of the areas highlighted in the report, drug and alcohol addiction is a significant issue in the Shetland community as we know through the relationships we have established with those in addiction as well as through conversations with statutory and other agencies. The situation is getting worse and we therefore fully support moves to improve the possibility of treatment and recovery for those affected by addiction.

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.

Yes, legislation that will remove some of the barriers to help being made available is needed. It makes a positive change to see a proposal in relation to the law and drug use that is not about punishing those with addictions but seeking to strengthen the possibility of them receiving effective treatment and being offered a hopeful future. Statistics show that the situation is getting worse so current approaches aren't working. Legislation could strengthen the approach to reducing the impact of drugs and alcohol.

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 Health Boards

Duty on Integration Joint Boards (IJB's)

Established targets/standards

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

This needs to be a coordinated multi-agency approach and therefore the IJBs should help this coordination. Health boards have direct involvement in the provision of treatment. Targets are not enough on their own, but are necessary to help monitor progress. The need we hear about from addicted people in Shetland is for more face to face support/relationships of support rather than just chemical prescriptions. Hence an integrated approach that draws together different agencies including the contribution of third sector bodies, including committed faith organisations, is needed.

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

Partially supportive

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

Complaints procedures are formal and off-putting to those who may be struggling with addiction. More valuable would be to enable advocacy support so that those affected by addiction can be supported when needing to complain through a formal process.

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?

Partially supportive

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

Freedom of choice sounds great in theory but the reality is that we want to have a say in our future but we all need guidance when we may not know what is the best option for us moving forward. This also applies to those affected by addiction. Again the need for a supportive advocate relationship, someone able to help the individual to explore what may be the best way forward for them. Treatment options should not be afraid to include working with faith-based programmes which in many cases have a long and proven track record of helping with recovery. Medical professionals should be able not only to prevent harm but to help in choice of options that are positively beneficial.

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

Partially supportive

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

Clearly we want to see the best possible access being available to appropriate treatment. If the issue of people being refused appropriate treatment because of irrelevant factors is significant then this must be addressed. Our experience of the situation in Shetland is that inappropriate refusal by agencies is less of a problem than being able to get alongside individuals to help them towards the most helpful treatment.

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

Partially supportive

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

Whilst a less piecemeal approach to funding would seem to be an improvement we are aware of some difficulties with a national funding scheme. If the emphasis is on targeting those communities where there is statistically significant economic deprivation, other communities such as Shetland, which nevertheless have a significant problem with drug and alcohol addiction, may struggle to obtain the necessary funding. Conversations with local professionals in this field suggest that national funding may not allow for the increased costs of provision in remote and rural areas.

## 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:

don't know

**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**

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:

**the Bill could be delivered more cost-effectively.**

'Don't know' has to be our answer at this stage as 'all those affected' includes multiple organisations as well as individuals and families. Over what time period is this cost assessment to be made. A long term reduction in those who are addicted may reduce costs in the health service, the criminal justice service and elsewhere but this will not be a quick fix.

## 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?

Unsure

**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.**

We do not think it is clear how this Bill will have an impact on those included within the protected characteristics groups. Our experience is that addiction affects people from all kinds of backgrounds. We are committed to playing our part in expressing God's inclusive love and care to all people affected by addiction.

## 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?

Unsure

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

We would hope that any improvement in the life opportunities for those affected by addiction would contribute to a stronger, healthier and more just society. If recovery led to employment that could help in promoting a sustainable economy. We are not clear about the impact in relation to the other principles.

## 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)?

We note that the proposal emphasises a link between deprivation and addiction. We believe that deprivation and other factors which have a significant influence on whether someone becomes addicted need to be addressed. Otherwise our actions are a sticking plaster solution. This proposed Bill needs to be part of a wider programme to support meaningful community living with people having opportunities to talk through their hopes and fears.

We have been working with people living with addiction through our 'Food for the Way' project over the past three years, providing a safe space for people to meet together in a social setting (Covid guidelines-compliant) with others whose needs may not relate to addiction. This has developed positive relationships and healthy networks of support. We have supported one long term drug addict in getting to a faith-based rehabilitation centre in mainland Scotland which has transformed his life. We have funding to explore the possibility of establishing a small residential setting in Shetland (Fresh Start Centre) to work in collaboration with health service and other agencies in offering a way forward for those referred by such agencies who have demonstrated a commitment to moving beyond a life dominated by addiction, using a faith-based programme including the opportunity to work in horticultural and other projects. We would hope that projects such as this could be included in the range of options available to those seeking recovery.