



Mission Statement and Guiding Principles

People who use drugs have the same rights as people who do not. We will work to ensure that people who use drugs and those involved with them are treated in a way that is fair, equitable and appropriate. We will seek to ensure that the rights of people who use drugs are observed. We will challenge policy, practice and legislation that arbitrarily reduces the rights of people who use drugs.

The right to housing:

- We believe that access to stable and secure housing is beneficial to individuals and to wider society.
- We support initiatives that house and support people who use drugs in appropriate accommodation.
- We believe that policies and housing practice that arbitrarily reduces access to housing for drug users is an infringement of this right and is counterproductive.

What we will do:

- Offer policy advice to housing organisations seeking to house people who use drugs
- Feed in to regional and national policy and strategy forums on housing and drug use
- Make literature, resources and training available to relevant workers and individuals in the field.

The right to education:

- We believe that people who use drugs are unfairly discriminated within education. Arbitrary and inconsistent drug-related exclusionary processes exemplify this across the country.
- Research demonstrates that access to and involvement with education is a substantial protective factor against problematic drug use and exclusion from education represents a substantial risk factor.

What we will do:

- Work with schools, colleges and regional bodies to increase awareness, skills and confidence in responding to drug use.
- Feed in to regional and national debate and strategy in working with drugs within educational settings.

- Develop resources, advice and information for all parties affected by discrimination against drug users within the education system.

The right to family life:

- We believe that drug use and family life can coexist. We also recognise that drug use can have a serious and negative impact on family well-being.
- Research has demonstrated the important role that family plays as a risk or protective factor for problematic drug use.
- We will support policy and practice that looks at drug use within the family in a holistic, and supportive way, and seeks to support families encountering drug use within the family.
- We will challenge approaches that deny people the right to family life solely because drug use takes place, without taking broader factors into consideration.

What we will do:

- We will work collaboratively with other groups addressing drug use within the family.
- We will work to ensure that all parties concerned with drug use within the family are able to approach such issues from an informed, proportionate and equitable position.
- We will make available resources and training to support families affected by drugs.

The right to health-care and treatment:

- People who use drugs have the same right to prompt, effective and appropriate treatment as people who do not use drugs.
- We believe that approaches that do not offer access to such treatment breach a fundamental human right. Furthermore we believe that such approaches are counterproductive, increasing the cost of drug use both to users and to the state.

What we will do:

- We will offer information to people who use drugs, their families, friends, advocates and peers. This information will include models of treatment and care available, routes to access such care, rights in accessing care and treatment.
- We will contest policy and practice that restricts or denies access to care and treatment for drug users, where evidence that such care is effective and appropriate.
- We will work with organisations and services to support the development of more accessible and effective services for drug users.

Legal rights:

- We believe that existing drug legislation is fundamentally flawed and effectively causes greater harm than that it is intended to prevent. We believe that the legislation needs to be independently reviewed and revised accordingly.
- We believe that people who use drugs and are in contact with the criminal justice system are entitled to fair and equitable treatment.

● We believe that responses to drug use within the criminal justice system should reflect the needs of drug users, should be balanced and proportional, and should ensure that service users have full access to independent legal advice and information throughout their engagement.

What we will do:

- We will work with legal practitioners to increase awareness and proficiency in addressing the legal needs of drug users.
- We will research and demonstrate the need for review and revision of drug legislation.

The right to freedom of movement

● We believe that the right to freedom of movement is a fundamental human right. We believe that on a national and international level, drugs legislation and policy infringes this right, and needs to be revised.

What we will do:

- We will work to address areas of national policy or practice that substantially infringe on a person's right to freedom of movement.

The right to information

● We believe that drug use, and drug risks are exacerbated by ignorance and inaccurate information. We believe that all people concerned about drugs are entitled to accurate, unbiased and relevant information about drugs, drug use and drug-related risks.

● This information needs to be made accessible to all, and needs to reflect the needs of a heterogeneous society.

What we will do:

- We will provide information and advice about drugs and drug use. This information will reflect the principles of honesty, accuracy and impartiality that we believe in.
- We will make this information available to anyone concerned about drugs, and will endeavour to make this information as accessible as feasible.

The right to harm-reduction and safety:

● We believe that, while much drug use is inherently risky, strategies and resources exist to reduce these risks.

● We believe that, where such approaches can reduce drug-related risk, they should be implemented. We believe that an unwillingness to do so impinges on a person's right to health.

What we will do:

- We will draw on national and international responses that reduce drug-related harm and support their implementation in the UK.

- We will seek to address legal and moral obstacles to such strategies where they exist.

The right to employment

- We believe that people have a fundamental right to work. We do not believe that drug use *per se* should be an obstacle to employment.
- We believe that people who use drugs should be entitled to fair, equitable and proportionate treatment in the workplace.

What we will do:

- We will support employers in developing and implementing effective workplace drugs policy through advice, information training and consultancy.

The right to dignity

- We believe that all people have the right to be treated with dignity.
- We believe that people who use drugs are entitled to protection from harassment, incitement to hatred, degrading or humiliating treatment.

What we will do:

- We will highlight and challenge policy and practice that fails to afford dignity to people who use drugs.

The right to participate

- We believe that drug use affects a wide range of groups and individuals. Each of these has the right to involvement in the development and delivery of drug policy and practice.
- We believe that it is vital to ensure that the needs, opinions and experiences of all these groups are considered in developing responses to drugs and drug use.

What we will do:

- We will ensure that our work draws on and consults with a wide range of interest groups.

Kevin Flemen, KFx: 2003