

Alcohol and Drug Snapshot

September 2025



Click on images to download information

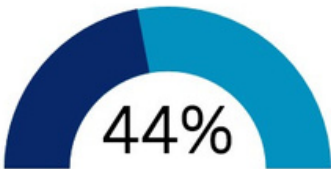


Tackling drug stigma is everyone's business!

People who use drugs, people in recovery from drug use, families and communities experience stigma.

Stigma is the social process of devaluing a person beginning with marking or labelling someone's differences then attributing negative values to those differences.

Stigma is closely linked to prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination. Stigma intersects with other ways people are disempowered and marginalised (ethnicity, gender and sexual identity among others) often increasing risk and harm.



agreed that those with a history of drug dependence are a burden on society.

[Source](#)

Why should we tackle drug stigma?

Tackling stigma and understanding how it connects to other ways people are disadvantaged, is vital to addressing drug related harm, including deaths.

Stigma is one of the biggest barriers people who use drugs can face when accessing any form of treatment and care. That matters a lot because engaging in treatment and care is the biggest protective factor from drug overdose and death.

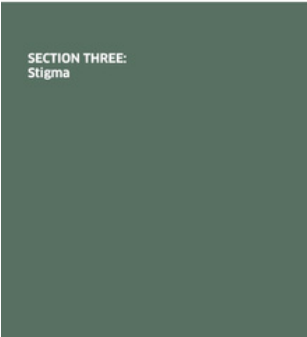
Tackling stigma at all levels is essential to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for people who use drugs and helps people feel a greater connection to society, more included and more likely to access treatment and support for recovery.

A National Priority

In 2020, the Drug Deaths Taskforce published A Strategy to Address the Stigmatisation of People and Communities Affected by Drug Use with the aim of helping to achieve a more informed and compassionate approach towards people with lived experience of drug use problems and their families.



In 2022, the Scottish Government recognised tackling drug stigma as a cross cutting priority in the National Mission on Drug Deaths and further to this published a cross government National Stigma Action Plan in January 2023.



Intersectionality

Stigma does not exist in isolation. There are many overlapping factors that influence a person's individual experience of stigma.

There are strong links between poverty, trauma, mental health, substance use and experience of the criminal justice system.

Greater Glasgow and Clyde Stigma Action Group

A Greater Glasgow and Clyde Stigma Action Group was established in July 2023. The multi-agency group provides a coordinated approach to tackling the stigma associated with drugs across the board area. This group has links into the development of a National Stigma Action Plan and is working with local Alcohol and Drug Partnerships to:

- Encourage and facilitate open conversations across society to speak about drugs and stigma
- Co- produce anti-stigma work and campaigns with people with lived experience
- Provide opportunities for training and education including how to challenge stigma
- Underpin anti stigma engagement work with human rights and equalities approach
- Prevent stigma by addressing its perpetuation



“Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs's involvement in the Stigma Action Group reinforces a whole-family approach. This collaborative work ensures that families’ unique challenges and perspectives are acknowledged and incorporated into support services, creating a more empathetic, comprehensive support network”



“It is important for Glasgow City HSCP Health Improvement Team to be involved in the work of the Stigma Action Group as drug stigma impacts negatively on individuals, communities and on wider public health, and challenging this should be a priority for us all.”



“It is essential for Scottish Drugs Forum to be part of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (GGC) Stigma Action Group to promote a unified, stigma-free approach across organisations, supporting people impacted by drug use. Participation in this multi-agency group allows SDF to collaborate on tackling discrimination, aligning with both local and national stigma strategies. By actively contributing to policy influence, information dissemination, and advocating for lived and living experience involvement, SDF helps build a more inclusive environment. This collaboration ensures SDF remains at the forefront of promoting social inclusion, equality, and compassionate care.”

How can you get involved in tackling stigma?

Recognising stigma is the first step to tackling it. When you witness stigmatising behaviour, you have a choice about the action you take. Whatever action you choose you show stigmatising behaviour is not acceptable.

You don’t need to be an expert, but we all have a role in tackling stigma.

Understanding stigma and approaching interactions with kindness and compassion is the key.

Resources

The GGC Stigma Action Group have developed a drugs and stigma framing document and workshop. These resources provide information and practical tools to support staff across all sectors to frame conversations about drugs and tackle drug related stigma.

The Framing Document will be launched in September 2025 and can be accessed via the [NHSGGC Alcohol and Drug Health Improvement Website](#).

The workshop will follow in the coming months.