

Embargoed – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021



## Launch of television campaign on preventing drug-related deaths

Today (Monday 20 September) sees the launch of a television and online campaign to promote intervention when someone experiences a drug overdose. The public are being encouraged to learn how to recognise an overdose and intervene to save lives. The campaign also encourages the public to order the freely available medication naloxone which can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Opioids, like heroin, were implicated in 90% of Scotland's 1339 drug related deaths in 2020.

This is the latest phase in a national campaign under the banner We Can Prevent Drug Deaths which also involves a comprehensive national campaign including radio, tv, billboard, bus and train advertising. The campaign will run until November.

The striking television and online adverts come in two versions of 40 and 60 seconds and are voiced by Scottish actor **Martin Compston**.

The campaign is backed up by a dedicated website, [www.stophedeaths.com](http://www.stophedeaths.com) where people can learn more about recognising overdose; what to do in the event of an overdose; access further online information on naloxone and order a naloxone kit

### **David Liddell, CEO, of Scottish Drugs Forum says:**

"This is a significant campaign not only in raising the issue of drug related deaths and how they can be prevented, but in terms of the stigma suffered by people who have a drug problem. The public health emergency around drug related deaths in Scotland has continued partly because of that stigma.

"The investment in this high-profile campaign by Government is a clear indicator of a change in public attitudes and the Government has shown leadership on this. SDF have been delighted to shape this campaign and to deliver it across Scotland."

### **Kirsten Horsburgh Strategic Co-ordinator in Drug Death Prevention at Scottish Drugs Forum says:**

"We are delighted to have this national campaign that promotes practical steps anyone can take to reducing drug-related deaths. Time is of the essence when someone becomes unresponsive after an overdose and can be crucial in terms of avoiding death or serious brain injury. We need everyone to be able to recognise an overdose, intervene and call 999.

"Naloxone helps buy the person time while waiting for an ambulance to arrive. If a person is not breathing or there is not enough oxygen supply to the brain then that person is

# Embargoed – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2021

obviously in very real danger. We encourage everyone to visit [www.stophedeaths.com](http://www.stophedeaths.com) to learn more and to carry naloxone.”

ENDS

## Background

- The National Records of Scotland have released the statistics on the drug-related deaths in Scotland in 2020. <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>
- Scottish Drugs Forum recently launched the #StopTheDeaths campaign. To find out more go to the Stop The Deaths website: [www.stophedeaths.com](http://www.stophedeaths.com)

Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) is a membership-based drugs policy and information organisation. It is an independent centre of expertise on drug use and drug problems, supporting effective and evidence-based responses.

For more information please visit: [www.sdf.org.uk](http://www.sdf.org.uk)

## Media guidelines

- Journalists can help reduce drug-related harm by understanding the complex interaction between media reporting, drug policy and drug-related harm.
- Stigma can prevent people from accessing treatment in addition to other healthcare services and can deter people from seeking support from family and friends.
- **As a journalist, you can help reduce drug-related stigma and harm by avoiding stigmatising and outdated language** such as addict, junkie, drug abuse, drug abuser.
- Instead, use **person first** language as much as possible. Just as we now say that a person ‘lives with anorexia’ or ‘experiences bipolar disorder’ - that language should also be used in relation to people with a drug problem.

[This preferred language is reflected in the Associated Press Stylebook](#) and through the work of [The International Society of Addiction Journal Editors](#).

## Contact

For further information please contact Scottish Drugs Forum.

Austin Smith, Practice and Policy Officer 07770 520 947 [austin@sdf.org.uk](mailto:austin@sdf.org.uk)