



# The Road to Recovery Refresh

Views from the Scottish Youth Parliament  
Justice Committee



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# Young people's views on the new Scottish Alcohol and Drug Strategy

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## Scottish Youth Parliament

The [Scottish Youth Parliament](#) is the democratically elected voice of Scotland's young people. The Scottish Youth Parliament's Justice Committee took part in a youth-led workshop called 'Substance Misuse: Prevent and Educate'. This was supported by a worker from the charity [Crew](#).

The young people discussed approaches to the new Scottish alcohol and drug strategy through exploration of the existing strategy, education and strategies implemented in other countries with a focus on "the Icelandic Model".

Members of the Justice Committee also completed a follow-up survey to collect their recommendations to the Scottish Government for the development of the new alcohol and drug strategy and their ideas for effective drugs education.

The Justice Committee's recommendations can be found at the back of this report with key quotes informing the body of content.

# Views on the Icelandic Model

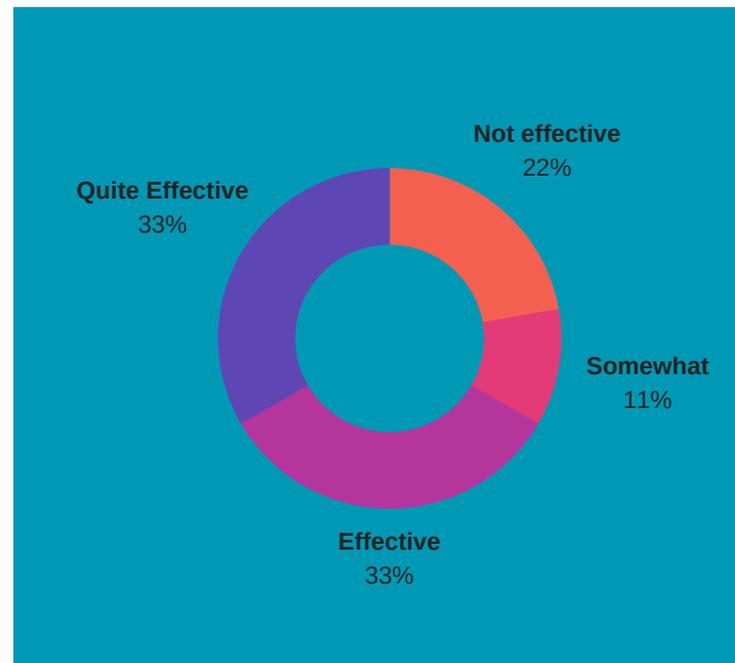
We asked the Justice Committee to read about the "Icelandic Model". This is an approach, to reduce substance use in young people, which has been implemented in Iceland for 20 years.

The approach involves a curfew for all under 18s; an agreement made by parents to manage the behaviour of young people; keeping young people preoccupied with activities and youth clubs and significant investment in youth activities. Young people are also surveyed each year on drug taking and emotions.

## Effectiveness of a curfew

Young people thought that while a curfew might have some effect they highlighted the cultural "ideals of liberty and freedom of the self" in Scotland, and that "if a curfew is to be had, it cannot come from the state authorities, only the household."

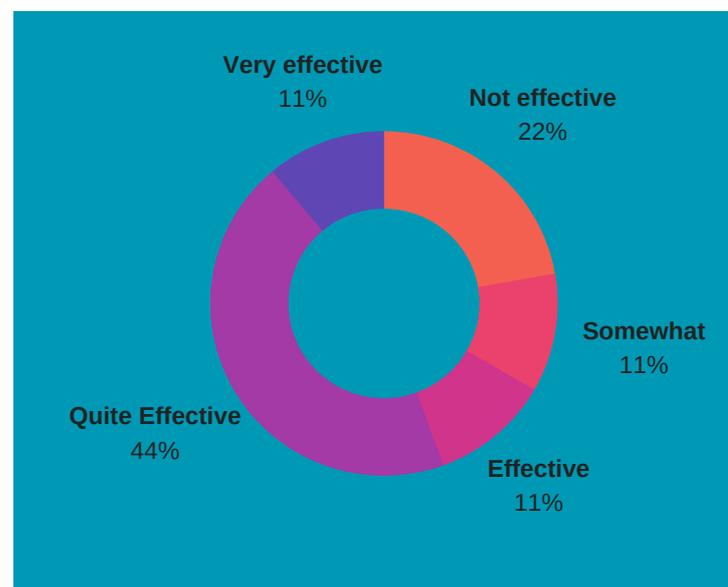
Others highlighted the possible use of fake ID to skirt past the enforcement.



## Parents signing a pledge

The idea of parents signing a pledge was not seen to be an effective approach with young people. They also considered the difficulties for single parent families, looked after children and young carers.

The importance of young people's voices in a similar approach was also seen as important.



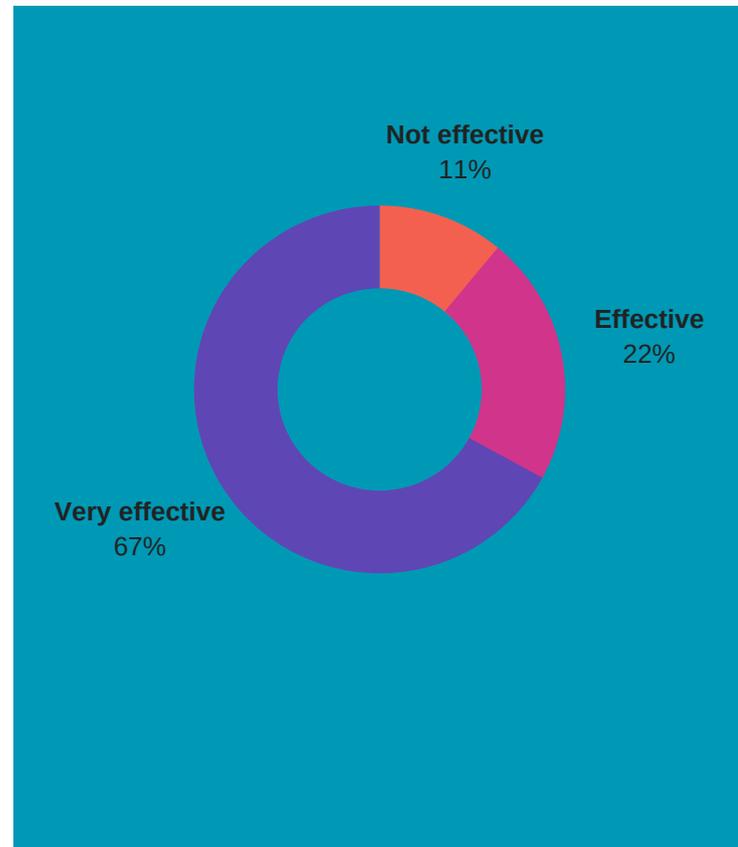
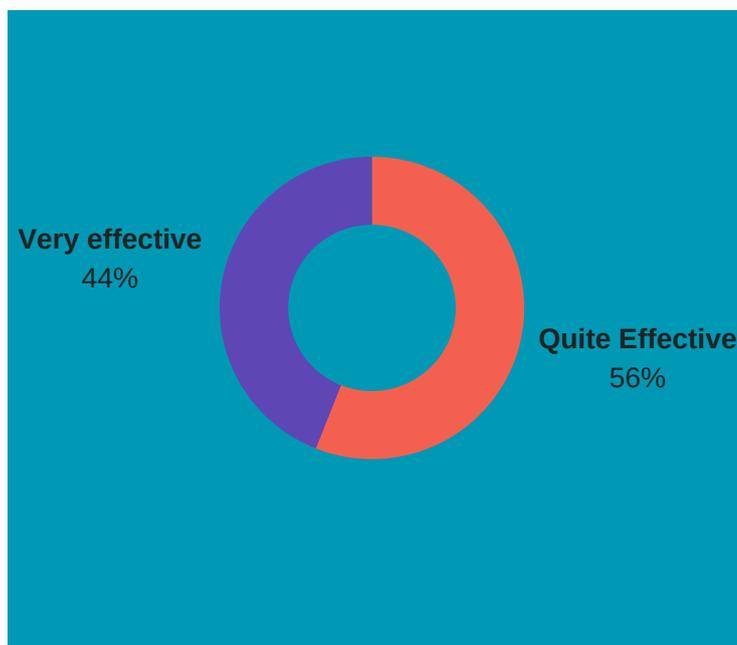
## Youth activities and youth clubs

The Committee could see potential in "keeping young people occupied" with youth activities as a distraction to reduce substance use in young people. They acknowledged that it "keeps young people occupied as well as giving them a group to identify with and build relationships."

This will prevent young people turning to substances as a means to cope as they will have friends and role models to confide in.

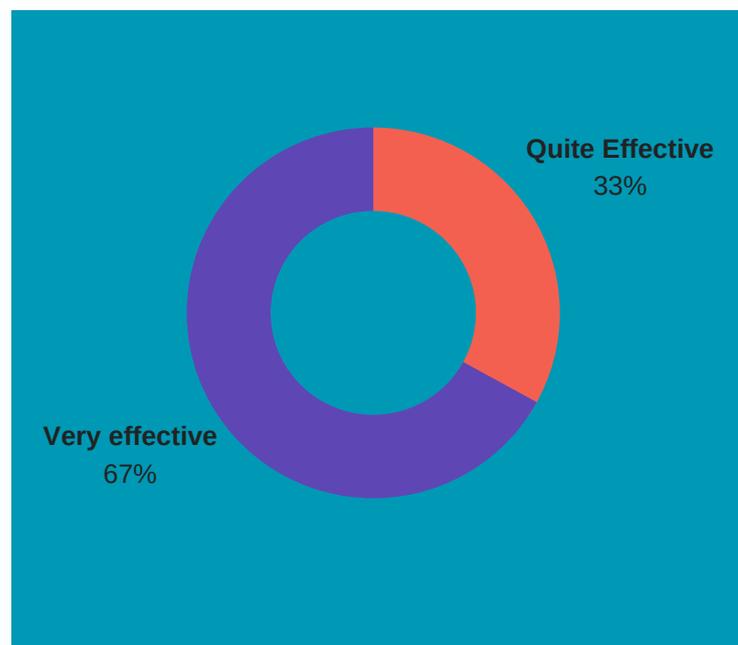
## A survey about drug taking and emotions

Young people felt that a yearly survey to explore drug taking and emotions would be an effective approach.



## Increased spend on youth activities

Increased spending was seen as the most effective aspect of the Icelandic Model which would be welcomed by young people.



# Would the Icelandic Model work?

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**"An agreement between parents and their children might be more effective. Giving young people a say, valuing their voices in the process empowers and doesn't control."**

**"I do believe that it's vital Scotland invests more in sporting activities and extracurricular clubs. This is important as it keeps young people occupied as well as giving them a group to identify with and build relationships."**

## Overall

The young people taking part in the consultation felt that, whilst there were "clear advantages in the Icelandic system", it would take a lot of work to implement it in Scotland and cultural differences would make it difficult to transplant without major adaptations.

The implementation of a curfew and parental pledge seemed the least popular aspects while investment in youth activities was seen as a key approach.

# Investment in youth activities



**"I do believe that it is vital Scotland invests more in sporting activities and extracurricular clubs. This is important as it keeps young people occupied as well as giving them a group to identify with and build relationships."**

**"I hope an effective strategy can be implemented."**

**"Providing clean needles to stop the spread of diseases and helping people rebuild their lives."**

# How to reduce high rates of substance use and drug related harm

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## Education

"Invest in our youth - give them things to do that'll stop them turning to drugs. Engage our youths in their lives and value their voices in decision making. Educate our youth on drugs and the effects of misuse. Making it less taboo takes away the attraction."

**"Create more free activities to prevent youth from getting bored and using drugs for fun."**

**"Train teachers to notice the signs that may indicate drug use and also get the young person the help they need."**

**"Invest in youth hubs and commit to rebuilding a sense of community."**

**"A more constructive rehabilitation process."**

**"Peer education is also effective."**

There was a general sense that more education about the risks of drug use and investment would make a difference.

# mandatory drug education

Young people saw the implementation of mandatory drug education as something that they would like to see.

But it has to be meaningful and productive.

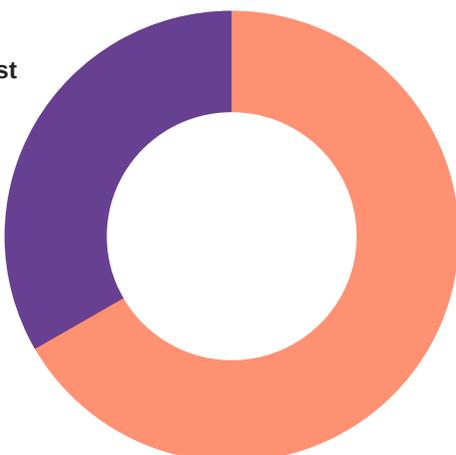
"It should be mandatory in all schools but it must be updated and meet the modern dilemma as outdated drug education can be repetitive and therefore become ineffective."

# drugs as a health issue

"I don't think treating it as a crime issue will ever work. It must be looked at as a health issue."

# more power for Scotland in decisions about drug policy

Against  
33%



For  
67%



# How to promote and support recovery in the community

**"Community support groups and networking opportunities."**

It was also suggested assistance should be given to help people who have been affected by drug use and are facing issues such as homelessness through the provision of free accommodation, support to find work and rebuild their lives.

**"Dissolve the shame culture and see the person affected as in need of community support."**

Challenging the stigma around drug use with a community-wide effort was seen as important.

## A person-centred approach

Young people suggested any help or care should be tailored to the individual.

**"Educate the community on how they can help but don't forget how important the voice of those taking drugs is in the design and set up of provisions."**



# Thinking about drinking...

**Young people were unclear about the effectiveness of Minimum Unit Pricing on alcohol.**

In the workshop, young people explored a “vintage” advert from the 1990s where the negative social impact of drinking too much alcohol, or being too drunk at a party was portrayed. They found this an interesting approach to messaging about drugs.

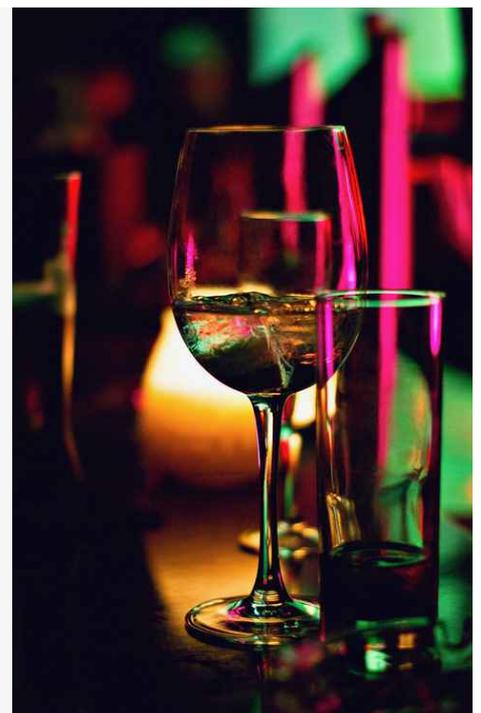
**"It might stop some people but people in the UK like to drink alcohol."**

Young people agreed that measures such as "Challenge 25" had an impact on the availability of alcohol but wondered if there was an increase in the number of parents buying alcohol for their children.

## How to target adverts about the risks of alcohol?

Young people thought that few people they knew were drinking alcohol, but those who were probably drank too much.

**"There are people drinking but there are a lot of people who don't because they are busy doing other things."**



# how should information about drugs be presented?



"I think adverts are effective as they are memorable. Bus stop posters and other public promotion could also get the message across."

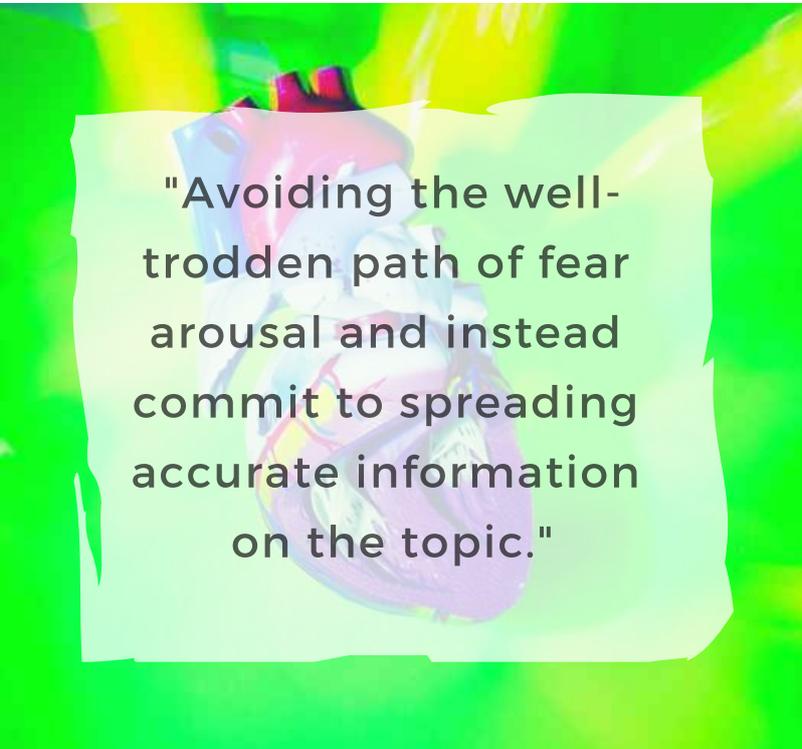
"Creative adverts get the message across."



## information delivered by experts

"I think information about drugs and drug harms should be delivered by trained specialists in school, high school and college. Leaflets should be child-friendly and tailored to age ranges."

## removing the taboo of drugs through education



"Avoiding the well-trodden path of fear arousal and instead commit to spreading accurate information on the topic."

# Recommendations for the new Scottish Alcohol and Drug Strategy

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- **Helplines to allow people to talk about what is going on for them**
- **Ensure recovery will not just focus on "stopping taking drugs" but also help people rebuild their lives**
- **Ensure people have things like clean needles etc.**
- **Ensure mental health issues are identified**
- **Provide accommodation for homeless people to prevent illness and disease**
- **Consultation with the public and community, medical professionals and support charities working with people who take drugs to create effective strategies and initiatives**
- **Increase mental health support and make sure everyone can access services, with a person-centered approach**
- **Promote drugs education in schools and introduce at a young age**

# Recommendations for the new Scottish Alcohol and Drug Strategy

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- **Providing peer education programmes**
- **Invest in the possibility of safe consumption rooms to reduce the risk of drug use**
- **Explore drug regulation**
- **Invest any tax from regulation into youth activities**
- **Consider community models as laid out in the Icelandic Model**
- **Dismantle the fear, stigma and shame culture surrounding drugs through rational discussion**
- **Invest in police and their relationship with communities**
- **Engage the community in education and prevention techniques**
- **Invest in youth work**
- **Promote health and well-being in schools**
- **Mandatory sports in schools**



## DRUG GLOSSARY

Drug Policy Network South East

Europe: <http://www.dpnsee.org/glossary-of-terms-used-in-drug-policy-promoted/>

## ICELANDIC YOUTH

VolteFace: <http://volteface.me/publications/iceland-report/>

## SUBSTANCE USE PREVENTION FOR ADOLESCENTS: THE ICELANDIC MODEL

Inga Dóra Sigfúsdóttir Thorolfur Thorlindsson Álfgeir Logi Kristjánsson Kathleen M. Roe John P. Allegrante Health Promotion International, Volume 24, Issue 1, 1 March 2009, Pages 16-25, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dan038>

## BBC: ICELANDIC MODEL

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDbD\\_JSCrNo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDbD_JSCrNo)

## HEALTH EDUCATION BOARD SCOTLAND VIDEO ARCHIVE

### Smoking

**Sticks:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f22wSJ8mslQ>

**Sarah:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgTK\\_xJK\\_hg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgTK_xJK_hg)

**Drunk:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar3w8nT7GwA&list=PLxCKPdNRQ3US1158-GUALue77vWrguQH1>

# REFERENCES APPENDIX