

**People First – Language Matters - Partner Pledge**

The Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership’s ‘People First - Language Matters’ Partner Pledge is an initiative to help reduce the stigma experienced by people; who have drug and alcohol problem(s), people in recovery and family members affected by problem drug and alcohol use.

**Why challenge stigma?**

People who experience alcohol or drug problems, either through use or by association, often experience the most stigma in our society. Negative attitudes from society, from professionals, and self-stigma can be one of the biggest barriers to accessing treatment, community services and other forms of support. Stigma needs to be challenged across sectors and society. (Extract from Scottish Government [Rights, Respect and Recovery](https://www.gov.scot/publications/rights-respect-recovery/): Alcohol and Drug Treatment Strategy\* 2018.)

There are three levels of stigma which need to be addressed:

* Stigma by association;
* Self-stigma; and
* Institutional stigma.

The current levels of harm and the discrimination people and their families experience is unacceptable in Highland, and this needs to change. Viewing problem drug and alcohol use as akin to other long-term health conditions will help to reduce stigma and discrimination.

The Scottish Drug Deaths Taskforce have recently published a national [Stigma Strategy](https://drugdeathstaskforce.scot/news-information/publications/policy-and-strategy/stigma-policy-and-strategy/) which recognises the importance of stigma as a key underlying component of the drug related deaths crisis. A strategic plan to direct activities will be developed by Scottish Government for national and local implementation. The focus of the strategic approach is to reduce *disempowerment, disadvantage* and *inequity.*

The Strategic Plan will include Scottish Government and the Drug Death Taskforce promoting a National pledge and Charter to tackle stigma. HADP intend to sign up to the National Charter and as a statement of our intent we have adopted this People First – Language Matters – Partner Pledge. Partners signing up to our Highland Pledge will be asked for permission to share their details as part of the National Pledge and Charter.

**What is the evidence?**

The national strategy considered the evidence available and identified three key approaches to reducing stigma i) protest and advocacy, ii) education including media campaigns and iii) contact (social contact) including peer programmes. Whilst the Scottish Government will provide a framework for national standards for addressing stigma, it is important that we all help to reframe the narrative around problem drug and alcohol use wherever possible.

**Why does language matter?**

The language used to describe people with drug and alcohol problems can have an impact on how they perceive themselves and how others view them. Inaccurate and derogatory use of language creates and perpetuates stigma. HADP believes that a person should not be defined by their alcohol or drug use, as it is only one aspect of their life. HADP wishes to encourage the use of ‘People First’ language; that focusses on the person, as opposed to the behaviour. (At the end of this document a link to the Language Matters guide has been added for your use). Using People First language matters, because it reminds us to be compassionate and that we are talking about human beings; People with Rights, who deserve Respect, and should be supported in their Recovery. Importantly, evidence tells us that health outcomes improve for people who are described and treated in a non-judgemental manner.

**What is the aim of Pledge?**

The aim of the People First - Partner Pledge is to:

* Encourage the use of People First language whether this is person to person, through literature; leaflets or when talking to the media or members of the public.
* Empower/encourage/support people with a drug or alcohol problem to identify and challenge stigma and to resist the stigma to which they are subjected.
* Work with those with lived and living experience to address stigma as a way to prevent and reduce harm and discrimination.
* Address and raise awareness within your organisation and across other services in a way which will help to reduce stigma.

We endorse the following principles and pledge to help work towards a stigma free Scotland:

* Everyone has the right to health and to live free from the harms of alcohol and drugs.
* Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity and for their individual recovery journey to be fully supported.
* Individuals and families experiencing alcohol and drug related harm should be offered a human rights, person centred response to support them in their recovery.
* Everyone has a responsibility to raise awareness of and reduce stigma by challenging discriminatory attitudes and practices.
* People with lived and living experience of recovery and receiving services should be involved in planning, developing, evaluating and improving services.

Endorsing the Pledge is a great way to help improve people’s wellbeing and shows your organisations commitment to reducing stigma and discrimination.

**More Information and inspiration:**

**What are some of the ways your organisation can support the Pledge? :**

* Support, disseminate and raise awareness by using People First Language targeted messages as part of the national and local campaign.
* Ensure people in need have good access to treatment, support and recovery services, particularly those at most risk.
* Develop person-centred approaches to work with people with alcohol and drug problems.
* Ensure people have access to or are aware of independent advocacy services.
* Provide mission statements, information for patients and service users on their rights.
* Where possible ensure the voice of lived and living experience are included in development, design and planning of services to support treatment interventions and approaches.
* Encourage opportunities to respond to the educational, volunteering and employment needs of people in recovery.
* Connect people in recovery to mutual aid fellowships and recovery communities to help maintain their personal recovery journeys.
* Help or signpost family members to where they can access support in their own right and, where appropriate, include them in their loved one’s treatment and support.
* Identify and support the positive contribution family members can make to a person’s recovery journey.
* Provide workforce development and \*\*training for those who support people with problematic drug and alcohol use. E.g. training on trauma informed care.
* Encourage participation by staff and those with lived and living experience to attend activities and national events which celebrate recovery i.e. annual Recovery Walk Scotland event.
* Develop an organisational process for reporting stigmatisation, how this is recorded and what actions have been taken as a response.

**\*\*Please note we have provided a list of resources and training available to your organisation at the end of this document.**

**Ready to Pledge?**

Please Pledge your organisations support today.

Click [**here**](file:///K%3A%5CFairer%20and%20Healthier%20Communities%5CWhole%20Population%20Approach%5CPeople%20First%5CPFP%20application.docx)to pledge support or use this

As a Supporter you will benefit from:

* A certificate and use of the People First Partner logo to show your support
* Opportunities to promote your work
* Your organisation proudly displayed on our list of supporters.

**Related Resources/Training and Information:**

Training Providers -



Training Courses available: -

- Understanding Stigma – Promoting Inclusive Attitudes and Practice

* Working with People who Use Alcohol and Other Drugs
* Developing and Enhancing Person-centred skills in groups
* Introduction to Trauma and working with people who use substances
* Peer Support Training

New Resource published Sept 2020 - <http://www.sdf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Moving-Beyond-People-First-Language.pdf>

[**Scottish Recovery Consortium**](https://scottishrecoveryconsortium.org)

- Recovery Community Training Programme

- Stigma and Me: Stigma and Us



Are you interested in coming along to our Stigma and Kindness Workshop?

We will look at what we know about stigma, how it affects us individually, our families and our communities. We will hear about some of the work to tackle stigma in Scotland and talk about how we feel about stigma, what we have experienced and what we can do together to remove stigma.

We will look at the concept of kindness and its value in displacing stigma through positive acts of kindness. Why is kindness important? Is there any evidence it makes a difference? What does it mean to be kind to myself and how can that affect my family, neighbours, friends and community?

To register: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/StigmaHighlands>

[Rewriting Recovery Research](https://scottishrecoveryconsortium.org/rewriting-recovery-research-project/?fbclid=IwAR2CVRyTQGR1LKLdyFXYLUFfbpPXLaAzPDha7D6sB_tIjZrYAAt41wxXfAs)  link to findings of research programme to explore the portrayal of problematic drug use and recovery in the media undertaken by Scottish Recovery Consortium and Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs.

Links to podcasts and a discussion pack you can download are also available.

[Language Matters](file:///K%3A%5CBusiness%20Support%5CTraining%5CLanguage%5CLanguage-Matters.pdf) handout – Adapted from the Global Commission on Drug Policy 2017 report and aligned to \*Rights, Respect and Recovery, the Scottish Government Alcohol and Drug Strategy.

**Highland Alcohol & Drugs Partnership** - Language Matters – A short interactive awareness session designed to be delivered in-house by Team Managers for staff groups as part of this Pledge, CPD or People First campaign. Contact HADP directly for more information- Sharon.holloway1@nhs.scot

[Stigma Watch](https://www.sane.org/services/stigmawatch#alcohol-and-other-drugs) – link to an Australian based initiative to tackle stigma which provides information for people in the media on how to report around alcohol and drugs in a less stigmatising way.

\*The Language used in the strategy conforms wherever possible to the [Global Commission on Drugs Policy Guidelines](http://www.globalcommissionondrugs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/GCDP-Report-2017_Perceptions-ENGLISH.pdf) to help combat stigma.