

DrugScope and our constituency

DrugScope is the UK's leading independent centre of information and expertise on drugs. Our aim is to inform policy development and reduce drug-related harms – to individuals, families and communities.

We provide quality drug information, promote effective responses to drug use, undertake research, advise on policy-making and good practice, encourage informed debate and speak for our members working in drug treatment, education and prevention and other areas.

DrugScope occupies the “demilitarised zone” in the so-called “war” on drugs. We do not believe that the continuing polarisation of discourse between health and criminal justice, between legalisation and prohibition, between maintenance and abstinence, does much to benefit either individuals whose lives are affected by substance use or the communities in which we live.

Over the past 12 months, **DrugScope** has reviewed and reformed its policy work, changing both the way in which we represent the views of our stakeholders and how we use those views to build new policy and engage with current and future debates in drug strategy. **DrugScope's** new policy framework is focussed on fluid, broad and consensual policy formation and response.

DrugScope does not work for the drugs field or the government.

DrugScope works **with** the drugs field and **with** the government because we all want to achieve the same thing. That is to improve the quality of life and opportunity of those individuals and communities experiencing harm because of substance use. This is a hugely emotive area of public policy – it is **DrugScope's** role to promote an informed, calm, rational debate – where responses to the issues of substance use are proportionate and pragmatic.

The **DrugScope** constituency is made up of a broad group of individuals and organisations. These include member and non-members, organisations and individuals:

- ⇒ **People working in the substance use field;**
- ⇒ **People who work in other fields but whose work brings them into contact with substance use;**
- ⇒ **Substance use service providers in the voluntary, public and private sectors;**
- ⇒ **Public bodies (like local authorities, police organisations and PCTs);**
- ⇒ **Politicians and civil servants;**
- ⇒ **People who have direct experience of substance use.**

DrugScope's membership and stakeholder group is **not** defined by a particular philosophy but by an interest in or experience of substance use.

The breadth of **DrugScope**'s constituency is singular in the UK substance use field and alongside its perceived independence is the greatest strength of the organisation.