

PE2024/E: Create a national, public information programme to raise awareness of the impacts of steroids, selective androgen receptor modulators, and other performance enhancing drugs

Scottish Drugs Forum written submission, 18 April 2024

Scottish Drugs Forum would welcome and actively support any harm reduction focused national initiative which highlights the wide range of risks and harms associated with the use of Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs (IPEs).

The use of IPEs is prevalent within a wide age range, and different harms are experienced by different groups of people who use. A range of age and gender-related strands would be crucial to the success of any campaign.

A national campaign would raise awareness of risks and potential harms. This should be accompanied by the provision of adequate services to reduce harms. For example, the introduction of blood testing and other health checks, such as cardiovascular function, would go some way to identifying and responding to problems experienced by individuals at the earliest stage with evidenced-based tailored responses thereafter. This should be easily accessible and confidential given many people at risk or experiencing problems are reluctant to present to GPs.

The analysis of IPEs (drug checking) would also help the individual and practitioner identify any concerns with the supply of drugs they are administering. This is particularly important given most IPEs are produced in illicit/underground labs.

These interventions have been provided by a specialist clinic in Glasgow since 2009 which would serve as a model for other areas.

If you want to discuss or have any other information needs, please do not hesitate to get in touch.