

Endorsement of proposal to establish an overdose prevention centre to address acute drug harm among people experiencing homelessness in inner-city Auckland

This statement is an endorsement by the **Nurses Society of New Zealand** of the proposal by the **Drug Foundation** to establish a drug overdose prevention centre in inner-city Auckland.

We support a proactive approach, rather than continuing to ‘turn a blind eye’ to overdose and acute drug harm in some of our most vulnerable people. This ignores harms from synthetic cannabinoids and other drug use among people who are experiencing homelessness in central Auckland. Ignoring this harm has meant drug overdoses, deaths, distress to inner-city residents and businesses, as well as wasting police and ambulance resources.

We recognise that tailored harm-reduction initiatives are required for this cohort, as well as improvements in how, when and where services are delivered. These changes need to take place in the context of wider improvements, such as housing provision, poverty reduction, mental health support, and shifting to health-based approaches to drug harm.

We fully support the proposal to trial an overdose prevention centre in inner-city Auckland for at least three years for people who are experiencing homelessness and who use drugs.

This potential solution will help address the concerns of Auckland residents and businesses by reducing the number of people using drugs on and around their premises. It would also prevent overdoses, take people off the streets, and give them a safer space to use substances, which will in turn protect residents and businesses.

We support the Drug Foundation asking the government to pass an Order in Council to grant a licence authorising the overdose prevention centre to operate legally, which would otherwise be prohibited under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975 (MODA). If the results of the trial are positive, we will support the Drug Foundation in its request to the government to amend MODA to legalise overdose prevention centres more generally, as they recently have done to allow drug and substance checking under licence.

In making this shared endorsement, the **Nurses Society of New Zealand** commits to working together with and supporting the Drug Foundation to trial a supervised drug space in inner-city Auckland, with the objective of preventing overdoses and reducing incidents of acute drug harm in the city centre.



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Director

NURSES SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND *Te Kāhui Tapuhi o Aotearoa & Te Uniana o NSNZ*