

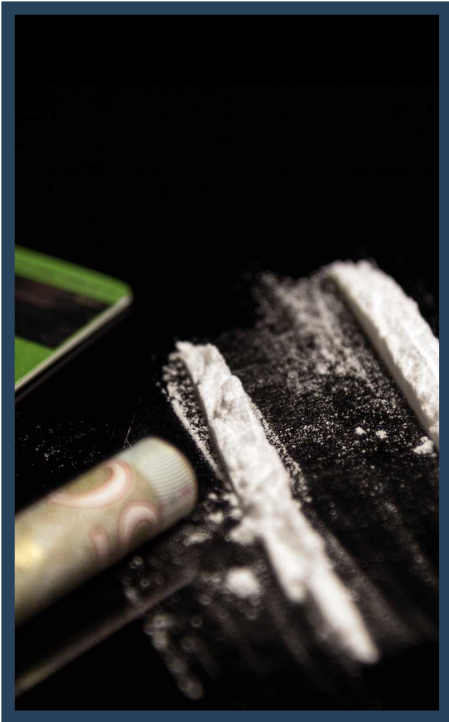
POLICY
THUMBNAIL

We Need To Talk About Addiction

Dealing With The Biggest Drag On UK Health
& Growth That No-One Dares Talk About



MAY
2026



THE PROBLEM

Britain's drugs laws have been failing consistently for years. The UK used to have just a few thousand addicts, but numbers started rising immediately the current laws were introduced in 1970 and we now have 300,000 addicts taking opiates and cocaine, with over 2½ million more who take other kinds of illegal drugs each year too.

Addiction costs taxpayers over £20bn every year in drug-related crimes, wasted lives, lost economic growth, and in extra costs for social services, benefits payments and long-term medical treatments.

No-one expects these negative trends to change or improve as things currently stand. Police and customs are clear that seizures and arrests only disrupt supply for a few days or weeks before new dealers and products appear to fill the gaps. And addiction is a 'third rail' political issue where potential policy changes are rarely discussed.

THE SOLUTION

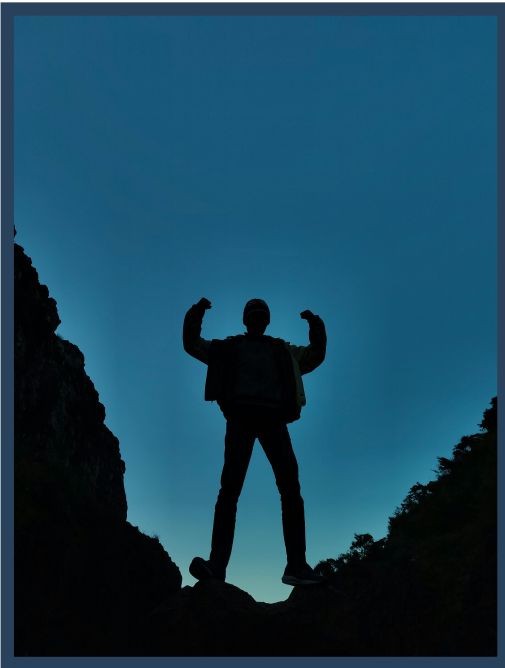
We will update and replace our current failed approach with strong, tailored new laws which will:

- a) permanently reduce the number of people becoming drug addicts in the first place, and
- b) help current addicts to lead healthy, proudly-independent lives.

These aims will form the terms of reference of an independent expert Commission, potentially in conjunction with a Citizens Assembly, with cross-party support if possible, to produce initial detailed drafts of the new laws. Those drafts will be presented to Parliament within the first 12 months of a new Government, to allow time for democratic and cross-party scrutiny as the proposals are turned into new laws.

The requirement to reduce the number of new addicts will effectively exclude the option of drug legalisation, for practical rather than ideological reasons. Addictive substances are dangerous chemicals and so – in the same way as we carefully control other dangerous chemicals like explosives, poisons or prescription medicines – the Commission's mandate will be to find more successful types of controls than we have now, rather than to remove them entirely.





THE BENEFITS

Strong and more effective new legal controls on addictive drugs will:

- Slash the size of a large (estimated as worth £9bn in yearly sales) and extremely violent part of the UK's black economy, which will reduce UK crime levels (with all the associated and extremely high criminal justice & rehabilitation costs for taxpayers) very significantly. At present ½ UK homicides and ½ UK acquisitive crimes are linked to drugs, and people with serious drug addiction occupy one in 3 prison places.
- Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and long-term health problems caused by addiction, which will not only be far better for the addicts themselves but will cut pressures on the NHS as well.
- Slash the cost of benefits bills and increase tax revenues, because more people will be able to get or keep a job, look after their children and keep up payments on their homes.
- Make more UK citizens happier, because they will be able to live proudly independent lives, rather than being caught in a spiral of chaotic dependency instead.

THE SOUNDBITES

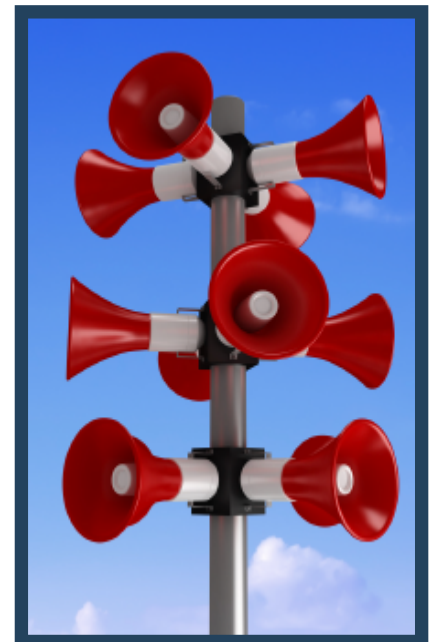
"Our current laws aren't working to win the war on drugs, and they haven't been for many years."

"Whenever police and customs seize drugs and arrest dealers, new ones appear within days. We need a new approach"

"The costs of drugs are counted in crime, in wasted lives, in help for families with an addicted parent or child, and in avoidable strain on our NHS. Just imagine how much better and richer our country and our society would be if we weren't carrying that burden every year."

"We can't just bandage the symptoms of the problem by helping people who are already addicted. We've got to stop people getting hooked in the first place too."

"½ of all our murders and ½ of all our thefts are linked to drugs, and people with serious drug addiction take up one in 3 prison places. We can't let things go on this way."



THE REBUTTALS



1. *Why are you going soft on drugs? Don't you understand the harm they do?*

We aren't going soft – quite the opposite. Our current laws aren't stopping drugs from getting onto Britain's streets every day, so introducing new controls that work better will be an upgrade.

2. *Why are you mentioning explosives, poisons or prescription medicines as examples the Commission might consider? Don't you understand they're completely different from addictive drugs?*

No-one is saying they are identical. The point is that even though those examples are extremely dangerous in widely different ways, we have been able to create tough, practical, tailored legal controls which work to keep their dangers in check. The big exception is our controls on addictive drugs, which aren't working nearly as well.

3. *Why not just legalise cannabis / nitrous oxide / magic mushrooms / other drugs. Isn't it more realistic to accept that society has moved on and regards them as OK?*

We shouldn't prejudge the Commission's work, but it certainly isn't true that most people think drugs are safe or OK.

4. *Why not just copy what they've already done in Portugal / Spain / Italy / other countries?*

We shouldn't prejudge the Commission's work, but I'm sure they will look at lots of international examples and follow the evidence to see which ones work well or badly. Let's see what they recommend first, before jumping to conclusions.

