



Proclamation of Support for International Recovery Month

As we embark upon the 27th International Recovery Month, it is important that we reflect on the impact that the flourishing recovery movement is having, not only on individuals, but on families, the wider community, and on our society as a whole.

The loss of far too many of our fellow citizens to drugs and alcohol misuse highlights how vital it is for us to continue the work we started with our 2008 Road to Recovery drugs strategy, and to find effective routes out of addiction for more people in this country.

Recovery from addiction does exist in Scotland. At an individual level, research suggests that most people do go on to recover, and after 5 years in recovery, individuals talk of attaining a 'better than well' effect, where they report themselves to be happier, better adjusted people who achieve more of their potential.

The challenges brought by addiction to substances affects every community in Scotland. However, recovery support groups, new recovery communities, individuals in recovery from addiction, their families and supporters, are combining to tackle addiction all across the country, to empower and support people.

By making recovery visible and more accessible, individuals who were once troubled and excluded by the stigma associated with addiction are turning their lives around and becoming positive and contributing members of our society. These benefits can also be felt at an intimate family level, for example parents re-connecting with their children. However, the benefits go much wider, allowing individuals to re-discover skills lost to them, to re-enter the workplace and allow them to provide for and to support their families.

I am proud that our country is now home to over 1,200 mutual aid meetings taking place every week, as well as over 120 new recovery support groups and communities led by people and family members in recovery. All of them working together as recovery activists to ensure that no one suffering with addiction who wants help is left without support nearby.

International Recovery Month provides these activists with an opportunity to celebrate and highlight the work they are doing with activities taking place all over the country, including the 5th Recovery Walk Scotland, organised by the Scottish Recovery Consortium and taking place in Falkirk on 17 September.

I applaud the efforts of everyone involved in the collective efforts to turn the tragedy of addiction into a story of recovery for the whole country. I encourage everyone to break the stigma attached to addiction by finding out more about recovery from addiction in your community so that together we can build a country where it's the recovery not the addiction that flourishes.