



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Finance and Public Administration Committee

Clare Haughey MSP  
Convener  
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

**15 May 2025**

Dear Clare

### Right to Addiction Recovery (Scotland) Bill

As you are aware, the Finance and Public Administration Committee (the Committee) is responsible for scrutinising Financial Memorandums (FMs) to Bills. As such, the Committee ran a call for views on the FM for the Right to Addiction Recovery (Scotland) Bill from 1 November to 20 December 2024, which received 9 responses, available on [Citizen Space](#).

We would like to draw your attention to the submissions received by the Committee on the FM, which raise concerns regarding potential underestimates, particularly due to lack of available data.

The [Financial Memorandum](#) for the Bill explains that—

“mapping existing costs and funding arrangements for alcohol and drug treatment is challenging, this is in part due to the number of different policy initiatives and associated funding streams. It is also challenging to track the number of people diagnosed each year with an addiction to drugs and/or alcohol through to the types of treatment they do, or do not, go on to receive.”

In light of the submissions received, the Committee took oral evidence from the Member in charge on [11 March 2025](#). During this session, the Member acknowledged challenges relating to the availability of data, particularly around unmet need, and the difficulty of producing accurate costs, however, he emphasised that “annual reporting to the Parliament will significantly improve that data because the Government will be duty bound to include it in a statement to the Parliament and will be held accountable for that”.

The potential for increases in costs due to unknown unmet need and the potential for a higher number of people coming forward as a result of increased awareness of treatment availability were also discussed during this session, alongside issues including—

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- capital investment and the use of private providers;
- existing funding challenges faced by local authorities and the potential of the Bill to add further pressure on Councils' budgets;
- equitable delivery of the provisions in the Bill, including in rural areas;
- the impact of increased employer National Insurance Contributions on the budget and local authority costs more generally; and
- the possible impact of provisions in the Bill on communities in deprived areas.

The Committee also interrogated the figures presented in the FM in relation to potential long-term savings, which build on Dame Carol Black's conclusions, in the 2021 independent review of drugs in England, that "Every £1 currently spent on harm reduction and treatment gives a combined health and justice return on investment of £4".

Following the evidence session, the Committee received further information from the Member in charge on [29 April 2025](#), including a number of related written parliamentary questions (which the Member lodged following the evidence session on 11 March) alongside the responses received, information on the research underpinning the savings statement in Dame Carol Black's report and the Member's suggestions of where potential savings could be made in the Scottish Government budget to fund the Bill commitments.

We invite the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to consider, as part of your wider scrutiny of the Bill, the evidence received by this Committee on the FM and the follow-up information provided by the Member in charge.

Yours sincerely,

**Kenneth Gibson MSP**  
**Convener**