



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

John Finnie

Member of the Scottish Parliament
Highlands and Islands

John Finnie

Ball Pàrlamaid na h-Alba
A' Ghàidhealtachd agus na h-Eileanan

Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

18th March 2019

Dear *Nicola*

Thank you for your response to my FMQ last week saying you would give consideration to a Public Inquiry into the unacceptable number of drug related deaths.

I commend the great harm reduction work which takes across the country, and the leadership and innovation shown by Scottish Drug Forum. However, everything suggests that the damning trajectory of drugs deaths, doubling in a decade, will continue.

I know our shared wish to see Scotland as the best small nation in the world is blighted by the fact that Scotland's drugs death rate is eight times the average of other EU nation – and rising fast.

This is a public health crisis we are facing. It can be easy to forget that the *statistics* we read about are people finally lost to addiction, lost to their family and friends and their passing has affected every community in our land.

Sadly, we are only too aware of the stigma associated with addiction and that's perhaps why there's no public outcry at the level of deaths. However, a progressive country cannot allow itself to lose this number of citizens.

I am persuaded that a Public Inquiry is the best manner of establishing every aspect of this problem and to give Government the evidence required to address it comprehensively and I hope that, after an understandable period of reflection, you will agree.

Kind regards

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