

## **MODEL DRUG LAW. A PATH TO BETTER DRUG LAWS FOR AOTEAROA WORKSHOP - PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

Kia ora,

We would like to invite you to participate in our study looking at the impacts of current drug laws on people who are at risk of drug-related harms. Before you decide, please read this information sheet carefully. It tells you why we are doing this research and what it might mean for you. Please ask if you have any questions.

### **About the project**

NZ Drug Foundation | Te Puna Whakaiti Pāmamae Kai Whakapiri is conducting this research to develop recommendations for policy change to make sure that New Zealand's drug laws are fit for purpose. We want to hear from the communities affected by drug harms about what a better way to control drugs could look like.

This year, our drug laws (Misuse of Drugs Act 1975) will turn 50. Since these laws were created, the drug markets have changed a lot. We know that our current laws don't help people access harm reduction and addiction treatment.

This survey will help us get a better understanding of some of the harms that take place under current drug laws so we can develop recommendations for reducing these harms.

The project is funded by Borrin Foundation.

### **Why have I been invited, and do I have to take part?**

You have been invited to participate because you or somebody close to you is at risk or has experienced harms related to drug use. We would love to hear from you if you (or someone close to you that you have supported) have experienced one or more of the following in relation to using drugs:

- Used drug checking services
- Experienced drug addiction
- Experienced an overdose or had a difficult experience while on drugs
- Been treated for drug addiction
- Injected drugs
- Accessed opioid substitution therapy
- Sold drugs to other people
- Been charged or convicted for drug-related offence(s)
- Been in jail for drug-related offence(s)

- Been homeless

To take part in the workshop, you must:

- identify with one or more of the experiences listed above, or have supported someone who has experienced those,
- be aged 18 or over,
- be able to speak English.

**Whether or not you take part is your choice.** If you don't want to take part, you don't have to give a reason, and there will be no negative consequences. If you do want to take part now, but change your mind later, you can leave the workshop at any time.

If you change your mind after the workshop had taken place, you can let us know within 3 days and we will make every effort not to use the information you have provided in our analysis and reports. However, we may not always be able to do that if this information is essential for providing context to other participants' contributions.

### **What will I be asked to do?**

The Workshop will be a group discussion among people who have experienced some drug or drug policy harms in their lives. It is expected to last up to two hours.

The workshops will be held online or in-person – their locations and times will be arranged with you. We will ask you whether you prefer an online or in-person format, and we will try to arrange it so you can attend the format of your preference, but we may not always be able to do this. Remember, you can change your mind and choose not to participate before the workshop for whatever reason.

There will be between 3 to 10 participants in each of the workshops, and they will be hosted by two facilitators who will guide the discussions and activities. The facilitators will include one of the study team and/or staff members from the NZ Drug Foundation staff with lived experience.

Māori participants will be offered an opportunity to choose whether they want to participate in a general workshop, or a dedicated Māori workshop with other Māori participants, facilitated by Māori facilitators.

During the workshop you will be encouraged to share as much as you are comfortable about your experiences and reflections about New Zealand's drug laws and their impacts on the communities. You can choose how much you share, and you can also decide not to share anything about any of the topics discussed if you are not comfortable doing so. In the workshop, we will ask you about your motivations to participate and we will also put some questions up for a group discussion. These may include questions like:

- How does the fact that drugs are illegal affect the way that communities of people who use drugs use substances?
- How does the legal status of drugs affect the harms people may be experiencing?
- What are some of the good aspects of current drug laws?

- If we could start from scratch with our drug laws, what should these drug laws look like?
- If there was one thing you would want our politicians to know when thinking about changing our drug laws, what would it be?

We will also include a drug laws goals activity in the workshop to focus on the topic what ‘perfect’ drug laws should aim to achieve in Aotearoa.

The workshops will be audio-recorded, and we will ask the facilitators to take notes to describe the highlights of the activities and discussions. All participants who want to participate in the workshop need to consent to being audio-recorded.

### **What are the benefits and risks of this study?**

We hope that this research helps inform the public discussion about making our drug laws better for New Zealanders. We believe that having input from people who are directly affected by these laws is the best way to make sure that our laws are better.

To thank you for your participation, we will give you a \$70 eGift shopping voucher.

We know that drugs or drug policies sometimes cause harms to people and their communities. It can be an upsetting experience to talk about these experiences, and we are very grateful for your generosity in sharing with us. Remember, there is help available.

If you or someone close to you is worried about drug harm or addiction, please see the following resources:

[The Level](#)

[Alcohol & Drug Helpline](#) - 0800 787 797

[Healthpoint](#) - a list of mental health and addiction services available across New Zealand

If you are specifically concerned about drug use of someone in your whānau, contact [Family Drug Support Aotearoa](#)

### **What will happen to the information that I share?**

Your participation in the research will be confidential, and you can freely choose a nickname that you want us to use to address you in the group. If we ever use a quote from you in any published report or article, we will not use your name or nickname.

All participants will be asked not to share anything from the workshops beyond the group, but we cannot guarantee that all of them will keep this information to themselves.

We will not include any obviously identifiable information in our reports (e.g., names of other participants or other people, addresses, contact details and similar), but it is possible that people in the community may still possibly recognise you from what you said.

If you disclose drug use, drug possession, or other drug offences, we will keep this information confidential.

In very rare circumstances where a facilitator or the researcher has a strong belief that there is a serious risk of harm or danger to yourself or another person (for example, physical, emotional or sexual abuse, concerns for child protection, rape, self-harm, or suicidal intent) we may be obliged to notify the authorities.

Following the workshops, the facilitators will transfer the recordings to a secure NZ Drug Foundation folder, with access available only to a small number of the study team who will take part in data analysis. We will transcribe the workshops recording with the help of Microsoft transcribing software (or other similar software with comparable data protection features).

After creating anonymised transcripts, the recordings will be archived separately with access available only to the Principal Investigator.

The consent forms will be digitised as soon as possible, and the physical copies will be destroyed. They will be stored separately from the other research data in a secure folder with access restricted only to the Principal Investigator.

After releasing the main research report, we will store the data digitally in a secure password-controlled folder for 5 years. After this period, all data will be destroyed.

You will not be able to receive a copy of the recordings or transcripts, to protect the confidentiality of other workshop participants.

### **What will happen to the results of the study?**

The results of the study will be published in a report that will be freely available on the NZ Drug Foundation website. We will also reach out to communities of people who use drugs through our social media and The Level to share the report.

We will also use the learnings from this research to inform our public policy advice and communications, to support our organisation's vision of Aotearoa free from drug harm.

We will also write a progress report for Borrin Foundation (the study sponsor) where we will include the findings (most likely in the form of attaching the public report).

We may also publish the results in scientific journals and present the findings during conferences.

### **What are my rights?**

You do not have to participate in this research if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question or participate in any of the activities during the workshop;
- withdraw from the study before three days (72 hours) have passed since your workshop has ended;
- ask questions about the study at any time;
- be able to read the report from this research, and to be sent a link to it, if you choose to.

**Who can I contact if I have any questions or problems?**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the study at any stage, you can contact:

**Dr Jacek Kolodziej** (NZ Drug Foundation Policy Director and study Principal Investigator):

[jacek.kolodziej@drugfoundation.org.nz](mailto:jacek.kolodziej@drugfoundation.org.nz)

This research has been assessed and approved by the Aotearoa Research Ethics Committee (AREC 25\_33). If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Coordinator of AREC, on [admin@aotearoaresearchethics.org](mailto:admin@aotearoaresearchethics.org)