

TRANSFORM

Drug Policy Foundation



Annual Review 2020



About us

Transform is an independent charity working to reduce drug-related harm through evidence-based reforms to policy and practice.

We believe the current drug laws harm everyone in society, especially the most vulnerable.

We want to see a world where drugs are regulated effectively, and where drug policy promotes public health, human rights and social justice.



Message from our Chair Jane Hickman



The Transform team, led by [Dr James Nicholls](#) and [Jane Slater](#), have risen magnificently to the many challenges 2020 has brought. We have an exciting agenda for the next year and are positioned to move forward decisively once the pandemic is finally under control.

The excellent work Transform has produced this year include our reports into the successes and challenges of drug policy reform in the US and Canada. Staff members have addressed high-level policy meetings in Canada and Colombia and continued to pursue partnership programs in a range of countries. We have produced an outstanding book on bringing stimulants (ecstasy, cocaine and amphetamines) under the control of effective regulatory systems. These reference works are being widely read and reviewed around the world and will continue to play a significant part in policy reform.

Our local policy work continues to encourage innovation in councils, health authorities and police forces across the UK. The number of drug diversion schemes is increasing, while the pressure to allow regions to pilot overdose prevention centres is becoming overwhelming. We have also developed sustainable research partnerships with a number of universities, and we continue to work closely with social enterprises, treatment providers and local advocates looking to create change across all communities.

Looking to the future we are excited to be working with a range of partner organisations to mark the 50th anniversary of the Misuse of Drugs Act in 2021. Together with our [Anyone's Child](#) campaign, run by families affected by drugs, we plan to demonstrate the extent to which the MDA has failed to curb the supply of drugs or to engage effectively with the health, welfare and safeguarding of our most vulnerable communities.

This year we have welcomed four new trustees: [Yewande Okuleye](#), [Rowan Miller](#), [Hannah Slater](#) and [Nina Edmonds](#). They bring with them a wide array of experience, skills and expertise, and have joined the rest of our board in providing active and constructive support to all of our work. With precious support from our funders (listed elsewhere in this Report) we have adapted to Covid and maintained momentum despite major challenges to public contact and outreach activities.

The charities and individuals who support us provide our life blood and we are ever mindful of the obligation to spend their contributions with focus and care.



Message from our Chief Executive James Nicholls

Covid-19 has created enormous challenges for everyone. Here at Transform it has impacted the way we work, the focus of our activities and our financial planning. Our team has responded brilliantly, adapting to the new circumstances with the energy, commitment and a spirit of innovation. This has been crucial, since the pandemic has done nothing to lessen the harms of drug policy and much to increase them.

As this report shows, we have maintained our focus on the bigger policy picture while responding swiftly to the changes that Covid-19 has required. This year we launched a number of key publications, all of which we believe will help shift the conversation around the practicalities of drug policy reform. Our [Anyone's Child](#) campaign has continued to provide a uniquely supportive environment for affected families while putting our case for change into the sharpest focus. We have sustained a vital role in developing local reforms, which have the potential to reduce harm and save lives right now. On the international stage we continue to support and influence partners and policymakers across the globe.

The global pandemic makes our work more important than ever. Not only do we need active and determined advocates for vulnerable people, but we must also ensure that drug policy reform is centre stage. This year we have seen that governments across the world can act swiftly and radically in response to health crises. We cannot return to a status quo in which inertia prevents essential reform. The continuing tragedy of drug-related deaths, exploitation and criminalisation must be brought to an end.

2021 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Misuse of Drugs Act in the UK and 60 years since the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was signed. Transform has ambitious plans to ensure this milestone is a turning point. We must break the policy deadlock that has caused so much human suffering and prevent another fifty years of failure. We are looking forward to putting our weight behind the movement for change, and will call on everyone who agrees that the war on drugs has failed to make 2021 the year they say 'enough is enough'.



Our strategic approach

This year we approved a new two-year strategy. It reaffirms our commitment to act as the leading advocates for alternatives to drug prohibition, and to call for policies that promote public health, human rights and social justice. Our strategy also sets out a clear theory of change, rooted in an evidence-based approach to policy influence. It provides a clear, informed and focused blueprint for our work going forward, and it focuses squarely on achieving real impact.

Our values

We believe that drug policy should create a fairer, safer world. It should be based on evidence and focused on the reduction of harm. Drug policy affects people across society, and we have a responsibility to listen to the voices of those who have direct experience. All our work is informed by these values, and it is the pursuit of these principles that motivates what we do.

How we work

To make change happen, we make the harms caused by drug prohibition visible; present compelling visions for policy alternatives; and ensure our ideas attract the widest possible political support. We do this by amplifying the voices of those directly impacted by drug policy; being global thought-leaders on drug policy impacts and alternatives; working with practitioners to implement practical local reforms that make a real difference; and using our expertise and networks to transfer research knowledge into political action.



Voices for change

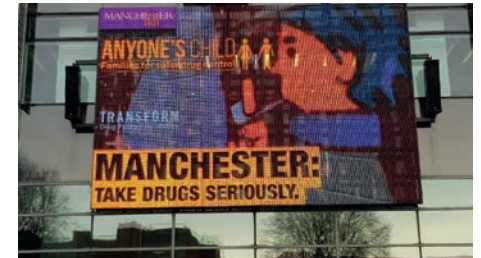
In this era of social and political turmoil, it can be hard to get the voices of those impacted by drug policy heard. But as drug-related deaths continue to rise it is more important than ever to ensure those harms remain visible. Our Anyone's Child campaign continues to stand at the forefront of this effort, amplifying the testimonies of those most directly affected by drug policy failures, and creating unique opportunities for policymakers to understand the suffering that we seek to address.

This year we have released eight new Anyone's Child films, describing the impacts of bereavement, imprisonment and disproportionate policing on the lives of individuals and families. Our members have featured in news stories across all media, and have played a vital role in persuading increasing numbers of policymakers to take a public stand for reform.



We have used our programme of public events — both in person and online — to bring together the widest range of knowledge and experience in order to make the case for reform. This year we have held major public events in Bristol and Manchester under the banner of 'Take Drugs Seriously', in partnership with key local stakeholders including universities and treatment providers. We have also held meetings in towns across the country, attracting key policymakers and practitioners. Through these events we have elicited public support from numerous MPs and senior elected officials.

We responded quickly to the Covid-19 crisis, helping lead responses that called for the Government to address the acute risks faced by vulnerable people who use drugs. We organised a letter to *The Times* signed by several NGOs and thirteen leading researchers calling for a meaningful response to this challenge. We also collaborated with partners at Release on a detailed submission to the Treasury calling for expenditure to support vulnerable people, improve treatment, and reduce prison populations as a key plank of the battle to reduce the impact of the pandemic.



We moved quickly into the digital space in response to Covid-19, running a series of international webinars that attracted speakers from across the world and large international audiences. Our webinars have addressed issues including drug policy reform and social justice; human trafficking; corporate capture and new cannabis markets; and how to regulate stimulants.

Lockdown this year meant that we were unable to carry out our annual Anyone's Child lobby of Parliament. Instead, we ran a digital campaign encouraging our supporters to contact and meet with their MPs, providing three training sessions for activists, and creating an online forget-me-not pack for supporters to create memorial flowers for those who have lost their lives to overdose. We also held a webinar with speakers including the author Johan Hari, Chris Daw QC and Anyone's Child members to encourage supporters to speak out.

'You are all amazing and are world leaders in this topic; this really is ground-breaking work!'

1,047
sign ups

22
guest speakers

31
countries



'Amazing speakers'

'Detailed and engaging'

'Just keep on doing what you do... Congrats!'

Showing the way forward



This year we published our landmark book *How to regulate stimulants: a practical guide*. Funded by over 150 donors, and supported with input from an international panel of experts, the book sets out the first ever detailed model for how we can establish a regulated market in stimulant drugs. The book was endorsed by a range of key figures, including a foreword written by the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Rt Hon Helen Clark. The book received widespread media coverage and has started to shape international debates, including in Colombia where a Bill to create a legal cocaine market was put to the Senate in the autumn.

In February, we published our report 'Challenges for a world where drugs are legally regulated'. Based on an international consultation event that we coordinated with St George's House, this report sets out seven key principles for drug policy reform. It focuses on the values and social outcomes that should be the goal of drug policy reform, and provides a consensus position on core principles for drug policy advocacy going forward.

'The think tank's accounting is sophisticated but also provides a primer of Canada's experiences with legal cannabis... Transform's assessment delves into the fundamentals — growing, processing and producing. The diverse ways the drug is sold to consumers in the provinces and territories is summarised succinctly and clearly.'

Professor Bill Bogart

'The verdict: Canada's cannabis legalisation is a success', *The Conversation*, 19th July 2020



We also published two major reports evaluating the cannabis markets in Canada and the United States. Our reports provided the first accessible comparison of different regulation regimes across the two countries, and they assessed the health impacts of legally regulated markets in terms of use, harm and the promotion of social justice. At the heart of these reports was a desire to ensure we learn from experience, so that future reform achieves the goals that we value. Since publication, we have been invited to present our findings to Canadian federal and provincial governments, and have used them in our advocacy for reform across the world.

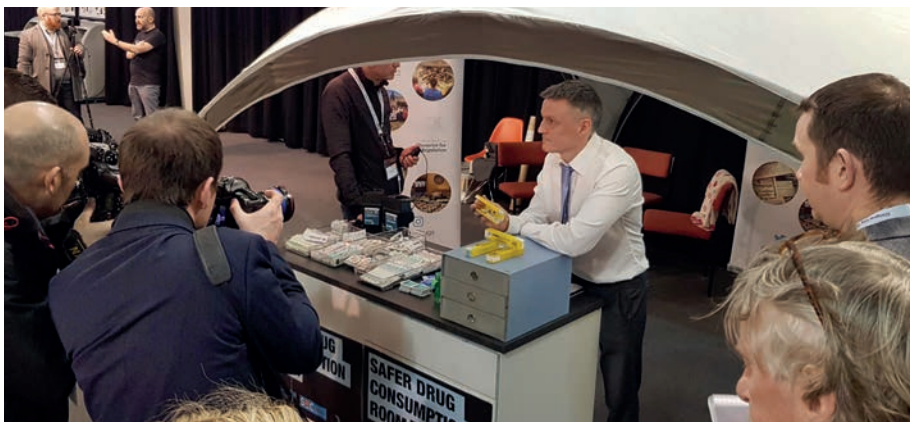
In September we published a groundbreaking new report into the links between human trafficking and drug policy. This vital issue needs to be discussed more widely. We have been working hard to gather both data and testimony in order to demonstrate the degree to which human trafficking is made worse by illegal drug supply. We intend to develop our work with human trafficking and anti-slavery campaigners in future in order to ensure that the role of drug prohibition in exacerbating this problem is fully recognised.



We see the development of cross-sectoral partnerships, and widening public engagement, as vital to improving drug policy. As part of our interactive public exhibition held in Bristol in January, we created a mock-up of a safer drug consumption facility to illustrate how such facilities would work in practice.

We were later invited to bring our mock-up safer drug consumption facility to the drug deaths summit established by the Scottish Government in Glasgow, and a summit on drug policy set up by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner. We are now co-investigators on a grant-funded project with colleagues at the University of Stirling looking at attitudes to safer drug consumption facilities. We see it as vital that our work is informed by evidence, and formal involvement in projects of this kind reflect the extent to which our expertise is valued.

We have played an active role in informing key stakeholders, including submissions to all stages of the Review of Drugs being led by Dame Carol Black and the provision of advice to high-level policy forums in both the UK and internationally. We take our role as credible and constructive partners seriously, and will continue to seek out all opportunities to engage positively with policymakers and advisors.



Getting ourselves heard

Transform is one of the leading global voices on drug policy reform, and our Anyone's Child members continue to provide a focus for media coverage of the lived experience of drug policy harms. As experts in the field of drug regulation, we regularly provide comment for national and international news media as well as being the subject of features and commentary. By telling their powerful stories, Anyone's Child families have helped change the national conversation, taking it from the margins to the mainstream. This year we have produced 40 blogs, appeared on and been quoted in 169 articles. We have written op-eds, letters, and appeared on a number of podcasts.

By maintaining our high media profile, we have successfully helped keep drug policy on the political radar despite the challenges of Covid-19 and major political turmoil across the world.

Our staff continue to publish articles in major research journals (including *The Lancet*, *Addiction*, *The Royal Pharmaceutical Journal*, and *Psychology and Health*) as well as chapters for books including the *Research Handbook on International Drug Policy* (Elgar) and *Risk and Substance Use* (Routledge). Our in-house research was cited in the 2020 United Nations *World Drugs Report*, and has been the subject of articles in *The Conversation* and *Forbes*.

250,000 web visits from over **20** countries
205+ media appearances
 169 (print) 36 (broadcast)



International influence

The work of Transform continues to have an international impact. Despite our size, we remain one of the leading global organisations shaping the debate on the future of drug policy. In this year, our staff have been invited to discuss drug policy reform with leading policymakers in Canada, Luxembourg, Mexico and Colombia. We have spoken at events in the United States, the Netherlands, Norway, and Germany.

We continue to play an active role at the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs meetings, where we have UN ECOSOC Special Consultative Status. At this year's meeting in Vienna we co-organised two side events with our colleagues at México Unido Contra la Delincuencia and we chaired three further sessions involving partners from the USA, Mexico, South Africa and elsewhere.

Our webinars have attracted international panellists and audiences, and we have also appeared as speakers in a number of online events with international reach including webinars organised by partners in New Zealand, Italy and the USA. We worked in collaboration with Health Poverty Action and a consortium of international NGOs to establish a webinar series looking at drug policy reform through the lens of international development. We also took part in a four-day digital conference run by the Drug Policy Alliance aimed at developing consensus views on the legal regulation of all drugs.



Widening our reach

Our Anyone's Child campaign continues to expand, supported by extended grants from key funders such as the Tudor Trust. Our membership now stands at over 40 families, and we are continually contacted by new people wishing to join the campaign. We have also run a programme of training this year helping new activists make the case for reform and get active in this area, reaching over 150 people, including 10 former law enforcement officers, in media training. While Covid-19 forced our activist network to move into a digital space — reducing opportunities for face-to-face engagement — it has allowed us to expand our geographical reach and connect supporters from across the world in our meetings.

We continue to play a vital role in supporting, connecting and advising local policymakers and practitioners who are seeking to introduce reforms in their area.



We have worked closely with Police and Crime Commissioners across the country in developing drug arrest diversion schemes, and supported the development of diversion schemes in West and North Wales, the West Midlands and Thames Valley. The first heroin prescribing clinics have opened in Glasgow and Middlesbrough and we have supported advocacy for more.

Our academic partnerships have extended the scale of our networks among key specialists, both informing our work and helping research to be translated into impact. We have also continued to work with senior figures in the health community, including helping to run a Parliamentary dinner to discuss the formation of a Drugs and Health Alliance.

Looking forward

We have significant plans for the year ahead, including the launch of a new website, a third edition of our book *How to regulate cannabis: a practical guide*; a new report on the regulation of psychedelics; an increased focus on diversity and racial justice; and the further expansion of our Anyone's Child network.

2021 will also mark the 50th anniversary of the Misuse of Drugs Act in the UK. We will be using this anniversary as a unique opportunity to make the case that the drug war has failed, and to establish consensus on the need for change. We have developed a campaign to maximise the impact of this anniversary and will be working closely with key partners and supporters to ensure that the 50th anniversary of the policies that have led to so much harm marks the beginning of a new future.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, we are confident that the debate on drug policy reform continues to move forward. We are establishing new and wider partnerships, attracting more supporters, and developing new campaigns.

We are grateful for the support of all those who have helped us so far, and we remain committed to the cause. We strongly believe that, in the new world that is emerging around us, there will no longer be a place for outdated, outmoded and harmful drug policies. Our commitment to not only showing where policy has failed, but setting out the alternatives is more important than ever.

The Transform team

Staff

[Dr James Nicholls](#) Chief Executive Officer

[Jane Slater](#) Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Campaign Manager for Anyone's Child

[Steve Rolles](#) Senior Policy Analyst

[Martin Powell](#) Head of Partnerships

[Emma Caldwell](#) Executive Assistant

[Ben Campbell](#) Communications Officer

[Harvey Slade](#) Research and Policy Officer

[Ester Kincová](#) Research and Policy Officer

[Mary Ryder](#) Anyone's Child Coordinator

[Cora Fern](#) Anyone's Child Coordinator

Trustees

[Jane Hickman](#) Chair

[Howard Jacobs](#)

[Hannah Slater](#)

[Vicky Unwin](#)

[Nina Edmonds](#) Treasurer

[Dr Yewande Okuleye](#)

[Rowan Miller](#)

Volunteers

We are also deeply grateful to all of those who have helped our work as volunteers, interns and on work placements. While Covid-19 has made it harder for us to make full use of all those who wish to help, we hope that we will soon be in a position to bring external supporters back into our thriving work environment.

Financial information

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2020 total £	2019 total £
Income from:				
Donations	113,549	195,617	309,166	557,429
Charitable activities	1,176	5,640	6,816	8,365
Other trading activities	-	2,518	2,518	-
Investments	-	718	718	628
Total income	<u>114,725</u>	<u>204,493</u>	<u>319,218</u>	<u>566,422</u>
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	-	8,516	8,516	12,086
Charitable activities	116,992	273,245	390,237	328,018
Total expenditure	<u>116,992</u>	<u>281,761</u>	<u>398,753</u>	<u>340,104</u>
Net income / (expenditure)	(2,267)	(77,268)	(79,535)	226,318
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	<u>(2,267)</u>	<u>(77,268)</u>	<u>(79,535)</u>	<u>226,318</u>
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	<u>102,579</u>	<u>342,155</u>	<u>444,734</u>	<u>218,416</u>
Total funds carried forward (of which reserves)	<u>100,312</u>	<u>264,887</u>	<u>365,199</u> <u>132,666</u>	<u>444,734</u>



Funding and support

We remain deeply grateful to everyone who provides us with financial support: from the largest trusts and foundations to every individual supporter. We could not do our work without them, and hope that they continue to value our achievements. We would like to thank:

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Glass-House Trust
John Ellerman Foundation
Linnet Trust
Open Society Foundations
Tudor Trust

CAF America
Bilton Charitable Foundation
Henry C Hoare Charity
Ken Aylmer
Howard Jacobs

and the hundreds of generous and committed individuals who have supported our work through sponsored activities, supporting the crowdfunder for our book on stimulants, and via regular donations.

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Transform Drug Policy Foundation is a registered charity (No. 1100518) and limited company (No. 4862177)