

NHS Addictions Provider Alliance's 'Stigma Kills' campaign calls for a change in attitudes towards addiction.

Tuesday 8 February, 2022

EMBARGOED UNTIL LAUNCH DATE ON TUESDAY 8TH OF FEBRUARY

The NHS Addictions Provider Alliance (NHS APA) is launching its public campaign today (Tuesday 8th of February) called 'Stigma Kills'. The campaign aims to reduce the stigma of addiction by asking individuals and organisations to stop defining people by their addiction and see the person behind it.

The [NHS Addictions Provider Alliance](#) (NHS APA) is a collective of 16 NHS Trusts working collaboratively with service users, carers and other organisations to make a positive difference to the addictions treatment and support sector and its service users.

Too often addiction is viewed as self-inflicted rather than as a mental or physical illness, or more specifically a behaviour related disorder that deserves support and treatment. The campaign encourages people to see the person behind the addiction instead of the stereotype and do 3 things: stop using words that hurt and isolate; start thinking about why someone might be ill, and ask how they can help.

The campaign comes as drug-related deaths have risen for the eighth year in a row according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). 2020 saw record-high numbers of drug & alcohol-related deaths, with 79.5 drug-related deaths and 130 alcohol-related deaths per million people in England alone.

The stigma surrounding addiction perpetuates shame, low self-esteem, guilt and fear of judgement and results in a reluctance to seek help. Lack of engagement with support services leads to devastating outcomes including ongoing addiction, isolation and poor health outcomes. Ultimately, stigma can kill.

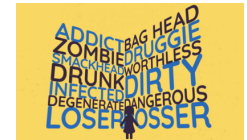
The campaign uses insights gained from the report, "Breaking Stigma Down", commissioned by the NHS APA and conducted by [Working With Everyone](#). A participant reported that "stigma has cost me dearly ... I've lost friendships ... jobs ... opportunities ... but it almost cost me my life."

The report found that intersecting factors such as race, disability and gender lead to multiple experiences of stigma and marginalisation, creating a further disincentive to engaging with treatment. A contributor from the South Asian community commented that "if you are only able to get a methadone script from one particular pharmacy, then you're definitely not going in there knowing that other people from the community can go into that pharmacy as well and question why it is that you're there."

Danny Hames, Chair of the NHS Addictions Provider Alliance, says: "We want to build a conversation and act as a catalyst for change for those directly affected by a drug, alcohol or gambling dependency but also for those who come into contact with those affected and experience its impact. It is in everyone's interests that the walls created by stigma are pulled down. If we do this we can increase the opportunity for people to engage, receive treatment and connect with others - all vitally important components in addressing dependency and recovery. If we make progress this will improve the outcomes for those affected, reduce the negative effect on communities including less crime, we will reduce harm and crucially avoid the ultimate impact of stigma which is sadly bereavement and death."

The campaign launches today with a short animation to encourage conversations about breaking down stigma. For further information on the campaign and to view the animation visit the [NHS APA website](#).

Media:



Related Sectors:

Government :: Health :: Medical & Pharmaceutical ::

Related Keywords:

Stigma :: Addiction :: NHS :: Drug :: Alcohol :: Gambling :: Gaming :: Drug-Related Deaths :: Stigma Kills ::

Scan Me:



Company Contact:

—

Brightsparks Agency Ltd

T. 07921253432

E. hello@brightsparksagency.com

W. <https://www.brightsparksagency.com>

Additional Contact(s):

sian@brightsparksagency.com

[View Online](#)

Additional Assets:

Stigma kills - full animation

www.nhsapa.org/stigma

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:

<https://www.brightsparksagency.pressat.co.uk>