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PRESS INFORMATION FOR IMMEDIATE USE

ISSUED 17th April 2012

FAGS BOOZE DRUGS + children – published 1st May 2012

Max Cruickshank

ISBN 978 1 9906134 98 3

276pp £9.99 paperback

REVIEW COPIES AVAILABLE (PRINT OR ELECTRONIC) AT ABOVE CONTACTS

- Tobacco is still too often the first drug consumed by children.
- Alcohol laws are a cocktail of confusion and contradiction that do not protect children.
- The massive vested interests of the alcohol industry is more powerful than the Mafia at selling its drugs.
- Ninety percent of males and 86% of females in Scotland buy alcohol regularly, but less than 5% buy illicit drugs.
- There are now around 2000 substances (drugs) in common use in the UK.
- No police force, army or government in the world have managed to control the drug barons who seek to dip into the pocket money of our children, for profit.
- Parents' ignorance about drug use and children does little to protect their families from harm.
- The most powerful way to reduce harm to children from drugs is to reduce demand. Ignorance increases harm. Knowledge reduces harm.

The aim of this book is to inform, educate and empower parents or carers of children and young people, about how drugs have the potential to damage their health and wellbeing. Many adults are particularly worried about the use of drugs by teenagers, and so they should be, but it is important to understand that drug use often starts well before adolescence for an ever-growing number of children.

Scotland has the unwelcome reputation of being more damaged by drug misuse than most nations. So understanding our Scottish love affair with drugs – including the legal drugs, tobacco and alcohol – is as good a point as any to start from to find at least some of the answers to why people misuse drugs.

Another theme of this book is drug laws do not protect children. The current drug laws mainly protect businesses and adults. And yet urgent drug law reform, even a halfway measure like unit alcohol pricing, is painfully slow – politicians will only make laws that they believe the public will accept.

Fags Booze Drugs + children contains all the facts clearly set out and the intention of the book is to enable many more parents to do their little bit towards reducing the harm caused to children from drugs. Those who profit from drugs can only do so if there is a market for their products. The misuse of drugs in society will only reduce when adults and children are well enough informed to realise that they do not need unnecessary drugs in their lives.

Max Cruickshank has served as a youth worker for over 35 years. He has run thousands of workshops and training sessions for young people and their parents on drugs, AIDS and sex education. He has been a leading youthwork voice on the Scottish Drugs Forum for over 20 years.

MORE >>

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DRUGS WORKER HITS OUT AT MYTHS

In a new book issued next week, drugs worker Max Cruickshank tackles head-on the numerous myths about drug taking in Scotland and worldwide.

Smoking tobacco calms you down.
You can drink yourself sober.
Tobacco keeps you slim.
You get a better buzz from 5-10 ecstasy tablets than just one.
Men's livers are different from women's, so men can heal their livers if they drink too much.
The French allow young children to drink watered down wine.
Cannabis is natural, because it comes from plants, so it is harmless.
Cannabis and acid cause schizophrenia.
I am not a smoker – I only smoke cannabis. etc. etc.

'Ignorance, as far as drugs and artificial stimulants are concerned,' says Cruickshank, 'is bliss.' But in a closely argued position, based on thousands of hours in training and counselling sessions with young people and their parents, he points to the power of the tobacco and alcohol industries and illicit drug interests who have the backing of major finance to peddle their wares. Governments, he argues, have more limited means to counter ignorance and they feel restricted (viz. the minimum alcohol pricing row) by what they think the public will accept.

Knowledge is power and Max Cruickshank takes the view that when parents come to realise this, they can successfully protect their children against harm from drug use.

Fags Booze Drugs + children is published on 1st May. A launch event will be held at Scottish Drugs Forum, 91 Mitchell Street, Glasgow on 8th May 2012. Info to follow.

ENDS

See over for panel material from the book >>

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See flyer pdf for book cover and more key points

Book contains summary of previous policy approaches
and why they have not worked [see Epilogue pps 259 – 264]

- Selling off school playing fields
- Youth curfews
- Re-classifying cannabis twice on police advice
- Just say No to drugs campaign
- Be all you can be slogan
- 3 strikes and you're out
- Police heroin clampdowns
- Cutting smoking use may create new problems.
- Get Knife Crime off the streets
- Demanding ID from under-25s to buy alcohol
- Going too far in hiking the price of alcohol and raising the age for buying alcohol
- Expecting school teachers to deliver effective drugs education
- Cutting funding for youth work
- Tinkering with drug laws
- The Scottish Government's aim of 'changing our drinking culture' has been badly set back by their lack of courage to take on the vested interests of the drinks lobby.

See also Appendix on Legalising Drugs pps 264 – 271

ENDS