Statement of the Hepatitis C Community Summit
Marseille, France, 25-26 November 2019

The decriminalisation of drug use and ensuring national funding of key services will reduce death, disease and marginalisation of people who use drugs

To enable marginalised members of society to break the ongoing cycle of imprisonment, disease and destitution, Governments must immediately adopt two measures:

1. Decriminalise the personal use and possession of all drugs; and,
2. Provide adequate and accessible life-saving health, social and economic interventions, especially Needle/Syringe Programmes (NSP), Naloxone and Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST).

It can no longer be acceptable, or allowed, for elements of law enforcement agencies to confiscate equipment that has been proven to prevent the transmission of HIV, Hepatitis C (HCV) and other blood borne viruses. Such behaviour is directly responsible for thousands of preventable infections and would not be tolerated in other areas of healthcare.

We recommend:

• Revise policies to make it easy to access Needle/Syringe Programmes (NSP), naloxone and Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST).
• All drug policies must be based on the health and well-being of people who use drugs and the communities in which they live and must ensure that the specific needs of women who use drugs are addressed.
• National governments must develop far reaching campaigns against the stigmatisation of people who use drugs.
• People who use drugs must have equal access to all health, social and economic support services.
• Immediately establish good quality safer injecting facilities that are easily accessible.
• HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV) prevention, testing and treatment programmes must be integrated into national action plans for health and delivered in local community settings.

Until the changes we demand take place, we will continue to improve the delivery of peer-led harm reduction interventions, accepting the risk of exposure, discrimination and criminal sanctions.