



IS THE DRAGON
STILL SMOKING?
STREET DRUGS WALES

Is the Dragon Still Smoking? Street Drugs Wales Conference 2019

University of South Wales, Cardiff Campus, The Atrium
Tuesday 25th June 2019

Welcome/Croeso

Dear Friends and Colleagues

We are delighted to welcome you to the third event in the Street Drugs series – ‘Street Drugs Wales: Is the dragon still smoking?’. This uniquely Welsh event provides you with the chance to listen to international experts and to learn about different policies and practices that might help us to create a healthier Wales for people with drug use issues.

The Welsh Government continues to invest in substance misuse services and as our Assembly is delegated more powers we can continue to develop a distinctive and life-affirming approach. This is in contrast to England where current drugs policy still has an emphasis on punishment rather than harm reduction. In Portugal earlier this year, the International Harm Reduction Conference promoted the powerful statement ‘People before Politics’. As we continue to evolve services and policy in Wales, this message provides a clear focus for all of us going forward.

There is not one approach to supporting drug users. There is no one story that unlocks the issues of problematic drug use. We must therefore listen to people, establish their needs and respond appropriately. People choose street drugs for a variety of reasons, which means that effective responses need to be individualised rather than generalised.

There are no easy solutions but through close partnership working, something that we do well in Wales and pride ourselves upon, and robust empirical research, we must continue to build the evidence base and identify the most effective ways of keeping people safe and helping them on their recovery journeys.

Society can create an environment where people can thrive or it can create a culture of fear and stigma. In the UK, we continue to wage a war on a certain sort of drug user with harsh sentencing, access to treatment that is reliant on good behaviour, and a media that often vilifies people who take drugs. There are, of course, unfair exceptions to this – for example, high profile celebrities and politicians. The result of a harsh approach to street drugs is to drive the problem underground where people are more likely to engage in risky behaviours that endanger their health and safety. This in turn creates an environment in which violent crime escalates and where vulnerable people are victimised and exploited, for example in County Line drug supply networks.

Today is partly about challenge, learning from countries such as Portugal, as well as questioning whether undercover policing of drug use is useful. We hope to learn more about the Chemsex scene where traditional agencies struggle to engage with people involved in high risk drug-using behaviours. It is also important that we look to our own country and address the increasing prevalence of prescription drug misuse and the associated problems among service users. We also need to keep thinking about new ways of keeping young people safe. It is a matter of concern that our music festivals in Wales have not prioritised festival-goer welfare by engaging with their local drug agencies or with national bodies such as the Loop drug-testing service.

The challenge that street drugs present is enormous and evolving. It is therefore important that we that we continue to work together, drawing on the evidence-base, to do whatever we can to reduce harm and keep people who use drugs safe. Our aim today is to not only share best practice and policy but also to stimulate debate and encourage innovation. We really hope you enjoy this conference and that you become champions of change, which are so badly needed at a time when drug-related deaths continue to rise in Wales and across the UK.

Anwyl Gyfeillion a Chydweithwyr,

Rydym wrth ein boddau i'ch croesawu chi i'r trydydd digwyddiad yn y gyfres 'Cyffuriau Stryd Cymru: A ydy'r ddraig dal yn ysmegu?'. Digwyddiad Cymreig unigryw yw hwn sy'n cynnig cyfle i chi i wrando ar arbenigwyr rhyngwladol a dysgu am bolisiau ac ymarferion sy'n gallu helpu ni i greu Cymru iach ar gyfer pobl sy'n defnyddio cyffuriau.

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn parhau i fuddsoddi mewn gwasanaethau camddefnyddio sylweddau ac wrth i'n Cynulliad gael mwy o bwerau, gallwn barhau i ddatblygu dull unigryw a chadarnhaol. Mae hyn yn wahanol i Loegr, lle mae pwyslais parhaus ar gosb yn hytrach na lleihau niwed yn y polisi cyffuriau presennol. Yn gynharach eleni ym Mhortiwgal, roedd y Gynhadledd Lleihau Niwed Rhyngwladol yn hyrwyddo'r datganiad pwerus 'Pobl cyn Gwleidyddiaeth'. Wrth i ni barhau i esblygu gwasanaethau a pholisi yng Nghymru, mae'r neges hon yn rhoi ffocws clir i bob un ohonom yn y dyfodol.

Nid oes un dull o gefnogi defnyddwyr cyffuriau. Nid oes un stori sy'n datgelu materion o ddefnydd cyffuriau problematig. Felly, mae'n rhaid i ni wrando ar bobl, sefydlu eu hanghenion ac ymateb yn briodol. Mae pobl yn dewis cyffuriau stryd am amrywiaeth o resymau, sy'n golygu bod angen i ymatebion effeithiol gael eu personoli yn hytrach na'u cyffredinoli.

Nid oes atebion hawdd, ond trwy weithio'n agos mewn partneriaeth, sy'n rhywbeth yr ydym yn ei wneud yn dda yng Nghymru ac ymfalchïo ynddo, ymchwil empirig gadarn, rhaid i ni barhau i adeiladu'r sylfaen dystiolaeth a chwilio'r ffyrdd mwyaf effeithiol o gadw pobl yn ddiogel a'u helpu ar eu teithiau adfer.

Mae cymdeithas yn gallu creu amgylchedd lle gall pobl ffynnu, neu greu diwylliant o ofn a stigma. Yn y DU, rydym yn parhau i erlid rhyw fath o ddefnyddwyr cyffuriau gyda dedfrydu llym, mynediad at driniaeth sy'n ddibynnol ar ymddygiad da a chyfyngau sy'n aml yn bychanu pobl sy'n cymryd cyffuriau. Mae yna, wrth gwrs, eithriadau annheg i hyn – er enghraifft, enwogion neu wleidyddion proffil uchel. Mae'r canlyniad dull llym gyda defnydd cyffuriau stryd yn gyrru'r broblem o dan y ddaear lle mae pobl yn fwy tebygol o gymryd rhan mewn ymddygiadau sy'n peryglu eu hiechyd a'u diogelwch. Mae hyn wedyn yn creu amgylchedd lle mae troseddau treisgar yn cynyddu a lle mae pobl agored i niwed yn cael eu herlid a'u mainteio, er enghraifft mewn rhwydweithiau Llinellau Sirol sy'n cyflenwi cyffuriau.

Mae heddiw yn ymwneud yn rhannol â her, dysgu o wledydd fel Portiwgal, yn ogystal â chwestiynu a yw plismona cudd o ddefnydd cyffuriau yn ddefnyddiol o gwbl. Gobeithiwn ddysgu mwy am Chemsex lle mae asiantaethau traddodiadol yn dod o hyd iddi'n anodd ymgysylltu â phobl sy'n cymryd rhan mewn ymddygiadau risg uchel ynglŷn â defnyddio cyffuriau. Mae hefyd yn bwysig ein bod ni'n edrych ar ein gwlad ein hunain ac yn mynd i'r afael â mynychder cynyddol camddefnyddio cyffuriau presgripsiwn a'r problemau cysylltiedig ymhlith defnyddwyr gwasanaeth. Mae angen i ni hefyd barhau i feddlwl am ffyrdd newydd o gadw pobl ifanc yn ddiogel. Mae'n fater o bryder nad yw ein gwyliau cerdd yng Nghymru wedi blaenoriaethu lles yr ymwelwyr trwy ymgysylltu â'u hasiantaethau cyffuriau lleol neu gyda chyrrff cenedlaethol fel y gwasanaeth profi cyffuriau – Y Loop.

Mae'r her y mae cyffuriau stryd yn ei chyflwyno yn enfawr ac yn esblygu. Felly mae'n bwysig ein bod yn parhau i weithio gyda'n gilydd, gan ddefnyddio'r sail dystiolaeth, i wneud beth bynnag y gallwn i leihau niwed a chadw pobl sy'n defnyddio cyffuriau'n ddiogel. Ein nod heddiw nid yn unig yw rhannu arfer gorau ond hefyd, ysgogi trafodaeth ac annog arloesedd. Rydym yn mawr obeithio y byddwch yn mwynhau'r gynhadledd hon a'ch bod yn dod yn bencampwyr newid, sydd eu hangen mor wael ar adeg pan fydd marwolaethau sy'n gysylltiedig â chyffuriau yn parhau i gynyddu yng Nghymru a ledled y DU.



Overview

Located within the Centre for Criminology at the University of South Wales, the Substance Use Research Group (SURG) was formed in 2019 to conduct high-quality research into the use of drugs and alcohol. Led by Professor Katy Holloway, the group is made of academic researchers (including Dr Tom May, Dr Marian Buhociu and Sharmila Kumar) with expertise in current and emerging issues in substance use, such as: harm reduction interventions, drug production and supply, criminal justice responses, substance use among university students, 'treatment-resistant' heroin users, and the implementation of substance misuse policy.

The group has a lengthy track record of securing internal and external funding for substance misuse research from the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Welsh Government, South Wales Police Crime and Commissioner, and from third sector treatment providers. Their research has generated a range of high quality publications including books, journal articles and official reports that have helped develop the evidence base on a range of substance use issues.

Current research

SURG members are currently engaged in a range of externally funded projects. These include studies investigating: how to improve the outcomes of treatment resistant heroin users, the (predicted and actual) impact of minimum pricing for alcohol on drinkers and their families in Wales, and the misuse of over-the-counter and prescription-only medication (including opioid substitution treatment). SURG members are also investigating substance misuse and related behaviours among university students as part of the Higher Education Alcohol and Drugs (HEADS) programme.

Partnerships

SURG members enjoy strong collaborative relationships with a wide range of staff working in the substance misuse field in Wales. This includes academic colleagues in other institutions as well as professional colleagues working in Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and third sector organisations. SURG members provide research support and advice to the DIGDDAS consortium (Dyfodol, Iris, Gwent, Dyfed - Drug and Alcohol Service) and sit on Welsh Government's National Implementation Board for Drug Poisoning Prevention. They are working alongside Kaleidoscope staff in supervising a KESS-funded PhD student (Sharmila Kumar) and collaborating with Barod staff in developing and evaluating a bespoke substance misuse information, advice and support service for university students.

Through close partnership working, Barod, Kaleidoscope and SURG are proud to bring you "Street Drugs Wales: Is the dragon still smoking?" We hope that you enjoy the day!



Conference Speakers



Nuno Capaz

Nuno Capaz has been working for the Portuguese Ministry of Health's Dissuasion Commissions since they were created in 2001. These Boards were created to apply Portugal's law passed in 2000 decriminalizing all drug use. As such, he is a member of an interdisciplinary team that evaluates drug users. He has also been in charge of correspondence with foreign delegations seeking information and research about the Portuguese model for drug policy.



Alex Stevens

Professor Alex Stevens has worked on issues of drugs, crime and health in the voluntary sector, as an academic researcher and as an adviser to the UK government. He has published extensively on these issues, with a focus on the sociology of drugs and crime, on risk behaviours by young people, on the use of evidence in policy and on quasi-compulsory drug treatment. His published works include a book on 'Drugs, Crime and Public Health', studies of decriminalisation of drugs in Portugal, of the right to use drugs, on gangs and on the ethnography of policy making.

Professor Stevens has a PhD in Social Policy from the University of Kent, an MA in Socio-Legal Studies from the University of Sheffield and a BA in French (in the School of European Studies) from the University of Sussex.



Katy Holloway

Katy is a Professor of Criminology at the University of South Wales. Throughout the course of her academic career, Katy's research has focused on illegal drugs. She has conducted studies that have investigated a wide range of drug-related issues including: drug use among arrestees, the causal connection between drug use and crime among prisoners, the effectiveness of drug treatment, the use of Take-Home Naloxone among opiate users, the implementation of the Welsh Substance Misuse Strategy, and the characteristics of opiate overdose events.



Tom May

Tom is a Research Fellow in the Centre for Criminology, USW. His main research interests are in the area of substance misuse and drug-related issues. He is currently working on a number of substance-misuse related projects with Professor Katy Holloway, including the misuse of prescribed only and over-the-counter medications, the diversion of opioid substitution medication, and the impact of Minimum Unit Alcohol Pricing (MUP) on substance switching. In May 2017, Tom was co-opted onto a sub-group of the Welsh Government's Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse to explore the potential benefits of introducing MSICs in Wales.



Joshua Torrance

Josh is a lead harm reduction advisor for The Loop, helping organise their presence at festivals and disseminating practical advice to young people. He works full time for Bristol Drugs Project, and is also involved in campaigns for a Drug Consumption Room in Bristol.





Henry Simmons

Henry Simmons holds an MChem from Durham University and is a senior chemist with The Loop. He currently works in the tech industry in Cardiff, as well as working towards a masters in Data Science.



Katy MacLeod

Katy has worked in front line drug services for over 10 years in residential detox, needle exchange and community based settings. This work has included coordinating welfare services at large dance events and festivals throughout UK and Europe. Before entering the drug field, she worked as a DJ and club promoter. Katy trained initially in counselling and then in learning and development.

Katy's areas of interest are drug use in nightlife settings, safer nightlife, drug trends, new psychoactive substances (legal highs), club drugs, harm reduction and poly-drug use. Since 2009, she has researched emerging drug trends and supported services to respond to these new trends, work funded by the Scottish Government.



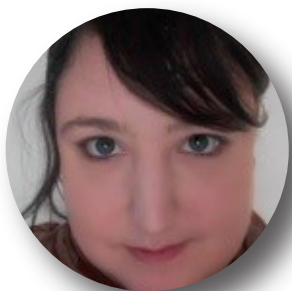
Neil Woods

Neil Woods is a former Detective and undercover operative, and is now part of LEAP UK, and a board member of LEAP in the USA. LEAP (Law Enforcement Action Partnership) is a U.N. accredited international organisation composed of law enforcement figures, military and policy influencers who campaign for evidence based drug policy. Having spent 23 years in Derbyshire Constabulary, Neil was on the frontlines as a drugs undercover operative over fourteen years. He also developed tactics and the training for other undercover officers. He later became a Detective Sergeant with Derbyshire CID whilst acting as a board member of the Drugs Expert Witness and Valuation Association (DEWVA). Neil is a regular in the media, discussing drugs and drug policy, and the author of Good Cop, Bad War, and Drug Wars together with JS Rafaeli.



Silje Anderdal Bakken

Silje Anderdal Bakken is a PhD student in Sociology at the University of Copenhagen, where she is researching online drug markets and the use of digital qualitative research methods. Her PhD is on online drug dealing, more specifically the use of social media and darknet to sell and buy illegal drugs. To explore these markets and their participants she uses qualitative methods like digital ethnography/netnography and semi-structured interviews. In 2017-18 she coordinated a Nordic project on drug dealing in social media, which was one of the first ever research projects on the topic.



Christine Schierano

Christine is a PhD candidate at the Public Health Institute at Liverpool John Moore University. She has been researching drug dealing within the London Chemsex Scene since 2012 and her current PhD project looks at sexualised drug use among men who has sex with men (MSM) the UK. Christine has been actively involved within the LGBT community, promoting harm reduction and safe sex. She is passionate about improving education in relation to drugs use to minimise risky behaviours and promote individuals' health, safety and wellbeing. Her other research interests are related to the stigmatisation of sexualised drug use and/or sex within minority groups; decriminalisation of drug use; the recreational use of drug such as GBL/GHB, mephedrone and crystal meth and individuals' right to pleasure.



Conference Agenda

9.45 – 10.00	Welcome and Opening Address	Professor Julie Lydon OBE Vice Chancellor of University of South Wales
10:00 - 10:30	Online drug markets: the use of digital platforms to sell and buy illegal drugs	Silje Anderdal Bakken
10:30 - 11:00	Not what the doctor ordered: The misuse of prescription-only medication among people who use drugs	Katy Holloway and Tom May
11:00- 11:30	Testing boundaries: reducing harm at UK festivals	Joshua Torrance and Henry Simmonds
11:30 - 12:00	Break	
12:00 - 12:30	Emerging Trends	Katy MacCleod
12:30 - 1:00	Decriminalisation of drug use in Portugal: A health care approach	Nuno Capaz
1:00 - 2:00	Lunch	
2:00 - 2:30	A public Health approach to drugs in the UK: the need for decriminalisation, harm reduction and social inclusion	Alex Stevens
2:30 - 3:00	The right to pleasure: drug dealing and use within a London Chemsex scene	Christine Schierano
3:00 - 3:30	The impact of policing prohibition	Neil Woods
3:30 - 4:00	Panel Questions and closing remarks	

Today's conference will be chaired by Caroline Phipps, CEO of Barod and Martin Blakebrough, CEO of Kaleidoscope



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**Thank you to all our speakers, sponsors and colleagues
who helped bring this conference together.
See you all next year**

