

HEROIN (H, SMACK, BROWN)

What is heroin?

- Heroin is a pain-killing drug (an analgesic) made from the opium poppy.
- Other opiates with a similar effect include morphine, codeine, methadone, palfium, diconal, and pethidine.
- Most street heroin in the UK is in the form of a brown powder.

How is heroin used?

- Heroin can be sniffed, smoked (inhaled), or injected.
- The effects are similar, but each method has its own risks.
- Smoking reduces the risk of overdose because the dose can be more easily regulated.

What are the effects of heroin?

- Heroin is a sedative drug. It relaxes the brain and slows down the heart and breathing.
- The user can feel physically and mentally calm.
- At higher doses the user can become drowsy and fall asleep.

What are the problems associated with heroin?

- If too much is taken this can cause an OVERDOSE – the user's breathing stops.
- The purity of heroin can vary, making it difficult to gauge the strength.
- The risk of overdose increases if other drugs are used at the same time, especially 'sedative-type' drugs such as alcohol, methadone, and tranquillisers.
- Anyone using heroin may experience:
 - Tolerance – a need for larger doses to get the same effect;
 - Withdrawal symptoms – runny nose, sweats, chills and cramps, if the drug is stopped;
 - Craving for the drug.
- Injecting heroin is particularly dangerous because:
 - Increased overdose risk because the drug reaches the brain quicker;
 - Impurities may enter the bloodstream and cause septicaemia and other infections;
 - Repeated injections can damage veins leading to abscesses and thrombosis;
 - Sharing injecting equipment can spread blood born viruses e.g. HIV, Hep C

Heroin and the Law.

- Heroin is a Class A drug.
- The maximum sentence for possessing heroin is 7 years in prison plus an unlimited fine.
- The maximum sentence for supplying heroin (including giving some to a friend) is life imprisonment and an unlimited fine.
- Heroin can be detected in urine for up to three days.

COCAINE (CHARLIE, SNOW, WHITE) AND CRACK (ROCK)

What are Cocaine and Crack?

- Cocaine is a white powder (cocaine hydrochloride) derived from the coca plant.
- Cocaine is a stimulant drug, like amphetamine, but shorter-acting.
- Crack cocaine is made by chemically altering cocaine powder to form crystals or 'rocks'.

How are Cocaine and Crack used?

- Cocaine powder is usually sniffed (snorted) up the nose. It can also be injected. Crack is smoked. The effects are similar but each method has its own risks.
- When cocaine is sniffed the effects come on gradually and peak after 15-30 minutes.
- When cocaine is injected the effects are experienced almost immediately and much more intensely.
- When crack is smoked the effects are experienced immediately but wear off very quickly.

What are the effects of cocaine and crack?

- They cause a sudden increase in heart rate, blood pressure and breathing.
- They lead to increased alertness, feelings of exhilaration, and feelings of well-being and confidence.
- These effects are usually more intense when cocaine is smoked in crack form

What are the problems associated with cocaine and crack?

- A common problem with cocaine and crack is spending too much money on it and getting into debt.
- Cocaine and Crack use can become compulsive.
- Side-effects can include depression, agitation, and paranoia.
- The intensity of the problems depends on how much and how often cocaine is used. These problems are usually more intense when cocaine is used in crack form.
- Smoking crack can lead to breathing problems and lung damage.
- Repeated sniffing damages the membranes of the nose.
- Excessive use or high doses can lead to seizures, stroke, or heart attack.
- Injecting is dangerous for a number of reasons:
 - Increased overdose risk because the drug reaches the brain quicker;
 - Impurities may enter the bloodstream and cause septicaemia and other infections;
 - Repeated injections can damage veins leading to abscesses and thrombosis;
 - Sharing injecting equipment can spread blood born viruses e.g. HIV, Hep C

Cocaine, crack and the Law.

- Cocaine and crack are Class A drugs.
- The maximum sentence for possessing cocaine or crack is 7 years in prison plus an unlimited fine.
- The maximum sentence for supplying cocaine or crack (including giving some to a friend) is life imprisonment and an unlimited fine.
- Cocaine and Crack can be detected in urine for up to three days.

AMPHETAMINES (SPEED, WHIZZ)

What are amphetamines?

- Amphetamines are stimulant drugs which come as powder (sulphate), tablets, or more rarely as paste.
- Speed usually contains about 4% amphetamine sulphate.

How are amphetamines used?

- Amphetamines can be sniffed, swallowed, or injected.
- The least harmful method of use is swallowing either mixed in a drink, wrapped in a cigarette paper, or dapped on the tongue. The effects come on gradually and last longer than with other methods.
- Sniffing amphetamines takes effect faster than swallowing them, but can damage the nasal membranes.

What are the effects of amphetamines?

- They produce alertness, confidence, and a sense of well-being, and increased levels of energy and stamina.
- They lessen the desire to eat or sleep.

What are the problems associated with amphetamines?

- Prolonged amphetamine use can produce cravings for the drug and use can become compulsive.
- Regular use can lead to the development of tolerance.
- When the drug wears off there can be an unpleasant 'comedown'. Users feel tired, lethargic, and depressed.
- Although rare higher doses of amphetamines can cause seizures and death from overdose.
- Loss of appetite can lead to weight loss. Users can become physically rundown which leaves them susceptible to a wide range of infections.
- Excessive use of amphetamines can cause mental health problems such as paranoia and psychosis. This can happen sooner if paste is used.
- Amphetamines can trigger underlying health problems.
- Injecting is dangerous for a number of reasons:
 - Injecting produces an intense 'rush' which can lead to compulsive usage ('chasing the rush').
 - Increased overdose risk because the drug reaches the brain quicker;
 - Impurities may enter the bloodstream and cause septicaemia and other infections;
 - Repeated injections can damage veins leading to abscesses and thrombosis;
 - Sharing injecting equipment can spread blood born viruses e.g. HIV, Hep C

Amphetamines and the Law

- Amphetamines are Class B drugs.
- The maximum sentence for possessing illicit amphetamines is 5 years in prison and an unlimited fine.
- The maximum single sentence for supplying illicit amphetamines (including giving some to a friend) is 14 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine.
- It is not illegal to possess amphetamines that have been prescribed for you.
- Amphetamines can be detected in urine for up to 4 days..

MDMA (ECSTASY, E, MOLLY)

What is MDMA?

- The chemical name for ecstasy is 3,4 Methylenedioxymethylamphetamine, or MDMA.
- It is a member of a family of drugs that includes amphetamine and mescaline

How is MDMA used?

- It is almost always swallowed as a tablet (Ecstasy).
- 'Molly' is the street name used to differentiate MDMA in its crystalline powder form which can be sniffed, smoked, injected, or swallowed in capsules. More rarely 'Molly' can be found in liquid form.

What are the effects of MDMA?

- MDMA produces a relaxed, euphoric state without hallucinations.
- MDMA takes effect 20-40 minutes after taking a tablet with little rushes of exhilaration which can be accompanied by nausea
- 60 to 90 minutes after ingestion the user feels the peak effects. Sensations are enhanced, music sounds better.
- Users report that the experience is very pleasant and controllable. Even at the peak of the drug people report being able to bring themselves down to deal with an important matter.
- The effect often identified as different from other drugs is the sensation of understanding and accepting others. Users feel as though barriers disappear; as well as feeling less inhibited
- The effects of MDMA subside after 3-4 hours.

What are the problems associated with MDMA?

- MDMA impacts on the same neurotransmitter systems in the brain as other 'addictive' drugs. However research on whether MDMA is 'addictive' is contradictory (perhaps due to the varied sample populations used). Animal research indicates that 'addictive' potential exists but to a lesser degree than drugs such as 'cocaine'. Regular users can report addiction symptoms.
- Figures fluctuate yearly however in the UK between 1993 and 2015, on average, about 40-50 people die from ecstasy related causes.
- Ecstasy-induced heat stroke is a significant cause of death; this is the rise in body temperature that is caused by taking ecstasy and which can be exacerbated by the environment that the user is in e.g. clubs, raves etc.
- Excessive hydration can also cause serious problems.
- MDMA use can lead to high blood pressure (hypertension), faintness, panic attacks, and in severe cases, a loss of consciousness and seizures.
- Sleep disturbances, lack of appetite, concentration difficulties, depression, heart disease, and impulsivity have been associated with regular use of MDMA. In addition, heavy MDMA use over a 2-year period of time is associated with decreased cognitive function. Some of these disturbances may not be directly attributable to MDMA, but may be related to some of the other drugs often used in combination with MDMA, such as cocaine, alcohol, or marijuana, or to adulterants commonly found in MDMA tablets.

MDMA and the Law.

- MDMA is a Class A drug.
- The maximum sentence for possessing MDMA is 7 years in prison plus an unlimited fine.
- The maximum sentence for supplying MDMA (including giving some to a friend) is life imprisonment and an unlimited fine.
- MDMA can be detected in urine for up to 2-4 days.

CANNABIS (WEED, SKUNK, BLOW, JOINT, HASH, SMOKE, GRASS)

What is Cannabis?

- Cannabis comes from either the Cannabis Sativa or the Cannabis Indica plant.
- Most cannabis sold is from plants that are hybrids of the two main Cannabis strains (Sativa and Indica)
- It is the most commonly used illicit drug in the UK and worldwide.
- Cannabis resin ('hash' short for 'hashish') is a block of compressed plant resin.
- Herbal cannabis (grass, weed) is the leaves and flowers from a mature female cannabis plant.
- Sensimilla (sensi) is a female cannabis plant that has produced flowers but has not been fertilised (so is without seed) and is stronger than ordinary cannabis cultivars; one such variety is known as 'skunk'.

How is Cannabis used?

- The most common way of using cannabis is to smoke it with tobacco in a 'joint'.
- The fumes can also be inhaled through pipes, bottles, hot knives, and bongs without using tobacco.
- Cannabis can be eaten either directly or in food (e.g. cakes, cookies)

What are the effects of Cannabis?

- Effects can vary dependent on the hybrid being used; where cannabis is legalised or used medically specific hybrids are used for differing effects.
- Generally speaking, in small quantities, users find cannabis relaxing and stimulating. Senses can be enhanced and appetite can be increased ('the munchies')
- The drug can frequently be used in social settings and can increase sociability and reduce inhibitions. The intensity of experience can be controlled and in smaller doses there are no after effects (hangover).
- In larger quantities (or with stronger strains) cannabis can have hallucinogenic effect: users may experience nausea, hallucinations, anxiety, panic attacks or paranoia
- Swallowing cannabis can produce more intense effects and it is harder to control the dose.

What are the problems associated with Cannabis?

- Smoking cannabis can exacerbate existing throat, chest or lung conditions worse.
- Smoking cannabis, especially with tobacco, is linked to cancer.
- Effects of short-term use include:
 - Impaired short-term memory, making it difficult to learn and to retain information
 - Impaired motor coordination, interfering with driving skills and increasing the risk of injuries
 - Altered judgment, increasing the risk of sexual behaviors that facilitate the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases
 - In high doses, paranoia and psychosis
- Effects of long-term or heavy use
 - Addiction (in about 9% of users overall, 17% of those who begin use in adolescence, and 25% to 50% of those who are daily users)
 - Altered brain development
 - Poor educational outcome, with increased likelihood of dropping out of school
 - Cognitive impairment, with lower IQ among those who were frequent users during adolescence
- Diminished life satisfaction and achievement (determined on the basis of subjective and objective measures as compared with such ratings in the general population)*
- Symptoms of chronic bronchitis
- Increased risk of chronic psychosis disorders (including schizophrenia) in persons with a predisposition to such disorders

Cannabis and the Law.

- Cannabis is a Class B drug.
- The maximum sentence for possessing cannabis is 5 years in prison and an unlimited fine.
- The maximum single sentence for supplying cannabis (including giving some to a friend) is 14 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine.
- It is illegal to cultivate cannabis or allow people to use it in your premises/abode.
- Cannabis can be detected in urine for up to 3-4 weeks in regular users..

LYSERGIC ACID DIETHYLAMIDE (LSD, ACID, TRIP)

What is LSD?

- LSD is a hallucinogenic or psychedelic drug.
- LSD is a liquid that is usually added to neutral carriers to make marketing and sales easier. Carriers include: sugar cubes, capsules, gelatin sheets, tablets, tiny tablets (called microdots), or on blotting paper. Historically LSD has been predominantly sold on blotting paper, or cardboard sheets, cut into 5mm squares with printed images on.
- A single 'trip' can contain anywhere between 50-200mcg of LSD.

How is LSD used?

- LSD is almost always swallowed.

What are the effects of LSD?

- Although the effects of LSD may vary between individuals and as a result of dosage, environment, and other factors, there are sufficient accounts to suggest similarities in the experience
- The LSD experience is usually described as a 'journey' because it is experienced by many as a journey to another place/way of being. Usually the user knows the effects to be 'unreal'. Genuine hallucinations are rare with LSD. The experience has been said to consist of four phases:
 - The Onset – thirty minutes to an hour after being taken, colours appear sharper and moving objects leave traces behind them. Repeated patterns may be seen with the eyes closed.
 - Plateau – Over the second hour; the effects become more intense. Patterns are visible with the eyes open. Fantastic visions can appear from nowhere – shapes in smoke to lines on the palms of the hand.
 - The Peak – Time is slowed to a standstill. Users may feel that they are on a different world. For some this is profound and mystical, but for others it can be frightening.
 - The Comedown – Five to six hours after taking the drug the sensations begin to subside. After eight hours, the trip is usually **over**, although some residual effects may remain until after sleep.

What are the problems associated with LSD?

- Immediate physical problems are unlikely to occur unless very large doses are taken (400mcg) or if LSD is taken with alcohol.
- LSD can trigger underlying mental health problems and produce paranoia and schizophrenia-like states.
- LSD can produce extreme anxiety states and panic attacks, not only whilst under the influence but also afterwards.
- LSD can lead to changes in personality.
- LSD impairs judgement.

LSD and the Law.

- LSD is a Class A drug.
- The maximum sentence for possessing LSD is 7 years in prison plus an unlimited fine.
- The maximum sentence for supplying LSD (including giving some to a friend) is life imprisonment and an unlimited fine.
- LSD can be detected in urine for up to 2-3 days.

SOLVENTS (GLUE, GAS, AND AEROSOLS)

What are solvents?

- Solvents are substances that are inhaled to get 'high'.
- They include glue, lighter fuel, aerosols and nail-varnish removers.
- Solvents fall within the classification: 'Volatile Substances' which also includes the gases Helium, Nitrous Oxide, and the nitrides (poppers)

How are Solvents used?

- The vapour or gas from the solvent is inhaled through the mouth or nose. Plastic bags are sometimes used to sniff glue.
- Aerosols are sometimes sprayed on a cloth before inhaling.

What are the effects of Solvents?

- The effects are similar to alcohol.
- Users can feel drowsy and 'unsteady' on their feet.
- Inhalation causes the drug to take effect very rapidly, causing a euphoric 'rush'.
- The effects wear off quickly, within 30-45 minutes.

What are the problems associated with Solvents?

- If a plastic bag is used there is a risk of suffocation.
- If aerosols are sprayed directly into the mouth they can 'freeze' the throat causing suffocation.
- Solvents can cause disorientation and sometimes unconsciousness.
- The highest mortality rates amongst the Volatile Substances are recorded for Fuels (366 deaths between 2001 – 2016), 'Nitrogen-related' (79 deaths between 2001-2016), aerosols (45 deaths between 2001-2016), and specific solvents [e.g. glues] (39 deaths between 2001 – 2016).
- Solvent use can impact on the heart leading to heart failure.
- Deaths can result from indirect causes such as:
 - Choking on vomit whilst unconscious
 - Accidents due to use in isolated or dangerous locations.
 - Suffocation.

Solvents and the Law.

- It is not illegal to use solvents.
- Since the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 it has been illegal for a shop 'knowingly' to sell solvents for the purposes of inhalation to anyone (no age restrictions).

NITRITES (POPPERS)

What are Nitrites?

- The popular term 'poppers' applies to amyl, butyl, or isobutyl nitrites.
- They are usually sold in small bottles under a wide range of names e.g. 'Rush', 'Liquid Gold'. 'Stud' etc.

How are Nitrites used?

- Nitrites are usually inhaled straight from the bottle or from an absorbent material.
- Use tends to be limited to certain settings e.g. the dance club scene.
- They may be used to enhance the effects of other substances e.g. ecstasy or LSD
- They can be used during anal sex because they relax muscle tissue.

What are the effects of Nitrites?

- Nitrites have a vaso-dilatory effect, causing blood vessels to open, the heart to beat quicker and the blood to rush to the brain. This produces the 'rush' associated with 'poppers'.
- They can cause dizziness, light-headedness, a flushed face and a pounding headache.
- The effects last a couple of minutes.
- Nitrites are said to enhance orgasm.

What are the problems associated with Nitrites?

- The vaso-dilatory effects can make it difficult for men to maintain an erection.
- Nitrites can cause tolerance after continuous use.
- Excessive use may result in a reduction of oxygen in the blood. This has caused death although primarily in people who have swallowed the drug.
- Use can lead to a temporary rash around the lips, cheeks, and nose.
- Nitrite use is risky for anyone with an underlying condition such as anaemia, glaucoma, or a heart condition.
- Nitrites are highly flammable.
- Amyl nitrites are attributed to 18 deaths between 2001 and 2016 in the UK. However nitrites may have been a factor in other deaths where the cause was attributed to other substances or causes.
- There is some limited evidence that suggests that use of nitrites may damage the retina (leading to eyesight problems) and the brain (leading to learning and cognition problems). As yet no consistent body of evidence exists to corroborate this.

Nitrites and the Law.

- Nitrites initially were going to be added to the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 however this did not happen and so Nitrites are still legal for sale and purchase in the UK but under the following conditions:
 - only as products not for human consumption. For this reason they are often sold as a 'room odouriser' and 'leather cleaner'.
- They are regulated under the Medicines Act 1968 and there have been cases where the Medicines Act was used to fine shopkeepers for selling Nitrites (poppers). Nitrites (poppers) are also covered by general consumer protection legislation.
- Possession is not illegal but supply can be an offence.

PSILOCYBIN (MAGIC MUSHROOMS)

What is Psilocybin?

- Psilocybin is a hallucinogenic drug with effects similar to LSD.
- Psilocybin is naturally produced in some fungi, most noticeably in the UK in the mushrooms called 'Liberty Cap'.

How is psilocybin used?

- The mushrooms containing psilocybin can be eaten raw; mixed with food, or made into a tea/infusion, and swallowed.
- The mushrooms can be eaten fresh, or dried, or in a medium such as honey.
- Usually a dose of 5-10 mushrooms will have a noticeable effect; 20-30 mushrooms will cause a 'trip'.
- Psilocybin content varies between individual mushrooms and so there is no reliable way of estimating the content. The amount can vary due to strain, size, age, and how it has been stored. This lack of certainty can be a key issue in the harms that arise from mushroom use.

What are the effects of psilocybin?

- The effects can vary dependent on the dose taken, the individual, and the setting the drug is taken within.
- At low doses the psilocybin in mushrooms may produce feelings of relaxation not dissimilar to cannabis. At higher doses the experience is closer to LSD. Users may experience intensification of colour, visual distortions and a sense of well-being.
- A 'trip' from psilocybin containing mushrooms tends to last about four hours.

What are the problems associated with psilocybin containing mushrooms?

- The biggest danger is misidentification. Some mushrooms are poisonous and cause stomach pains, vomiting and diarrhoea.
- Some users report feeling sick even when taking psilocybin containing mushrooms.
- Like LSD some users experience 'bad trips' or panic attacks.
- Psilocybin impairs judgement which can lead to accidents.
- There is very little evidence of long-term health problems. Evidence of long term mental health problems suggests that underlying mental health issues may have been a key factor
- Only 1 death has been recorded in the UK between 1993 and 2014 from psilocybin.

Psilocybin and the Law.

- Psilocybin is a Class A drug. Moreover, since 2005, 'Magic Mushrooms' are specifically mentioned in Law as a Class A drug. Therefore possession, preparation, supply and production of 'fungi containing psilocybin' or products made from 'fungi containing psilocybin' is illegal.
- The maximum sentence for possessing 'fungi containing psilocybin' is 7 years in prison plus an unlimited fine.
- The maximum sentence for supplying 'fungi containing psilocybin', or related products, (including giving some to a friend) is life imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

ANABOLIC STERIODS (ROIDS, ANAS)

What are Anabolic Steroids?

- Anabolic steroids are synthetic derivatives of the male hormone testosterone.
- Anabolic steroids are a subgroup of drugs which fall within the category of 'Image or Performance Enhancing Drugs' (IPEDs or PIEDs)
- Anabolic Steroids are NOT the same as corticosteroids (such as cortisone and prednisolone) which are medically prescribed to treat asthma, skin disorders, or as anti-inflammatories. Corticosteroids have NO muscle building or masculinising effects.

How Anabolic Steroids used?

- They can be taken orally or by injection into a muscle (NEVER into a vein).
- 'Stacking' refers to the practice of taking several drugs simultaneously. This is common among Anabolic Steroid users and can also involve the use of drugs other than steroids. Stacking increases the risks and harm caused.
- 'Cycling' refers to the typical pattern of anabolic steroid use where drugs are taken in cycles of a number of weeks followed by a drug free period.

What are the effects of Anabolic Steroids?

- They have an anabolic effect – they increase lean muscle mass and strength.
- They have an androgenic or masculinising effect.
- They can increase appetite, energy, motivation, confidence, and self-esteem.
- The effect of taking Anabolic Steroids will vary from person to person, depending on how many drugs are taken, the amount of each drug taken and how they are taken. Not everyone will experience all of the effects or to the same degree.

What are the problems associated with anabolic Steroids?

- Physical problems:
 - Increased water retention; acne; changes in sex drive; changes in cholesterol levels; increased risk of heart disease and strokes; abnormal liver function; changes in fertility.
- Psychological problems:
 - Mood swings and irritability; Fatigue; impulsive behaviour; depression; paranoia; sleep disorders; hallucinations; increased aggression.
- Additional effects for males:
 - Baldness; development of breast tissue; shrinking testicles; decreased sperm production.
- Additional effects for females:
 - Growth of facial hair; changes in menstrual cycle; decreased breast size, enlargement of the clitoris; deeper voice.

Anabolic Steroids and the Law.

- Anabolic Steroids are Class C drugs.
- It is not illegal to possess anabolic steroids for personal use.
- It is illegal to manufacture, to supply, or import and export them with the intent to supply. The maximum sentence is 14 years in prison and/or an unlimited fine.
- Most professional sporting bodies ban the use of IPEDs and as such if found guilty of use professional, and amateur, sportspeople may find themselves banned.

ALCOHOL

What is Alcohol?

- Alcohol is made by fermenting fruits, vegetables or grains.
- Alcohol is a depressant drug which slows down body reactions and the working of the brain.

How is Alcohol used?

- Alcohol is swallowed

What are the effects of Alcohol?

- Small amounts of alcohol usually help people to relax.
- However the effect of alcohol can be determined by your mood and situation; if you already feel 'down' then alcohol can make this worse.
- Increased consumption of alcohol can lead to poor co-ordination and slurred speech. Large amounts can result in double vision and loss of consciousness.

What are the problems associated with Alcohol?

- Alcohol is frequently a factor in violence and accidents.
- Alcohol can lower inhibitions and impair decision-making. This can make it difficult to plan safer sex.
- Alcohol consumption can be expensive.
- Death can occur when people lose consciousness and choke on vomit. Fatal overdoses can also occur when people drink alcohol. Alcohol is especially dangerous if consumed with other drugs.
- In 2018:
 - In the UK 7,551 deaths were alcohol-specific (meaning death occurred as a direct result of alcohol consumption e.g. overdose, choking on vomit whilst unconscious)
 - In England it is estimated that there were 24,720 alcohol-related deaths (meaning alcohol was a contributing factor in death but not the direct cause e.g. Liver Cancer, Hepatitis, etc)
- Alcohol is directly related to over 60 serious medical conditions (including cancers, sclerosis, Hepatitis)
- Alcohol dependency/addiction rates are the highest globally.
- Long term alcohol (mis)use is linked to a range of mental health conditions e.g. depression, anxiety disorders etc
- As with all depressants suddenly stopping dependent usage can be dangerous and potentially fatal. Someone wishing to stop dependent and/or regular usage should seek medical support.

Alcohol and the Law.

- It is illegal to give alcohol to a child under 5 years of age
- It is illegal to sell alcohol to under 18s
- 16 year olds can drink alcohol (but not spirits) in a pub if they are having a meal
- The police have the power to confiscate alcohol from anyone under the age of 18 who drinks in public.
- Some towns have made it an offence to drink alcohol on the streets.

TOBACCO

What is Tobacco?

- Tobacco is made from the dried leaves of the tobacco plant.
- Tobacco contains the stimulant drug nicotine, which increases pulse rate and blood pressure.

How is Tobacco used?

- Tobacco is usually smoked in cigarettes, cigars, and pipes.
- Powdered tobacco (snuff) is sniffed up the nose.
- Chewing Tobacco can be chewed and kept in the mouth between the lip/cheek and gums.

What are the effects of Tobacco?

- Tobacco that is smoked has an almost instantaneous effect.
- First time users may feel dizzy or sick.
- Regular smokers say it helps them concentrate, relax, combat boredom, and reduce anxiety.
- It can suppress appetite so people eat less.
- The effects of a single cigarette can last 30 minutes.

What are the problems associated with Tobacco?

- Prolonged nicotine use can produce cravings for the drug and use can become compulsive.
- Regular use can lead to the development of tolerance.
- Regular smokers can experience restlessness, irritability, and depression symptoms if they do not use nicotine regularly.
- Smoked tobacco frequently leads to coughs, chest and breathing problems, and bad breath. This can be exacerbated in people with existing lung conditions (e.g. asthma)
- Regular users have a much greater risk of developing lung and some other cancers, heart disease, circulatory problems, bronchitis and ulcers.
- As of 2018 Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death globally. It kills more than 7 million people each year: 6 million through direct use, and around 890,000 are non-smokers exposed to second hand smoke.
- As of 2016 smoking was directly responsible for 95,800 deaths in the UK. Tobacco causes 3 in 20 cancer cases in the UK.
- On average smokers die ten years earlier than non-smokers; even low levels of smoking (1-4 cigarettes a day) increases the risk of early death.
- Annual cost to the NHS in England is around £2.5bn.

Tobacco and the Law.

- There are some differences between the laws in England and Wales versus Scotland. In the UK smoking is legally permitted, however:
 - In England and Wales it is illegal to smoke in public places such as restaurants, shops or pubs
 - It is illegal to smoke in a car if one is transporting people under 18 or if the vehicle is used for work purposes.
 - The minimum age to purchase tobacco products is 18 years of age. It is illegal to consume tobacco products in public if you are under 16 years of age
 - In England it is illegal for retailers to display tobacco products.

BENZODIAZEPINES

What are Benzodiazepines (Tranxs, sleeping tablets)?

- Benzodiazepines usually come in tablet or capsule form and each brand can be prescribed at differing strengths. They include brands such as: diazepam, lorazepam, alprazolam, chlordiazepoxide, flurazepam, nitrazepam (Mogadon – ‘moggies’), temazepam (‘jellies’, ‘eggs’)
- Benzodiazepines are a prescription only drug.
- Benzodiazepines are sedative/depressant drugs that are usually prescribed by GPs to reduce anxiety, to promote sleep, or act as a muscle relaxant.
- They are also used illicitly to offset the effects of stimulant drugs or with other ‘downers’ such as alcohol and heroin.

How are Benzodiazepines used?

- Usually they are swallowed.
- Rarely they can be crushed into a powder and added to other drugs as an adulterant.
- Powdered Benzodiazepines (or liquid Benzodiazepines e.g. temazepam) can be injected.

What are the effects of Benzodiazepines?

- They can relieve the symptoms of stress and anxiety and promote calmness, relaxation and sleep.
- Benzodiazepines quickly build tolerance and can become ineffective; they may stop working as ‘sleeping pills’ after only 2 weeks of continuous use and no longer manage anxiety after 4 months of regular use.

What are the problems associated with Benzodiazepines?

- Some users experience drowsiness, forgetfulness and confusion.
- They can impair driving and other tasks requiring concentration and coordination.
- They can cause physical dependency and tolerance.
- As with all depressants someone wanting to stop usage should do so with medical assistance; suddenly stopping taking depressants can be very dangerous and potentially fatal.
- Withdrawal symptoms can last for weeks or even months after stopping taking Benzodiazepines. Symptoms vary from one person to another and include anxiety, sleeping problems, nausea, panic attacks, and occasionally convulsions.
- If mixed with other sedatives a fatal overdose is possible.
- Injecting is dangerous for a number of reasons:
 - Increased overdose risk because the drug reaches the brain quicker;
 - Impurities may enter the bloodstream and cause septicaemia and other infections;
 - Repeated injections can damage veins leading to abscesses and thrombosis;
 - Liquid temazepam can re-solidify and block blood vessels causing loss of limb or death.
 - Sharing injecting equipment can spread blood born viruses e.g. HIV, Hep C

Benzodiazepines and the Law.

- All benzodiazepines are Prescription Only Medicines under the Medicines Act. This means they can only be legally supplied by a pharmacist in accordance with a doctor’s prescription.
- They are controlled as a class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act. The maximum sentence for possessing is 2 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. The maximum sentence for supplying to someone else and for production is fourteen years and and/or an unlimited fine.

METHADONE (METH, LINCTUS, PHYSEPTONE)

What is Methadone?

- Methadone is a prescription-only drug that is usually prescribed to reduce the risk of illicit drug use by people who take heroin.
- Methadone is a synthetic opiate which is manufactured to mimic the effects of opiates such as heroin.
- Methadone can be used as a long term (years) treatment for heroin addiction; it is considered that it is much lower risk than heroin use with fewer long-term effects. However this is a contested issue in the research with many advocating for alternatives such as buprenorphine.

How is Methadone used?

- Methadone is usually prescribed as a liquid (to be swallowed) but it also comes in injectable tablet forms.
- Methadone dose is measured in milligrams (mg). Liquid preparations usually contain 1 mg per 1 ml of fluid, but sometimes 10mg per 1mg

What are the effects of Methadone?

- Methadone is a much longer acting drug than heroin. Users can take it once a day and usually will be free of withdrawal symptoms for 24 hours.
- It can give feelings of well-being and absence of stress, less intense than heroin but longer lasting.
- Side-effects of methadone include constipation, sweating and itchy skin.

What are the problems associated with Methadone?

- Methadone can be a dangerous drug.
- Methadone overdoses can occur especially if methadone is used with other drugs such as alcohol, heroin, or tranquillisers.
- Overdose (and death) can occur if even small doses are taken by adults or children who have not developed a tolerance for the drug
- Regular Methadone use, as an opiate, leads to the development of tolerance and addiction.
- Withdrawal symptoms from Methadone are reported to last longer than heroin however they are also reported to be less severe.

Methadone and the Law.

- Methadone is a Class A drug.
- The maximum sentence for unlawful possession of Methadone is 7 years in prison plus an unlimited fine. 'Unlawful' means possession without an appropriate prescription.
- The maximum sentence for supplying Methadone (including giving some to a friend) is life imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

KETAMINE (K, SPECIAL K, VITAMIN K, KET)

What is Ketamine?

- Ketamine is an anaesthetic drug legally produced for use in human and animal medicine.
- Ketamine also has psychedelic or hallucinogenic effects.
- Historically Ketamine has been associated with electronic dance music (EDM).

How is Ketamine used?

- Ketamine can come as a white powder that can be snorted, a liquid that can be injected, or a tablet that can be swallowed.
- Small amounts form an active dose.
- When Ketamine is snorted the effects begin in a few minutes and last for 15-30 minutes.
- When swallowed the effects usually begin in 15 minutes and last for 1-3 hours.
- When injected the effects begin within a minute and last for about 1-3 hours

What are the effects of Ketamine?

- It can be stimulating, creating feelings of increased energy and euphoria. Other effects can include floating sensations, numbness, loss of time, nausea, and loss of control or disconnection from the body.
- Users report feeling as though they have travelled to other worlds with out of body experiences, recall of memories, and existential insight.
- Users may not know the effects are 'unreal' until the drug has worn off.
- Users may report blurred vision and difficulty moving and speaking.
- Ketamine can cause genuine visual and auditory hallucinations (a perception without a stimulus) as opposed to the psychedelic hallucinations caused by LSD or psilocybin (usually misinterpretations of stimulus or increased vividness of images/stimuli)

What are the problems associated with Ketamine?

- Ketamine can sometimes be sold as if it is ecstasy. It is impossible for users to tell whether tablets contain ketamine or ecstasy unless a content analysis is undertaken by Harm Minimisation Practitioners using a 'drug checking kit'. In some jurisdictions these testing kits are considered 'drug paraphernalia' and possession can lead to criminal prosecution.
- Users may not be aware that they are hallucinating; they may feel disoriented, confused and frightened.
- There is increased risk of injury especially if Ketamine is used in a public space.
- Ketamine overdose can lead to respiratory problems, heart problems, seizure, coma or death. Death from ketamine overdose tends to be associated with accidents rather than Ketamine toxicity itself.
- Ketamine has been linked with a range of mental health conditions including anxiety, panic attacks, post-traumatic stress, depression, insomnia, and suicide.
- The evidence base for long-term ketamine use is very limited.
- Evidence suggests Tolerance and Dependence can develop through long term Ketamine use.

Ketamine and the Law.

- Ketamine is a Class B drug (it was reclassified from a Class C drug in 2014)
- The maximum sentence for possessing Ketamine is 5 years in prison and an unlimited fine.
- The maximum single sentence for supplying Ketamine (including giving some to a friend) is 14 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

**GAMMAHYDROXYBUTYRATE (GBH, GHB, FANTASY, LIQUID E)
GAMMA BUTYROLACTONE (GBL)
1, 4-BUTANEDIOL (1,4BD)**

What is GHB?

- GBL and 1,4BD are liquids that metabolise into GHB in the body.
- GHB, GBL, and 1,4BD are usually clear liquids sold in small glass or plastic bottles. It usually has no smell and a slightly salty taste.
- GHB can also be sold as a powder that can be dissolved in water and swallowed.
- GHB was originally developed as an anaesthetic to promote sleep prior to surgery. It is classed as a Depressant.

How is GHB used?

- GHB is usually swallowed; because of its potency it is usually mixed with a drink.
- It is unclear what a typical dose is; some consider a 40ml bottle to contain 3 doses. It is not possible for users to know how strong the GHB is that they have.

What are the effects of GHB?

- In small doses GHB can promote feelings of euphoria, well-being, calmness and relaxation. Some report feeling 'turned on' or 'sexy'.
- Although sometimes referred to as 'Liquid E' the effects are different to 'ecstasy'.
- At higher doses it can cause dizziness, nausea, vomiting, muscle spasms, loss of consciousness, coma.
- GHB can lead to loss of inhibitions.
- Some use GHB to increase the intensity of feeling during sex.

What are the problems associated with GHB?

- Overdose is very easy as the difference between a 'safe' dose and an overdose is very small.
- Swallowing undiluted GHB can lead to chemical burns in the throat and mouth.
- Overdose can lead to unconsciousness, coma, and death.
- Using GHB with other depressants (e.g. alcohol, benzodiazepines) can increase the risk of overdose.
- The most recent statistics (2017) show 26 fatalities that were either the direct result of GHB use or where GHB is a contributing factor.
- Illicit GHB (that is GHB that has been made illegally rather than GHB made by licensed medical suppliers) is often made with industrial chemicals of unknown purity. This may contain caustic or dangerous contaminants.
- GHB has been implicated in rape cases.
- Use can cause confusion and disorientation that increase the risk of accident or injury.
- The long term effects are as yet unknown.

GHB and the Law.

- GHB, GBL and 1,4BD are Class C drugs.
- Illegal possession of these drugs carries a maximum sentence of 2 years in prison and an unlimited fine.
- It is illegal to manufacture, to supply, or import and export these drugs. The maximum sentence for supply these drugs (including giving some to a friend) are up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.
- Like drink-driving, driving when high is dangerous and illegal. If you're caught driving under the influence, you may receive a heavy fine, driving ban, or prison sentence.
- If the police catch people supplying illegal drugs in a home, club, bar or hostel, they can potentially prosecute the landlord, club owner or any other person concerned in the management of the premises.

SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS (FENTANYL, CARFENTANYL)

What are Synthetic Opioids?

- Synthetic Opioids (e.g. Fentanyl) are man-made drugs that mimic the effects of natural opioids such as heroin or opium.
- Synthetic Opioids are frequently sold as a white powder. They have been found mixed with synthetic cannabinoids in herbal smoking mixtures
- Medical synthetic opioids, especially Fentanyl, are available as patches, pills, tablets, and solutions for injection.
- Synthetic Opioids were developed as medical alternatives to natural opioids and to act as pain relief (analgesics).

How are Synthetic Opioids used?

- They are used in similar ways to natural opioids: they can be injected, sniffed, swallowed, or heated and inhaled.

What are the effects of Synthetic Opioids?

- Synthetic Opioids are a sedative drug. It relaxes the brain and slows down the heart and breathing.
- The user can feel physically and mentally calm.
- At higher doses the user can become drowsy and fall asleep.
- Users also report sweating, itching, and nausea

What are the problems associated with Synthetic Opioids?

- Synthetic Opioids are often more potent than natural opioids and so have greater effect is smaller doses. This can increase the likelihood of harmful effects especially overdose.
- Taking Synthetic Opioids, especially if no tolerance has been built up, can lead to loss of consciousness, coma and death.
- Effects, even where tolerance has been built, can include:
 - Dizziness and fainting
 - Suppression of normal breathing, including respiratory arrest.
- As with natural opioids the synthetic opioids, if taken regularly, lead to tolerance and dependence
- Injecting synthetic Opioids risks damage to veins and arteries and can lead to infections, blood clots/thrombosis, ulcers, and gangrene.
- Sharing injecting equipment risks the spreading of BBVs.
- In the USA in 2018 approximately 32,442 people died of Synthetic Opioid overdose.
- In the UK the National Crime Agency report that fentanyl is increasingly being added to heroin. Latest results (2017) suggest that at least 26 overdose deaths were Fentanyl related. This figure may rise as back-dated toxicology tests are made.

Synthetic Opioids and the Law.

- Most Synthetic Opioids are Class A drugs.
- The maximum sentence for possessing Synthetic Opioids is 7 years in prison plus an unlimited fine.
- The maximum sentence for supplying Synthetic Opioids (including giving some to a friend) is life imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

The information and data for these handouts has been collated from a number of sources. The following sites have provided the key information and can provide further detail:

- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/>
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/>
- <https://americanaddictioncenters.org/how-long-drugs-system>
- <https://findings.org.uk/>
- <https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/penalties-drug-possession-dealing>
- <https://ash.org.uk/home/>
- https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/rapid-communications/drug-related-deaths-in-europe-2018_en