NPS use in Lothian

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Harm Reduction Team
The Lothian Issue

- Increased number of clients injecting NPS: over 10% of all IEP transactions but could be higher
- Lack of awareness of NPS amongst service users, professionals and challenge to services
- Increased number of publicly discarded works and public injecting.
- Increased media attention
- Drug related deaths
- Infections and related illnesses
“Burst”

- Most commonly reported injected NPS in Lothian
- Reported to contain pure Ethylphenidate
- Clients report this substance as being empathogenic and psychedelic in effect
- Clients report of an initial rush
- Severe comedown
Reasons for using NPS

• Self medicate
• Trauma-previous or present
• Curiosity
• Circumstances
• Friends using them
• Take away opiate withdrawal
## Drug use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drugs used</th>
<th>Current number using</th>
<th>Prior to NPS use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legal High / NPS stimulant</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal High / NPS Non-stimulant</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroin</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crack</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzodiazepines</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methadone</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methamphetamine / Crystal meth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBL</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketamine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescription Drugs</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone-else’s prescription drugs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What service users say

• “I’m here for a good time not a long time”
• “If its legal it can’t hurt me”
• “Taking more risks than ever with heroin”
• “Best drug ever taken”
• “Initial rush so intense felt like I was going to drop down dead or faint”
• “Side effects horrific. Friend doing 10 years after stabbing someone”
Temporary Class Drug Order

10th April 2015 ethylphenidate was placed under a Temporary Class Drug Order making it illegal to sell or distribute.
Test for Change

• Data collection to identify nature and extent of the challenge of NPS injecting.
• Face to face questionnaire
• Service user presentations.
• Treatment and recovery options.
• 12 week period
IMPACT

- Can be life changing
- Homeless
- Physical health issues (short and long term impact)
- Mental health issues
- Increased risky behaviours
- Society
Total Transactions

- Leith Walk
- Newington
- NEON Musselburgh
- Exchange Lady Lawson Street

May-July 2014
May-July 2015
Jan-March 2016
Physical effects

- Weight loss (27)
- Wounds (19)
- Cardiac symptoms (16)
- Septicaemia (9)
- Abscess (9)
- Infection (18)
- DVT (6)
INFECTIONS/INJURIES

• Streptococcus Pyogenes infection
  • Cellulitis
  • Abcesses
  • Joint infection
  • Ischaemic limb
  • Amputation
  • Sepsis

• Staphylococcal infections
  • Cellulitis
  • Abcesses
  • Sepsis
  • Endocarditis
  • DVT
  • HDU/ITU admission
  • Death
Psychological effects

- Paranoia (58)
- Hallucinations (28)
- Insomnia (29)
- Anxiety (12)
- Psychosis (9)
- Delusions (9)
- Depression (6)
- Aggression (5)
- Suicidal thoughts (2)
Injecting Issues

• Highly irritant and corrosive – damaging to veins and surrounding tissues
• 2-3 injections per site
• Extremely easy to miss the vein
• Large wounds at injecting sites
• Cooking up may solidify the substance
• Bingeing
• “Snowballing”
BEHAVIOURS

• Injecting frequency
• Injecting locations
• Injecting sites
• Sharing
• Hygiene
• BBV
Where are service users at now?

- Reverted back to Heroin
- Drug related deaths increase
- Increase in HCV
- Long term physical health issues
- Unsure of long term mental health issues
Where are services at now?

- Training
- Advice and information sessions
- Testing
- Collaborative working
- Pan Lothian NPS workplan
- National guidelines
Harm Reduction

- Smallest needle possible
- Clean equipment-follow good hygiene
- Liaise with friends
- Be cautious with dose – avoid bingeing
- Always filter
- Avoid cooking
- Dilute small amounts with more water
- Do not use citric/vit C if not necessary
- Safe sex
- Avoid “snowballing”
resources

- [www.scottishdrugsservices.com](http://www.scottishdrugsservices.com)
- [www.mycrew.org.uk](http://www.mycrew.org.uk)
- Shooting Up [www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)
- New Psychoactive Substances [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/Recent](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/Recent)
- One new drug a week [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications)
- Lothian Viral Hepatitis Managed Care Network Annual Report 2014/15
- Drug-related Deaths 2014 Edinburgh and Lothians