

# CREW COVID-19 and Drug Markets Survey



**What you told us...and harm reduction  
information we think you should know**

**May's survey results highlight similar themes to previous reports. Many people are taking larger quantities of drugs, taking drugs more frequently and spending more.**

**This will increase drug-related harms, especially since many people also report difficulty in accessing drug-related support. Reports of shortages, 'poorer quality' of products and less variety, highlight a changing drugs market.**

**All drug use has risks, but for those who choose to take them, informed harm reduction messages are essential.**

**As lock down eases (in many countries) and we are reunited with loved ones, it may feel like an opportunity to celebrate, but remember drug use is particularly risky at this time.**

# **If you have been taking less than usual...**

- **Your tolerance will have reduced, meaning you will need to take less to get the desired effect.**
- **If you decide to increase your use after a period of reduction or abstinence, there is a heightened overdose risk - dose low, go slow!**

**In April and May, an average of 30% of respondents reported 'poorer quality' of drugs. This may reflect changes to the appearance, potency, purity or contents of a drug.**

**If you choose to take drugs:**

- **Try to only purchase from people you trust.**
- **Test your drugs before use. Reagent test kits are available online.**
- **Always start with a test dose (a couple of draws, a tiny line or part of a pill).**
- **Wait 2 hours before taking more.**
- **If the effects are different to what you would expect then avoid taking more.**

# **If you have been taking more than usual...**

- **This can have a negative effect on your physical and mental health.**
- **Your tolerance will have increased, and although you need a greater amount to achieve the effect, taking greater amounts of drugs increases the risk of drug-related harms including overdose.**
- **If you want to take less, a gradual reduction in use may help to reduce withdrawal symptoms and this is recommended for drugs such as benzodiazepines, GHB and alcohol.**
- **For information on how to manage alcohol use, visit: [www.crew.scot/alcohol-and-lockdown](http://www.crew.scot/alcohol-and-lockdown)**

**The SARS-CoV-2 virus can spread through aerosols and from contaminated surfaces and equipment.**

**Ensure good hygiene and follow harm reduction practices:**

- **Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before and after you handle, prepare or take drugs.**
- **Clean packaging and wipe surfaces with alcohol wipes before preparing drugs.**

- **Crush substances down as fine as possible before use to reduce soft tissue abrasions (cuts can increase the likelihood of disease transmission).**
- **Avoid sharing paraphernalia (including snorting tools, injecting equipment, joints, pipes, vapes) - use colour coded equipment so you don't get mixed up.**
- **For general hygiene advice related to COVID-19 visit: [www.crew.scot/coronavirus-general-hygiene-tips](http://www.crew.scot/coronavirus-general-hygiene-tips)**



**If you would like help to better  
manage your drug use...**

**Find a drug service in your area:**

**SCOTLAND: [www.scottishdrugservices.com](http://www.scottishdrugservices.com)**

**EUROPE: [www.tripapp.org](http://www.tripapp.org)**

**There have been changes to services across  
Scotland, including injecting equipment  
providers (needle exchanges).**

**For service changes, visit:**

**[www.sdf.org.uk/covid-19/service-delivery-  
changes](http://www.sdf.org.uk/covid-19/service-delivery-changes)**



# **Take opiates?**

## **Make sure you have naloxone.**

**For home delivery visit:**

**[www.sfad.org.uk/support-  
services/take-home-naloxone](http://www.sfad.org.uk/support-services/take-home-naloxone)**



**For more information:**

**[www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)**

**Looking for someone  
to talk to?**

**[wearewithyou.org.uk](http://wearewithyou.org.uk)**

