

## Terminology

### Drug:

A drug is a substance, other than food, that, when taken into the body, changes the way your brain or central nervous system works.

### Use (Misuse etc.):

Terms like 'misuse' and 'abuse' can often be confusing terms to use as people will have differing opinions and feelings on what counts as 'misuse'. The term 'drug use' is broader and is more helpful.

### County Lines:

'County Lines' is a term used when drug gangs from big cities expand their operations to smaller towns, often using violence to drive out local dealers and exploiting children and vulnerable adults to sell drugs. These dealers will use dedicated mobile phone lines, known as 'deal lines', to take orders from drug users.

## Drug Categories:

<p><u>Stimulants</u></p> <p>These drugs stimulate the nervous system, increase alertness, diminish fatigue and delay sleep.</p>	<p><u>Depressants</u></p> <p>These drugs depress the central nervous system, relieve tension and anxiety and promote relaxation.</p>
<p><u>Hallucinogens</u></p> <p>These drugs heighten the senses – people can hear and see things differently.</p>	<p><u>Pain relief/Others</u></p> <p>These drugs reduce sensitivity and emotional reaction to pain.</p> <p>These drugs produce feelings of warmth and contentment.</p>

<p><u>Stimulants</u></p> <p>Caffeine Cocaine Ecstasy Nicotine</p>	<p><u>Depressants</u></p> <p>Alcohol Cannabis Nitrous Oxide</p>
<p><u>Hallucinogens</u></p> <p>(Cannabis) (Ketamine) (Nitrous Oxide)</p>	<p><u>Pain relief/Others</u></p> <p>Heroin Ketamine</p>

## Laws:

### Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

Creates three classes of controlled substances – A, B and C (A carries the toughest penalties). Offences include possession, possession with intent to supply, supply and allowing your premises to be used for producing or supplying controlled drugs.

### Psychoactive Substances Act 2016

This is a blanket ban on everything that has a psychoactive effect. Offences are production, supplying or offering to supply, possession with intent to supply, importation or exportation and possession of a psychoactive substance in a Custodial Institution.

There are exceptions, including drugs covered by the MDA, medicines, alcohol, tobacco, alkyl nitrites and food and drink.

## Signs and Symptoms of Use

*Please note that there may not be any obvious sign, and that many of these may have other causes – the only real way to know if someone is using drugs is to talk to them!*

### Behaviour:

- Change of behaviour
- Loss of money
- Loss of co-ordination
- Secretive
- Loss of appetite
- Mood swings
- Sleepy
- Unable to sleep
- Change in attitude
- Loss of motivation
- Low self esteem
- Telling lies

### Drug Effect:

- Enlarged pupils, bloodshot or glassy eyes
- Increased energy and confidence
- Loss of inhibitions
- Loss of coordination
- Aggressive behaviour
- Trembling, twitches
- Paranoia (being extremely suspicious)
- Hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that aren't really there)
- Nausea and vomiting

- Complaints of stomach cramps, blurred vision, headaches or dizziness
- Exhaustion, fatigue or insomnia (being unable to sleep)
- Irritability and moodiness
- Changes to eating patterns such as eating less or more
- Anxiety symptoms such as panic attacks, dizziness, sweating, dry mouth, muscle aches and headaches.

#### Paraphernalia:

- Finding actual drugs
- Large cigarette papers or (rizla)
- Roaches
- Bonges
- Discoloured knives
- Magazine paper wraps
- Tin foil
- Syringes
- Mirrors or tiles and razor blades
- Spent aerosol cans with product and no gas
- Cut straws
- Scales (suggest dealing)
- Pipes or broken bottle necks

#### Signs and Symptoms – Gangs and County Lines

##### Grooming:

- New friendships, maybe with unlikely people (e.g. older)
- New possessions like phones, trainers, clothes, unexplained money
- Change to friendship groups
- Secretive behaviour
- Being seen with people with known or suspected gang connections
- Change in relationship with parent/carer

##### Involvement:

- Persistently going missing/suddenly leaving home
- More money or belongings
- Excessive texts or phone calls (secretive)
- Unusual relationships
- Signs of physical harm
- Decline in school performance
- Changes in emotional well-being
- Parental concern (always notice this!)

### Vulnerability Factors:

- Lack of knowledge about substances and their consequences
- Genetic predisposition
- Personality traits (e.g. impulsivity, sensation seeking)
- The presence of mental health conditions and behavioural disorders
- Family neglect and abuse
- Poor attachment to school and the community
- Social norms and environments conducive to substance use (including the influence of media)
- Growing up in marginalized, stigmatized and deprived communities

(From 'What we have learned over the last ten years: A summary of knowledge acquired and produced by the UN system on drug-related matters' March 2019)

### How can we help protect our children?

#### Protective Factors Include:

- Psychological and emotional well-being
- Personal and social competence
- A strong attachment to caring and effective parents (or a caring relationship with at least one adult)
- Strong parental monitoring with clear family rules
- Family involvement in the child's life
- Attachment to schools and communities that are well resourced and organised

So, can we have input into any of these?

#### Some practical ideas:

- Know what your child is doing on the internet
- Know where they are and who they are with
- Talk to them (including about drugs) – and be ready to listen
- Get to know your child's friends and their families
- Help your child learn how to handle conflict without violence
- Encourage your child to get involved in hobbies or similar
- Help your child develop peer resistance techniques
- Help your child develop helpful skills like socialising, communication
- Build their confidence
- Spend time with your child (easier to start this when they are younger)

## Where to get help:

- G.P.
- School
- [actionforchildren.org.uk](http://actionforchildren.org.uk)
- [brighterfuturesforchildren.org](http://brighterfuturesforchildren.org)
- [talktofrank.com](http://talktofrank.com)
- Social Services
- Police

## Hope UK:

- Website: [hopeuk.org](http://hopeuk.org)
- Resources: [resources.hopeuk.org](http://resources.hopeuk.org) (includes e-learning units)
- Facebook: [HopeUKofficial](https://www.facebook.com/HopeUKofficial)
- Twitter: [@hopeukUK](https://twitter.com/hopeukUK)
- Instagram: [hopeukuk](https://www.instagram.com/hopeukuk)