

BEHIND THE LINES

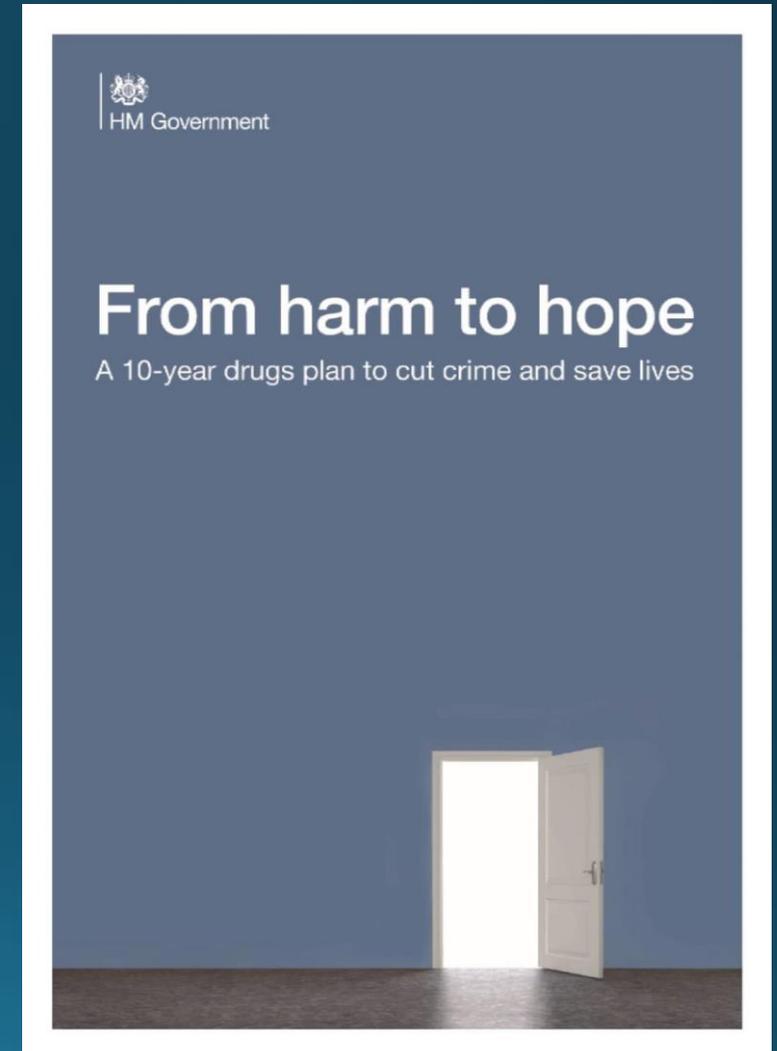
THE IMPACT OF RECREATIONAL DRUG USE ON SOCIETY AND THE WORKPLACE



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

'From Harm to Hope'

- Dame Carol Black review.
- Generational shift on the recreational use of drugs.
- Limited evidence on prevention of recreational use particularly amongst adults.

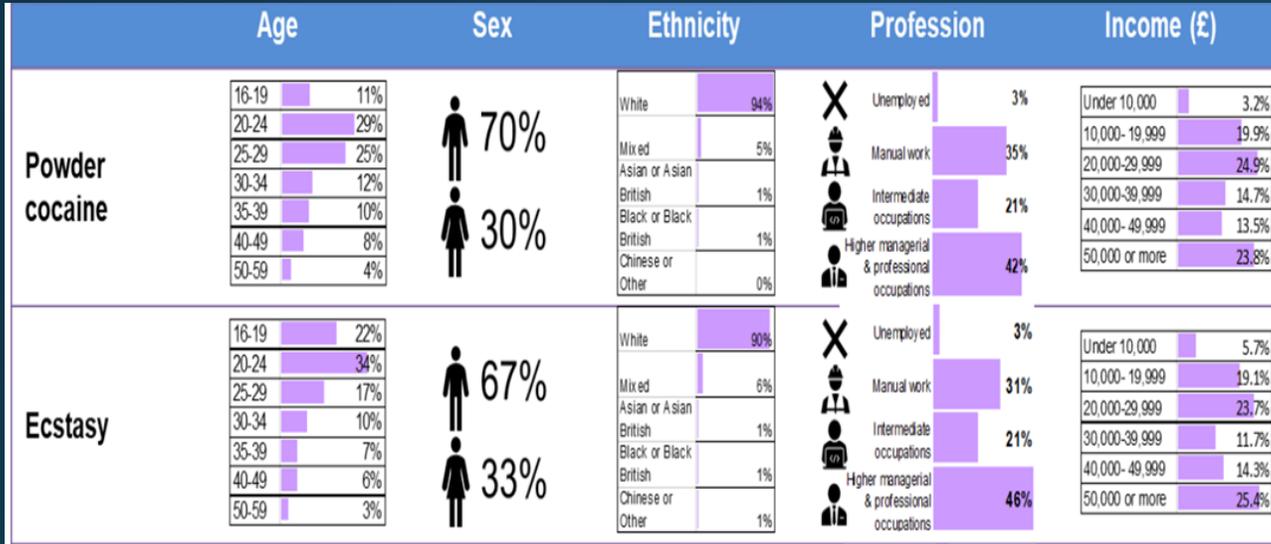


Context

- The illicit drug market in the UK is worth almost **£10 billion** a year with **3 million** users.
- Including health harms, costs of crime and wider impacts on society, the estimated cost is **£22 billion**.
- Drug related deaths have risen **80%** since **2012**.
- **1,716** organised crime groups involved in supplying drugs in the UK.
- The county lines model represents a significant threat, having quadrupled in volume since **2017**.
- The recruitment of children and young people into county lines – and the subsequent child exploitation- increased by **31%** in **2020**.



Recreational Use



- The number of powder cocaine users has increased sharply with daily spend up 290% in the past 10 years (NCA).
- Opioid related deaths on downward trajectory in London since 2016. Cocaine related deaths increasing.
- Disproportionate recreational use- white, male 20-40, professional background, high level of disposable income.



Customer Characteristics

- White collar workers and professionals.
- Homeowners with families.
- Highly profitable customers with disposable income.
- Expect a service that delivers good product on time and in convenient manner.
- Willing to pay a premium for the service.



What End-Users See



- Wide selection of drugs offered via encrypted apps.
- Clearly labelled and appealingly packaged.
- Social media platforms to advertise and build brand. Complete with logo and brand image.
- Price menu for Wholesale and Retail.
- Sense of anonymity for customer.
- Operating model similar to legitimate services e.g. Amazon, Deliveroo etc - high quality products, delivered to the door.
- Messaging apps have negated the need for specific 'deal line' enabling the business to open new lines and to expand like a franchised business.

What End-Users are Shielded From

- 50% of all acquisitive crimes are linked to drugs.
- 50% of all homicides are linked to drugs.
- The supply chain has become increasingly violent and exploitative.
- Estimates suggest 27,000 children in England and Wales identify as gang members, and 2,000 teenagers from London alone have been identified as having a link to county line drug supply (The Children's Commissioner).

Middle-class cocaine use fuels London's rising violence, says Sadiq Khan

Mayor says action needed against party-goers who buy drug as well as gang members



Behind the Lines- Rasheed, Lydia & Michael

- Following exclusion from a number of schools Rasheed (15 years old) was recruited into a local gang and began dealing drugs for them.
- He was robbed and the drugs were stolen. He was then held accountable for the debt to the value of the drugs lost.
- Debt was enforced by way of violence and threats to Rasheed and family.
- The debt was to be paid off by transporting class A drugs from London and selling them in the Home Counties.
- It is believed the robbery was set-up by the gang to secure continued and more extensive labour from Rasheed by way of 'debt-bondage'.
- Rasheed began to go missing regularly and was found in trap houses outside of London.
- At the trap house Lydia, also a child, was being forced to 'work off' her debt to the group by having sex with males, often as a 'reward' for their 'good sales performance'.
- Michael, a male in his late teens, although not likely towards the top of the group's hierarchy, was found to be controlling and exploiting the children. He was charged with multiple offences but was shot dead prior to trial- believed owing to a feud between gangs over drug territory.

Behind the Lines- Oliver

- Oliver is 14 and from an affluent family.
- He has mental health issues and learning difficulties.
- Behavioural issues linked to his neuro-diversity left him outside mainstream schooling.
- Seized upon by a group who told Oliver he owed money for items he had broken and other contrived justifications.
- Forced to sell drugs to repay the debt.
- Both of his parents struggled to cope- one left and the other tried to pay the debt off.
- Gang maintained he still owed money despite payment.
- Continued to work dealing drugs under threat of violence- including being stabbed twice.
- Solution only found by Oliver being taken into care and moved to a placement elsewhere in the UK. Despite this he continued to receive threats from the gang.

Today- Your Insight

- 1) The impact of recreational drug use by employees.
- 2) What workplaces can do to raise awareness.
 - How can we close the gap between perception and reality?
 - What levers are available to influence behaviour in this space?
 - How can we frame this as an ethical issue and ensure employees can make an informed decision?

