

Britain's War on Drugs: How is it going? Changing times.

April 2026

Dr J Yates

Retired GP Birmingham

Drug related death analyst

"Doctors for Drug Policy Reform"



Britain's War on Drugs: What is happening in 2026?

In the last five years things have changed:

1. Trends in drug use (wastewater analysis)
2. Nitazenes in pills and increasingly in heroin (And now also the "orphines")
3. Update on Afghan poppy cultivation 2023, 24, 25 and 26.
4. The story of Xylazine since 2023, and since 2025, also medetomidine,
5. The ongoing story of SCRAs (synthetic cannabinoid receptors)
6. What will happen next

“There's never been a more dangerous time to take drugs”: National Crime Agency.

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/there-has-never-been-a-more-dangerous-time-to-take-drugs-says-national-crime-agency-as-annual-threat-assessment-is-published>

Government Wastewater analysis (WAND): 13th April 2026.

England level estimates between August 2024 and July 2025:

- **cocaine** : around 123,000 kg

£9.8 billion market value

- **ketamine** estimated to be 30,800kg

£0.9 billion market value

- **heroin** estimated to be 6,800kg

£0.3 billion market value

- **amphetamine** estimated to be 46,700kg,

£0.5 billion market value

- **MDMA** estimated to be 9,900kg

£0.3 billion market value

- **methamphetamine** around 2,300kg,

£0.2 billion market value

Trends:2021-2025

Largest increase in estimated consumption : **ketamine** and **MDMA**.

Decreases in estimated consumption of **heroin** and **amphetamine**.

(measured in mgs per 1,000 people per day) increased for:

- **MDMA (232%) (>triple)**
- **ketamine (229%) (>triple)**
- **methamphetamine (61%)**
- **cocaine (26%)**

However, estimates decreased for:

- **heroin (-40%)**
- **amphetamine (-27%)**

Government Wastewater analysis (WAND): 13th April 2026.

Drug consumption by areas in England and Scotland, WAND: August 2024 to July 2025

Drug	Areas with high estimated consumption	Areas with low estimated consumption
Cocaine	Liverpool, Sunderland, Scotland	Yorkshire and the Humber
Ketamine	Liverpool, Brighton, Portsmouth, Norfolk, Bristol	West Midlands, East Midlands, Scotland
MDMA	Brighton, London and Liverpool, South West	North East
Amphetamine	North West, East of England	Portsmouth, Yorkshire and the Humber
Methamphetamine	London, Brighton, Manchester, Gloucester, Bristol, Birmingham, Peterborough, Leeds	Low in rural areas and small cities
Heroin	Scotland, West Midlands, East of England	6-MAM is too unstable to make comments on low estimated consumption

Do the Police know what is happening to street heroin in UK?

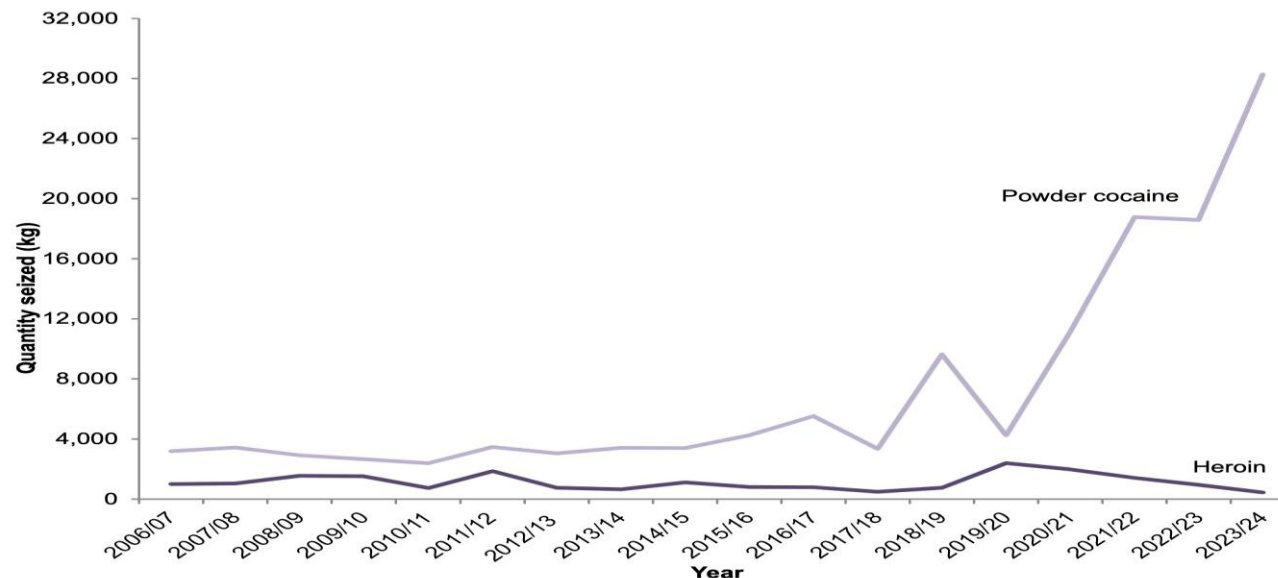
In 2023-24, **Cocaine** seizures were **up 52%**; **Heroin** seizures were **down 54%**!

Police Seizures of drugs in England and Wales in the year ending March 2024:

Powder cocaine: 28.27 tonnes of powder cocaine was seized by police forces and Border Force; representing a **52% increase** compared to the previous year. This is the largest recorded quantity of cocaine since the time series began in **1973**.

Heroin: the total quantity of heroin seized **decreased by 54%**, from 950kg to 441kg, compared to the previous year. This is the lowest quantity of heroin seized since **1989**

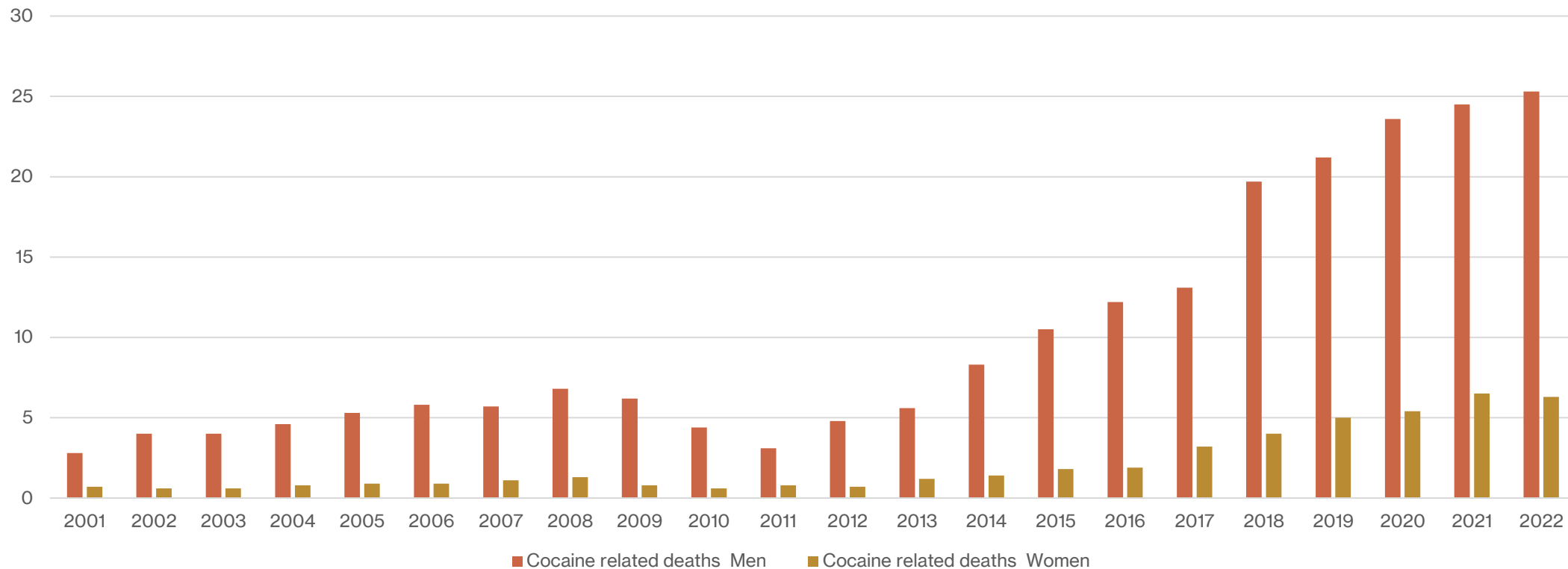
Figure 5: Quantity of powder cocaine and heroin seized by police forces and Border Force, years ending March 2007 to March 2024



Source: Home Office, [Summary Table 2](#).

Cocaine related deaths have risen in England and Wales for 13th consecutive year

Cocaine related deaths have risen in England and Wales for 13th consecutive year:



ONS: Age-standardised mortality rates per million people

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsrelatedtodrugpoisoningine nglandandwales/2023registrations>



Arrival of Synthetic Opioids in the UK since 2019

Two separate groups of are at increased and increasing risk of harm and of death related to synthetic opioids: “nitazenes” and since 2025 also “orphines”:

1. **Young people (often teenagers)** who buy pills and powders on-line (especially diazepam, Xanax, oxycodone) may now contain nitazenes.

-Not in touch with “drug treatment services”

2. **Older people (20-70)** who normally use street heroin. May now contain nitazenes, orphines, xylazine etc.

Nobody needs to die of opioid overdose if someone is around to give naloxone.

(other things can also reduce risk of harm e.g. drug checking, drug consumption rooms)

2020, 21, 22...

First three deaths related to “nitazene” in Birmingham: 2021-22

- 3 very young men, aged 19, 20 and 27yrs.
- They all separately thought they had bought **oxycodone pills**.
- They were not people who used heroin. They were not known to drug treatment services.
- Toxicology showed **n-pyrrolidino etonitazene**. (What is it?)

Date of death	Gender Age	Substances contributing to Cause of death	Place of death
October 2021	M 20	Synthetic opioid (N-pyrrolidino etonitazene) toxicity. Acute ethanolic intoxication. Benzodiazepine (Alprazolam) consumption. Zopiclone consumption.	Home
January 2022	M 27	N-pyrrolidino etonitazene toxicity cocaine and flualprazolam use.	Home
January 2022	M 19	Combined toxicity of N-pyrrolidino etonitazene and flualprazolam	Home

2020-2026: Fake Oxycodone pills containing “nitazenes” instead of oxycodone or Xanax or diazepam have, caused deaths of young people across the UK from December 2020. (Inquests held in 2021-2023)

bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-61719172

Three men's deaths in Birmingham related to new synthetic drug

29 June 2022



Dr Judith Yates first identified the three deaths caused by N-pyrrolidino etonitazene

HullLive

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Teen bullied over cleft lip dies after accidental overdose of dark web drug

The family of Will Helstrip, from East Yorkshire, have paid an emotional tribute after he died in May

By James Campbell Reporter

05:00, 1 OCT 2023

Will Helstrip aged 18, Yorkshire




bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-6777938#:~:text=Will%20Melbourne%2C%2019%2C%20had%20mis

'We had to investigate our autistic son's death'

Warrington, Cheshire

4 January



The parents of an autistic teenager who died from an accidental overdose say they had to investigate his death themselves to find out what killed him. Will Melbourne, 19, had mistakenly taken metonitazene, a strong synthetic opioid he bought on the dark web.

Will Melbourne: Died, Dec 2020. Inquest Dec 2023



WEDINOS Welsh Emerging Drugs and Identification of Novel Substances

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WELCOME

'Legal highs, club drugs, designer drugs, psychoactives...'
Drug markets are changing.
It can be hard to get accurate information and stay safe.
WEDINOS tests substances to give individual users and others rapid and accurate information to reduce harms.

COLLECTING, TESTING, INFORMING

Sample Testing
Click here to complete a Substance Sample & Effect Record form.

Sample Results
Find your sample results here and results of other WEDINOS tests..

Substance Information
Click here for more information on a range of substances.

Following a review by the WEDINOS Programme Board, it has been decided that as of 25th July 2014, no further samples of Steroids and/or Image Enhancing drugs (SIEDs) will be tested by WEDINOS. For further information please [click here](#).

News

Feb 1st, 2024

admin@wedinos.org email
We have identified some issues with the WEDINOS email system. These currently remain ongoing. We are working to resolve them and appreciate your patience as we do so. If you are working in the media sector and have any media enquiries please direct them to the Public Health Wales Communications Team.

Tweets from @WEDINOSProject

WEDINOS Project @WE... · Jun 13, 2023

Having observed several conversations relating to xylazine, we have extracted the following information sheets from our upcoming annual report, to provide a little information on the substance; and details of samples submitted to the programme profiled as containing xylazine

Xylazine

WEDINOS and Xylazine

Rick Lines

WEDINOS is a harm reduction project, providing an anonymous service, and

A sample sent to WEDINOS for testing in March 2022:



March 2022

W024533

Date Received: 07 Mar 2022

Postcode: RG4 -

Purchase Intent: Oxycodone instant release

Package Label: Mallinckrodt M30 pill

Sample Colour: Blue

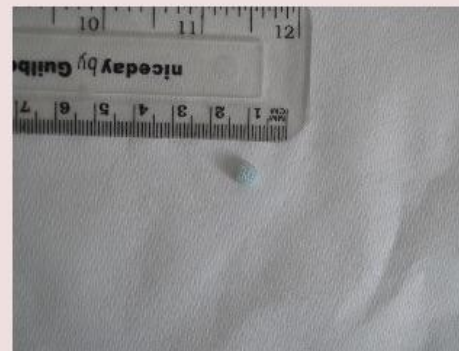
Sample Form: Tablet

Consumption Method: Array

Self-Reported Effects: Euphoria, Increased Confidence, Visual Hallucinations, Relaxed, Nausea, Loss of consciousness

Sample Upon Analysis (Major): Etonitazepyne

Sample Upon Analysis (Minor):



[Click to Enlarge](#)

("etonitazepyne" = n-pyrrolidino etonitazene)

Screen shot from WEDINOS.org

Why are “nitazenes” and “orphines” (groups of synthetic opioids) in UK now?

-1950s “nitazenes” :potent synthetic opioids, first discovered and described in scientific papers in 1950s, and “orphine”s in 1960s by Paul Janssen (scientist who also discovered the fentanyl. Neither was ever used as medicines

-2019: China controlled fentanyl and its precursors to the US.
Chinese underground chemists experimented with other synthetic opioids and re-discovered nitazenes. and posted pills to Europe..

-2020-2021 First wave of Nitazenes “new” synthetic opioids first arrived in the UK from China in pills, disguised as Oxycodone or as one of the benzodiazepines.
Contributed to deaths of 3 young people in Birmingham and other teenagers around the UK.

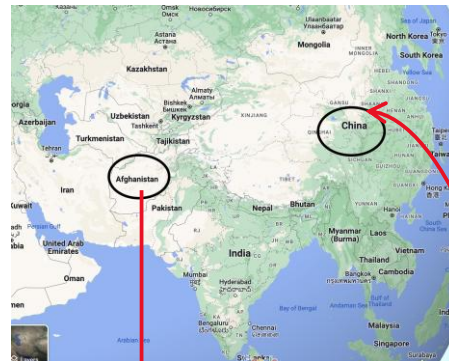
- 2023: Taliban reduced poppy crop by 95%. (similar tiny harvests in 2024 and 2025)

- Summer 2023: Second wave of nitazenes in the UK:
“Nitazenes” in “heroin” have been found to be cause of death of 38 people in Birmingham since June 2023.

-July 2025: Nitazenes banned by China. “Orphines” (a different synthetic opioid) arrived in UK **October 2025**



95% of Europe’s illicit heroin came from Afghanistan.
Crop successfully reduced by 95% in 2022-23, by the Taliban.
(Photo: Talking drugs)



China, world's fentanyl source, to finally control drug



Charles Fain Lehman
December 3, 2018

China will finally add fentanyl and its analogs to its list of controlled substances, following a Saturday meeting between Chinese president Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump.

Synthetic opioid fentanyl successfully controlled by China in 2019; “nitazenes” banned by China in July 2025

Since 2023, people who use heroin are increasingly at risk, in the UK.

Simeon was living in a shared house in Birmingham, aged 33yrs.

He had bought what he thought was a bag of heroin, not knowing it contained n-desethyl isotonitazene. He shared one "bag" with two friends.

The other two survived, but Simeon died two days later in hospital in October 2023.

His mother believes that if there had been a drug consumption room in Birmingham, with drug checking, Simeon would have gone there and could still be alive today.

38 people who thought they had bought heroin, have died nitazene related deaths in Birmingham since June 2023 .

→ [bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67589364](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67589364)

An inquest will determine the cause of his death, but Ms McAnoy says the coroner told her a nitazene was found in Simeon's system.



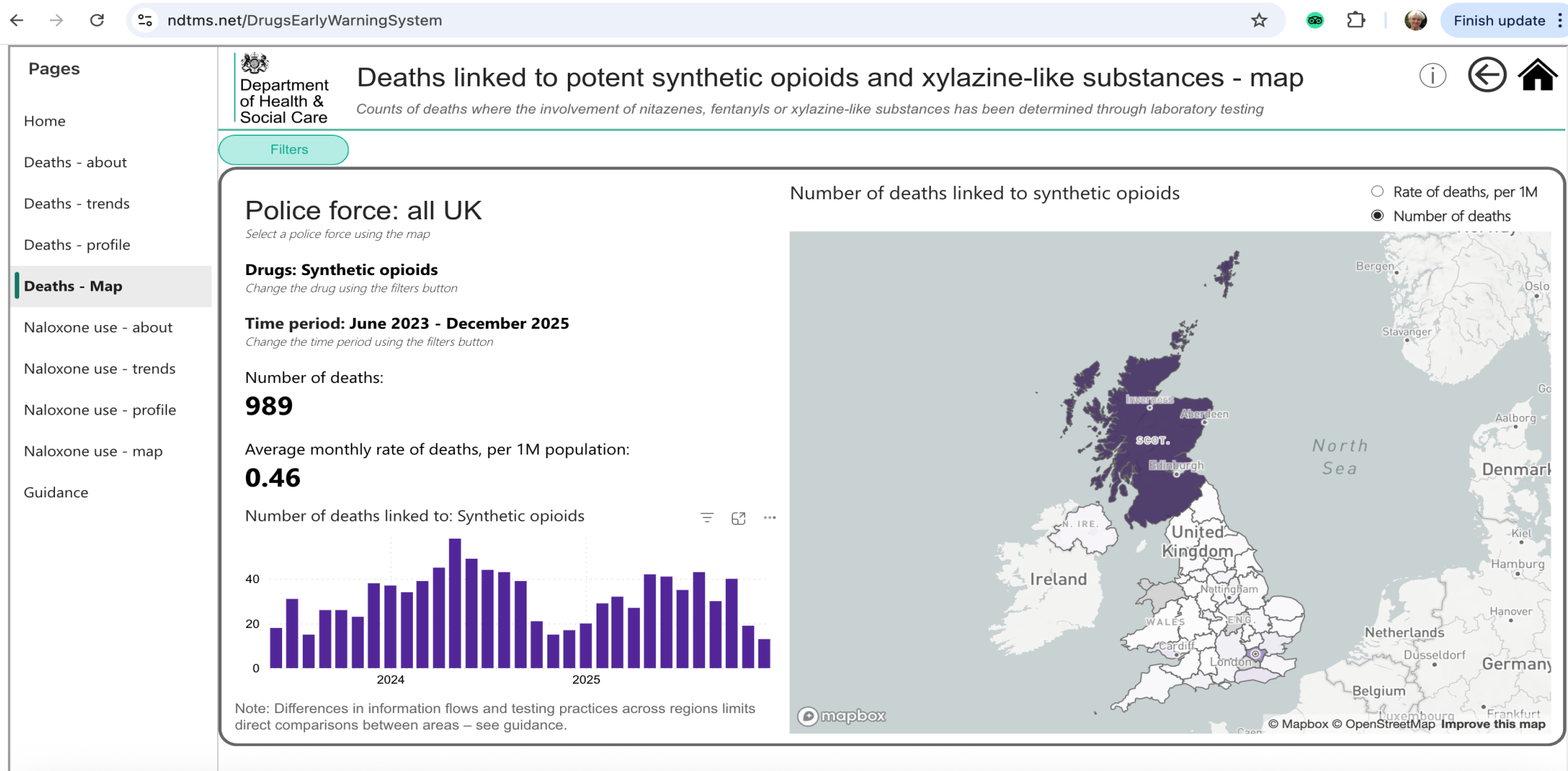
Simeon was the second of Jackie's four children

"We will never ever be the same as a family," she said. "For every one of us, something's gone. We are all more isolated. Christmas is coming up and no one wants to celebrate."

She has called for the government to step in. "This is going to become an epidemic and we're going to lose a lot of young people," she warned.

BBC.co.uk

National “Drugs Early Warning System” Can be seen (sometimes) via tab on NDTMS.net



Screen shot
taken from
NDTMS.net
April 2026

2026

Double whammy :

- 1) Prohibition of fentanyl production by China in 2019 (and since July 2025, also “orphines”):
- 2) Prohibition of poppies in Afghanistan since 2023:

Alcis and David Mansfield “The return of the Golden Crescent . Rising poppy cultivation across SW Asia” March 2026

As poppy harvest had reduced by 95%, farm gate opium prices rose in 2023.

The price fell slightly in 2024, because of high levels of opium from the record 2021-22 harvest, held in stock.

Heroin still flowed to Europe during 2024 and 2025.

What is happening to poppies in 2026?

”Drip irrigation” in Iran, Pakistan and less accessible parts of Afghanistan.

David Mansfield March 14th 2026:

<https://www.alcis.org/post/the-return-of-the-golden-crescent-rising-poppies-cultivation-across-southwest-asia>



<https://www.alcis.orgblog>

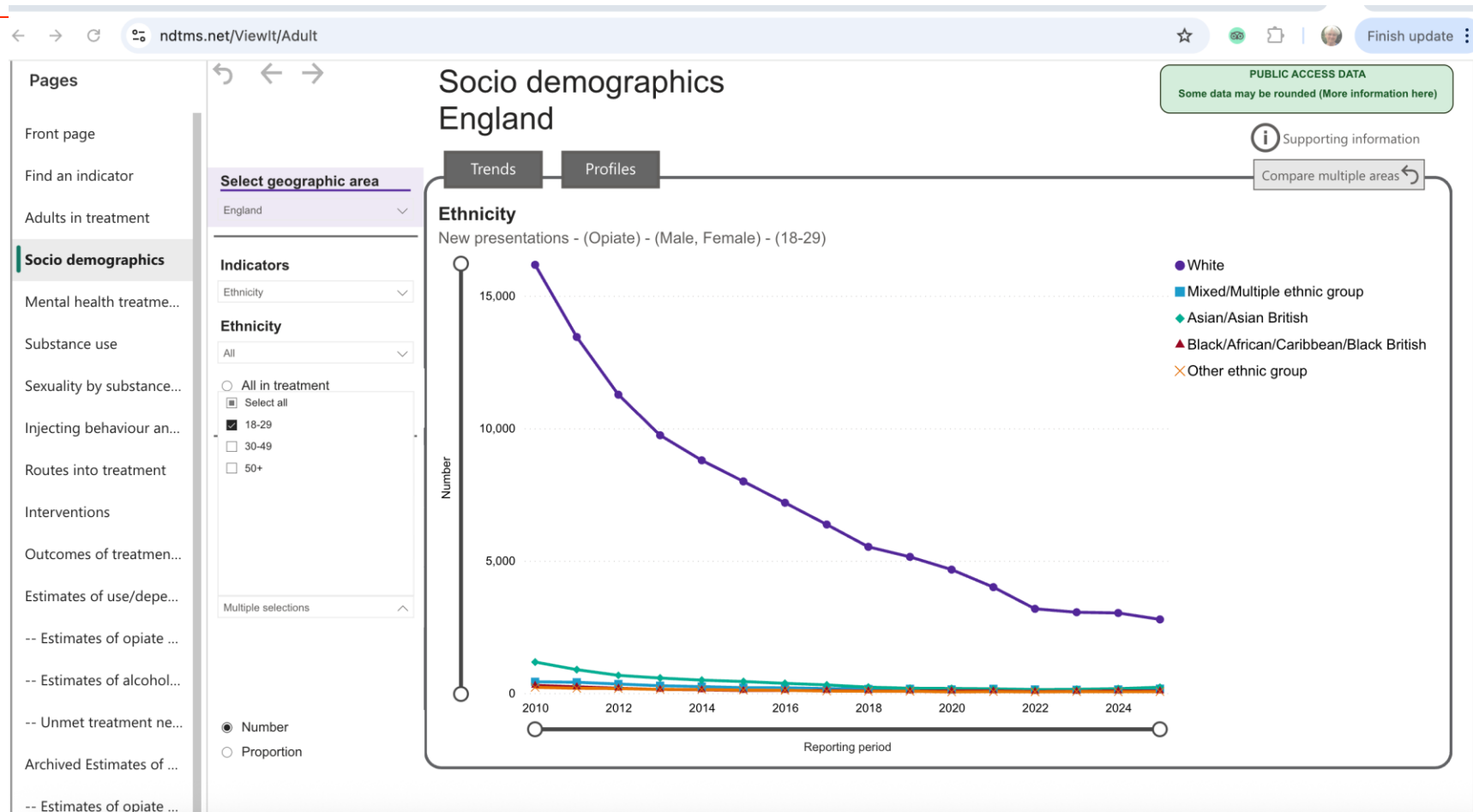
1 2 3 304

David Mansfield @mansfieldintinc · Apr 12

7. In Afghanistan, farmers persist with cultivation in areas where they can, & where they cannot they have moved to Iran & Pakistan, taking advantage of the deteriorating security situation, preexisting market & familial linkages, & exploited new technologies like drip irrigation

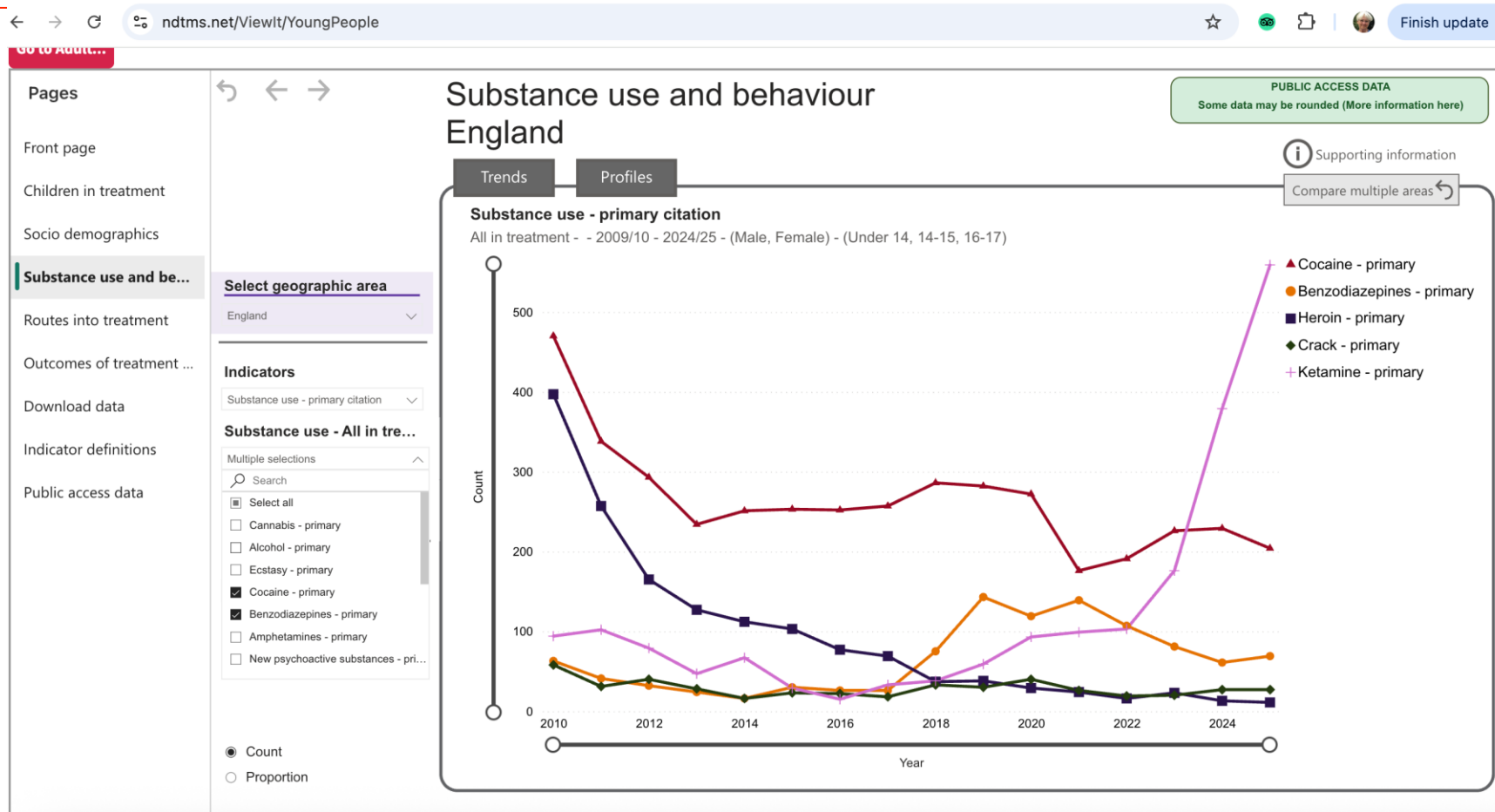
1 3 6 582

18-39yr olds: new presentations to drug treatment services for opioid use are falling. (2010-2025)



Screen shot taken from NDTMS.net April 2026

Under 18s. Ketamine up: but heroin and benzos down (2010-2025).



Screen shot taken from NDTMS.net April 2026

Whack-a-mole consequences of prohibition

- Nitazenes
- “Orphines”
- Xylazine
- Medetomidine
- SCRAAs

Look at this: An extraordinary heroin mixture sent to WEDINOS from Wakefield on **6.2.26:**
Four synthetic opioids plus heroin and medetomidine.

N-pyrrolidino protonitazene, N-propionitrile chlorphine, Heroin, Medetomidine,
N-desethylprotonitazene, Etodezitramide,



February 2026

W073552

Date Received: 06 Feb 2026

Postcode: WF2 -

Purchase Intent: heroin

Package Label: Not Stated

Sample Colour: Brown

Sample Form: Powder

Consumption Method: Not Stated

Self-Reported Effects: Not Stated

Sample Upon Analysis (Major): N-pyrrolidino protonitazene, Paracetamol, N-propionitrile chlorphine, Heroin, Medetomidine, Caffeine, Noscapine

Sample Upon Analysis (Minor): N-desethylprotonitazene, Etodezitramide, 6-MAM, Papaverine



[Click to Enlarge](#)

“Nitazenes” found by WEDINOS since 23.1.26. (See extraordinary concoction sent from Wakefield in February which includes 2 nitazenes and 2 “orphines”)

Table by Dr J Yates, from information posted by WEDINOS

Date	Intended purchase	Ingredients when tested	appearance	Post code	place
10.3.2026	Heroin	Etonitazene, Heroin	Brown powder	EH15	Edinburgh
10.3.2026	Heroin	Heroin, metonitazene	Brown powder	EH3	Edinburgh
9.3.2026	heroin	Etonitazene, heroin	Brown powder	EH32	East of Edinburgh
17.2.2026	heroin	Metonitazene, protonitazene, nirtrazolam, bromazolam, 6-MAM	Brown powder	NP20	Newport
13.2.2026	heroin	Heroin, etonitazene	Brown powder	G83	Loch Lomond area, North west of Glasgow
6.2.2026	Heroin	N-pyrrolidino protonitazene, N-propionitrile chlorphine, heroin, medetomidine, n-desethyl protonitazene, etodezitramide.	Brown powder	WF2	Wakefield
3.2.2026	Oxycodone (v48/12)	AB-MDMSBA , metonitazene	Blue pill	ST87	Biddulph, North of Stoke-on-Trent
28.1.2026	heroin	Heroin, metonitazene	Grey, brown powder	EH6	Edinburgh
26.1.2026	Valium (martin dow)	Metonitazene, bromazolam	Blue pill	BN25	Brighton
26.1.2026	heroin	Diazepam Etonitazene, heroin	Brown powder	EH48	Bathgate (East of Glasgow)
28.1.2026	heroin	Xylazine, metonitazene, protonitazene, cocaine, heroin	Brown liquid	NP20	Newport
23.1.2026	Diazepam	Bromazolam, metonitazene	Blue pill	SA43	Cardigan , West Wales

Xylazine and Medetomidine are anaesthetics and alpha-2 adrenergic agonists (not opioids).

In overdose they can both cause:

- profound sedation,
- very slow heart rate,
- slow respiration
- high blood sugar

These effects are not reversed by naloxone (though naloxone should still be given, in case any opioids taken).

Xylazine: Created in 1962 as a quick acting animal anaesthetic used by vets.

- Arrived in the UK in 2023, mainly in “heroin” samples.

Medetomidine is 200 times more potent than xylazine.

- Was first seen by WEDINOS in 2025, (along with the orphines)

They are both animal anaesthetics, and not opioids.

- They also both cause vaso-constriction so slow wound healing.
- **They are added to synthetic opioid mixtures, in an attempt to provide a longer, more mellow “hit”, to mimic the effects of heroin.**

date	Purchase intent	Medetomidine and “Orphines” found by WEDINOS October 2025-Jan 2026.	appearance	Post code	place
23.1.2026	Afghan heroin	Heroin, 6-NAM, paracetamol, caffeine, Medetomidine	Brown powder	L8	Liverpool
23.1.2026	Heroin	Paracetamol, Caffeine, Medetomidine , Clozapine, 6-NAM, Heroin	Brown powder	WR1	Worcester area
19.1.2026	heroin	N-propionitrile-chlorphine , Medetomidine	White powder	NN12	Towcester (NW of Milton Keynes)
15.1.2026	Diazepam	Medetomidine	White pill	DD1	Dundee
31.12.2025	Diazepam	Medetomidine	White pill	PR8	Southport
31.12.2025	Diazepam	Medetomidine	White pill	DD1	Dundee
23.12.2025	Valium	Medetomidine	White pill	FK4	Nr Falkirk (E of Glasgow)
16.12.2025	Valium	Medetomidine	White pill	FK1	Falkirk (E of Glasgow)
18.11.2025	Diazepam	Medetomidine	White pill	ML6	Airdrie (E of Glasgow)
12.11.2025	Heroin	Paracetamol, N-propionitrile-chlorphine , Medetomidine	Brown powder	OX14	Abingdon, (S of Oxford)
5.11.2025	Heroin	Heroin, 6-NAM, Paracetamol, Medetomidine	Brown powder	E18	Woodford, East London
21.10.2025	Heroin	Heroin, 6-NAM, Medetomidine	Brown	L15B	Liverpool?
15.10.2025	Heroin	Paracetamol, 6-NAM, Caffeine, papaverine, Medetomidine	White solid	CF62	Barry. W of Cardiff
7.10.2025	Heroin	5,6-dichloro desmethyl-chlorphine , Medetomidine	White powder	SW9	Brixton, London

Table by Dr J Yates, data taken from WEDINOS.org

SCRAs: (“mamba”/”spice”) (synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists)

Nothing to do with cannabis

The exact number of synthetic cannabinoids discovered is difficult to pinpoint due to the continuous emergence of new compounds. However, based on available data:

- **European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA = EUDA):** Currently monitors **277 synthetic cannabinoids** (as of 2025), making them the largest group of new psychoactive substances in Europe.
- **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** has reported **around 350 synthetic cannabinoids worldwide.”**
- **SCRAs can cause sudden death from cardiac arrhythmias or seizure.**

WARNING

Synthetic cannabinoids ('Spice') vapes

There have been several recent incidents in a school in the **Oldham** area that have led to pupils collapsing after vaping a liquid. It is thought this liquid may have been sold as 'THC' or 'cannabis oil'.

Four samples involved in incidents were tested and found to contain a synthetic cannabinoid called *ADB-BUTINACA*. This is one of the laboratory made chemicals found in 'Spice'. It is **extremely dangerous** for a young person with no *tolerance* to inhale **even a single dose** of a potent *synthetic cannabinoid*.



Fig 1.



Fig 2.



Fig 3.



Fig 4.

All four samples contained commercially produced flavoured *e-liquid* into which a *synthetic cannabinoid* had been added. Synthetic cannabinoids are the laboratory-made chemicals found in 'Spice'. It is thought the blue liquid (fig1) in the bottle was the same substance added to the commercially available refillable nicotine vapes (fig 2 and fig 3). A further commercially available refillable nicotine vape contained a honey coloured *e-liquid*, to which the same *synthetic cannabinoid* had been added (fig 4).

Synthetic cannabinoid (Spice) is rarely used outside of adult populations in prisons and among homeless populations. Spice has a very negative image among young people. It is therefore likely that the substance was mis-sold as THC or cannabis vape oil. In the past few years a number of similar incidents have been reported in Greater Manchester.

Reports of students becoming unwell after vaping are common. However, this is normally thought a result of vaping too much nicotine. It is highly unlikely that non-refillable/disposable nicotine vapes or other commercially available nicotine liquid has been spiked with 'Spice' (or THC), but is purchased/used in the belief it was a THC/ vape rather than a nicotine one.

SCRAs - "Mamba" "Spice" are now increasingly found in "THC" vapes.

(synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists)

Previously SCRAs mainly smoked by rough sleepers and people in hostels or prisons.

SCRAs were found to be main cause of death for 34 people in Birmingham between 2016 and 2022: **sudden death with seizure and/or cardiac arrhythmias.**

Since 2023, SCRAs are frequently found in vape liquids bought by teenagers and young people, where purchase intent was THC and was cause of death of 5 people in Birmingham in the last 18 months.

A quick audit of “THC” vapes tested by WEDINOS: (data from WEDINOS.org)

X46 up to March 2025 and x46 up to March 2026

2025- 60% of “THC Vapes” contained no THC. (48% contained only a “SCRA”)

2026- 76% of “THC Vapes” , contained no THC (50% contained only a ”SCRA”)

x46 “THC” Vapes tested up to March 2025		x46 “THC vapes tested up to March 2026	
Contained THC	19		11
Contained Nicotine	3		7
Contained nothing	2		4
Contained a synthetic cannabinoid	22: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDMB-4en-PINACA = 17 ADB-BUTINACA = 3 5F-ADB = 1 MDMB-4en-PINACA + MDMB-Butinaca = 1 	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDMB-4en-PINACA = 13 5F-ADB = 8 ADB-en-PINACA = 1 MDMB-BUTINACA = 1
Contained DMT		(“Dimitri” a hallucinogenic)	1

“THC vape juice” sent to WEDINOS by somebody in Loughborough in February, contained only 5F-ADB (a SCRA linked to sudden death)

W074023

Date Received: 18 Feb 2026

Postcode: LE12 -

Purchase Intent: THC Vape juice

Package Label: Not Stated

Sample Colour: Green

Sample Form: Liquid

Consumption Method: Smoked

Self-Reported Effects: Euphoria, Increased Energy, Increased Confidence, Increased Libido, Empathy, Visual Hallucinations, Relaxed, Chest Pains, Irregular Heartbeat, Memory Loss, Panic Attack, Loss of consciousness, Agitation, Insomnia, Suicidal Ideation

Sample Upon Analysis (Major): 5F-ADB

Sample Upon Analysis (Minor):



[Click to Enlarge](#)



Germany since April 1st 2024, everybody can grow 3 cannabis plants each.

Switzerland has 7 recreational cannabis “pilots” running since 2024

Meanwhile in the UK.....



Police crack down on cannabis smokers flocking to Hyde Park to celebrate 420 drugs rally

By [JOE ROSSITER, REPORTER](#)
PUBLISHED: 01:26, **21 April 2026**

Daily **Mail**

Chief Inspector Michael Barton, from GMP’s Bury district, said: “This was a great result for the local neighbourhood team, who secured four arrests and seized hundreds of plants.

Manchester 14.4.26



Cannabis seized in Selly Oak
“Our enquiries are still very much ongoing to find those responsible.

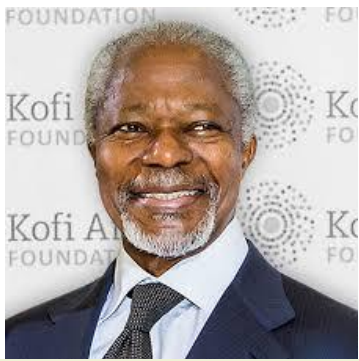
Birmingham Feb 2026



Drugs factory discovered under former bar
More than 1,000 cannabis plants were seized by Northumbria Police **South Shields 16 April 2026**
An “industrial-sized drugs factory” discovered under a former bar has been shut down, police said



What will happen next?



I have come to agree with Kofi Annan and with Lord Charlie Falconer: that prohibition has always led to more dangerous drugs.

Nitazenes and orphines are here in response to prohibition.

Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists (SCRAs, Spice, mamba), now also seen in “**THC vapes**” are here as response to prohibition of cannabis.

Xylazine and **medetomidine** are now seen mixed with heroin as a response to prohibition

“legalise and regulate the supply of drugs – including cocaine and heroin - to undermine gangsters who are killing thousands every year”

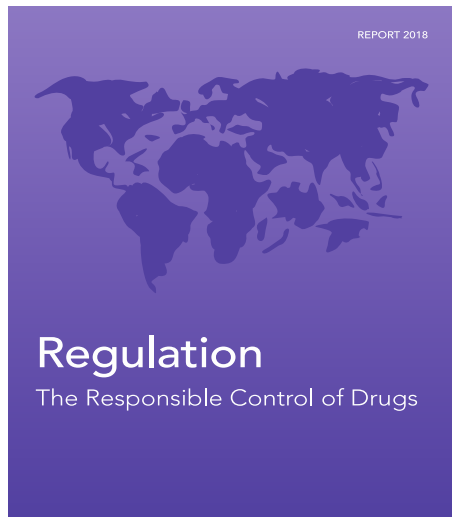
Lord Charlie Falconer,
Labour Party Conference side event , 2018.

(Shadow Attorney General 2020-2021)



Kofi Annan *“I believe that drugs have destroyed many lives, but wrong government policies have destroyed many more.”*

Secretary General of the UN,
1997-2006



TRANSFORM'S 5 MODELS OF REGULATION.



Doctor.

Medical prescriptions
– for registered users
of drugs such as
injectable heroin



Specialist Pharmacists.

Sales to registered
adult users – for drugs
such as amphetamine,
powder cocaine and
MDMA



Licensed Retailers.

Sales to adult users for
drugs such as
cannabis



Licensed Premises.

Sale and consumption
for adult users –
similar to Dutch 'coffee
shops' – for drugs
such as cannabis



Unlicensed Premises.

Sale of lower-risk
products such as
caffeinated drinks and
coca tea

<https://transformdrugs.org/publications/after-the-war-on-drugs-blueprint-for-regulation>



What will happen in 2026?

We are unlikely to end our War on Drugs this year.

Heroin will become scarce and expensive.

Nitazenes and “Orphines” are an increasing threat to 2 groups:

1. **Young people** (often teenagers) who buy pills and powders on-line (especially diazepam, Xanax, oxycodone)
2. **Older people** (20-70) who normally use heroin

We need more:

- **Drug checking. Toxicology. More real time information**
- **Naloxone** (including people who go to clubs or pubs where people might take pills)
- **“Safe supply”** (increase all forms of prescribing: OST including heroin assisted treatment. Also benzos for those who have become dependent)
- **“Drug consumption rooms”** especially attached to needle syringe programmes, where people who have nowhere safe or hygienic to inject their drugs can come inside and get whatever help they need.
- **High Tolerance Housing: Somewhere safe for people who use drugs to live without fear of eviction.**

Let's end the "war on
drugs" and the war on
people who take drugs

Stop doing things which
don't work

Stop causing harm

Thank you

Dr Judith Yates

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