



How can we involve students in our work on drugs and alcohol?

Fiona Carson, CGL

Maria Hunter, MMU

Luke Heron, Bath Spa

Noah Taylor, Bath Spa

Session Overview



- **Introduction**
- **Fiona Carson**
- **Noah Taylor**
- **Luke Heron**
- **Maria Hunter**
- **Discussion**
- **Q&A**

Speakers



How can we involve students in our work on drugs and alcohol?

Fiona Carson

How did I get involved?



Internships (MMU)



Placement as part of my MA course - GMTRENDS

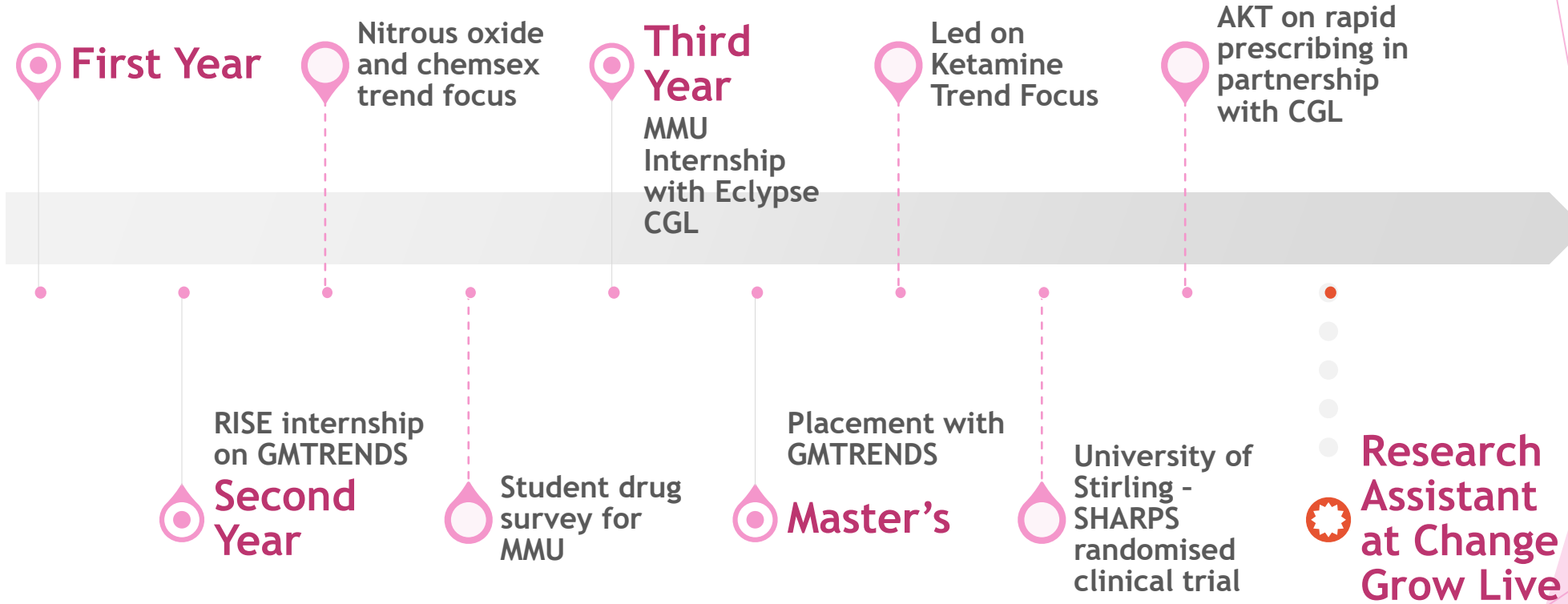


SHARPS - University of Stirling




Post university - AKT at MMU in partnership with CGL

Research Journey



GMTRENDS

2023-2024 Monitoring Cycle. **Trend focus**




Ketamine

Greater Manchester: Testing and Research on Emergent and New Drugs

GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY


GM TRENDS

Manchester Metropolitan University



GM TRENDS

Adult trend focus:
Substances Associated with Chemsex




HOPE

Crystal Methamphetamine

May 2023


GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Manchester Metropolitan University



GM TRENDS

Young people's trend focus:
Nitrous oxide - **DRAFT Not for circulation**




Rob Ralphs, Michael Linnell, Oliver Hulmes, Sam Wright

February 2023

GMCA GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

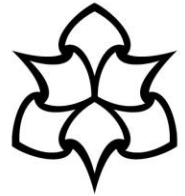
Manchester Metropolitan University





SHARPS - University of Stirling

- ▶ Randomised clinical trial
- ▶ Data collection
- ▶ Recruitment
- ▶ The Salvation Army
- ▶ 20 cluster sites around Scotland and England



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

Improving Substance Use Support for MMU student - Survey

- ▶ Zero tolerance - Harm reduction approach
- ▶ What support were students aware of?
- ▶ Specific concerns from students
- ▶ What type of harm reduction advice do students want?

Change Grow Live

Internship - Eclipse - 2023

- ▶ Shadowing opportunities for Manchester CYP service
- ▶ Created a new advice desk in MMU student union for student support
- ▶ Fantastic opportunity to learn how front-line CYP services function

AKT partnership - 2025

- ▶ Conducted an evaluation of CGL's rapid prescribing service
- ▶ Conducted 21 interviews with practitioners and service users
- ▶ Produced 6 recommendations for scalability

Thank you

The background features a series of overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in various shades of pink and maroon. These shapes, including triangles and polygons, are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, primarily concentrated on the right side of the frame. The left side of the image is a plain white background.

Noah Taylor | Bath Spa University


ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION FILM




The amount of young who fall victim to misinformation around alcohol is terribly high. In collaboration with Bath Spa University wellbeing team, I produced a short film to tackle this issue.



THE BIG PICTURE

- Information is more accessible than ever due to social media and the internet
 - But this also means misinformation is at an all-time high
 - Especially common amongst fellow University students
 - How can I use my interest in film to help this issue?
- 

THE BRIEF

- Commissioned by Bath Spa University Wellbeing team
 - Short film (90 secs – 2 minutes)
 - Themed around drug & alcohol harm reduction
 - Target audience of students
 - Educate students and help them make more informed choices
 - Supportive and non-judgmental approach
- 



MY RESPONSE

- Myth-busing narrative
- All myths were sourced directly from student experiences
- Rotoscoped elements to show effects of alcohol
- Fast paced editing. State the myth then directly address it
- Filmed in places students know well, for example accommodation kitchen or the Student Union

ADVICE

- Keep it simple
- Confusing messaging contributes to the misinformation
- Focus the narrative around facts
- But don't make it too serious, otherwise viewer won't find it engaging
- Don't need a big budget or many actors

**THANK YOU
FOR LISTENING**





Involving Students in Drug and Alcohol Awareness

Luke Heron

Making Content about Harm Reduction



Responded to a client brief from the D&A Harm Reduction Team at Bath Spa University for our Digital Content Creation module, choosing the theme **“Helping Out Your Mates.”**



Planned an abstract film about students supporting each other through drug and alcohol addiction, but after interviewing Craig, we shifted focus toward relatable university experiences and realistic harm reduction scenarios.



Developed a final concept showing a group of friends on a night out, where one student becomes too drunk and is safely helped home by their friends — demonstrating simple, everyday harm reduction in action.

What We Learnt from the Process

- Through creating the film, we gained a deeper understanding of harm reduction in Bath and Bristol, while also producing a message that encourages students to look after their friends on nights out.
- Our research showed that alcohol use among students was far more common than the use of drugs such as cocaine or ketamine, although cannabis use was also prevalent.
- As a result, we chose to focus primarily on excessive drinking rather than multiple substances, allowing us to communicate a clearer and more accessible harm reduction message.



Encapsulating the Harm Reduction Message

- At the end of the film, we included hotline numbers and support services that students could contact if they were concerned about their own drug or alcohol use, or worried about a friend.
 - We intentionally avoided demonising drinking, as we felt a judgmental approach could alienate viewers and reduce the effectiveness of the message.
 - Instead, we reflected the tolerant and supportive attitude of the D&A Harm Reduction Team at Bath Spa University, focusing on safer practices and informed choices rather than a strict zero-tolerance approach.
-

Reflection

- Our original concept was much more dramatic and cinematic, but feedback from the D&A Harm Reduction Team at Bath Spa University made us realise it risked glorifying addiction and alienating the student audience.
- Interviewing Craig helped reshape our approach, encouraging us to focus on relatable student experiences and realistic harm reduction rather than extreme addiction.
- During filming, we learned the importance of structure and direction, especially when managing multiple actors in busy environments like the pub scene.
- In post-production, we changed the film's structure by opening with the "morning after" scene, helping emphasise the consequences of excessive drinking rather than the excitement of the night out itself.

My student experience of Drug and Alcohol research

**DRUGS, POLICY &
SOCIAL CHANGE**



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**

Just dropping my
LinkedIn QR code:



**Maria Hunter
MA Applied Criminology**

12th May 2026

Agenda

1

How I got involved in D&A research

2

What research I've been involved with

3

What impact this has had on my student experience and opportunities

How (& why) I got involved in D&A research

-
- Interest in quantitative data analysis (BSc)
 - Interest in Drugs and Alcohol
 - **Named** co-author on final report
 - Opportunity to network and meet academics, stakeholders and people who work with PWUD
 - Making an impact to other YP
 - Lived experience around PWUD and alcohol as a uni student

BUT, most importantly...



IT WAS PAID!



What research I have been involved in



GMTRENDS (quantitative):

- **Research Assistant for internship (2024)**
 - Analysing and writing up the findings
- **Senior Research Assistant for Masters Placement (2025)**
 - Developing the survey building from last year
 - Interviewing and managing third year interns
 - Survey promotion
 - Analysis and write up of the findings

Ketamine specific research (quantitative and qualitative)

- **GMTRENDS**
 - Specific research into ketamine
 - Event assistance at national 'Think Ketamine' event
- **Ketamine Treatment research with Early Break**
 - Conducting interviews with local charity Recovery Workers, Young People, family members of YP, stakeholders
 - Creation of bespoke data collection tool
 - Analysis and write up of the findings



Opportunity for my own research



My Master's dissertation:

- Conducted a solo research project
- Mixed-methods study on Cocaine and Ketamine (CK)
- Conducted four focus groups
- Data from our MANDRAKE lab
- Used statistics from GMTRENDS survey



The opportunities this has given me

- **Presenting** at **international** and **national conferences**
- **Progression** from research assistance to managing students
- I **teach** on the UG courses
- I am a **named co-author** on GMTRENDS, recognised nationally
- Learning **methods** I previously would not have used
- I actively **support** and **attend local events** where the research is presented, **networking** and meeting new people who are great contacts for my future career
- I am a **dissertation supervisor** for a BSc student analysing the GMTRENDS survey
- Volunteering (& guest list) to Parklife festival

**Thank you
for
listening!**

Shamelessly dropping
my LinkedIn QR code
again:



**Over to Fiona for
the discussion
activity**

(Q&A afterwards)

**What student groups on
your campus might be

interested in this work?**

**How can you engage
students in work on
drugs and alcohol?**

**What are the benefits of
engaging students in
work on drugs and
alcohol on campus?**

Any questions?
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Thank you