

What do we mean by Drugs?

If we watch TV or read papers and magazines, we will realise that we live in a world where drugs are a reality. For some they will be a lifestyle choice and for others they will have become a day-to-day necessity. How and Why people choose to use substances is a personal choice, and by providing information and advice, the harm associated with substance use can be minimised. It helps to know as much as you can about the substance you might wish to use, so that you can make an informed choice.

Illegal Drugs

Three Classes, A, B or C according to the harm they can do. Class A Drugs are most harmful and likely to be more addictive. These include cocaine, crack, ecstasy, heroin, LSD and Magic Mushrooms.

However, other substances are legal but can be misused and cause harm. Such as gases, glues and aerosols, medicines, alcohol and tobacco.

Health, Social and Personal Risks

All drug use can have an effect on health, relationships, and personal safety. For some, drug use takes over, disrupts their lives and becomes a problem. They can become addicted, may become involved in crime or be exposed to risky lifestyles and influences.

It is often hard to tell what the effects of a drug will be. It will vary depending on who's taking them, their state of mind, what the drug might be mixed with and where it is being taken.

Staying safe if you choose to use drugs

- Sometimes people can have a bad reaction to the drugs they have taken. Some ways of taking drugs are more risky than others (such as injecting). What can you do to try to reduce the risks to yourself and others?
- Don't inject. If you have to, don't share any equipment used in the preparation of the drugs. Access a needle exchange to get clean equipment and dispose of your used needles safely.
- Don't mix different substances and take them together.
- Don't use drugs if you are already feeling down, depressed or anxious.
- Try not to be alone or in a isolated place if you do decide to use drugs.
- Make sure you know what to do if you see someone having a bad reaction to the drugs they've taken. This can make the difference between life and death.
- Prepare yourself as well as you can. Know the risks and signs, talk to other people about their experiences, get some first aid training.
- If you find someone having a bad reaction, call 999 and get an ambulance as quickly as possible. Don't leave the person, and tell the ambulance crew what the person has taken when they arrive. Don't waste time trying to do anything else to bring the person around.
- Speak to your local drugs service.