

# WHAT IS DRUG CHECKING TELLING US?

Results and experiences from  
SDF's living experience groups

Jason Wallace  
Katy MacLeod





## WHAT IS LIVING EXPERIENCE ?

Living experience is direct experience of living with a drug problem. This may include people who are currently using drugs and/or people who are accessing Medication Assisted Treatment or other forms of treatment and support.

People who are currently using drugs or accessing treatment may hold different attitudes and opinions from people in long term abstinent recovery

# LIVING EXPERIENCE GROUPS

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Aim: To ensure that the voice of living experience of the 60,000 people experiencing drug problems is developed and enhanced in Scotland to inform and influence service development and delivery across Scotland at both local and national levels.

Current groups cover:

Glasgow/ East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, Borders, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Fife, East Ayrshire, Perth, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Edinburgh

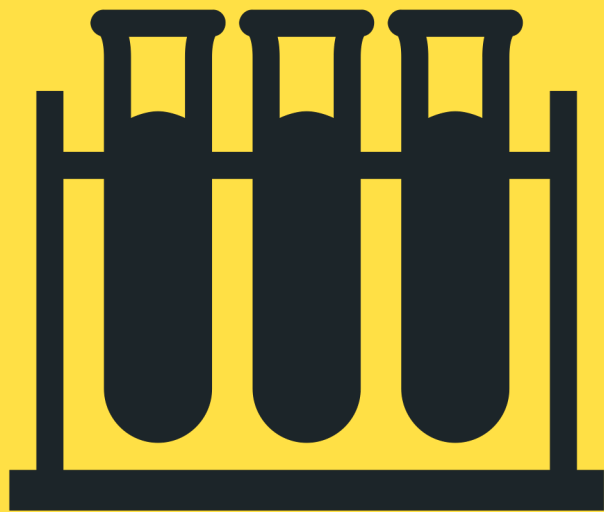
There are 100+ people attending the 11 groups, approx. 70% male/30% female, Most attendees have a long history of drug/alcohol use 10 years +

National group:

Representatives across groups come together 3-4 times a year

Involved in the national collaborative 'charter of rights'

# DRUG CHECKING

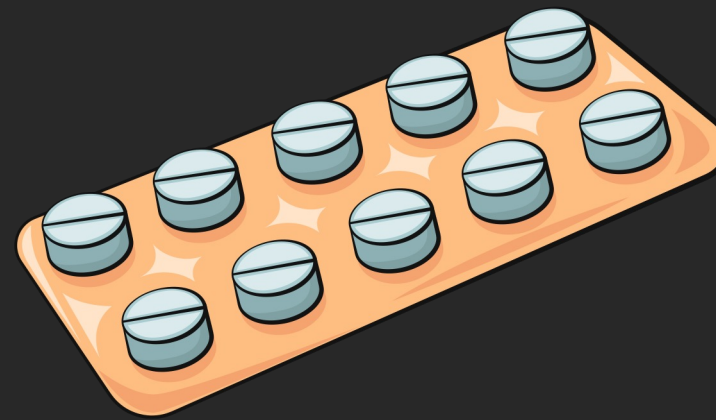


- All groups since June 2022 supported to submit samples of concern to WEDINOS system – offered tamper proof pre-paid postal bags, support to complete the paperwork sent with the sample submission, logging of sample number and support to access the results online where required.
- Currently piloting Nitazene testing strips and supporting group members to submit samples of concern via WEDINOS
- Living experience group members update staff when they use a test, both for positive and negative results.
- Group members engage in a phone interview and harm reduction intervention covering:
  - Drug tested i.e. street benzos etc, the first part of the postcode substance was used in, and (if different) where the drug was purchased from, how much was paid, appearance/smell of drug
  - If they went on to take the substance. If yes, if they made any changes to their use e.g. took less and what were the effects they experienced, any unexpected effects or differences observed to how drug reacted to preparation e.g. smell, taste or how it dissolved etc.
  - Staff encourage the tester to submit any remainders of substance to WEDINOS for confirmatory testing, reiterate harm reduction messages and advice around naloxone administration for nitazenes
- Results distributed:
  - Local level e.g. ADP, management group
  - RADAR
  - Police Scotland Bulletin
  - Drug Trend Monitoring Groups





96 Samples sent  
since  
June 2022



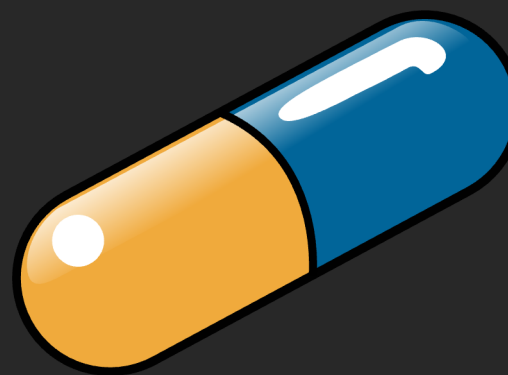
69% street benzos (n=66)  
Of the 49 returned to date:  
etizolam (n=25), bromazolam  
(n=17), clonazolam (n=3)



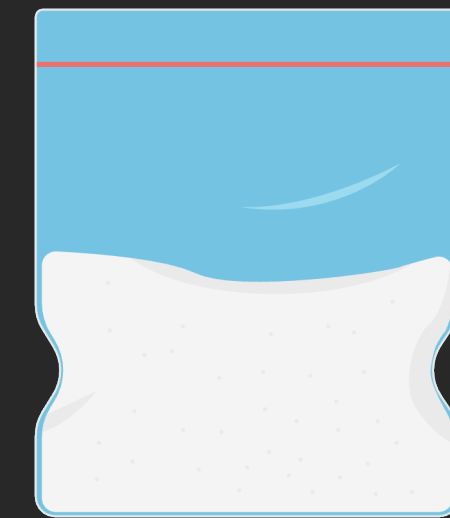
12 Xanax:  
Bromazolam (n=5),  
alprazolam (n=2) not able  
to be tested (n=5)



6 heroin  
heroin (n=3), nitazene  
(n=1) unable to test (n=2)



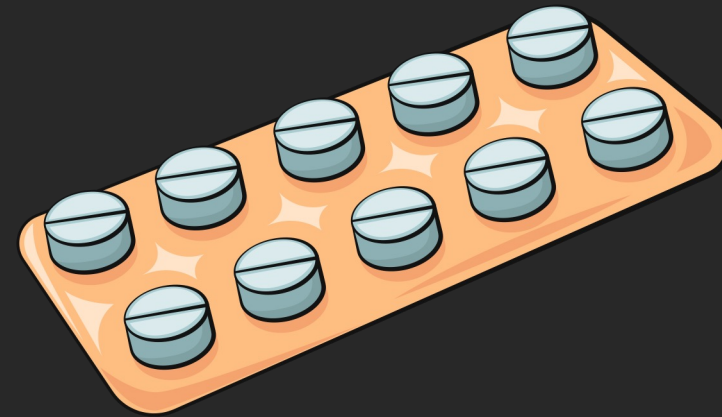
3 gabapentinoids  
gabapentin (n=1), diazepam (n=1),  
awaiting results (n=1)



3 cocaine/crack  
cocaine (n=1), caffeine/amphetamine  
(n=1) awaiting results (n=21)



22 samples sent  
away  
in 2022



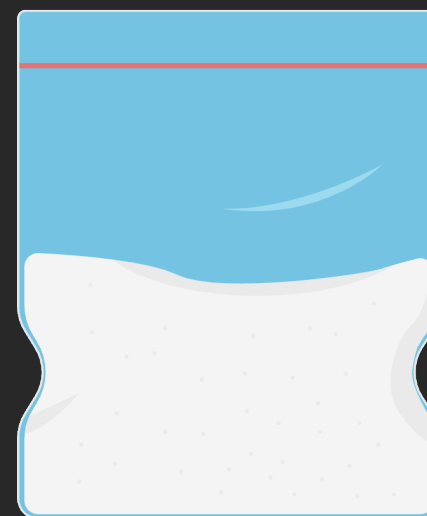
18 street benzos-  
etizolam (n=14),  
bromazolam (n=2),  
1 clonazolam, 1 not able to  
be tested



1 Xanax  
(alprazolam)



2 heroin  
(heroin)



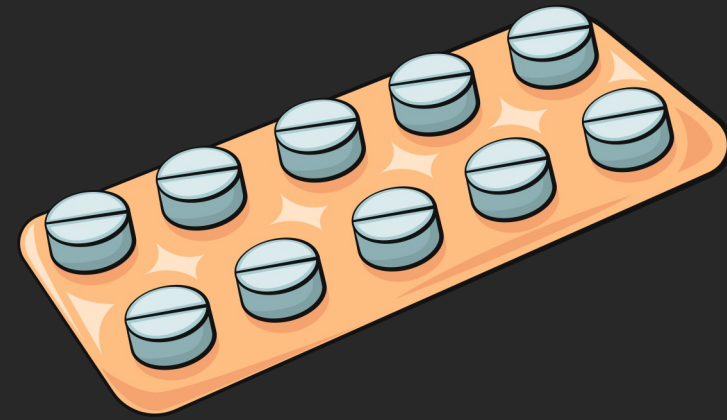
1 cocaine/crack  
(cocaine,  
phenacetin)



samples came from Glasgow  
and the Borders



50 Samples sent in 2023,  
13 results not returned



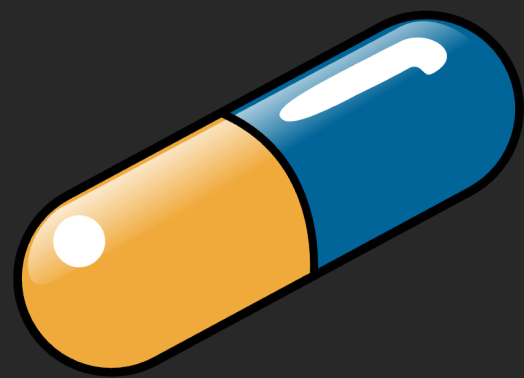
27 of 37 street benzos  
returned  
bromazolam (n=13),  
etizolam (n=9)



7 xanax  
alprazolam (n=1),  
bromazolam (n=5)  
1 not returned



1 heroin  
(N-desethyl  
isotonitazene)



2 gabapentinoids  
pregablin (n=1),  
diazepam (n=1)



1 cocaine/crack  
(caffeine/amphetamine)



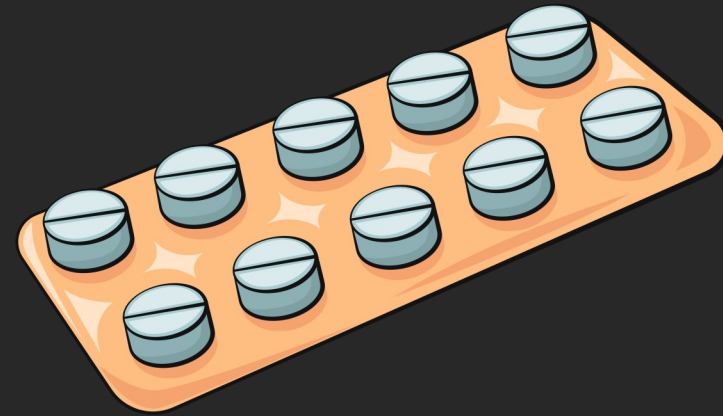
2 temazepam (1 temazepam  
1 deschloroetizolam  
1 nitrazepam  
1 red apple (tapentadol)



samples came from  
Glasgow, Borders, Fife,  
Ayrshire and Lanarkshire



24 Samples sent in 2024, awaiting results for 16 samples



11 street benzos, of the 5 returned so far  
bromazepam (n=2), etizolam (n=2), diazepam (n=1)



4 xanax



3 heroin  
1 sample returned so far (heroin)

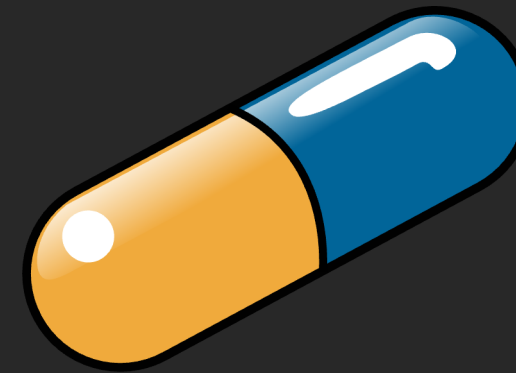


2 cannabis, 1 returned so far (THC)



1

amphetamine  
1 cocaine  
1 ecstasy



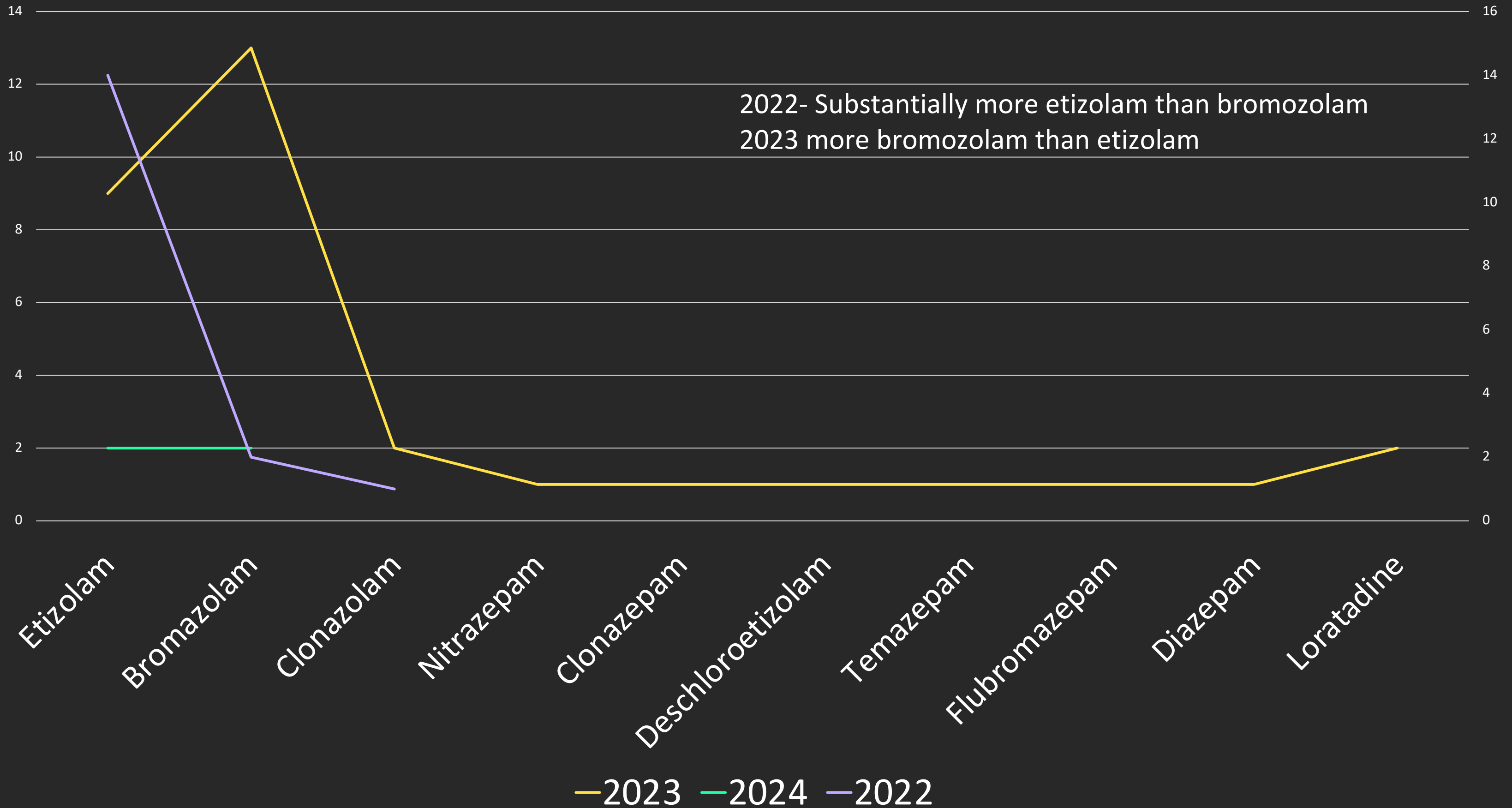
1 gabapentinoid



samples came from Perth, Fife and Highland



# Benzo trends over time



# TESTING STRIPS PILOT



- Training on nitazene awareness, overdose prevention and harm reduction/use of testing strips delivered to 241 people
- 181 strips given out so far
- 3 positive results so far ( 1 false positive on confirmatory testing, 2 awaiting results)

# CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS



- Real time information to allow people to make more informed decisions- engages people in utilising wider analysis services e.g. WEDINOS
- Offers an opportunity to open up a health-based intervention with target at risk groups (often not in regular contact with treatment services)
- Engages people in harm reduction intervention/training- can check on naloxone carriage and provide a refresher on how to administer
- Initial feedback from training has indicated people would consider changing behaviours e.g. not use, use less, be more mindful of re-dosing or poly use, enhanced naloxone carriage
- **There is an appetite for drug checking among the most at risk groups in Scotland**





**THANK YOU !!**

Jason@sdf.org.uk

katy@sdf.org.uk

