

LIVING EXPERIENCE DRUG TRENDS

BULLETIN

JAN-JUNE 2025

INTRODUCTION



SDF have 12 living experience engagement groups currently operating across Scotland in:

- Glasgow
- West Dunbartonshire
- Highland
- Falkirk
- Borders
- Fife
- East Ayrshire
- North Lanarkshire
- South Lanarkshire
- Edinburgh
- Perth and Kinross
- Moray

The groups provide a safe space for people who currently use drugs and/or are on medication assisted treatment to share issues that are important to them, including drug trends information.

This bulletin includes both anecdotal insights shared by group attendees and test results from samples submitted to the WEDINOS postal testing service.



Nitazene Testing Strips

As part of a pilot initiative, SDF distributed nitazene testing strips and delivered training on nitazene awareness and overdose prevention to at-risk groups involved in its regional Living Experience Engagement Groups.

The evaluation findings suggest several key benefits with the use of these testing strips:

- Enables people to access real-time information, supporting more informed decisions about substance use
- Creates space for meaningful, harm reduction-focused conversations with individuals at risk.
- Provides further opportunities to encourage and support naloxone carriage

Access to the full Nitazene Testing Strips Report is available here - [Just Say Know - Nitazene Testing Strip Evaluation](#)



WEDINOS RESULTS (JAN- JUNE 2025)

Samples Submitted

The Living Experience Engagement Team has supported group attendees in accessing substance testing through WEDINOS. This service provides confirmatory analysis for positive nitazene test strip results, as well as general testing for any other substances used by participants.

Over the period Jan to June 2025, the following 32 samples have been sent by attendees of the groups for testing.

Intended purchases were:

- 17 x street valium
- 5 x cocaine/crack cocaine
- 4 x heroin
- 3 x white powder
- 1 x temazepam
- 1 x pregabalin
- 1 x ecstasy

Results

26 x results returned:

- 4x diazepam (purchased as street benzo's)
- 4x etizolam (purchased as street benzo's)
- 3x no active component (purchased as street benzo's)
- 3x cocaine (purchased as cocaine)
- 2x heroin (purchased as heroin)
- 2x bromazolam (purchased as street benzo's)
- 1x phenazepam (purchased as street benzo's)
- 2x ketamine (both purchased as cocaine)
- 1x zopiclone (purchased as cocaine)
- 1x MDMA (purchases as ecstasy)
- 1x 2C-B (hallucinogenic bought as ecstasy)
- 1x melatonin (bought as street benzodiazepine)

6 x results not yet returned by WEDINOS.

**BENZODIAZEPINES WERE THE INTENDED PURCHASE IN
53% OF THE SAMPLES SUBMITTED FOR TESTING**



NATIONAL TRENDS

The most commonly reported drug trends across all groups:

- Cocaine
- Street Benzo's
- Heroin

BORDERS

Heroin was initially reported to be poor quality. It was described as resembling gravy granules, leaving dark marks on foil, and lacking strength. There were also reports of it having a 'fishy smell' and being 'see through when on the foil'. By the end of the reporting period however, group members reported stronger heroin with smoother texture and clearer residue and one member describing it as a "creeper." Pricing remained consistent at £20 per ½ gram.

Cocaine and crack cocaine were consistently present throughout the reporting period. Powder cocaine was priced at £40 per gram. Group members reported varied experiences, some described good quality when washed back, while others noted milky or mixed results. By the end of the reporting period a substance known as "Pink," a mix of cocaine, ketamine, and MDMA, was reported.

The use of **Crystal meth** emerged, with reports of intravenous and inhaled use via pipe. Group members described a "clear-headed" high distinct from crack cocaine, with effects lasting up to 18 hours. The substance appeared in glass-like shards, clear, cloudy, or blue, and was sold in sealed bags for £60 per gram.

Amphetamine base was also present, though its quality was considered poor. It was sold for £20 per gram and described as "on the rock," with effects differing from previous experiences.

FIFE

Street benzos remain prevalent, with various tablets reported, blue MSG-stamped pills, white Valium marked tablets, and Benzidine variants. These are typically sold in strips (15–20 tablets) for £10, with individual tablets priced between £1–£2. Effects reported by group members include prolonged sedation, memory loss, and blackouts lasting up to 48 hours. One individual reported losing 20 hours after consuming six 10mg tablets. Xanax bars (white, gritty texture) were also noted, though less commonly.

Pregabalin use increased notably in May and June. Capsules (300mg, red/white with Arabic writing) and are sold in strips of 14 for £20. Group members described strong sedative effects similar to benzodiazepines, with some group members reporting immobility after use.

Cocaine in both powder and rock form is widely available with sourcing through dealers, social media, and the dark web. Prices range from £40–£80 per gram, with £20 for 0.2g of crack, "Prop" £40 per half gram. 90% of group members reported they were smoking or injecting, with effects lasting from 5 to 40 minutes. Adverse reactions included depression, low mood, and "horrible feelings" post-injection. Despite this, some group members described the taste and buzz as consistent with high-quality cocaine.

NATIONAL TRENDS



FIFE CONTINUED

Heroin remains accessible, priced at £10 per 0.2g. Reports suggest a stronger potency than usual, with several group members reporting they had experienced non-fatal overdoses (NFOs), including one incident requiring naloxone administration. The substance was described as burning red or appearing dark brown when prepared, with lumpy consistency on foil.

Herbal cannabis is widely used, with strains such as Black Diamond, Dog, Strawberry Kush, Blue Cheese, and Cali mentioned by group members. Prices average £60 for a ¼ gram. The strain “Dog” was reported to be used by most group members. Sourcing occurs both locally and via the dark web.

ELGIN

Heroin use was reported to be relatively scarce. Multiple group members noted that it was difficult to source, with crack cocaine dominating the local market. When heroin was available, it was typically priced at £25 for 0.5 grams or £20 for 0.2 grams. Group members described varied effects depending on the method of use. Injecting produced instant effects, while smoking resulted in a ‘creeper’ and doesn’t last as long. There were also reports of feeling sick after smoking, and another noted numb lips, suspecting the heroin had been cut with cocaine. Overall, the quality was described as poor, and availability remained limited.

Powder Cocaine was widely accessible and consistently used. It was priced at £100 per gram and could be sourced through multiple channels including social media, Telegram, text, phone calls, and in-person contacts. Group members described the effects as intense, with a “magic pure rush” followed by feelings of paranoia and anxiety.

One group member reported sourcing high-quality cocaine, the buzz was reported to last a couple of hours, and numb lips were a common physical effect.

Crack cocaine was also prevalent with availability described as widespread and easy to source. Prices varied, with reports of £100 per gram and £50 for half a gram. The strength of crack cocaine was inconsistent, depending on the source, but generally considered “not the greatest.” Group members reported a short-lived high and noted that the quality could vary significantly.

Etizolam use was reported by one group member who described an extreme reaction after dipping a fingertip into a small amount of powder. The effects were prolonged and intense and they were unable to walk shortly after consumption and experienced slurred speech for up to 24 hours.

Street benzodiazepines were also present, with strips of 10 tablets sold for £15. These were reportedly purchased online, and group members described feeling effects into the following day .

NATIONAL TRENDS



INVERNESS

Throughout the six-month period, **cocaine** remained one of the most commonly used substances, with 70% of the group reporting regular use. It was available in both powder and rock forms, though the quality varied significantly. **Powder cocaine** was generally considered acceptable, while crack cocaine was frequently described as poor, with some group members reporting physical shaking and an “edgy” feeling after use. There was a report of crack cocaine ‘bursting into flames’ when smoked. Pricing fluctuated, with deals such as 3 x £20 rocks/Bags for £40 or 0.2g for £20, 3 for £50, and 7 for £90. Powder cocaine was also sold at £50 per half gram or 0.3g for £30, with bulk deals available.

Pregabalin use was consistently reported, often used to enhance Opioid Replacement Therapy (ORT). Both illicit and diverted pharmaceutical forms were present, including 300mg tablets and prescribed signature capsules.

Street benzodiazepines, including a report of ‘Martin Dows’ (Blue Valium), were widely available and promoted via text and social media. These were sold at £12.50 per strip and packaged professionally. Xanax white bars, were noted for their potency.

Heroin was described as strong throughout the reporting period.

Tablets containing a mix of **CBD** and **ecstasy** were reported, and **ketamine** use appeared to be increasing among teenagers and younger individuals.

Herbal cannabis, purple in colour, was described as very strong and readily available.

GLASGOW

Group members report ongoing use of **crack and cocaine**, with several describing severe negative effects such as paranoia, deepened depression, and, in some cases, suicidal thoughts.

Multiple individuals described severe and unexpected physical reactions after smoking crack, including breathing difficulties, intense body heat, and chest palpitations.

Cocaine is being reported as “sticky” when prepared, raising suspicions of cutting agents.

Some group members believe their cocaine is being mixed with an unidentified substance referred to as “*magic*”, causing trance-like comedown states.

Group members described stimulant-like effects from crack, more akin to speed, alongside shivering, temperature fluctuations, heart palpitations, and breathlessness. Group members said it was easily available for home delivery, with recent purchases costing around £100 for just under 2g.

Street benzodiazepines were also mentioned, with group members raising concerns about inconsistent potency or shifting drug supply quality. Several group members reported a noticeable shortage of street benzos within the city centre. Those seeking them are having to travel further afield.

NATIONAL TRENDS



WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

Group members report **crack cocaine** (smoking) and **street benzos** are the 2 most used drugs. Group members reported being prescribed **pregabalin** which they took with multiple other substances.

Pink Champagne was a new substance reported by group members, which was sold as cocaine mixed with ecstasy. People reported the quality was poor and they preferred crack cocaine.

Street benzodiazepines purchased from local dealers ranged from strong etizolam to reportedly inactive pills, sold cheaply in trays, and taken in very high doses with effects lasting most of the day.

Crack cocaine was the most common substance used, easily available via text or phone with delivery at all hours. Prices varied, as did quality.

Heroin was usually low quality but stronger when sourced from Clydebank. It was often sold alongside crack.

Nitrazepam ("moggies") remains available in large quantities at low prices, with some group members consuming 25 or more in a day.

Xanax, particularly green "Incredible Hulk" bars, were also available, with testing results from Wedinos revealing unexpected combinations including bromazolam, caffeine.

All drugs discussed were sourced locally, with no reports of county lines or cuckooing. Dealers use daily text menus and provide delivery or drop-off services.

LANARKSHIRE

Groups cover North and South Lanarkshire.

Group members report that crack/cocaine and street benzodiazepines were the most used substances, with both described as high in quality and readily available. Group members noted that dealers regularly send out lists of available drugs via text message, with delivery to a chosen location.

Crack cocaine was reported to sell at £120 for three rocks or £60 for 0.9g locally, with 'Somali suppliers' offering £50 per gram. Supply was highly accessible, with daily text alerts and drop-off services from 9am.

Powdered cocaine costs £100 for 3g, £80 for 2g of "prop" or three for £100 locally, and £50 per gram reportedly from 'Somali suppliers', with the same daily text and delivery pattern.

Street Valium, particularly Blue Roche, was sold locally at £20 for 50 pills, while White Cox was harder to obtain and costs around £200 for 1,000. Online sources offer £25 for 15 pills. Group members describe the market as unpredictable, comparing it to "Russian Roulette" due to unknown strength and effects. Blue 10mg tablets were available in Cambuslang at £10 for 10, offering effects that last a few hours.

Heroin was widely available and varied in cost, strength, and appearance across different areas. Locally, it sold for £20 for 0.5g, £15 for 0.2g. Higher-strength batches sourced from the East End of Glasgow area were reported as unusually strong.

NATIONAL TRENDS



EAST AYRSHIRE

Many group members described a highly accessible drug market, with daily text messages advertising deals and the option for drugs to be delivered directly.

Group members report that **crack cocaine** and **street benzodiazepines** were the most used substances. Some members receiving Long-Acting Buprenorphine, (Buvidal), treatment reported an increase in their use of crack cocaine.

Crack cocaine was the most used substance. It was priced at around £40 per 0.4g rock or three 0.5g deals for £100 and was widely available for delivery at any time. Some group members preferred buying powdered cocaine and washing it back themselves for a better return. Powder cocaine was priced between £45 and £80 per gram depending on purity and was also readily available.

Street benzodiazepines were sold for around £10 for 25 tablets or £125 for 1,000. Supply varied, with “dry ups” reported. Strength and effects differed between batches. Many were using street benzos to self-medicate for mental health issues due to limited access to community mental health teams.

‘Fake’ **pregabalin** and **Zimmovane** were also in circulation, sold at £10 for 5 pregabalin or £20 for 15, and £10 for 10 Zimmovane. These were reported to cause heavy sedation.

While **heroin** was harder to source in some areas, recent batches were noted to be unusually strong. Heroin in East Ayrshire was selling for around £10 for 0.2–0.3g, though supply was limited with only a few dealers in the area. Potency was variable, with reports of green or red-tinged heroin.

Other substances include **ketamine**, which was reportedly on the rise at a cost of £25 per gram and mainly used by people in their early twenties.

Xanax tablets sold for £1 each with reports of heavy sedation when used with heroin.

FALKIRK

Feedback from group members indicates ongoing concerns and mixed experiences with substances in the Falkirk and surrounding areas.

White benzodiazepines purchased in a white tub labelled “diazepam CDC”, were described as white tablets marked with a “10” and a score line, costing £30 for 50. Other benzodiazepines, in both white and blue varieties, were reported to be of poor quality, producing little or no effect, although they were noted to be cheaper than usual.

Heroin use was mentioned, with a price of £20 per bag. Recent heroin quality was described as particularly poor, with an unpleasant rubber-like taste and smell.

Cocaine and crack cocaine remained easy to obtain, with some members sourcing locally and others arranging delivery from areas such as Livingston, Bathgate, and Greenock. Prices reported include £60 per gram for cocaine, and for crack, £30 for two rocks. Locally sourced crack was often described as poor quality, with little to no effect, cocaine sourced from out with the local area was described as having strong effects, particularly when injected or “washed back”.

Pregabalin was reported to be openly sold in the town centre. It was also reported that crystal meth was available in the Grangemouth area.

NATIONAL TRENDS



EDINBURGH

A variety of substances remain easily available, particularly in the city centre, with some notable changes in quality, cost, and effects being reported.

Cocaine and crack cocaine continue to be widely used, although quality varied significantly between dealers. Some batches were reported as 'good', with no adverse effects, while others were considered poor, producing feelings of depression, fatigue, headaches, and, in some cases, paranoia lasting for weeks. Some cocaine has been reported to turn mushy and unusable when "washed back", with some believed to be cut with "Magic". Crack cocaine was available for around £10 per 0.1g rock, while powdered cocaine was priced at approximately £40–£45 for half a gram.

Heroin remained present in the local market, reportedly of high potency compared to previous supplies. Some batches were turning green after being left for a few hours or when "cooked up," leading to street names such as "Dirty Smack." Prices were around £10 for 0.1g, which was considered more expensive than usual. Availability was high in the city centre, with reports of a new supply in certain areas such as Niddrie.

Street benzodiazepines were still circulating in different forms and packaging, with varying costs, strengths, and onset times. Blue ROCHE 10 tablets, costing £20 for 15, were reported to be of a good quality, with effects felt within five minutes. Loose white tablets were cheaper at around 50p each. Effects differed between batches. Some group members stating that the drugs take effect almost immediately, while others report a delay of up to 45 minutes.

Pregabalin, particularly 450mg capsules, remained widely available in the city centre, costing around £4 each. Group members reported that current batches are taking effect more quickly than in the past.

PERTH

Cocaine is reportedly used by all group members, priced at £40 for 0.5g. It is widely available through street contacts. Group members reported they prefer to wash it back themselves to produce crack for a more satisfying high.

Crack cocaine is also used with members stating it produces a better high than powdered cocaine. Crack sells for around £20 per 0.2g and is easy to source with good quality product available through drop-offs or direct purchase at properties.

Heroin remains accessible through street dealers. Prices are typically £20 for 0.4g or £70–£80 for an eighth. While some described the heroin as better than in the past, producing a relaxed feeling, others noted a decline in quality with less euphoria and occasional nausea when smoking.

Benzodiazepines are easy to source via call or text. White "Roches" are considered strong, with three tablets needed for a strong effect, while other white pills with only a scored line are seen as weak. Pricing for both types is around £10 for 15 tablets. Some members source benzodiazepines such as etizolam from dark-web sellers.

Xanax is also widely available, with red tablets preferred over white for their potency. One group member purchased 100 xanax pills online for £80, reported that they were later confirmed via WEDINOS testing to contain alprazolam.

Other substances mentioned include pregabalin ("pre-gabs"), and zopiclone ("zimmers").

Pregabalin is currently circulating at £2 per 300mg tablet, with variable quality; two good-quality tablets are said to last a whole day.

Zopiclone strips are sold for £15 and can be sourced via text.

TRENDS FROM ENGAGEMENT GROUPS

Emerging or Notable Trends

- Nitazenes often unknowingly consumed
- Green or "scab" heroin noted in multiple regions, described as much stronger
- Ketamine use rising, especially among younger people, with some sold as cocaine
- Crystal Meth and Methamphetamine reports in Borders, Falkirk, and Fife
- Polydrug use is the norm, not the exception. Many overdoses involve combinations of opioids, benzos, gabapentinoids, and stimulants

Prevalent Substances

- Heroin – present across almost every region
- Crack Cocaine – widely available and used frequently, cited in areas like Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, and Fife.
- Street Benzodiazepines – very common and cheap: Etizolam, bromazolam, phenazepam, and counterfeit diazepam or Xanax
- Benzodiazepines effects often strong and unpredictable, with memory blackouts and non-fatal overdose (NFO) very common
- Benzodiazepines frequently sold online via social media and the dark web, and implicated in polydrug overdoses

Cross-Cutting Harms and Risks

- Non-Fatal Overdoses (NFOs) and hospitalisations are heavily reported across all substances and regions.
- Mental health deterioration—especially linked to stimulant use and polydrug comedowns.
- WEDINOS testing reveals presence of non-active or dangerous components.

NATIONAL TRENDS: WEDINOS RESULTS JAN-JUNE 2025

Samples Submitted

At Scottish Drugs Forum, we actively encourage and support the use of WEDINOS confirmatory testing for anyone concerned about the contents of the substances they use. This commitment is reflected across all our programmes of work and the networks we facilitate, including the Scottish Needle Exchange Workers Forum (SNEWF) and Scottish Naloxone Network (ScoNN).

Over the period January to June 2025, 357 samples have been sent to WEDINOS from Scotland for testing.

These samples include drugs bought or sold as heroin, cocaine, MDMA, ketamine, benzodiazepines, various painkiller type tablets and “unknown” substances.

- 38 sample reports involve drugs bought or sold as cocaine and crack cocaine.
- 42 sample reports involve drugs bought or sold as heroin.
- 142 sample reports involve tablets bought or sold as a type of benzo.

Results

Of the 38 reports tested involving cocaine:

- 15 contained only cocaine
- 12 contained cocaine and other common adulterant drugs
- 8 contained unexpected results
- 5 results contained no cocaine, testing instead as positive for ketamine, paracetamol, levamisole and no active component
- 3 others contained ketamine or heroin

Of the 42 reports tested involving heroin:

- 10 tested positive for a nitazene type drug.

Of the 142 samples submitted as benzo's:

- 43 contained the benzo the person intended to buy.

Of the unexpected benzo type drugs

- 23% of these tested as bromazolam,
- 14% as etizolam
- 6% as etylbromazolam.

The remaining 27% of tablets contained things including other benzos, paracetamol or caffeine, but also opiate painkillers such as tramadol and oxycodone.

**30% OF SAMPLES SUBMITTED FOR TESTING CONTAINED THE
INTENDED PURCHASE OF BENZODIAZEPINES**

CONTACT US

For more information about the trends outlined in this bulletin or for further details about the regional living experience groups, please contact us:

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