

ru-ok? Briefing – December 2021

Newsflash (health warnings and other news):

- **Spiking:** What to do if you or someone else is at risk of being spiked.
<https://www.crew.scot/stop-spiking/>
- **Condoms:** The C-Card has gone digital. The C-Card scheme lets under 25's get FREE condoms & lube across Brighton & Hove.
<https://tinyurl.com/ru-ok>
- **No/Low alcohol:** "The market in no- and low-alcohol drinks is booming in the UK as more people swap the festive hangover for mindful drinking".
<https://tinyurl.com/2s3ea8su>
- **Alcohol Ads:** "No escape: How alcohol advertising preys on children and vulnerable people." <https://tinyurl.com/bdenb9w6>
- **Cannabis:** "Test your knowledge on cannabis research lingo with this new glossary"
<https://buff.ly/3wf4IUG>
- **TikTok:** "Class A drugs including MDMA, LSD and magic mushrooms being openly sold on TikTok". <https://tinyurl.com/3j6uz2wj>

Current Trends: Ketamine and Cocaine

Some of our young people are reporting being offered ketamine and cocaine pre-mixed in a gram bag, known as *CK* or *Calvin Klein*. The amounts of each in the bag are unknown, and it is possible that there are other toxic or non-toxic substances in it. The mix may be a ploy for dealers to get rid of low quality/highly adulterated gear and this is one way of masking it. Even if it is a genuine mix of coke and ket, the results of using it can be varied. Ketamine is a dissociative, reducing the users heart rate, awareness of their body and environment, whilst cocaine raises heart rate, increases confusion/agitation and blood pressure. Ketamine will stop the user from noticing the warning signs of cocaine and could lead to serious harm. Cocaine, in turn, can reduce the awareness of how affected the body is by the ketamine, making the user more vulnerable to harm from the environment and others.

On a more basic note, it could be considered a waste of money as they reduce the experience of both drugs, but not the harms.

<https://www.drugsand.me> call this mix "**Dangerous. We strongly recommend you avoid taking these drugs together, reactions are highly unpredictable and can be fatal. You will likely come to some degree of harm even if you take strong precautions.**"

Children's Emergency Department and ru-ok? stats:

In October 2021, 19 patients attended CED in relation to substance use. In November, it was 6. The patients were aged 13 to 17 were reported to have attended A&E due to alprazolam (aka Xanax), diazepam (aka Valium), cannabis, alcohol and various prescription medications. Each was offered an appointment with ru-ok? for support and advice on how to stay safer in the future.

Theme of the Month: Polydrug use

What is it? It's basically taking more than one type of drug in a sitting, and yes, that does include alcohol.

The majority of the young people we see in our service now will use more than one thing at a time, and amongst some groups this is normalised. For example, some will use one thing to go up and then another to come down, known as parachuting.

So what's the risk? That really depends on what substances are being used, how active they all are in the system at the time and the amounts. There is really no easy answer other than mixing any substances increases the risks.

That said, the greatest risks come from mixing a depressant with another depressant e.g. alcohol & Xanax/Valium, alcohol & more alcohol, Xanax & Valium, heroin and a painkiller. Even if the user drank earlier in the evening and feels sober, the body is likely to still be affected by it (lower heart rate) meaning the addition of another depressant will slow it down further.

Here's an analogy to help people understand how drug mixes work:

 The car travels an average 50mph, happily reaches 70mph, and struggles below 20mph.

 Slowing the car down to 15mph can be ok but it takes more effort. Slowing down further, can cause it to stall. *(Depressants slow down the central nervous system, and continuing use of depressants in one sitting can result in fatal overdose – this is the main cause of drug deaths).*

 Speeding the car up to 75mph runs the risk of losing control and takes more effort. Going faster can lead to a crash. *(Stimulants speed up the central nervous system, and continuing use of stimulants in one sitting can result in stroke, heart attack, overdose).*

 Putting on the brakes and the accelerator at the same time will cause the car to malfunction. *(Using stimulants and depressants together lead to neither working well but increasing risk of harm).*

 Driving off road without a map can lead to a wild adventure, or serious damage, or both (psychedelics). However, driving really fast or slow at the same time greatly increases those risks. *(Psychedelics with any other substance are more likely to lead to mental health issues during and potentially after the trip).*

Drugs and Me have created an interactive tool allowing people to learn about the risks to various combinations of substances. Whilst we acknowledge that any drug use contains risks, we believe that by learning about the potential harms and how to reduce them, this knowledge can save lives.

<https://www.drugsand.me/tools/interactions>

If you have any concerns about a young person's drug or alcohol use, contact Brighton and Hove's U18s substance use and sexual health service (ru-ok? inc DASH) which provides confidential support, advice and guidance to young people, their families, carers, friends and professionals, alongside treatment programmes for young people identifying problems arising from substance use and/or sexual health. A duty worker is available weekdays from 2 pm – 5 pm (4:30 on Fridays). **ru-ok? details: ru-ok? is on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook sharing useful information around drugs, alcohol and sexual health. Please follow us. Contact us at ru-ok? Tel: 01273 293966 or 07795 336436 or email Luci.Hammond@brighton-hove.gov.uk or RUOKDB@brighton-hove.gov.uk .**

We would love your feedback!