



# CHEMSAFE: ADVICE

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# Further Support Page

## **The Reach**

Provides in-person support for chemsex: [www.gmpash.org.uk](http://www.gmpash.org.uk)

## **George House Trust**

Support for people living with HIV: [www.gh.org.uk](http://www.gh.org.uk)

## **Terrence Higgins Trust**

Providing information about HIV and testing: [www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)

## **Narcotics Anonymous**

12 step programme for support on narcotics: [www.ukna.org](http://www.ukna.org)

## **The Northern**

Sexual Health testing for Manchester: [www.thenorthernsexualhealth.co.uk](http://www.thenorthernsexualhealth.co.uk)

## **Friday/Monday**

Online resource on drugs and sex: [www.fridaymonday.org.uk](http://www.fridaymonday.org.uk)

## **Controlling Chemsex**

Online support and info on chemsex: [www.controllingchemsex.com](http://www.controllingchemsex.com)

## **Chemsafe.Space**

Digital resource for chemsex services in GM: [www.chemsafe.space](http://www.chemsafe.space)

## **St. Mary's**

Sexual assault referral centre: [www.stmaryscentre.org](http://www.stmaryscentre.org)

## **Change Grow Live**

Services supporting drug and alcohol use: [www.changegrowlive.org](http://www.changegrowlive.org)

# **Introduction**

LGBT Foundation, BHA for Equality and George House Trust work together in the Passionate about Sexual Health (PaSH) partnership to promote safer sex and support people living with or at risk of contracting HIV. Our goal is to stop HIV transmission in Greater Manchester. This resource offers information to help people involved in chemsex stay safe and cut down or stop using substances.

## **Chemsex Definition**

"Chemsex" is the use of drugs to 'intensify' sexual experiences, usually organised through apps. These sessions can sometimes last for days and involve several people. While chemsex is often associated with cisgender gay and bisexual men, people of any identity and background can engage in chemsex. Some risks include mental health issues, sexual health problems, addiction, and harm to relationships.

Having chemsex, or any type of sex, always comes with a level of risk to your overall well-being. Look at these harm reduction tips to have as safe a time as possible. However, remember that avoiding chemsex will alleviate a lot of these potential harms and risks.



## Just the (Sex) Tips

- Get screened for STIs and HIV every 3 months
- Make sure you are vaccinated for Hep A, Hep B and Mpox
- Use condoms and plenty of lube during sex
- Change the condom if you use a new hole or are sharing sex toys
- Access PrEP for an extra level of protection from HIV transmission, and use an app like Preptrack for reminders
- If you are living with HIV, remember to take medication with you when you play, and set reminders to take your medication
- Establish boundaries for sex whilst you are sober
- Try to play with people you trust if you can
- If you do invite people over who you don't know, keep your money and valuables in a safe, secret place
- Prepare condoms, lube, and needles that are colour-coded, so people don't share the same needles and dispose of them properly
- Enjoy sober sex as well as chemsex, as this will make you less dependent on chemsex
- Don't share needles to avoid transmitting Hep-C, which can also live outside the body on surfaces from 16 hours to 4 days
- Avoid sharing douching equipment

## **A Wealth of Health Advice**

- Consume soft, small amounts of food to keep your energy up
- Hydrate with water, fruit drinks, smoothies and sports drinks
- Make sure you let someone you know where you are going and share GPS location services on your phone
- Always have a mutual agreement with the people you sleep with
- Some substances can be tasteless and odourless, so be aware of spiking, including drinks and lube
- Avoid coffee and alcohol
- Taking substances can make it harder to sleep as well, so take regular breaks outside of chemsex settings
- If you struggle to sleep, find a quiet, dark space so you can rest
- If someone overdoses, try to wake them up and put them in the recovery position

## **Mind your Mental Health**

- Set a limit for how long you play, as this will reduce risks and lessen your chances of paranoia or hallucinations from a lack of sleep
- Take breaks from chemsex sessions regularly to avoid weight loss, depression and psychological dependence
- If you want some support to cut down or play more safely, see the support services listed at the front of this resource
- Try to make your home cosy and clean so you have something positive to come home to after a session and try to eat and stay hydrated
- If you need support with anything or a non-consensual incident has taken place, please see some services on the front of this resource







## Safety and Substances

- If a hookup doesn't feel right, avoid meeting them or leave
- Avoid problems with the quality of your substances by using a dealer whom you trust and who knows what they are selling
- Try to avoid mixing substances and stick to one
- Don't mix GBL with alcohol or drugs with sedative effects
- Take the appropriate dose at reasonable time intervals when using drugs to avoid overdosing – use an alarm or notepad to remind yourself of doses
- G has risks, including overdosing, coma or even death. Even though you might be familiar with 'going under', be prepared to support someone who may be going under, including calling an ambulance
- Always dose your supplies so you know how much you are taking, and use a dropper bottle or syringe for accurate measurements
- Sometimes G takes a bit of time to work, so give ample time for the G to hit before taking more
- If slamming, always wash your hands and clean the area thoroughly each time before injecting
- If someone else is slamming you, which isn't recommended, please ensure you see the injecting equipment come from sealed packaging
- Never share injecting equipment, and use gloves when slamming
- Always use a new needle each time you slam
- Alternate and rotate injection sites, leaving a 1-inch space between spots
- If slamming, drink lots of water for circulation and visible veins
- Inject in veins, NOT arteries (research the difference)

## Drug Law

The law surrounding drug use and possession is complicated, but if you ever find yourself in trouble it's best to get legal advice as soon as possible.

- If you are arrested at a chemsex party, you need to speak to a solicitor, even if you do have to wait. You have a legal right to access a solicitor and it is free
- It is vital you speak to a solicitor at the earliest stage possible before you are interviewed
- You do not have to say anything to the police if arrested, however, if you are charged later when you are questioned on something you rely on later in court this may be used against you
- It may be useful to get the names and addresses of witnesses and police officers if you want to challenge the police on anything they have done
- Make a written record of any issues you have faced that are also signed and dated.
- You can complain to the Independent Office for Police Conduct Product (IOPC)

Sometimes if you give an innocent explanation to the police, they may leave you alone, however, it is not wise to discuss a case with the police if you have been arrested until you speak to a solicitor. Anything you say to the police may be used against you if arrested, so there is no such thing as a 'friendly chat'. If you do choose to say anything, think carefully before you speak.



## **When to Call an Ambulance**

You need to call an ambulance (999) during a chemsex party if someone at the party:

- Loses consciousness
- Confused/dazed
- Has had/is having a seizure or fit
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing

You should try to wake them up, and if you cannot, you need to put them in the recovery position. When you call an ambulance, the police may also accompany them. Police practices can vary all over the U.K., and it is often the choice of the emergency service worker you call or the emergency service staff who arrives on the scene as to whether police may or may not arrive. Whilst the criteria for why the police would be called is undefined, it may include:

- There is a suspicion a crime has been committed
- They feel there is danger at the scene
- That someone may have been harmed
- If they need to carry out forced entry at the scene

## Handling Police Involvement

The reason why the police might be called is to prioritise saving a person's life, and this should be your concern too if something happens. It might be scary to call for help when something goes wrong, and the fear of the police may stop you from calling for medical support. It's important to remember to prioritise people's safety and lives. However, this does not mean that police won't take action on crimes they see if they come to you.

It can make it harder for the police to prosecute or identify a crime if there are no drugs to be found at the party. However, delaying a call to the ambulance whilst you dispose of drugs can mean you are legally responsible if someone dies. Please always prioritise someone's health and safety in a situation like this. In any situation, especially those involving the police and/or emergency services, try to be calm, and kind and prioritise the health and safety of the people at a chill out by acting quickly and responsibly, and contacting emergency services who can talk you through a situation.





## **What to do if Police Arrive to a Party**

If the police do arrive at a chemsex party and you want to challenge anything they have done, you need to get the names and addresses of any witnesses, and the name or number of the police officer. Try to make a written record of what happened as soon as possible, which should be witnessed, dated and signed by yourself and the witness. If you have been injured or there has been damage to something you own, take pictures/a video as evidence and have yourself medically examined. You can always complain to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) if you have been mistreated, or to a group like Citizen's Advice Bureau for advice on possible legal actions.

## **Your Rights if Arrested**

If you are arrested and taken to a police station, it is important to know your rights. You should always be treated with humanity and respect, and ensure you speak to a custody officer whose job it is to mind your welfare when in police custody, especially if you need access to prescribed medications.

They may also keep you isolated while waiting in a cell, but this is usually for no longer than 24 hours. If this isn't provided to you, speak to your solicitor. You have the right to: See written codes for how you are going to be treated in custody and the rights that you have Know why you have been arrested Have a responsible adult with you if you are considered 'vulnerable' or are below 17 Have someone notified of your arrest Privately be able to consult a solicitor Have a medical examination if you feel unwell Have a solicitor (even if it takes a while) and always have a solicitor if you are interviewed (solicitors are a right of yours and are free)

## **Rights While in Police Custody**

They may also keep you isolated waiting in a cell, but this is usually for no longer than 24 hours. If this isn't provided to you, speak to your solicitor.

You have the right to:

- See written codes for how you are going to be treated in custody and the rights that you have
- Know why you have been arrested
- Have a responsible adult with you if you are considered 'vulnerable' or are below 17
- Have someone notified of your arrest
- Privately be able to consult a solicitor
- Have a medical examination if you feel unwell
- Have a solicitor (even if it takes a while) and always have a solicitor if you are interviewed (solicitors are a right of yours and are free)

## **Drug Possession: Police and Your Property**

The police may search your premises if they arrive. They are allowed to search premises with the consent of the occupier. However, there are situations in which the police may be able to investigate your property without your permission. This includes:

- They have a warrant (you should be able to see a copy of this by request)
- To get in to arrest someone
- They have arrested someone and can search that detained person's property
- To capture an escaped prisoner or to protect a life/stop serious damage



If the police search your home, they can only do so where you live and any communal areas. They may also use 'reasonable' forced entry if they feel someone is in danger. Any record of a search must be kept by the police and they should tell you what they are/are not allowed to do when searching. It's important to remember this is a simplified list of reasons police may enter a property.

## **Additional Support**

Release provides free and confidential information and advice about drug law. You can call or message them at 020 7324 2989 or email [ask@release.org.uk](mailto:ask@release.org.uk). The information provided is for guidance only, if someone needs medical assistance you must call 999. You should get legal advice as soon as possible if the police accompany emergency services. Make sure you know your rights if questioned or arrested.

Here you can find advice on how to plan a chemsex party as safely as possible, and this website by Controlling Chemsex you can learn more about first aid and advice on how to deal with potential emergencies at a chemsex party.



# **WE EMPOWER LGBTQ+ PEOPLE TO REALISE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL EVERYDAY**

LGBT Foundation offers inclusive sexual health services for the LGBTQ+ community. We offer free rapid HIV testing, STI screening, condom and lube distribution, sexual health advice, and information on PrEP and PEP

Contact us at 0345 3 30 30 30 or email  
[sexualhealth@lgbt.foundation](mailto:sexualhealth@lgbt.foundation)