Chemsex & HIV Prevention
Taking a Partnership Approach

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About London Friend

• London Friend – since 1972
• Health & well-being
• Coming out, social groups, activity groups
• Mental health – counselling
• Sexual health & HIV Prevention
• Antidote – drugs & alcohol service
• One of first services in UK to identify trend we now know as ‘chemsex’
Chemsex & HIV

• Context of using has become more sexualised
• Drugs have changed, and route of administration
• Harm is disproportionate to numbers using
• Positive Voices study: clear association between chemsex & risk, HIV, BBVs, STIs
• Antidote clients: 46% attribute HIV to chems
• 47% use increased; 29% use began after HIV+ diagnosis
Responding to chemsex

• King’s Fund Report:
  – London’s services have been slow to respond to the changing needs of people living with HIV and the prevention strategies required to adapt to new sexual health behaviours such as chemsex.

• Chemsex seen at Antidote due to concentration of presentations

• Observed in sexual health settings

• Slower to reach drug treatment services

• Risk following HV diagnosis indicates need for response in HIV services
Responding to chemsex

• Reluctance to use drug treatment services
  – Not relevant
  – Cultural competence & trust to disclose
  – Substance competence: changing drugs, ‘slamming’
  – Additional stigma
• Clear role for support outside of drug treatment
  – Prevention
  – Brief interventions
• Small voluntary sector agencies and community groups
  – Antidote, After Party
  – Theatre, community discussion, Let’s Talk About Gay Sex & Drugs
Changing interventions

• Combining drug treatment, HIV prevention, mental health & behavioural change
• Enabling frank, open, sex-positive discussions
• Adapting evidence-based interventions to context of using (e.g. relapse prevention & apps)
• Creating opportunities for earlier intervention (e.g. routine chemsex discussion in GUM)
Delivering in Partnership

• Club Drug Clinic – ‘centre of excellence’ approach
  – Medical interventions
  – Mental health assessments
  – Cultural competence exchange
• GUM in-reach – Code Clinic @ 56 Dean Street
• HIV prevention delivery partnerships
• Training & capacity building with other services
• London Chemsex Network development
Resources & Guidance

- Novel Psychoactive Treatment Unit (NEPTUNE)
- Out of your mind
- Guidance on the Clinical Management of Acute and Chronic Harms
- Club Drugs and Novel Psychoactive Substances
- Improving provision of drug and alcohol treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual & trans people
- Among sexual and drug-using populations
- London Lighthouse
- Public Health
- National Aids Trust
- The Health Foundation
- Inspiring Improvement
- friend
Challenges

• Sexual health new frontline for drug issues – need for wider skill set
• Localism & fragmentation
• Sexual health & GUM = open access; drug treatment = local residents
• Chemsex interventions not always ‘treatment’
• Ongoing omission in JSNAs
• Self-testing – risk of missing opportunity to engage on wider issues
Opportunities

- Commissioning partnerships – including cross boundary
- PrEP – additional interventions alongside clinical attendance
- Realigning sexual health & substance misuse to include earlier (& different) intervention
- Voluntary sector partnerships
Contact

• [www.londonfriend.org.uk](http://www.londonfriend.org.uk)
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