



## Drug Trend Bulletin - Issue 19 March 2019.

**THIS IS A REDACTED COPY OF AN INTERNAL POLICE DOCUMENT THAT PROVIDES INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON SOME OF THE LATEST DRUG TRENDS AROUND SCOTLAND. IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT EMERGING DRUG TRENDS OR SIGNIFICANT DRUGS ISSUES AFFECTING YOUR COMMUNITIES PLEASE SPEAK WITH OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POLICE STOP UNIT.**

### Cocaine & Crack Cocaine

The continued rise in the use and harms of Cocaine and Crack Cocaine is well documented and was discussed in the last bulletin. Cocaine has generally moved from a three to a two tier market, meaning that there are two street level markets. This can be observed in street names for the drug of 'council' for lower purity cocaine and 'proper' or 'prop' for higher purity cocaine.

There are recent reports of a multi-tiered market still existing in the West of Scotland with suppliers offering a variety of purity levels of the drug for sale. Notable terms being used which confirm this market include '50/50' for a mid-range product and 'Gucci' suggesting a high purity product potentially different to 'prop'. Street pricing reflects these markets with gram deals typically weighing about 0.8g and costing between £40 and £100 respectively for this drug.

Typical purities of street level Cocaine is in the region of 50% in Scotland at present but Crack Cocaine and high purity Cocaine powder can be up to 75%. This is a significant increase in the potency over previous years.



Crack Cocaine appears to have increased in prevalence of misuse and is anecdotally said to be getting abused as a result of difficulties in sourcing or because of the poor street quality of heroin which generally only has a purity of about 20%.

**SNOWBALLING or SPEEDBALLING** – This is the practice when users combine both Heroin and Cocaine and it is generally injected. The effects of the Cocaine (stimulant) and the Heroin (depressant) make this an extremely dangerous mixture in addition to the dangers from poor injecting practices.

There are reports of this being an increasing trend across Scotland with a general increase of injecting controlled drugs among the drug using community.

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### Street Valium

Some of the latest pictures of 'Street Valium'



There continues to be significant issues with 'street valium', with clusters of adverse health effects and it also has a significant correlation to drug related deaths all over Scotland. The strength and contents of street valium can fluctuate dramatically and its appearance can also vary with tablets of various shades of blue, yellow and white.

White and blue tablets with the "V" (Vintage Pharmaceuticals logo) on them and 10mg on the reverse and may be referred to on the street as 'v' or 'voi' and have been implicated in at least one drug related death in the west of Scotland. The tablets in the images above contain the drug Etizolam but it is possible that tablets of the same appearance could contain other active ingredients.

Etizolam was originally marketed as a New Psychoactive Substance ('legal high') before it was controlled in 2017. Etizolam has a high potency, with 1mg being equivalent approximately to a 10mg diazepam. Etizolam has been implicated in many recent benzodiazepine deaths in Scotland and it is difficult to know the actual strength of tablets in circulation, given many are produced on the illicit market.

A briefing on Etizolam can be found here: <http://www.sdf.org.uk/drugfax/>

Alprazolam (Xanax) is another benzodiazepine which can be sourced in most areas of Scotland. Xanax is a potent and short acting drug. The most commonly recovered tablets in the UK are 2mg white bars. Xanax is active from .25mg (meaning 8 doses in a 2mg bar) so people using full bars are taking a very large dose and would be at risk of overdose especially when combined with alcohol or other drugs. Police Scotland have recovered Xanax tablets which have contained Alprazolam, Diazepam and Etizolam.



A briefing on Xanax can be found here:

<http://www.sdf.org.uk/drugfax/>

## Drug Trend Bulletin

### Gabapentin / Pregablin

Over recent years there has been a sharp increase in the amount of Pregablin and Gabapentin being recovered by the police. The vast majority of this drug comes from the diversion of legitimate prescriptions. There is also anecdotal reports in some areas of Scotland of online pharmacy prescribing.

#### **CHANGE IN THE LAW!!**

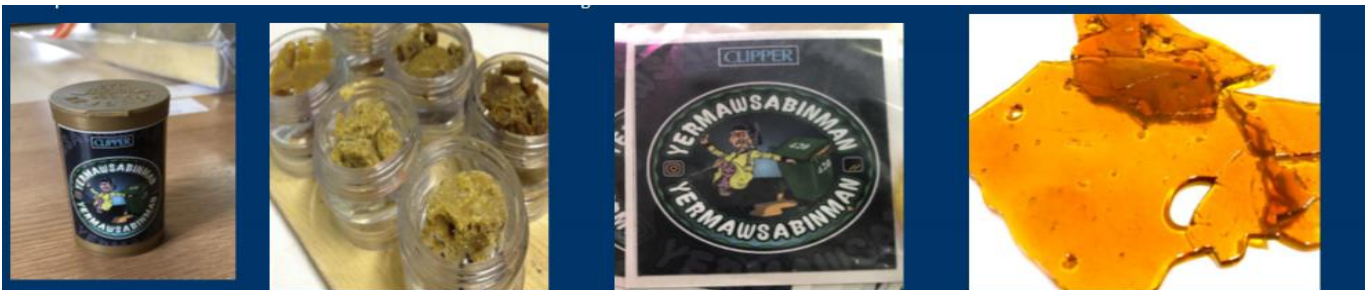
These drugs until now have not been controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, however, be aware that from the 1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2019 these two drugs will become CLASS C controlled substances. Some information on this is shown on the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pregabalin-and-gabapentin-to-be-controlled-as-class-c-drugs>

In addition to people who are prescribed pregablin for epilepsy, nerve pain and anxiety, pregablin/gabapentin is used by others who want to potentiate the effects of other drugs like heroin or prevent withdrawal effects of other drugs. Some people describe the effects as like a mixture of alcohol and diazepam (a benzodiazepine).

### Cannabis

The variety of products containing Cannabis continues to rise. Here is a sample of some of the most recent police recoveries from around the country to help you identify them.



The above images are of recently seized Cannabis Wax and 'Shatter' which were being supplied in the Forth Valley area but are common around the whole of Scotland at present. High strength THC Cannabis products have a typical value of between £60 and £100 per gram.



The items in this image are of edible Cannabis confectionary products that were recovered in the Borders recently. They have been confirmed as containing THC following laboratory analysis. They have been marketed as 'Starburst OG', 'Wham bars' and 'Blackcurrant' flavours. They were found to weigh 5 grams with larger bars found to weight 25 grams. Their price is unknown at present.

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The items in this image are small medicinal bottles of what is marketed as being '**BANG BANG CHOCOLATE SAUCE**'. It is a form of Cannabis but more liquid than Cannabis Oil. It is unknown what the strength/purity of this product was but it was confirmed as containing THC. They were labelled with a content of 500mg & 1000mg (0.5g or 1g) which we suspect was the amount of THC in each bottle with values of £40 and £70 respectively. The bottles were half full (100ml approx).



A recently recovered empty packet following a drugs operation which is almost identical to Haribo confectionary. These type of Cannabis edibles are beginning to be recovered frequently by the Police. They are available in a variety of sizes. They are likely to be sourced over the internet and more information on their price is requested.

## Contents of a Cannabis Joint



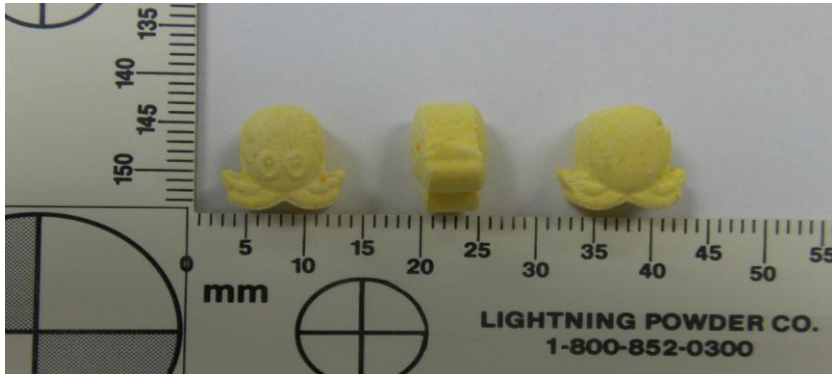
With Cannabis being the most commonly recovered drug by the Police, '**A Study of the Contents of Cannabis Joints**' published in February 2019 by Peter Collins, a Police Drugs Expert in Avon and Somerset Police found that "mixing cannabis flowering top with tobacco was the most common method of consuming cannabis in a joint. It is common for joints with cannabis mixed with tobacco to contain in the region of 200 milligrams of cannabis flowering top.

With a cannabis joint containing in the region of 200 milligrams, then one gram of cannabis flowering top would be able to make five joints. It is common for cannabis joints to be made with a single large paper and a roach made from card.

Regardless of whether the joint contains cannabis resin or cannabis flowering top the weight of the cannabis in the joint is in the region of 200 milligrams."

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### MDMA / ECSTASY



These Yellow Octopus Ecstasy tablets have been found to be causing health issues in south Wales.



This image is of an Egyptian Pharaoh's head Ecstasy tablet recovered at the SECC in February. This type of tablet has been linked to health issues around the UK.

### Recent Trends in Pricing & Weights

**Heroin** – There has been a general decrease in the price of Heroin across Scotland. The most common street deals recovered by the police are still £10 deals which generally weigh between 0.1g & 0.2g. Less quantity is more common in rural communities where 'tenner bags' can still weigh only 0.1g. Half gram deals weighing about 0.45g are an increasingly common street deal to be recovered and cost between £20 & £30.

**Cocaine** – Increase in purity and price. Street level deals of about 0.8g constitutes a typical 1 gram deal sold for anywhere between £40 SQ (standard quality) and £100 HQ (high quality).

Many thanks to the Scottish Drugs Forum for their contribution to this edition of the bulletin.

