



## **An investigation of the prevalence and characteristics of chemsex in Plymouth**

### **Overview**

- Chemsex is defined as *the intentional use of drugs before or during planned sexual activity to sustain, enhance, disinhibit, and/or facilitate sexual experience*. It is thought that these practices are most prevalent among men who have sex with men in urban areas and that sex-seeking websites and smartphone apps are commonly used.
- These practices are associated with multiple partners, condomless sex and injecting drugs (slamming). Consequently there are health protection concerns about the transmission of sexually transmitted infections including HIV. There are also concerns around treatment compliance for HIV+ people and the risk associated with injecting drug use.
- Some users of sexual health services in Plymouth have reported engagement with and knowledge of chemsex practices in the local area. There is currently no systematic recording of reported incidents and engagement.
- Research into the prevalence and characteristics of chemsex in Plymouth will improve intelligence and understanding and inform service based and community based responses to at risk populations.
- The research could be undertaken as a qualitative study using interviews with people who have engaged in chemsex and interviews with staff working in relevant services such as GUM and Harbour Drug and Alcohol Services. Subjects could be identified through social media and geo-social networking applications.
- Support for the research could be provided from Public Health, Derriford GUM service and Eddystone Trust.
- There has been some recent research in South London <http://sigmaresearch.org.uk/projects/item/project59>

Contact [Laura Juett](#) for further information.