

## **Global changes to the drug market and the increasing harms of synthetic opioids**

### **Speakers/Facilitators:**

Peter Furlong<sup>1</sup>

Tracey Kemp<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Change Grow Live, UK

### **Speaker bios**

**Peter Furlong** is the National Harm Reduction lead for Change Grow Live and has been working in Drug and Alcohol services since the late 1990s. Starting as a volunteer Peter has worked across a range of previous frontline roles including outreach worker, needle and syringe exchange, drug worker, services manager, and regional lead.

### **Tracey Kemp**

Tracey Kemp is the National Hepatitis C Strategic Lead at Change Grow Live. Tracey is a harm reductionist at heart, who has a passion and commitment to support people to change the direction of their lives, grow as individuals and to live life to its full potential by creating opportunities for better access to screening and linkage to care for Hepatitis C.

### **Background and aims:**

In England, increased monitoring alerts for new synthetic opioids (NSO) were picked up in the early months of 2023. In June/July, over 30 deaths were reported among people accessing Change Grow Live (CGL) drug services in Birmingham. So far, 117 deaths have been confirmed nationally resulting from drugs adulterated with Nitazenes, its suspected other deaths have gone undetected and many still currently awaiting a coroners' verdict.

Providing over a third of all treatment services in England, CGL works with over 63,000 people in treatment yearly. CGL swiftly developed a Critical Incident Task and Finish Group in July 2023 developing an organization-wide NSO strategy, supporting service responses. This strategy introduced a phased approach for targeting support to services, including provision of accessible and accurate safety advice, increased harm reduction, same day access to prescribing and testing strips for Nitazenes and Fentanyl.

Given sustained changes in Afghan supply routes, the NSO situation is likely to worsen world-wide. It is therefore crucial to share harm reduction strategies across Europe and globally.

### **Description of workshop:**

This workshop aims to share learning from CGL's NSO response, collate and share other good practice from across Europe. By sharing ideas across providers from different countries, we will consolidate knowledge about potentially effective responses and be able to disseminate a wider range of options for services and governments world-wide.

### **Methods and format:**

Beginning with a brief overview of work conducted in England by CGL, the workshop will be broken into small discussion groups (8-12 people) examining:

- Local situations in relation to NSOs and government/organizational responses
- Unmet need and horizon scanning for particular risk groups

- Ideas for developing good practice and disseminating harm reduction strategies to the widest group of drug users possible.

Groups will be facilitated, with discussions recorded for comprehensive write-up and dissemination post-conference.

**Number of delegates:**

60

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

*The conference collaborators recognise the considerable contribution that industry partners make to professional and research activities. We also recognise the need for transparency of disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by acknowledging these relationships in publications and presentations.*