

CHEMSEX HARM REDUCTION SAFER 1 PACK EVALUATION



Campaign: May 2023 – May 2025
Evaluation: December 2025

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BACKGROUND

2021

Following conversations with A&E staff, it became apparent that GBMSM 'G' related overdose admissions were given nothing, or a generic heteronormative handout on drugs on discharge. Addressing this, GMHC developed a Chemsex Resource Pack for St Thomas' Hospital A&E (ED), where it was piloted. Contents were based on print resources already included in PIP PAC safer chemsex pack (with paraphernalia). Feedback was universally positive: improved outcome for patients, improved use of staff time and resources that enable staff and patients to initiate and navigate challenging conversations.



2022

GMHC was deeply concerned about the lack of pan-London safer chemsex health messaging for GBMSM so set out the need for a targeted campaign to raise awareness and reduce harms. An expanded 'Chemsex Resource Pack' became the blueprint for SAFER 1 which also addressed requests from GBMSM for safer information without paraphernalia. SAFER 1 was funded by Fast Track Cities London, supplemented by contributions from Change Grow Live, Cranstoun, Forward Trust, and We Are With You.



2023

The pack contained six booklets and leaflets:

- Safer chemsex (A5 booklet, 32 pages)
- Health and wellbeing (A5 booklet, 16 pages)
- Hook-up Safer (A6 booklet, 8 pages)
- Overdoses and calling 999 (A6 leaflet, 4 pages)
- HIV/ STI/ HCV "Risk-O-Meter" (A5 leaflet, 4 pages)
- Your rights on arrest (A6 booklet, 12 pages)

In May 2023, NHS England launched a service allowing people to order at-home hepatitis C (HCV) testing kits. SAFER 1 included three perforated QR code slips to the testing kit website. Note: NHS England had not included GBMSM as a primary target group.



2023 – 2025

A little under 20,000 packs were distributed to over 266 sexual health and drug services, A&E (ED), HIV and LGBT+ organisations, and community groups, and LGBT+ venues and saunas. Intended to be a 12-month campaign, SAFER 1 ran for two years. As SAFER 2 was launched in June 2025, evaluating SAFER 1 was put back until December 2025.

Legacy

SAFER 1 has been a catalyst for new resources:

- SAFER 2 grew out of SAFER 1
- Cool Beans Vol. 1-3 (Oct 2025) grew out of SAFER 2
- SAFER 2 is distributed pan-London to services, organisations and scene venues supplemented posters/ QR coded health cards
- SAFER 2.1 is scheduled for June 2026



EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK SUMMARY

SAFER 1 has been evaluated through 41 user responses, 2 service responses, and services feedback through email exchanges (9). Though the evaluation slip was prominently displayed inside the pack, a QR code sticker was added to the outside of the envelope. While the number of respondents is low, it has been suggested that trauma from COVID, exhausted services (across the board), and shame/ stigma surrounding chemsex are factors.

First impressions

- First impressions and perceived usefulness are strong. First impression of the pack: 4.6/ 5. Usefulness of booklets and leaflets: 4.5/ 5. We believe this is high for community health promotion. People didn't just accept the pack, they rated it as genuinely useful. The tone, content, and design landed as intended so not *same old same old* health promotion for GBMSM.

Reach

- The pack reached people largely *outside* formal services including friends/ peers, scene venues, LGBT+ organisations, and sexual health services. This validates GMHC's outreach-led, peer-distributed model. If this pack only existed in clinics, it would miss a significant proportion of its audience.

Age profile

- The age profile is not just "young gay men", the largest groups being 35–44, 45–54, Then 25–34, and few under-21s. This aligns with what we already know about chemsex and harms. Mid-life gay men remain a core affected group yet are often invisible in commissioning narratives obsessed with "young people".

MPOX (*Ancillary question*)

- Concern about MPOX was real but not panic level (average concern score 3.5/ 5). People paid attention, but this wasn't hysteria. It suggests an audience capable of engaging with nuanced, non-alarmist health messaging, a space GMHC aims to occupy.

Met Police (*Ancillary question*)

- Trust in the Met police is in the is low and lowest-scoring metric in the dataset (average confidence score: 2.2/ 5). Low confidence in police is (and remains) a long-standing structural barrier to harm reduction, reporting, and safety, especially in contexts involving drugs, sex, and stigma.

Qualitative feedback

- Open comments repeatedly reference non-judgemental tone, clarity and conciseness, relatability, and practical usefulness. No meaningful signal that the pack is confusing, patronising, or irrelevant. This is culturally competent grassroots harm reduction done well, not repackaged mainstream messaging.

Conclusion

- This is community-led campaign strongly indicates an appetite for health promotion like this. SAFER 1 demonstrates acceptability, reach, and perceived utility, exactly what was envisaged as an 'opening salvo'.
- While the information contained in SAFER 1 can also be found at MENRUS.CO.UK, print resources still have value when they are well designed, relevant, and distributed in the right places.
- GBMSM remain a key audience and should not be sidelined or marginalised.
- Trust and confidence deficits with statutory systems, the NHS, government and police remain challenging.
- Those reading this report and saying 'not sure there's a demand, are not engaging in good faith reading of data and feedback included.

Learning

- Improved delivery infrastructure and resources targeting (including named contacts)
- Improved communication with local authority commissioning
- Expansion staff A&E (ED) chemsex awareness sessions
- Learning factored into Safer 2, launched in June 2025.

PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

SAFER 1 booklets and leaflets were printed in Germany, arriving on 5 pallets.

Volunteers made up packs sealed in a black printed C5 envelope. Seventeen packs, with a covering letter, were packed into a small box. Weighing under 2kg allowed orders to be posted 2nd class/ £2.99 (franked). An inside label allowed the box to double up as a display.

Drawing upon MENRUS.CO.UK services listings, volunteers researched services and organisations in Greater London. It was decided not to send Metropolitan Police Service packs given their stance on chemsex at the time.

Drug and Alcohol Services	81
Sexual Health Services	32
Accident and Emergency Dept (ED)	26
Scene Venues	34
LGBT+/ HIV Organisation	38
London Assembly Member	26
Public Health Directors	32
	269
MPS Walk-In Police Stations	37
MPS Custody Suites	32
	69



Packs were distributed in waves, every 4-6 weeks until January 2024 after which time they were sent on request and distributed at events/ training days. As a guide: 269 organisations and services: 17,000 Packs. Factoring in returns and recalibrating the distribution list, approximately 3,000 remained by late 2024.

LOST ORDERS AND RETURNS

Contacting organisations and services, coupled with feedback from London Chemsex Conference 2024 delegates (seeing the packs for the first time), it became evident that some boxes did not reach their intended destination. In some instances, boxes were put aside as the addressee title did not 'compute' as to their purpose, or until someone noticed. However, once aware, staff were helpful tracking down missing orders (storage cupboards, mailrooms, under tables). It's interesting to note that a few smaller LGBT+ organisations were indignant to have been sent the packs at all as the contents were regarded as irrelevant/ inappropriate.



Image 1
Display box



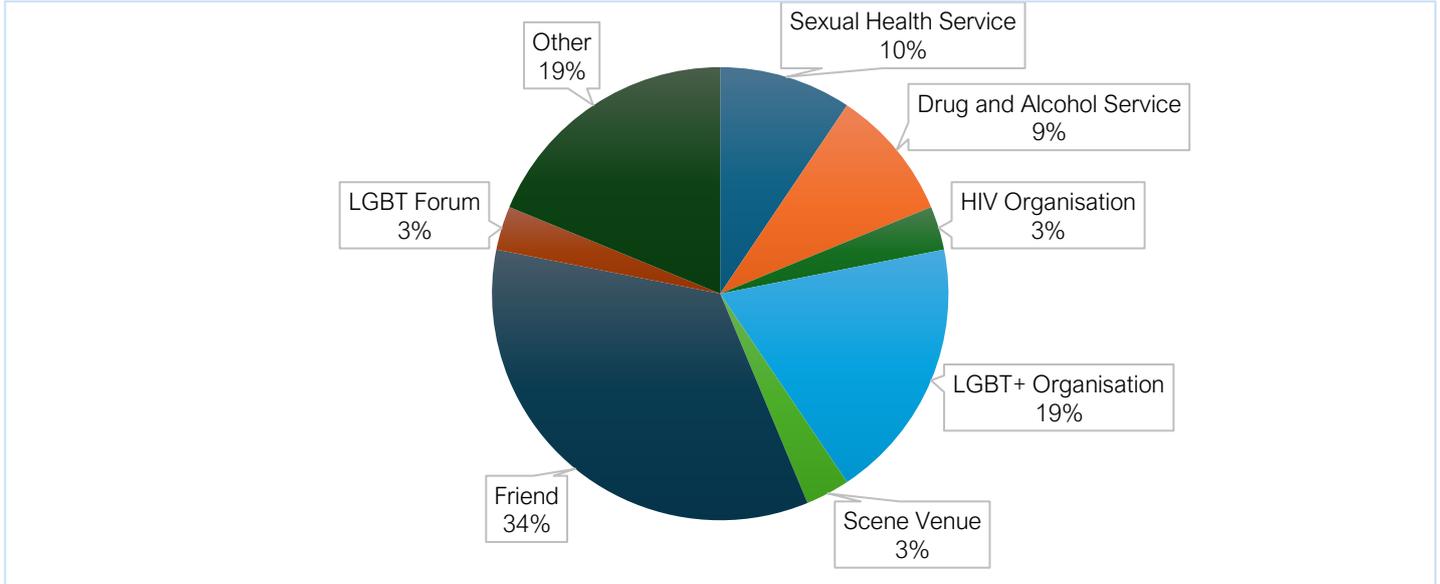
Image 2
Envelope evaluation sticker



Image 3
Return

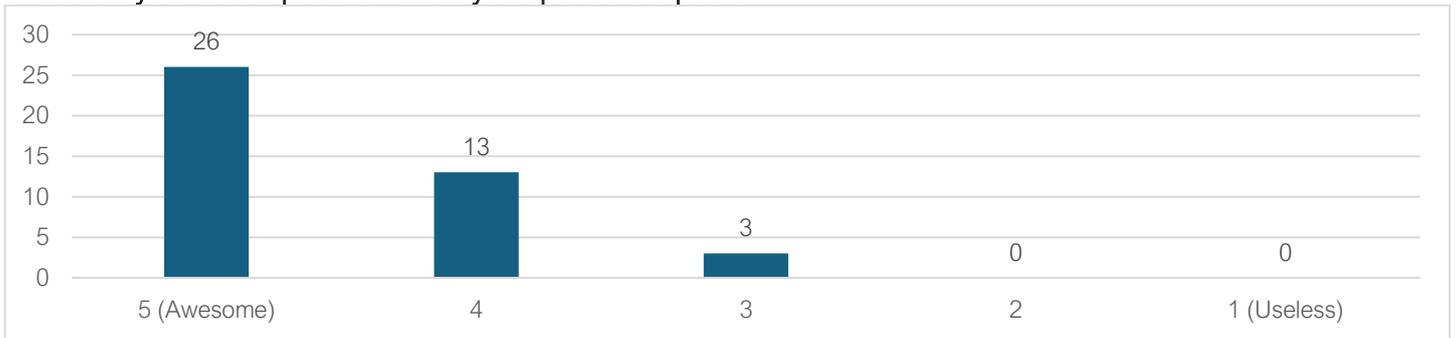
USER EVALUATION (41 responses)

Where did you get the Safer pack?

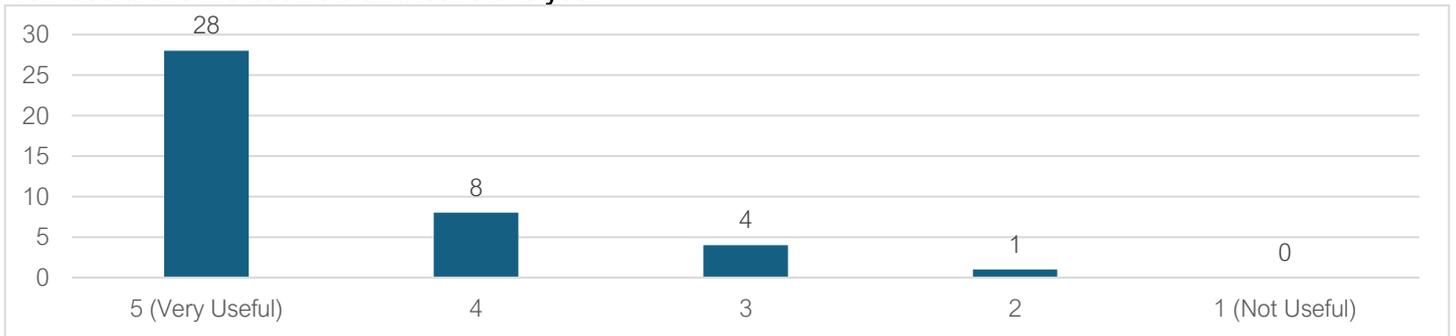


Other: Regulation (Shop) x 2, Friend, Gay's the Word (Shop), Clone Zone (Shop), Chemsex Conference

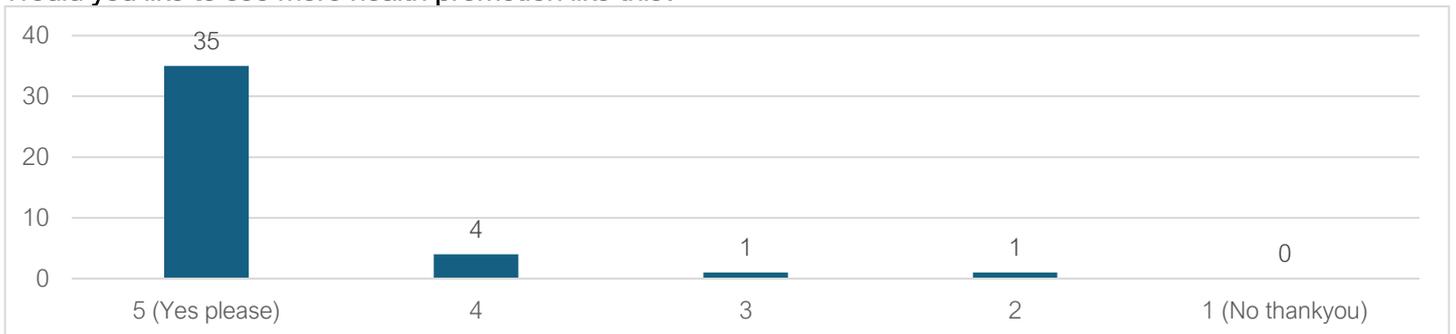
What was your first impression when you opened the pack?



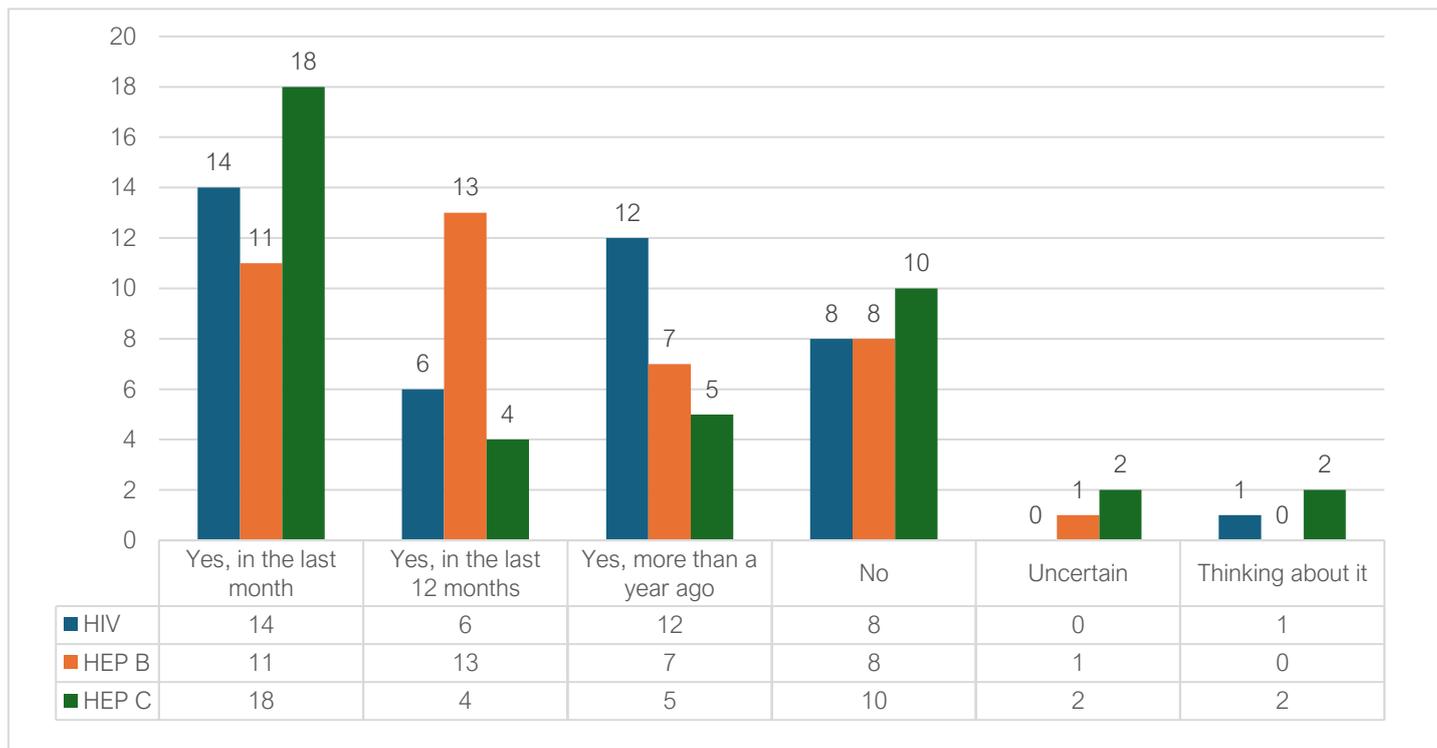
How useful are the booklets and leaflets to you?



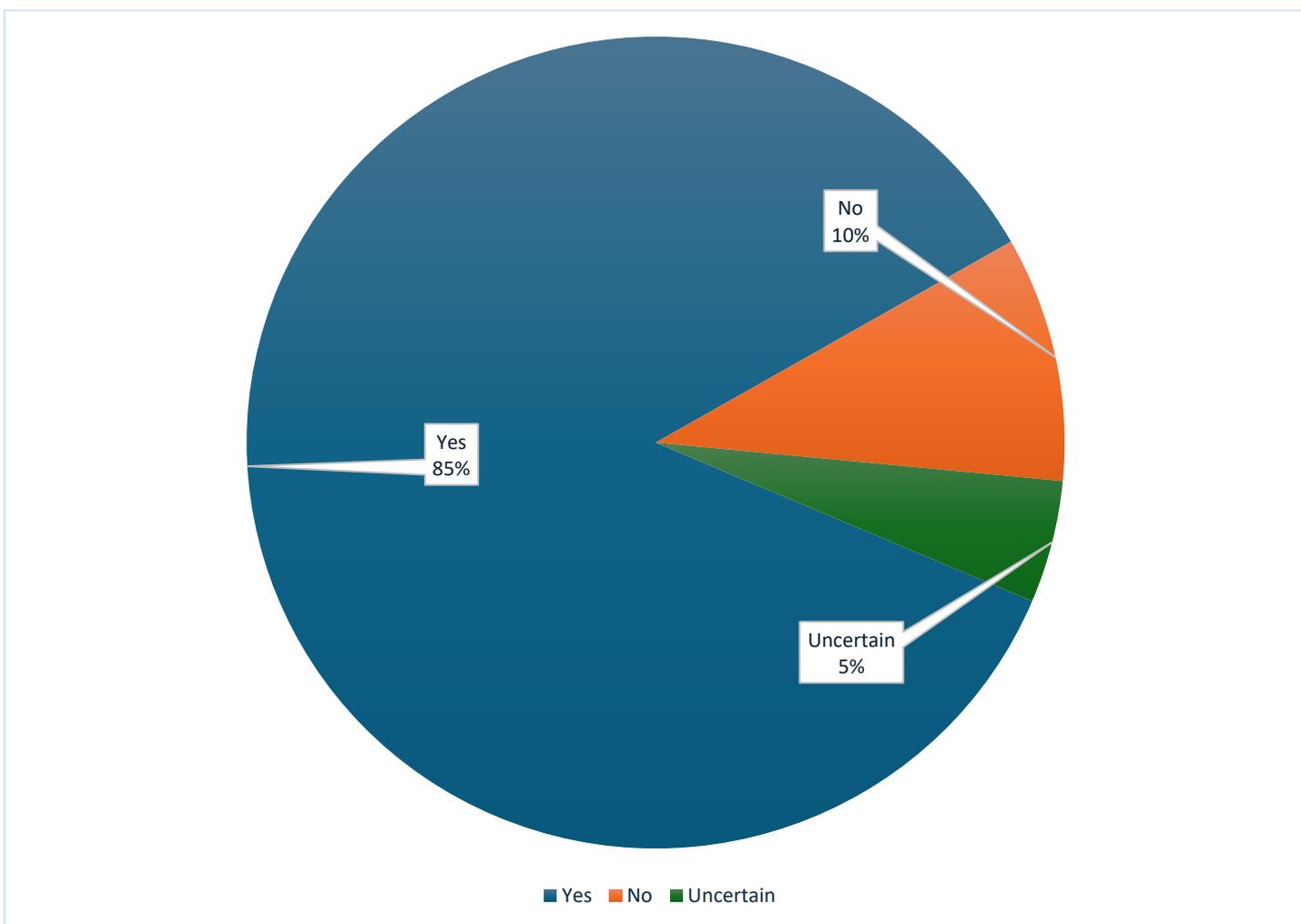
Would you like to see more health promotion like this?



HIV and hepatitis B and C testing

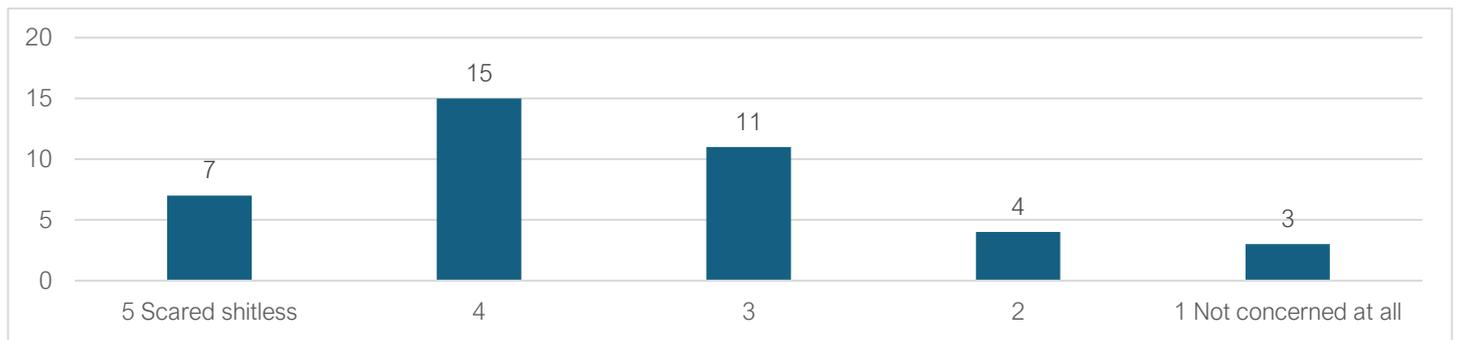


Have you been vaccinated against Hepatitis B?

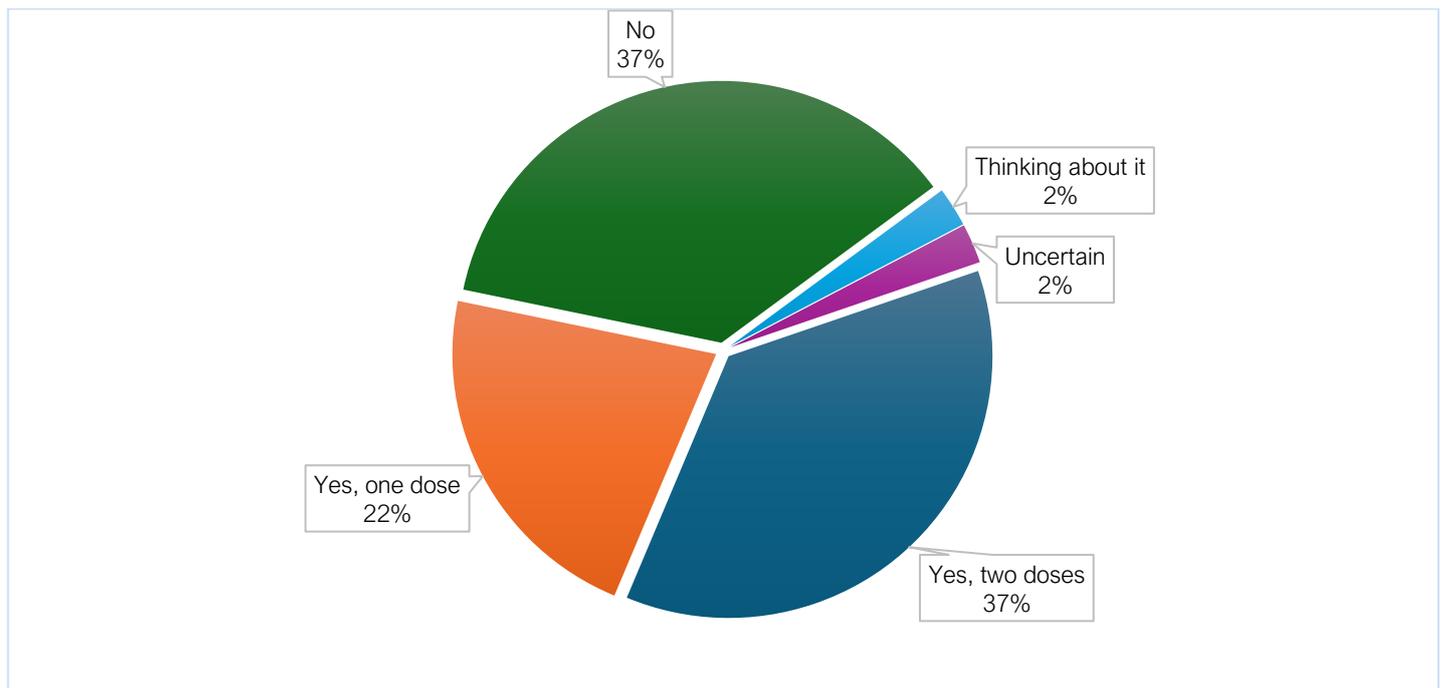


MPOX

How concerned were you when MPOX hit the news headlines in 2022?

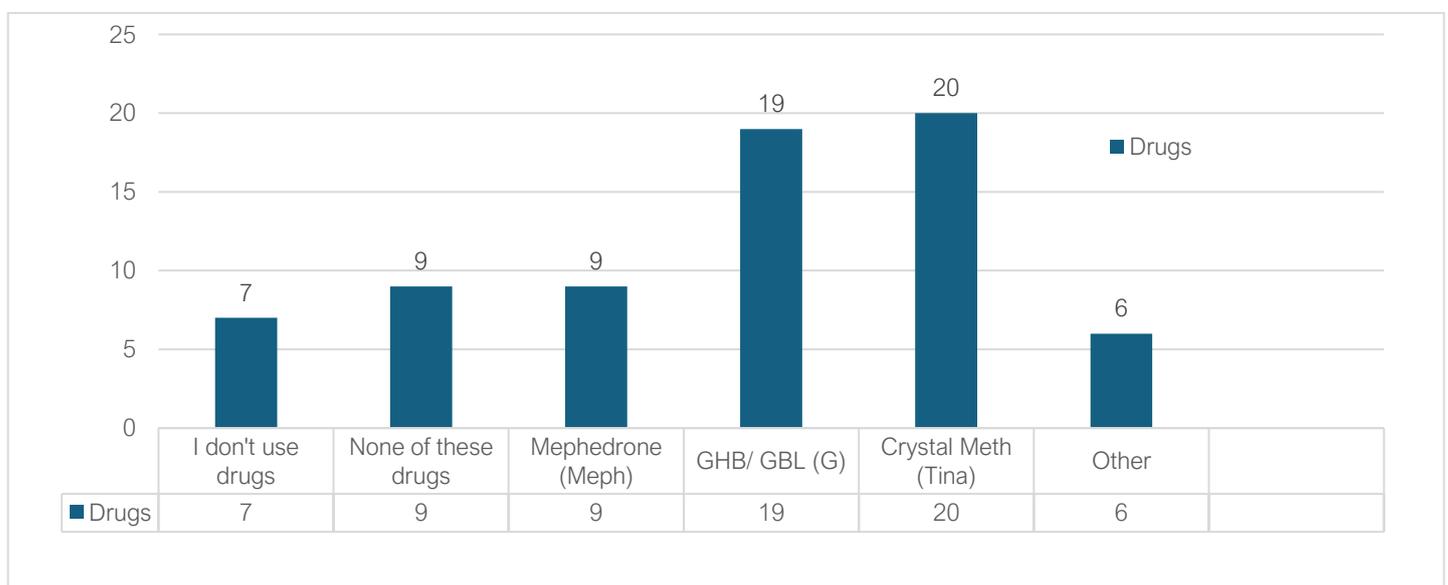


Have you been vaccinated against MPOX?



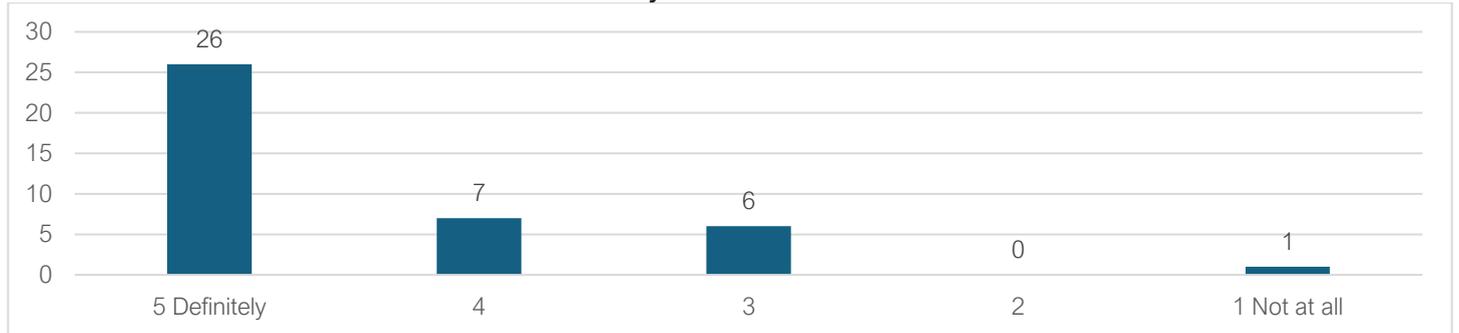
Chemsex

Which of the following have you used in the last 3 months?

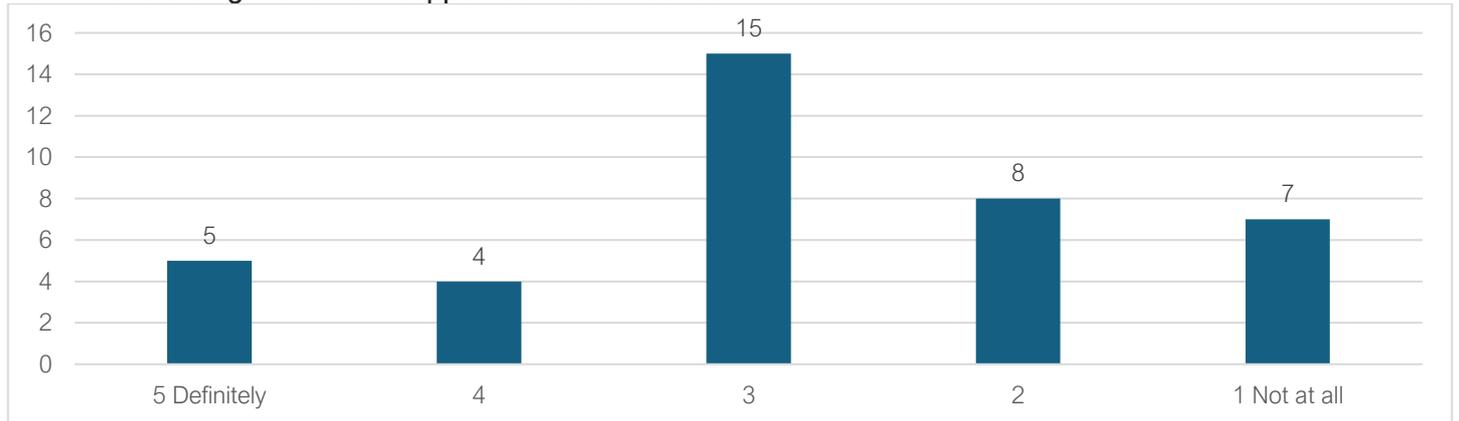


Other responses: MDMA, cocaine, ketamine, alcohol, use G rarely, stopped a few years ago, cannabis

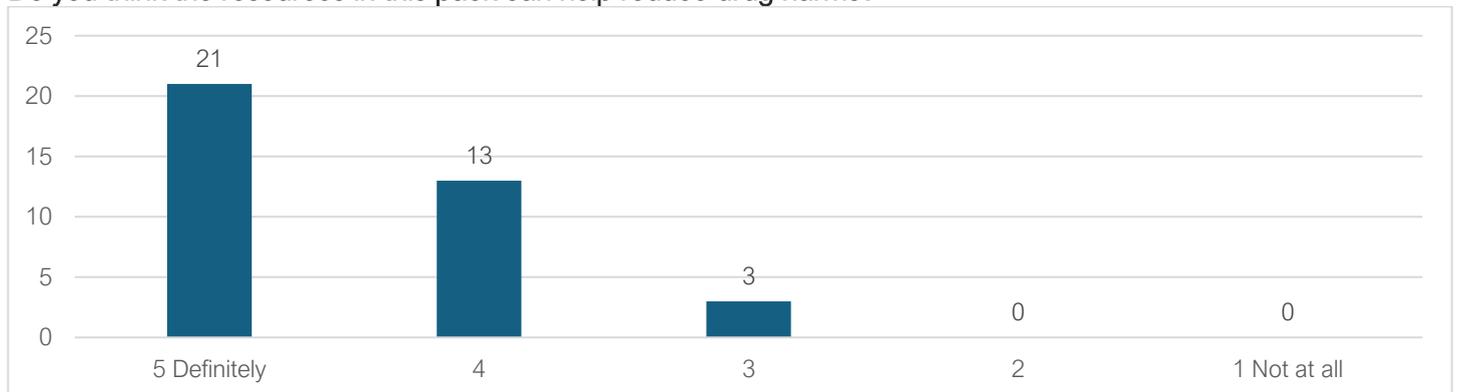
Is chemsex a health issue for the LGBT+ community in London?



Do we have the right chemsex support services in London?

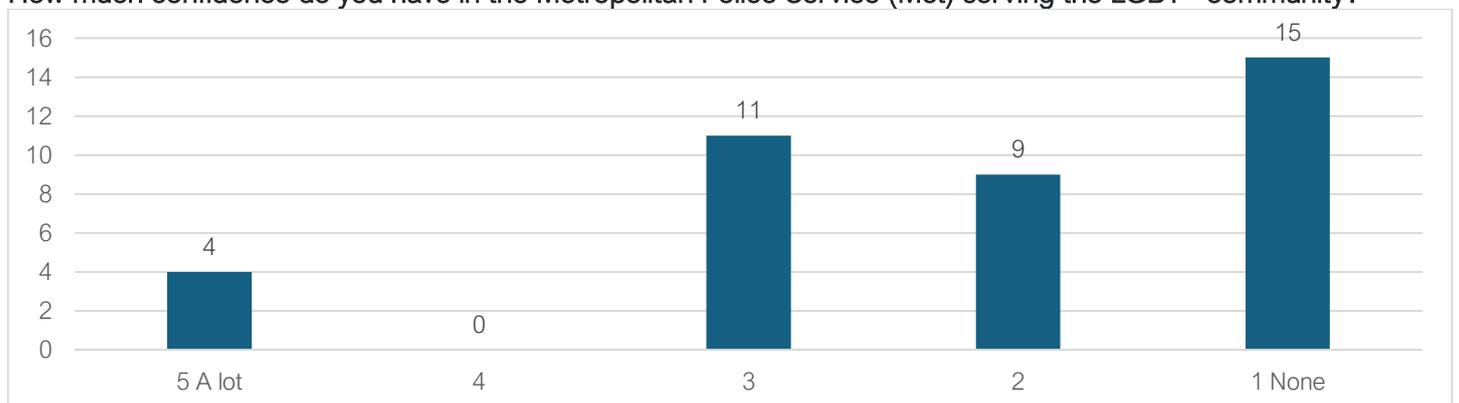


Do you think the resources in this pack can help reduce drug harms?



Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)

How much confidence do you have in the Metropolitan Police Service (Met) serving the LGBT+ community?



ABOUT YOU

In which London Borough do you live? (If you live outside London, please say which town or city).

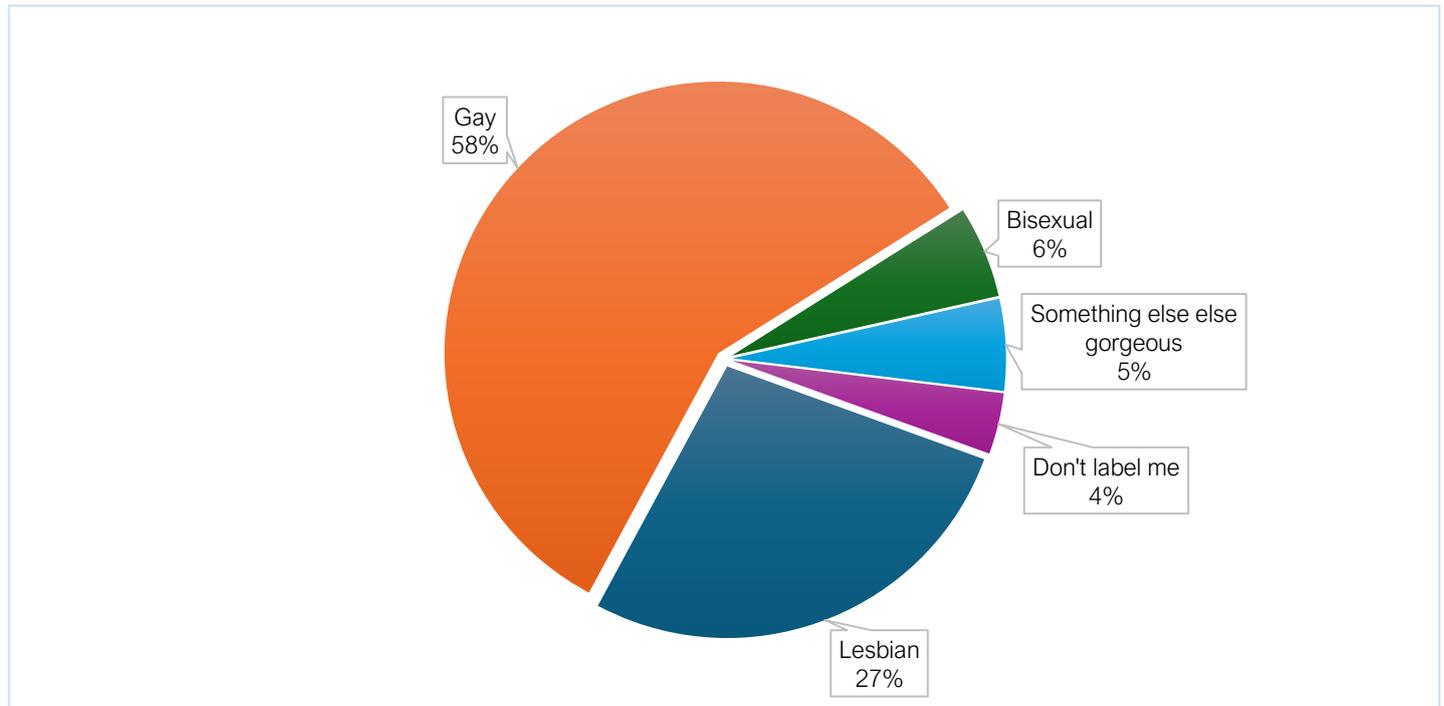
Barnet x 2
Birmingham
Bromley
City of London x 2
Croydon
Ealing

Essex
Greenwich
Hackney
Hammersmith
Haringey x 2
Southwark

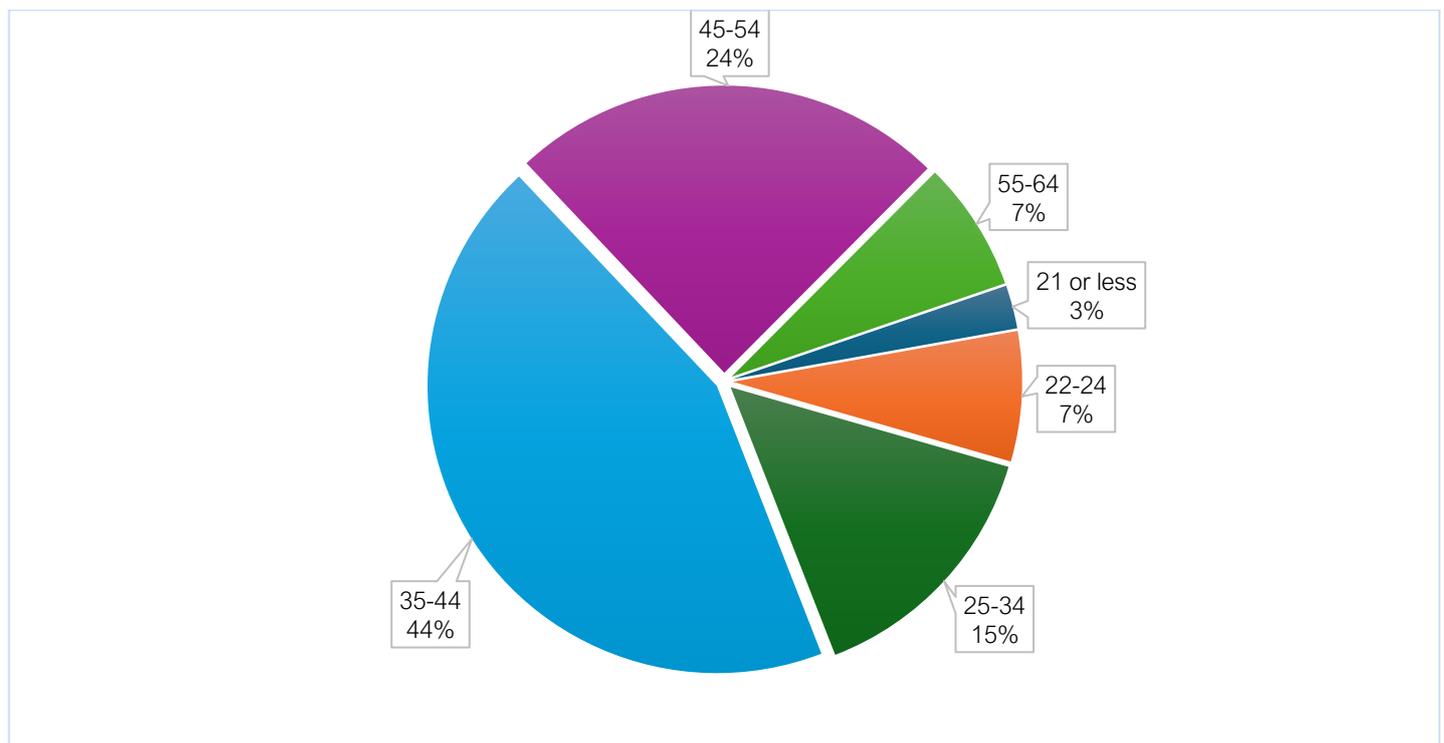
Lambeth x 4
Lewisham
Maidenhead
Newham
Southwark x3
Surrey

Tower Hamlets x 2
Visitor
Wandsworth
Watford
Westminster

Are you:



How old are you?



Please describe your ethnicity

Black	British x 2	Latin	White x 14
Black British	British Asian	Mixed	White British x 9
Black Caribbean	British	Mixed heritage	White European
Mixed white	Caucasian	Mixed white and	White not Anglo
British	Chinese	Asian	Saxon

Any Final Comments

Tell us what you liked and didn't like about this campaign.

1. This is superb. Amazing resource amazing ..i think I may volunteer for you or donate ..wow so no nonsense and the right language. Can you create an app that people would keep on their phones? Well done. Great to see such frank advice without judgement.
2. The simplicity and discrete nature of the resources is fantastic
3. Open and honest which is unique. Slightly repetitive and quite wordy but it's an amazing product just could be a little more concise. Maybe an app in place of the paper form, it would be good to keep it updated, get messages out to the community quicker, chat rooms for advice etc allow reporting of concerns to be made quicker and order slam packs. All on one place at hand
4. Was well presented and relevant
5. N/ A
6. It's not immediately obvious who its intended audience is causing some to dismiss it feeling it doesn't relate to them
7. I love the art work!
All the information is really useful and I have learnt a few new things.
8. I love the quality of production and effort of design. Good repartition of topics, info is easy to digest. Discreet to pass on to someone in need.
9. I wish there were more spaces with these in them.
10. Artwork is incredible. Bright and easy to read. More support organisations.
11. Great pack
12. Alk. Well done. More please these are excellent resources
13. Thanks guyz
14. Love the physicality of having something I can hold, read, and save for later to digest again.
Great artwork, more please
15. Main Feedback
Content 100% spot on. Has stuff in there that is such common sense and how to keep us safe and know how to react in certain circumstances. Super Impressed, which is why I scored it as Awesome. HOWEVER. The format is not great, fiddly different sized separate booklets all slipping out of my hands. If I hadn't been asked to evaluate it, I would probably give up, but I persevered though it was hard work.
One book, with tabs for each subject something for a drug fucked Queen to be able to handle and refer to in an emergency and a panic when they're. The layout of the data on each page is clear and concise enough, it's been really well thought out, but annoying to use when multiple smaller booklets
16. MEN R US Is it a campaign? If it is, I only saw the pack unfortunately. So starting from opening the envelope, I don't really know if it was the amount of different leaflets, the different sizes, or I guess the glossy paper used for printing them, or even my goofiness, made that most of all inside fell down the floor. Once grabbed from the floor, it costed me a while to sort them out as didn't quite know where are the front and the back of most. And which order shall I read them? That was a bit annoying. Then the content was really useful and complete. Honestly, I really liked how much information was included. But the consistency and hierarchy of the content was something really bad and at the end, confusing. Some leaflets have massive type size and some are squeezed. Also I think the info graph about the emergency case is not easy to get and to be honest it can seem very confusing so I would better not include it or do it simpler. Illustrations are really good too. I feel we could have even more... If I would suggest something would be including it all in one simple leaflet A5, no weird formats. Doing it really sorted and well laid out so people don't get lost when looking for a specific information, and make people want to take it with them, maybe including extra material or making it very cute... For the links I fell a bit odd pages, very little interesting, when it

- should be the top interest. QR codes should be coloured and with illustrations. Hope it's helpful
17. Informative. Easy to read. Timely.
 18. Great way to get info out. should be sent to more places. Not just London.
 19. Maybe a brief description of its contents on the cover would be helpful?
 20. I love how accessible and informative it is
 21. I would like to know more about LGBTQ+ community and support them more. And if I can get more details and things like this on post will be amazing!
 22. Great leaflets but too much to read. And too different formats between the large ones and small ones.

23. Wordy, but useful.
24. Very informative
25. Excellent presentations and discussions at Camden Town Hall 07/06.
Very enjoyable day!
26. Liked how concise and straight forward the info is
27. Clear, direct, nonjudgmental information and advice. I picked up at an STI clinic - hope it's available on other gay spaces, and schools/colleges/universities.
28. It's very relatable and is jammed with lots of info about things that are a little taboo and awkward to ask a doctor directly.

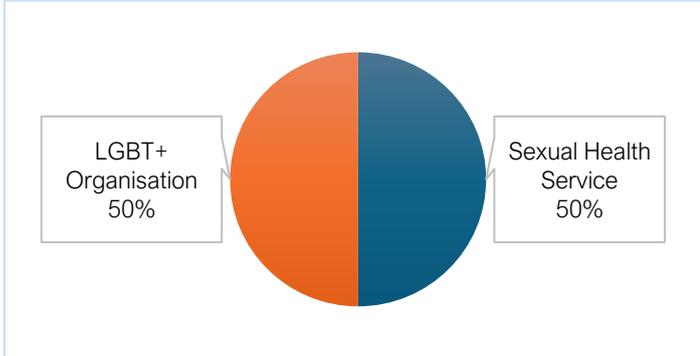


SERVICES EVALUATION (2 responses)

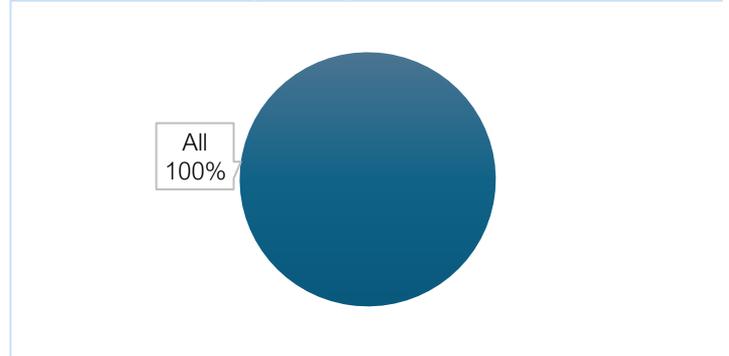
[1] What is the name of your organisation/ service?

Falcon Road Sexual Health Clinic
Unknown

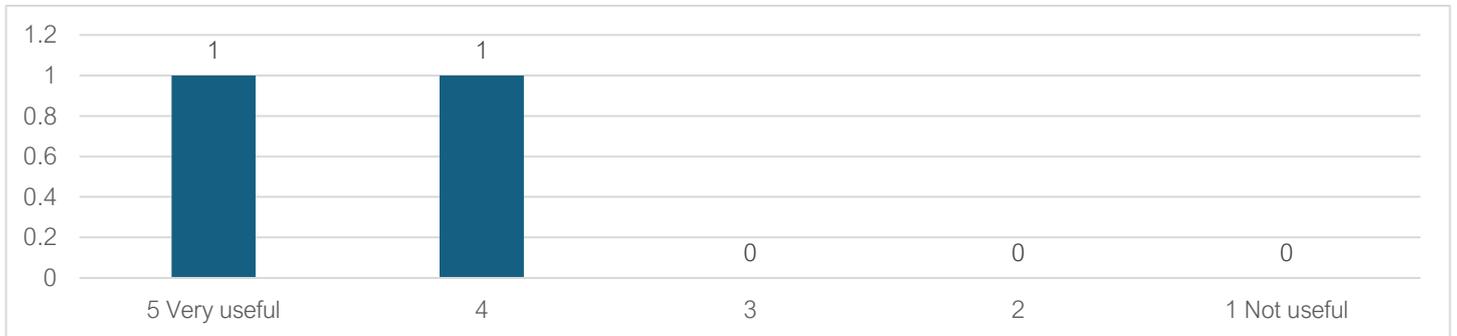
[2] Type of service/ organisation?



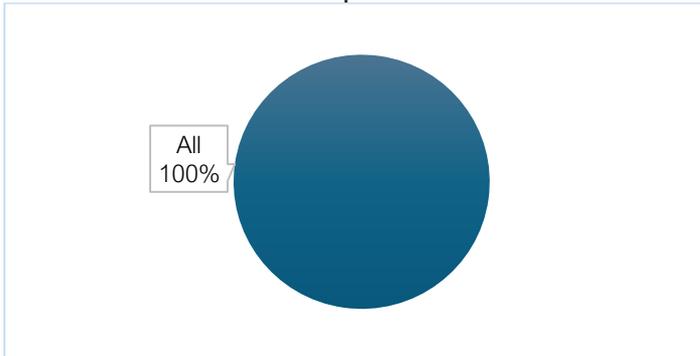
[3] Your service was sent several boxes over the summer. How many have you received?



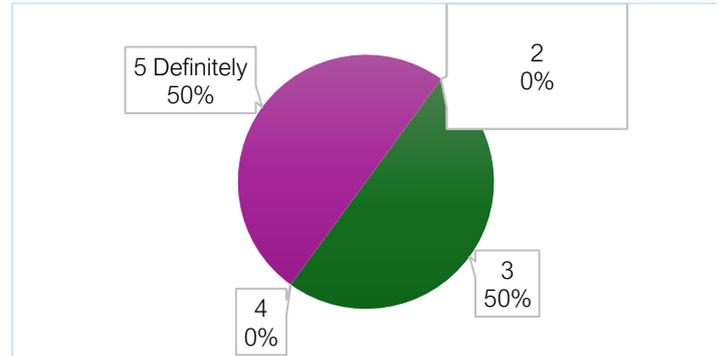
[4] How helpful have the packs been in your (chemsex) work?



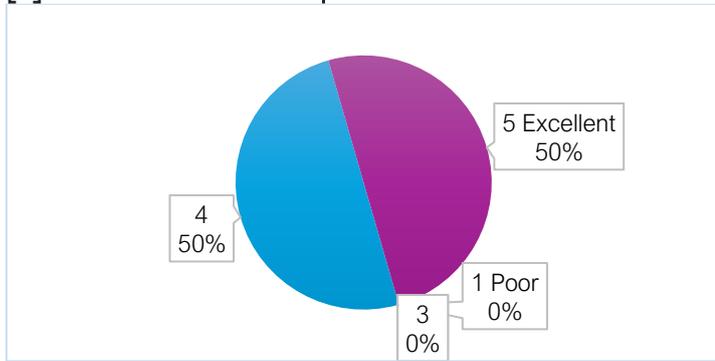
[4A] From the menu, select what you think is the most useful resource for clients/ patients.



[5] Would your service like more health promotion like this?



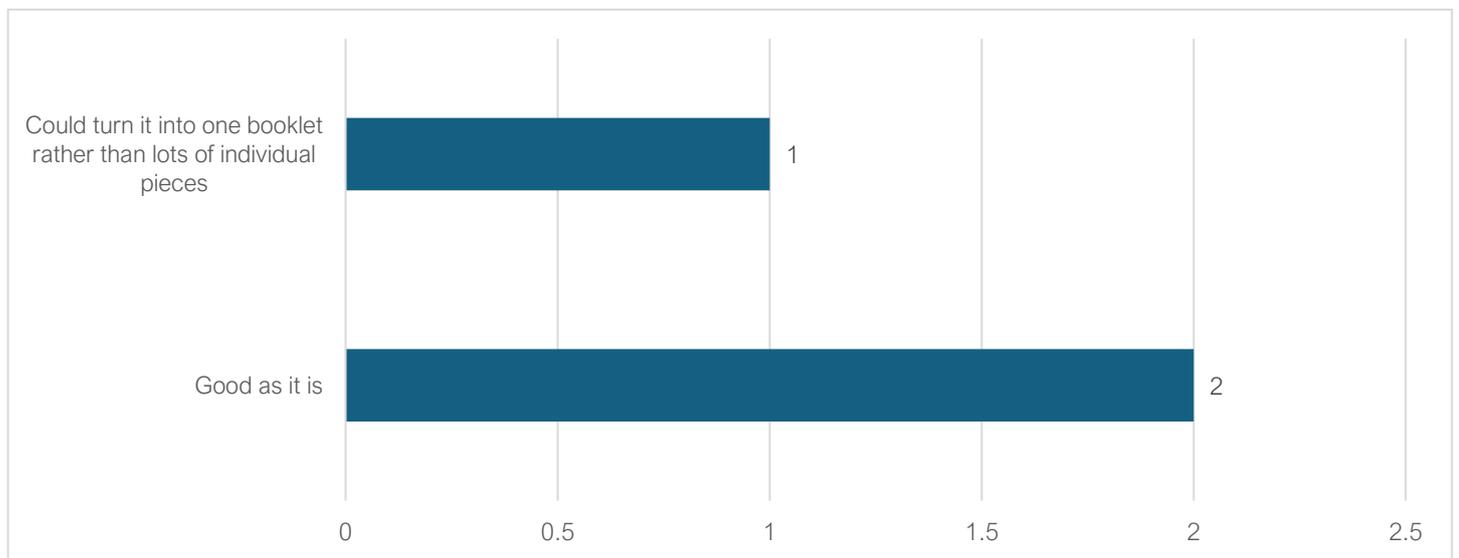
[6] Please rate the Safer pack overall:



[7] What did you like most about the pack?

- All of it
- That they cover a lot of information made easy to digest and carry away for patients.

[8] In a few words, how can the pack be improved?

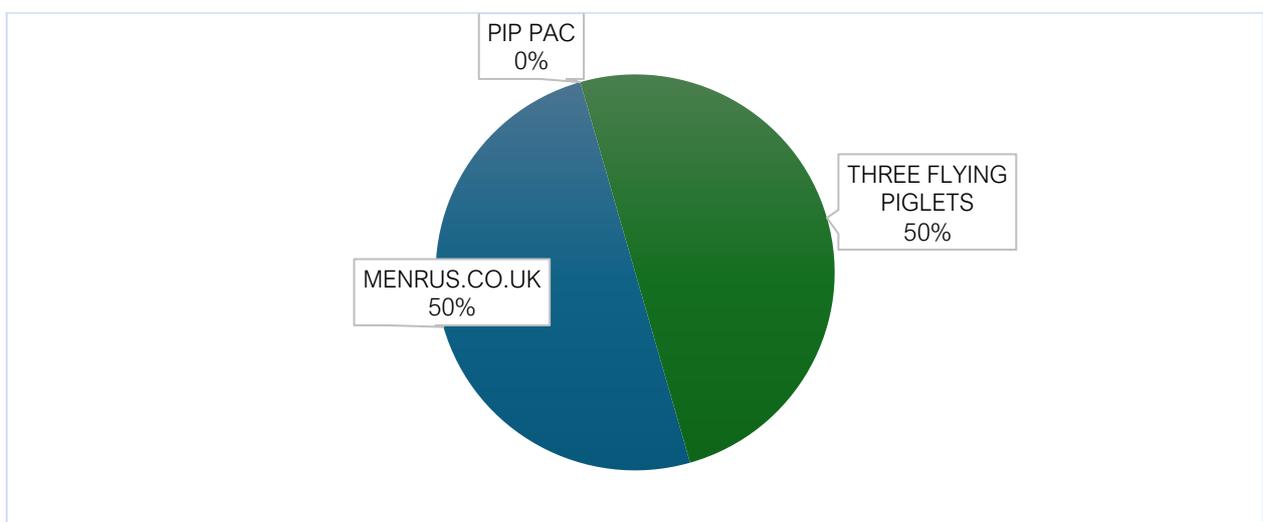


[9] Any further comments:

The packs are great and great to see more services creating accessible information.

[10] Which GMHC projects are you aware of?

- MENRUS.CO.UK - health and well-being website
- PIP PAC - safer chemsex packs
- THREE FLYING PIGLETS - films on gay men's health and well-being (inc. chemsex)



EMAIL FEEDBACK

Personal identifying information had been removed

"I do engage with a lot of the chemsex services users in the clinic and these packs are just the resource I will be giving out. Thank you so much for sending them through to us and putting them together."

Sexual Health Advisor, Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust

"I am just sending an email to say thank you for sending us some of the chemsex safer sex packs – they are really well made and look very good and helpful! I also wanted to offer our help in any future projects or collaborations. We are currently trying to set-up more chemsex services and resources here and thought these packs would be really helpful for that in future."

Sexual Health Officer/ Sessional Recovery Officer, LGBT+ Charity

"It arrived and looks incredible. The content is so comprehensive, honest and really accessible. The artwork is fantastic too – congrats to whoever is responsible for that."

Academic Clinical Fellow, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

"Thank you for sending us your safer packs - they are very well made up and have a lot of useful information!"

Senior Harm Reduction Lead, Adult Substance Misuse Service, London Local Authority

"I absolutely love love reading the physical copies. It allows me to truly appreciate the artwork, the attention to detail within the information provided, and the hard work that was put into making this. I greatly appreciate your kindness in sending them over. It's very inspiring to see resources and education [even at-home testing kits!] made

accessible to the people. The addition of sharing the packet/information should it not be applicable to the reader, encouraging the spread of awareness and education is great as well!"

Social and Behavioral Research Assistant, Non-Profit, USA

"We would love to have more please, they are a very helpful resource for our patients. Can you address them to me, I can then ensure they get to the right places in clinic."

Sexual Health Adviser, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

"We don't have an LGBT+/Chem sex lead, so they can just be sent to this address c/o The Health Adviser Team. Although they are very interesting packs, I think people often don't want to take away an envelope of papers - they generally much prefer links to online information. I think we have enough envelopes for now - we will let you know if we need further supplies and what people's response is. Many thanks for getting in touch and sending the resources - much appreciated!"

Senior Sexual Health Adviser, London Sexual Health Service

"I have asked our lead nurse, the technicians in the lab and our specialist HIV nurse and none of them recognise these packs at all I don't think they have been reaching the Centre."

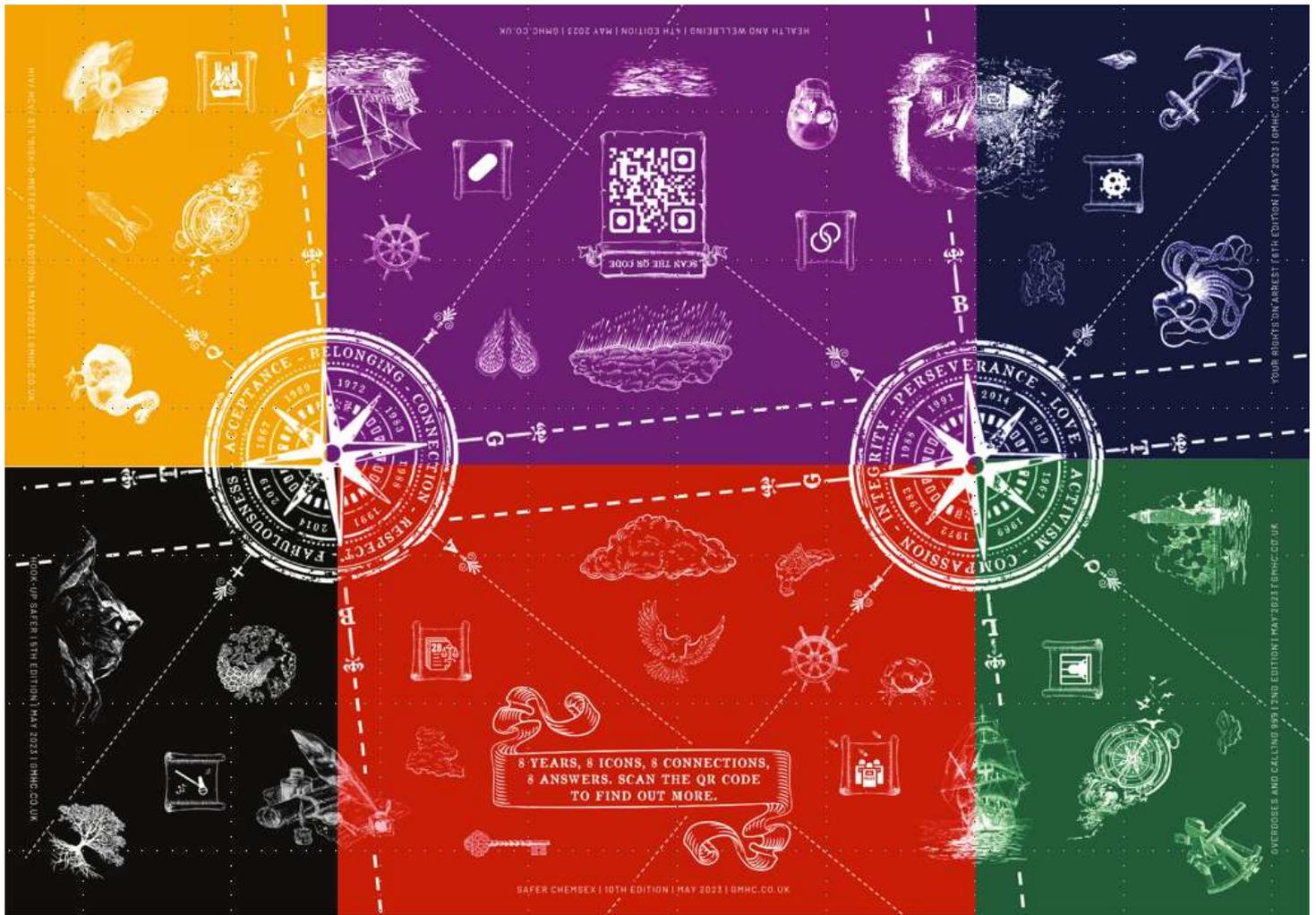
Medical Secretary, Sexual Health Service, London

"Our patients really appreciate them and it been good to open out our discussions more. Do please keep sending!"

Sexual Health Intervention and Prevention Team, London NHS Foundation Trust

CONNECTIONS PUZZLER

As an experimental easter egg, placing the back pages of the booklets and leaflets Safer 1 in the correct position creates a 'treasure map' and puzzle.



Instructions

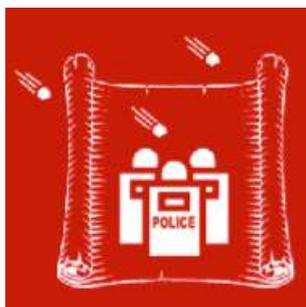
By following the instructions “Eight years, eight icons, eight connections, eight answers” and scanning the QR code, entrants could enter the correct information to win a small prize: a limited-edition enamel mug with bespoke artwork.



Answers



Partial Decriminalisation of
Homosexuality
1967



Stonewall Riots (USA)
1969



First Gay Pride
Gay Liberation Front
1972



HIV Identified
1983



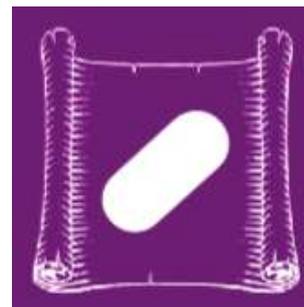
Clause 28
1988 enacted
2000 repealed Scotland
2003 repealed England and
Wales



Death of Freddie Mercury
1991



Gay Marriage
England and Wales
2014



PrEP (Pre-Exposure
Prophylaxis) Trials

Entrants

Even though there were clues what there was some more going on (including some of the answers) only five people entered as many thought the back covers were simply part of the overall pack design.

Terms and conditions

The first 50 entries with the correct answers to all eight questions will receive a bespoke prize tailored to the campaign. The Connections Puzzler starts 12:00 on 1 June 2023, finishing at 12:00 on 31 March 2024 or when 50 prizes have been won.

No purchase is necessary. One entry per person. Prizes will be sent to UK addresses only. Responsibility will not be accepted for entries lost and illegible entries. Those not in accordance with the entry instructions will be disqualified. GMHC's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

Open to all residents of the United Kingdom, excluding GMHC employees, volunteers, their partners, shags, family and friends, agents, or anyone directly connected with GMHC. In unforeseen circumstances, GMHC reserves the right to offer alternative prizes of equal or greater value. Only the maximum number of prizes will be awarded. The competition is organised by the Gay Men's Health Collective (GMHC).