

APOLOGY AND CORRECTIONS

Mystery Shopping: Drug and Alcohol Service Chemsex Support by Borough ~~London Services Chemsex Support 'Mystery Shopping'~~

GMHC would like to apologise for the following errors in this report, sent to commissioners and services on Wednesday, 8 April 2026.

- Incorrect service providers were allocated to several borough drug and alcohol services, namely:
 - Harrow, Kingston, Merton and Redbridge should have read VIA, not CGL
 - Sutton should have read Cranstoun, not CGL
 - Southwark should have read CGL not Turning Point
- 56 Dean Street has been removed as it is not a drug and alcohol service though we acknowledge it provides chemsex support.
- Omitting Club Drug Clinic (Westminster) which has now been included.

This work falls short of our usual standard and we are embarrassed. However, we would like to thank those services and commissioners who rightly brought this to our attention.

The mistakes we made illustrate some of the difficulties those seeking support can experience. However, this does not offset our apology, in any way.

We have revisited our listings for drug and alcohol services at MENRUS.CO.UK ensuring they are up to date. Feel free to check the listing yourself by [clicking this link](#).

We know some sexual health services provide chemsex support. These include 56 Dean Street, Caldecot Centre, Homerton Sexual Health and Burrell Street. Later this year, GMHC aims to update its sexual health service listings at MENRUS.CO.UK to reflect this.



Patriic Gayle patriic@gmhc.co.uk



Glen Scott glen@gmhc.co.uk

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Background

Undertaken in March 2026, this exercise is a snapshot of access to statutory services, based on a single point of contact. It is intended as a conversation starter, not a formal evaluation or audit. It reflects what happens when someone reaches out for help in a moment of concern. It was prompted by GBMSM with lived experience.

The findings are intended to prompt reflection and discussion, identify practical gaps (eg: knowledge, materials, access), and support service improvement and collaboration. They should not be used in isolation to judge services, but they highlight barriers experienced at the first point of contact.

This piece of work was undertaken by the Gay Men's Health Collective (GMHC), a small, volunteer-led organisation without the resources to carry out formal research at scale. Structured methods and AI-supported analysis have been used to bring consistency to scoring and reporting. The aim is to be transparent, practical, and useful, rather than academic.

What this does and does not show

This does: reflect a first contact experience, show how services respond to a chemsex-related enquiry and highlight variation in understanding and accessibility. This does not: assess full service quality or outcomes, capture what happens after engagement, represent multiple attempts or different staff, or meet the standards of formal research.

Findings (summary)

Across London, services are generally polite and process-driven but lack consistent understanding of chemsex and the needs of gay men (GBMSM). Most responses default to standard treatment pathways, with limited practical advice, few materials, and weak cultural competence. Antidote at London Friend is mentioned explicitly as a workaround for gaps. Access is variable, with callbacks and clear pathways not reliably offered. Overall, the system is functional but not configured to respond effectively to chemsex-related enquiries at first contact.

How the data was gathered

A worker contacted drug services across London boroughs by phone and asked two questions: 1) "I have a friend into chemsex. I'm worried. Can I pick up some information or leaflets for him?" and 2) "If I came in with him, what support could you provide?"

What was assessed

Each call was scored across six areas:

1. Attitude and willingness to help: polite, respectful, takes the enquiry seriously
2. Understanding of chemsex: recognises the term and its context
3. Information materials available: leaflets, booklets, or accessible resources
4. Support if attending with a friend: clear explanation of what help is available
5. Referral pathways: internal or external options offered
6. Ease of access: walk-in, appointments, waiting time explained

0 = No reply. 1 = Poor. 2 = Adequate. 3 = Good. 4 = Excellent.

Caller notes

In addition to scoring, brief notes were taken during each call. These captured: confidence discussing chemsex, awareness of gay men/ LGBT+ context, misinformation and examples of good or poorer practice. These notes were graded from A+ (very helpful) to D- (unhelpful).

How final grades were calculated

The six criteria scores were combined and converted into a grade (A+ to D-). The caller notes were graded separately (A+ to D-). Both were converted to numeric values and averaged. This produced a final overall grade for each service. Important: a no reply is treated as the lowest possible score.

Results

Borough	Provider	Criteria Grade	Notes Grade	Final Grade
Barking and Dagenham	CGL	B	B-	B-
Barnet	CGL	C+	C	C
Bexley	Pier Road	D-	D-	D-
Brent	Via	B	B	B
Bromley	CGL	B-	C-	C
Camden	CGL	B	B	B
City and Hackney	Turning Point	B+	B+	B+
Croydon	CGL	C+	C-	C
Ealing	CGL	C+	C	C
Enfield	NHS Trust	C	D	D+
Greenwich	Via	B-	C-	C
Hammersmith and Fulham	Turning Point	B	B	B
Haringey	The Grove	C	D+	D+
Harrow	Via	C+	C-	C
Havering	CGL	C	D	D+
Hillingdon	ARCH	C+	C	C
Hounslow	ARC	C+	C	C
Islington	Better Lives	B+	B+	B+
Kensington and Chelsea	Turning Point	B	B	B
Kingston	Via	C+	C-	C
Lambeth	Chemclinic	B+	B+	B+
Lewisham	CGL	C+	C	C
Merton	Via	C+	C-	C
Newham	CGL	C	D	D+
Redbridge	Via	C+	C	C
Richmond	CGL	B-	C	C
Southwark	CGL	B+	B+	B+
Sutton	Cranstoun	C+	C	C
Tower Hamlets	CGL	C+	C	C
Waltham Forest	CGL	C+	C	C
Wandsworth	With You	B	B	B
Westminster	Turning Point	B	B	B
Westminster	Club Drug Clinic	A-	B+	A-

Callbacks

While an adjunct to the brief, some services offered a callback: Barnet (CGL), Camden (CGL), Ealing (CGL), Redbridge (Via), Sutton (CGL), Westminster (Turning Point). Of particular note: Camden and Ealing callbacks.

Antidote

Several services mentioned Antidote at London Friend: "Better for LGBT+ understanding"; "Better starting point"; "More suitable than here"; "We don't have materials – go there."