LONDON CHEMSEX CONFERENCE 2026

WED 14 OCT 2026
MARY WARD HOUSE, WC1

GMHC MEN RUS .CO.UK



ANTIDOTE LONDON FRIEND

A huge thank you to the Volunteers
Who have helped prep for Conference,
and who are on hand throughout the day.



Participating organisations

56 Dean Street
All East Sexual Health / Barts Health NHS Trust
Antidote (London Friend)
Canterbury Christ Church University
Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust
Change Grow Live
Gay Men's Health Collective (GMHC)
Great Chapel Street Medical Centre
Impulse London
Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)
Kent County Council
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Metropolitan Police Service
ReShape
Safe Only CIC
SASH
The Times
Turning Point

Conference supported by

Change Grow Live
Impulse London
Turning Point

Conference organised by

Gay Men's Health Collective (GMHC)
Antidote at London Friend

Welcome to the 3rd London Chemsex Conference.

Once again, we meet in a challenging landscape: more complex harms, stretched services, and tighter funding which continue to expose gaps between sexual health, chemsex service provision, mental health, community organisations, emergency care, and the wider eco systems in which we operate.

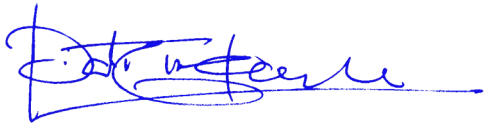
This year's Conference programme is about practice and about what you need and can use: tools, knowledge, approaches and connections that help you at the coalface with clients and patients.

Today's packed agenda brings together a wealth of experience and expertise. It will challenge us, poke us, inspire us, giving us practical ideas to take back into our work, strengthening our practice, and the connections to respond better together.

It's truly inspiring to meet colleagues from across London, and beyond, from different services, professions and perspectives, to share what works, what doesn't, what needs to change, and what we can do.

Chemsex does not sit within one service, one profession or in one London borough. Neither can our response.

Thank you for being part of this.





Patriic Gayle
Projects Lead, GMHC

Julian Dineen
Manager, Antidote

Conference aim

To strengthen professional understanding and practice in responding to chemsex, with a particular focus on reducing harm, improving support, and ensuring that services are culturally competent, informed and responsive to the needs of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men and the wider LGBT+ community.

Objectives

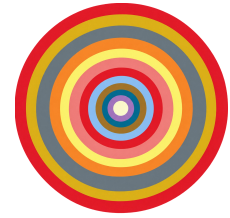
- Provide an up-to-date overview of the chemsex landscape, including emerging trends and increasingly complex harms.
- Improve understanding of the relationship between chemsex, sexual health, mental health, drug use, neurodivergence, safeguarding, homelessness and criminal justice.
- Examine how heteronormativity, stigma and gaps in LGBT+ cultural competence can affect engagement with services and outcomes.
- Share practical approaches, tools and harm-reduction interventions that can be used by frontline practitioners.
- Increase understanding of acute and emergency risks, including those associated with GHB/GBL and other chemsex drugs.
- Explore safeguarding, exploitation, vulnerability and consent within a chemsex context.
- Highlight examples of effective treatment, support, peer-led recovery and service provision.
- Improve knowledge of referral pathways and encourage better multidisciplinary and cross-sector working.

Create space for practitioners from different sectors to learn from one another, share experience and identify practical improvements to services.

Intended outcomes



- Recognise when chemsex may be relevant to a patient's, client's or service user's presentation and support needs.
- Discuss chemsex, sex and drug use in a more informed, culturally competent and non-judgemental way.
- Identify key chemsex-related risks and harms, including situations requiring urgent, specialist or safeguarding intervention.
- Apply appropriate harm-reduction information and approaches within the boundaries of their professional role.
- Understand how chemsex can intersect with mental health, neurodivergence, homelessness, trauma and criminal justice involvement.
- Identify appropriate services, support options and referral pathways.
- Work more effectively with colleagues and services across professional and organisational boundaries.
- Identify at least one practical change they can make within their own practice, team or service as a result of attending the Conference.



Learning from previous conferences

This is consistent with the direction of the previous conferences: the 2024 event focused on understanding the chemsex landscape, health-service impact, harm reduction and strengthening London's response, while delegate feedback subsequently called for more practical, frontline and service-focused content.

The 2025 Conference evaluation also supports this approach: delegates particularly valued the practical and clinical content, reported leaving better informed and more confident to apply learning in practice, and identified service pathways, harm reduction, mental health, safeguarding and cross-sector working as continuing priorities.

10:00–10:05 **Welcome and housekeeping**
Fraser Serle

10:06–10:21 **London chemsex landscape overview**
Patriic Gayle, Projects Lead
Gay Men's Health Collective

10:22–10:37 **Utilising lived experience**
Seba Dyer
Welfare and Harm Reduction Lead, Safe Only CIC

10:38–10:53 **Addressing heteronormativity in services**
Dan Ady, LGBTQ+ Drug and Alcohol Recovery Worker
Antidote and Turning Point

10:53–11:08 **COMFORT BREAK**

11:08–11:23 **Developing cultural competences in services**
Ben Kaye, Senior LGBTQIA+ and Chemsex Lead
Change Grow Live

11:24–11:39 **What Works at SASH**
Robert Fletcher
Operations Manager, SASH

11:40–11:55 **Neurodivergence, chemsex and the mixing desk of risk**
Oscar Patton-Lyons, Deputy Peer Support Lead
Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust

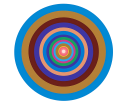
11:56–12:11 **Working across silos: The intersection between harm with care in statutory and NHS**
Dr Mauricio Alvarez, Principal Clinical Psychologist
E1 Clinic at All East Sexual Health

12:11–12:26 **AM roundup, audience questions and contingency**

12:26–13:26 **LUNCH**

13:26–13:41	**Safeguarding and chemsex** *Dr Michael Yates, Clinical Psychologist* *Psychology Service Lead, 56 Dean Street*
13:42–13:57	**Intersection of chemsex, homelessness and the LGBT+ community** *Dr Dana Beale Joint Clinical Lead GP* *Great Chapel Street Medical Centre*
13:58–14:13	**Supporting chemsex clients within the criminal justice context** *Ray Thomas, Assistant Manager, Antidote*
14:14–14:29	**GHB in police custody: recognising risks and delivering safe care** *Kersti Burman, Custody Nurse Practitioner/ Independent Prescriber, MPS* *Eoin Bradley, Advanced Forensic Nurse Practitioner, MPS*
14:30–14:45	**Peer-led recovery spaces and chemsex-focused 12-step meetings** *Jimmy Hutton, BSc Counselling Student* *Peer Support Volunteer, Antidote (London Friend)*
14:45-15:00	**COMFORT BREAK**
15:00–15:15	**Where community activism and chemsex intersects** *Dr Alex Tridico, President, Impulse London*
15:16–15:31	**Chemsex in Kent** *Nicole Pollock, Canterbury Christ Church University* *Nathalie Reeves, Kent County Council*
15:32–15:47	**Trends and complex harms** *Peter Kingsley, Advanced Paramedic (Critical Care)* *London Ambulance Service NHS Trust*
15:48–16:03	**The Case of Edward Cornes** *Fiona Hamilton, Chief Reporter, The Times*
16:04–16:19	**Next steps for London: connections** *Ben Collins, Co-director and Partnerships Lead, ReShape*
16:20–16:30	**PM roundup, audience questions, and close** *Fraser Serle*

Dr Mauricio Alvarez *he/ him*
Principal Clinical Psychologist, E1 Clinic at All East Sexual Health
Mauricio is a Principal Clinical Psychologist at Barts Health NHS Trust, where he leads the 'E1 Clinic', a chemsex and high-risk sexual behaviours pathway within ALL EAST Integrated Sexual Health Services. His clinical and academic work examines how shame and early attachment wounds shape addictive patterns in gender and sexual minorities, drawing on attachment theory, psychodynamic thinking, and contextual approaches to behaviour change. He understands chemsex as the intersection of sex, substances, and digital technologies shaping and feeding each other, meeting needs that usually predate chemsex itself. Beyond individual work, he is a strong advocate for peer and network-based approaches to recovery, informed by his doctoral and postdoctoral research on Peer Supported Open Dialogue in the Netherlands. Central to his clinical approach is helping people build the capacity to 'mentalize' (i.e. to notice and reflect on what is happening relationally before, during, and after an urge) fostering mastery through better understanding ourselves and others. Alongside his clinical work, Mauricio provides training, supervision, and consultancy to clinical teams, universities, and third-sector organisations in the UK, the Netherlands, and Mexico.



Dr Dana Beale *she/ her*
Joint Clinical Lead GP, Great Chapel Street Medical Centre
Dana is joint clinical lead GP at a specialist NHS GP surgery for people experiencing homelessness in Westminster. She is also a director of Homeless Health CIC (HHCIC), a social enterprise company that exists to support and improve the health of people experiencing homelessness. HHCIC holds this NHS contract and other specialist contracts with the aim of delivering equitable, holistic health and complex case management care to people experiencing homelessness.

Eoin Bradley *he/ him*
Advanced Forensic Nurse Practitioner, Metropolitan Police Service
Prescribing lead, and lecturer in forensic healthcare and his work over the past seven years has focused on strengthening joint, cross-agency approaches to chemsex-related harm. He has championed innovative medication-based interventions within policing and advanced trauma-informed, equitable pathways for both offenders and victims. In parallel, his role as an external clinical reviewer for deaths in prison provides independent scrutiny of complex cases, ensuring accountability, safer practice, and meaningful learning across justice and healthcare systems.

How can sash support me?

We provide **free sexual health advice and support** through Counselling, Coaching, Peer Mentoring, training and workshops to those in Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham.

We can support with:

- Chemsex
- Identity
- Relationships & Communication
- Safety & Consent
- Living with HIV
- Sex Work Experiences
- Self-esteem
- Emotional Wellbeing

Working Together

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Scan me to make a referral on our website

At Turning Point, we help people overcome challenges, improve wellbeing, and build more independent lives.

- Drug & Alcohol Support
- Learning Disability Support
- Mental & Physical Health
- Sexual Health

TURNING POINT inspired by possibility

Find out more about Turning Point by scanning the QR code

Kersti Burman RGN, Dip-He, NMP
Custody Nurse Practitioner/ Independent Prescriber
She is a Registered Nurse with over a decade of experience, qualifying in 2012. Since 2020, she has worked with the Metropolitan Police as a Custody Nurse Practitioner, delivering healthcare within forensic and custodial settings. Her previous roles include community nursing, Tissue Viability Nursing (TVN), emergency response, and substance misuse services within the prison environment. These diverse experiences have equipped her with expertise in caring for individuals with acute, complex, and vulnerable healthcare needs. In her current role, she has been involved in promoting safe clinical practice and supporting interventions that prevent deterioration and avoidable hospital admissions among people using GHB. She is currently a postgraduate student at the University of Greenwich, undertaking an Advanced Forensic Practice programme.

Dan Ady, Recovery Worker *he/ him*
Antidote at London Friend
Dan currently works in the partnership role between Antidote and Turning Point where he exclusively supports only LGBTQ+ clients with their substance use. His caseload heavily includes those who engage in chemsex, giving him valuable insight into the unique challenges and experiences that can arise within this context. His practice is informed through his background in Psychology, Nursing, and Mental Health support work, as well as his own lived experiences with addiction. He is passionate about creating inclusive, person-centred services and challenging barriers that can prevent LGBTQ+ people from accessing the support they deserve.

Ben Collins *LGBTQ+feminism*
Co-director and Partnerships Lead, ReShape
Ben is a community organiser, co-mentor, convener and network builder with over fifty years' experience in social justice, health and community-led movements. He is co-director and partnerships lead at ReShape and a co-founder of the Chemsex Forum, and has held leadership roles across European and global health initiatives including EuroTEST, EACS/WAVE and EATG. Ben brings deep lived experience to his work: long engaged in chemsex culture, living with HIV since 1982, and navigating ADHD and a high ACEs score, which he describes as living in syndemics. His work centres on movement-building across interconnected social and health challenges.

Change Grow Live

Let's be honest.

As the UK's largest provider of drug and alcohol treatment services, we haven't been as involved in the chemsex conversation as we should have been.

We're at this conference to help change that.

For years, specialist organisations, communities and people with lived experience have led this work, building the trust, insight and expertise that make a real difference. We want to listen, learn and work alongside those who have been leading the way.

We also know that chemsex isn't just happening in London. Change Grow Live has services and partnerships across the country, giving us both an opportunity and a responsibility to improve how we respond.

Generic approaches don't always work. If we're going to be useful, we need to listen, learn and earn trust. That means working with communities, not speaking for them, and recognising the value of specialist knowledge and lived experience.

Our ambition is to work alongside the specialists, understanding where we can add value and finding our place within the wider chems network. By combining the expertise that already exists with our national reach, we can strengthen pathways, build workforce confidence and make support more accessible across the country for anyone using chems - in sexualised or non-sexualised contexts, however they identify.

If you'd like to catch up at todays conference, please drop me an email to Chris.Lee@cgl.org.uk.

Chris Lee
Director of Strategy and Partnerships
Change Grow Live

Julian Dineen *he/ him*
Manager, Antidote at London Friend, Conference Organiser
Julian is Antidote's manager, leading London's only LGBTQ+ drug, alcohol and chemsex support services. Julian has a particular interest in the evolving needs of LGBTQ+ communities and in developing compassionate, non-judgemental and inclusive approaches to chemsex, harm reduction and substance use. Alongside his role at Antidote, Julian is a qualified, BACP-registered integrative and relational psychotherapist.
He brings together his experience of working within LGBTQ+ drug and alcohol services with his psychotherapy practice, exploring the complex intersections between sex, substances, mental health, relationships and identity.

Seba Dyer *she/ they*
Welfare and Harm Reduction Lead, Safe Only CIC
Seba is a welfare and harm reduction professional working across nightlife and Trans+ Community Healthcare. She is one of the core organisers of THNX, a harm reduction hub and needle exchange run in conjunction with The Love Tank across London, in addition to their work on the ground in Queer nightlife events and as organiser of a large mutual aid network for Trans+ individuals. She is the host of a radical radio show on Netil Radio and recent speaking appearances include presenting at the European Conference on LGBTQ+ Health 2025 in Brussels.

Robert Fletcher *he/ him*
Operations Manager, SASH
After Rob's initial degree in business and accounting, successfully managed pubs for 17 years. After a couple of years of focussed Chemsex use changed careers, studied a Masters degree in Addiction psychology and counselling and has worked for Turning Point (TP) for over the last decade. Initially immersed himself into CMA (Crystal Meth Anonymous) helping grow the meetings from 2 a week to 2 a day. During which time also spent 7 years working at Antidote and then utilised this combined knowledge to create a Chemsex pathway within TP which led to Antidote Chemsex workers being written into all the London TP Substance Use tenders. For the last 4 years as been the Operations Manager of SASH, sexual health and well-being service, most recently getting the funding for another Chemsex worker authorised to work across LF/ TP/ SASH as of Oct 2026.

ANTIDOTE
LONDON FRIEND

- **Twice weekly drop-ins**
- **Walk-in assessments**
- **Satellite services**
- **One-to-one key working**
- **Group work**
- **Sober social activities**
- **Counselling (London Friend)**

Antidote is the UK's only LGBTQ+ run and targeted drug, alcohol and chemsex service.

We were the first drug service in the UK to see people seeking help around chemsex and have developed a range of specialist support services.

ANTIDOTE@LONDONFRIEND.ORG.UK

Patriic Gayle
Projects Lead, Gay Men's Health Collective, Conference Organiser
Co-founder of the Gay Men's Health Collective (GMHC), Patriic is now in his fifth decade of involvement in gay men's health and wellbeing, HIV prevention, community activism, training and health education, and is a published author. His work includes conceiving MENRUS.CO.UK, PIP PAC safer chemsex packs, SAFER chemsex resources, and the London Chemsex Conferences. This acerbic bear of a man is as charming as he is curmudgeonly, laser focused on harm reduction, health inequalities, LGBT+ cultural competence and improving responses to chemsex across statutory, NHS and community settings. His work combines lived experience, community knowledge, frontline practice and research collaboration, with a focus on practical change and challenging systems where services are failing gay and bisexual men, and the wider LGBT+ community.

Fiona Hamilton
Chief Reporter, The Times
Fiona Hamilton covers the spectrum of major news stories including security issues. Previously, as crime and security editor, she repeatedly uncovered police failings. She has been working at The Times since 2008 and began her journalism career in Australia working on regional newspapers. She covered the Stephen Port case and broke the story about the death of Edward Cornes.

Jimmy Hutton
BSc Counselling Student; Peer Support Volunteer, Antidote (London Friend)
Jimmy is actively involved in the recovery community and helps facilitate peer-led recovery spaces, including a chemsex-focused 12-step meeting. He is particularly interested in the role of lived experience, community and connection in recovery, and in creating spaces where people can talk openly about chemsex, sex, shame and addiction. Jimmy brings lived experience of chemsex, addiction and long-term recovery alongside his developing professional practice in counselling and peer support. He is currently studying for a BSc in Counselling and volunteers with Antidote, London Friend's specialist drug and alcohol service, supporting people affected by substance use and chemsex.

GMHC provides chemsex and sexualised drug use education, training, and briefing sessions for the NHS, statutory services, and community organisations.

Sessions are flexible, tailored to need, supported by comprehensive print/ online resources.

ED nursing and clinical staff especially welcome for shorter sessions.



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Ben Kaye *he/ him*
Senior LGBTQIA+ and Chemsex Lead, Change Grow Live
Ben Kaye, BA (Hons), MBACP, Senior LGBTQIA+ and Chemsex Lead at Change Grow Live (CGL), the UK's largest mainstream drug and alcohol charity. With 10 years' experience in the drug and alcohol field, Ben is based in CGL's Camden service, working directly with people affected by chemsex while collaborating with colleagues nationally to develop CGL's approach to chems and related drug use in sexualised and non-sexualised contexts. A qualified counsellor with lived experience of chemsex and recovery, his work spans frontline practice, service development and workforce training. His recent MSc Psychology research explores how professionals in recovery from chemsex understand their experiences and professional practice.

Peter Kingsley *he/him*
Advanced Paramedic (Critical Care), London Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Peter joined the LAS in 2002 and has accumulated more than two decades of experience in prehospital emergency care. He has undertaken a range of frontline clinical roles, including ambulance clinician, solo response paramedic, flight paramedic with London's Air Ambulance, and Specialist Practitioner in Urgent Care. In 2017, Peter qualified as an Advanced Paramedic Practitioner (Critical Care). Based at Westminster Ambulance Station, he provides advanced clinical support across London, working alongside ambulance service colleagues to enhance the assessment and management of critically ill and injured patients. Alongside his operational duties, Peter co-leads the London Ambulance Service's chemsex harm-reduction programme. This work focuses on three key areas: improving awareness and understanding of chemsex among prehospital healthcare professionals, generating new evidence through original research, and collaborating with the Gay Men's Health Collective (GMHC) to develop targeted harm-reduction resources for individuals who have accessed ambulance services during chemsex-related medical emergencies.

impulseLDN

We are a volunteer-led organisation working with gay men and the wider LGBTQ+ community. We're part of Impulse Group, the world's largest health and wellbeing collective for gay men, founded in 2009 with volunteer-led chapters acorss the globe



Everything we do is shaped by our community's needs — from chemsex and substance use, HIV and sexual health, and mental health to social justice. Working alongside community partners, we create bold, advocacy-led events and campaigns that educate and unite our community.



GET INVOLVED

Want to find out more, connect with us or get involved? Our Advocacy Team is here to help. Get in touch at **Advocacy.London@impulsegrp.org**

FIND OUT MORE

Follow us on **Instagram** and keep up with what we're doing.

impulseLDN

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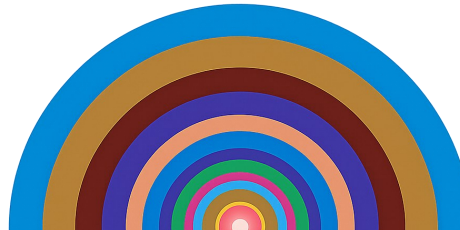
Oscar Patton-Lyons *he/ him*
Deputy Peer Support Lead, Central and Northwest London NHS Foundation Trust
Oscar Patton-Lyons is a gay man, lived experience leader and Deputy Peer Support Lead at Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, where he helps develop a large workforce across mental health, addictions, physical health and specialist services. His work focuses on peer support, trauma-informed practice, inclusion, workforce development and service change. Oscar draws on lived experience of homelessness, problematic drug use, mental health crisis, sex work, living with HIV and a later ADHD diagnosis. He has led local and national initiatives, co-chairs CNWL's Minds Matter Staff Network, and is a Fellow on CNWL's Chief Operating Officer Fellowship Programme.

Nicole Pollock *she/her*
Associate Dean of Education, Canterbury Christ Church University
Nicole is an experienced nurse, academic, researcher and author with over 20 years' experience in healthcare and education. Her clinical background includes senior roles in sexual health, alongside extensive work in professional education and public health. Nicole's current interests include chemsex, sexual health inequalities, healthcare education and widening access to support, particularly beyond major urban centres. She is co-authoring 'Chemsex Beyond the City' and is committed to translating research, lived experience and professional practice into inclusive, evidence-informed education and services.

Nathalie Reeves
Public Health Specialist, Kent County Council
Nathalie is a Public Health Specialist, leading work across sexual health and health improvement. She works with commissioning partners to shape and deliver Integrated Sexual Health Services, LARC, and primary care, contributing to Kent's Sexual Health Action Plan. She is committed to improving population outcomes and tackling health inequalities, driving service improvement through evidence-informed approaches. Nathalie holds an MA in Health Research, a Postgraduate Certificate in Public Health, and is developing doctoral research on chemsex.



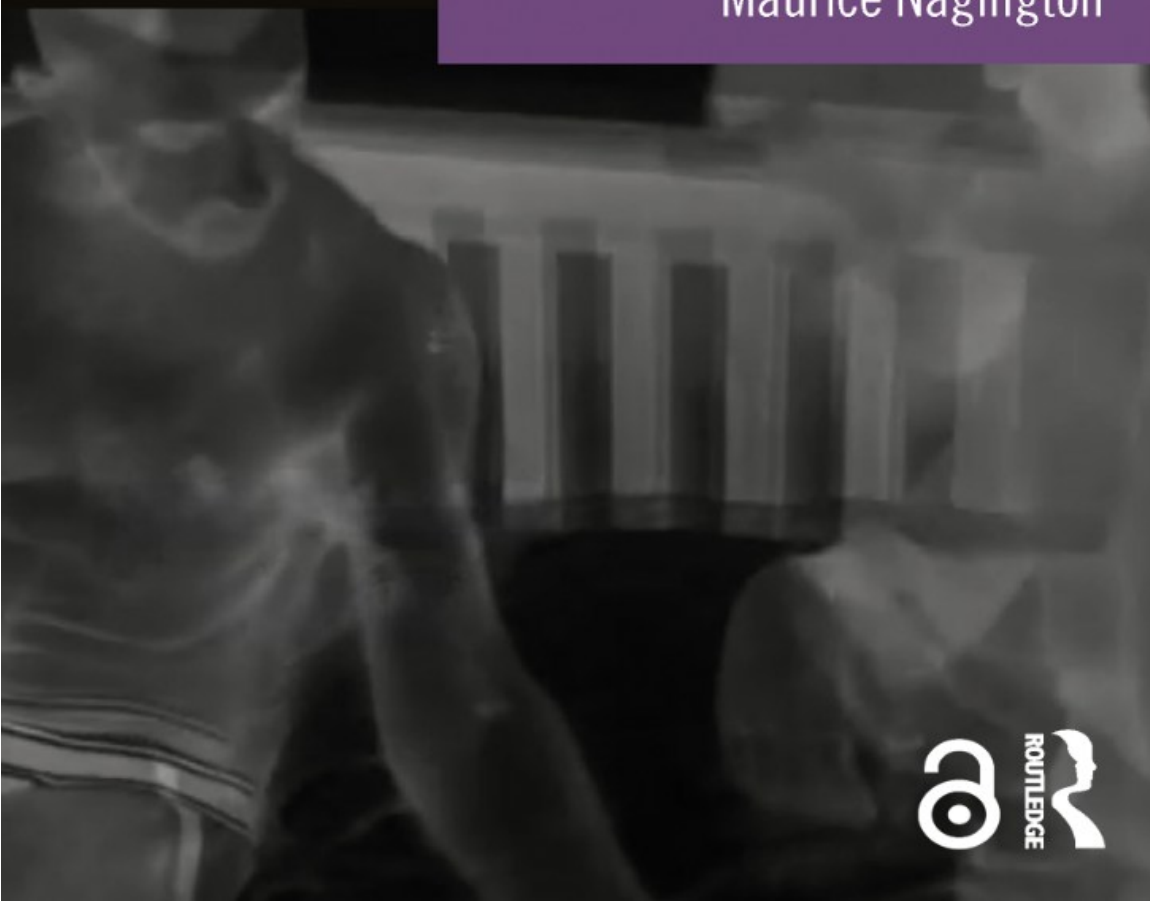
SEXUALITY, CULTURE AND HEALTH



THE MORAL LESSONS OF CHEMSEX

A CRITICAL APPROACH

Maurice Nagington



ROUTLEDGE

Fraser Serle MPH
GMHC Volunteer

Fraser has spent more than 30 years working in public health, communications and community engagement, helping people have a say in decisions that affect their lives. Along the way Fraser has worked on HIV awareness, smoking cessation, health inequalities and behaviour change campaigns, as well as grassroots community outreach projects. He was involved with London's gay scene for many years and brings both lived experience and professional insight to his work. Whether it's public health, local government or community campaigns, He is passionate about making information accessible, listening to people and helping voices that aren't always heard get a seat at the table. Fraser likes maps, flags, stamps, wigs, social justice and hot guys with beards.

Ray Thomas *he/him*
Assistant Manager, Antidote

Ray is the Assistant Manager at Antidote, having previously held the role of Criminal Justice Lead, supporting GBMSM and trans people with convictions related to Chemsex. He is also a qualified Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) and an experienced group facilitator for survivors of sexual violence at Survivors UK. He is currently leading a sex worker scoping project focused on the experiences and needs of trans sex workers and queer male sex workers in London.

Dr Alex Tridico *he/ him*
President, Impulse London

Alex is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Arden University and President of Impulse London. He holds a PhD from Queen Mary University of London, where his research focused on railway suicide in Great Britain. His work brings together academic research, public health and LGBTQ+ advocacy, with interests spanning psychology, harm reduction and suicide prevention. As President of Impulse London, Alex leads community outreach, health promotion, education and campaigns addressing sexual health, substance use and mental wellbeing. He also has experience working within NHS mental health services, including crisis intervention and community support. Across his academic and community work, Alex is passionate about translating research and evidence into meaningful, real-world change, with a particular focus on harm reduction, suicide prevention and improving the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ communities.

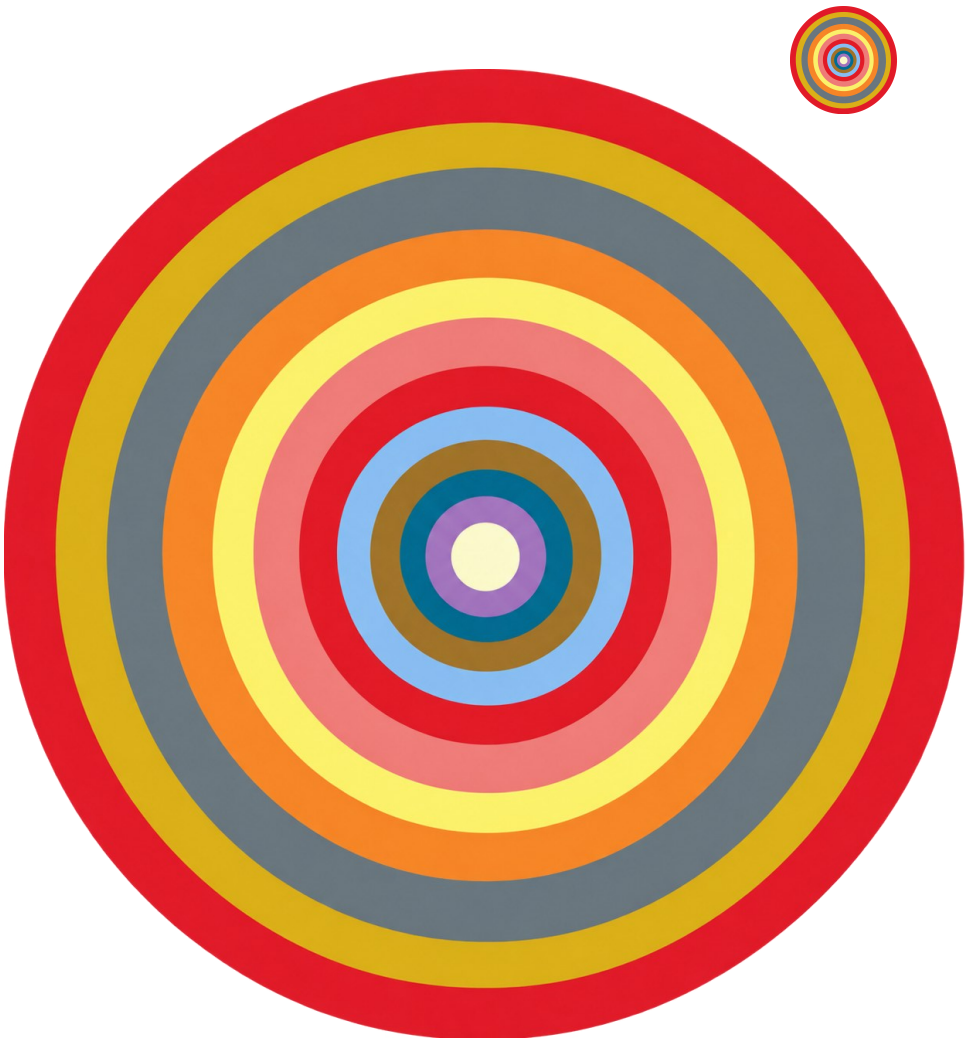
We are the Independent Office for Police Conduct

We are the police complaints watchdog for England and Wales. We are not the police - we are completely independent of them. We investigate the most serious complaints and conduct matters involving the police, and we set the standards by which the police should handle complaints.

IOPC

Independent
Office for
Police Conduct

Dr Michael Yates *he/ him*
Clinical Psychologist; Psychology Service Lead, 56 Dean Street
Michael is a Clinical Psychologist and Sexual and Relationships Specialist. He is currently Psychology Service Lead at 56 Dean Street, a leading NHS sexual health service. He is also Clinical Director of Time To Talk About Sex, which is launching one of the first at-scale group therapy programmes in the UK for compulsive sexual behaviour for men. Michael is a member of the BASHH Special Interest Group for Sexual Function and Wellbeing, supporting training, consultation and policy development in psychosexual health nationally. His published research work focuses on the development of group interventions for Chemsex and Compulsive Sexual Behaviours.





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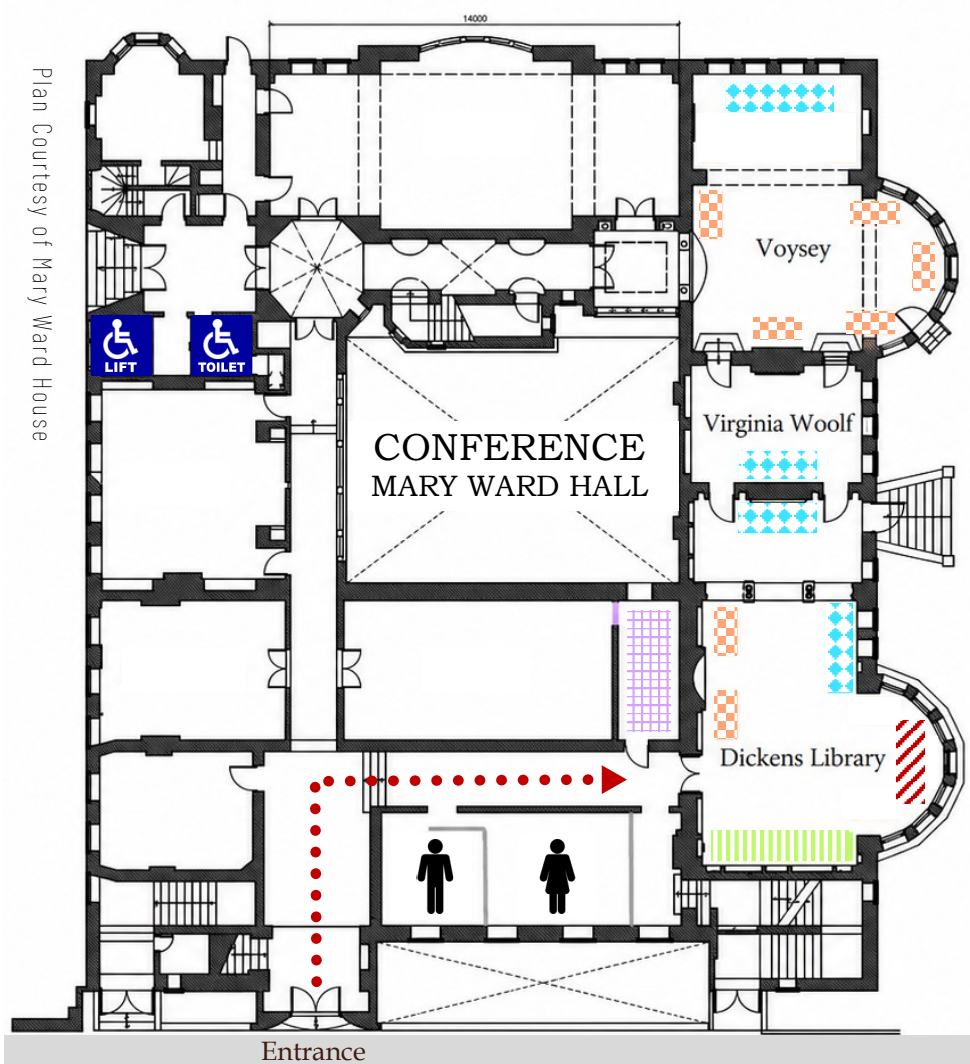
GAY MEN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING WITH SUPPORT FOR THE WIDER LGBT+ COMMUNITY

Produced by GMHC, a non-profit community organisation, to promote health and wellbeing information from MENRUS.CO.UK. The original photograph has been licensed and adapted by replacing the station name with MENRUS.CO.UK. This independent health-promotion artwork is not affiliated with or endorsed by Transport for London and is not for sale.

MARY WARD HOUSE

Registration | Cloakroom | Catering | Exhibitor Table | TV Screen



Plan Courtesy of Mary Ward House

TAVISTOCK PLACE