

0. WELCOME TO SAFER 2



Welcome to Safer 2

The successor to Safer 1*, the Safer 2 pack has been produced to help you stay safer and signpost to the support you may need, when you need it.

The pack has been updated and 'Using G', 'Navigating Support', 'Self Care', and 'Health and Wellbeing' are new, following feedback and suggestions. While there's a focus on chems, many health issues addressed here affect us all.

We're not health professionals, rather gay men passionate about our health and wellbeing—some with direct experience of chems, problematic drug use, and recovery. This pack has been edited, tweaked and proofed by peers, shags, allies, organisations and services, who have given their time generously at every turn.**

There is no escaping it, we continue to live in tough times and the health support we need may be difficult to find and access. However, we hope the information here will point you in the right direction.

Safer 2 is our take on being gay and queer today, joining up the dots of our health and well-being. It's not perfect, it's sometimes messy, but it's ours.

Hope

We continue to see unhelpful reporting on chemsex in the media and bleak narratives by some organisations. Yes, navigating support can be challenging [shit] but over the past year services and commissioning bodies have started coming together—with many LGBT+ staff and volunteers (some in recovery) at the forefront of this change. Safer 2 is part of this.

Though our LGBT+ paths and life experiences vary, many of us face shared challenges: from phobias and heteronormativity to discrimination; stigma; hate crimes; a lack of dedicated support; and long waits for treatment. While this pack was produced by gay men, we hope there is something useful for everyone.

Words of caution

Not all gay men use drugs, or do so for sex, or in problematic ways. The needs of gay men are not best served by suggesting chemsex is universal. In fact, suggesting it's universal runs the risk of giving the impression that it is both inevitable and impossible to escape.***

Letters and words

LGBT+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender, with the plus sign ('+') acknowledging Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and other identities not captured by these letters. It's an umbrella term for the community, with several variations. Safer 2 has chosen to use LGBT+.

When we say 'gay men', we include queer, bisexual, men who have sex with men, and those who don't like labels. We see you. We hear you. We love you.

The small print

Safer 2 pack information is provided for educational and harm reduction purposes only. It is not medical advice and does not encourage or condone drug use. Any reliance you place on the information supplied here is at your own risk.

* 2023-2025

** Ju, Da, Ed, Fr, Ga, Ha, Ma, Ni, Sw, Nw, Bh, Pa, Be, Ki, Co, To, Le, Cl, Ra, Gl, Ad, Ki, Sh, Da, Pe, Al, and Lu.

*** FH.

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Not everything has to go somewhere,
not everything has to have a big
message. We're just a bunch of queer,
poz, and gay men who write, make
films, tell stories, and do stuff.



What's inside Safer 2

0. WELCOME



Your welcome to the Safer 2 pack, an overview of its contents, background, and an index to the nine booklets and leaflets.

1. SAFER CHEMS



Now in its 11th edition, a guide to safer chems use and harm reduction including 'T', 'G' and 'M', slamming, come downs, and much more.

2. HOOK-UP SAFER



Sixteen no-nonsense tips to help you remain safer, providing a spring board to think about getting the best out of hooking up.

3. HEALTH AND WELLBEING



An overview of health and wellbeing with a focus on the need for connection, ways to boost motivation, and getting out and active.

4. NAVIGATING SUPPORT



A guide to help better understand how the NHS, statutory and local authority services and support pathways work, and how to access support.

5. HIV/ STI/ HCV "RISK-O-METER"



An innovative if irreverent tool to gauge risks and harm associated with 16 practices relating to sex, chems and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

6. USING 'G'



A response to rising 'G' related Emergency Department admissions (ED, also known as A&E) and the most requested safer chems topic.

7. OVERDOSES AND CALLING 999



A flow diagram showing potential outcomes from calling or not calling for an ambulance, and if the police turn up and/ or turn up first.

8. YOUR RIGHTS AND THE LAW



A guide to your rights when stopped, questioned searched, and/ or arrested by the police. It's our experience that our understanding of the law is poor.

9. SELF CARE



A guide to understanding triggers and cravings (knowing the difference), sober sex, loss and grief, grounding and survival kit tools.

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