



## APPENDIX 8: HARM REDUCTION GUIDANCE

### The Harm Reduction Approach

#### What is Harm Reduction?

Harm reduction is a proactive approach, which refers to policies and practices that attempt to reduce the harm that people do to themselves or others from their drug use. It helps to keep people who use drugs safe and is the most viable way of dealing with the issue of recreational drug use within a club setting or event. A common misconception about harm reduction is that it condones or encourages substance misuse. Harm reduction is based on the recognition that *“despite even the strongest efforts to prevent the initiation or continuation of drug use, some people will continue to use at any given time and should be supported to remain as safe and healthy as possible when in active use”* (Sheffield Drug Strategy 2018-2022).

#### Importance of event managers recognising and responding to people using substances

Many of the harms associated with recreational drug use are related to the environment in which they are used and are therefore often preventable. This guidance recommends a range of harm reduction measures to provide a healthy setting for people attending events alongside the medical management of people who may feel unwell. This should support event organisers and staff in keeping the people who attend their events safe and avoiding incidents of harm.

#### Guidelines for ensuring the environment for the event is safe

- **Prevent overcrowding** – a venue’s capacity must not be exceeded; (queues managed to ensure flow of movement and reasonable access to facilities (e.g. toilets, water)
- **Safe and efficient cloakroom facilities should be provided**, as people may dress down for dancing but need access to ‘extra layers’ of clothing they have brought for going home;
- **Early detection of health issues or vulnerability and effective reactions by event staff** in a critical period (including, staff briefings and clear communication pathways, vigilance, rapid referral to medical or other relevant assistance);
- **Control the venue’s temperature where possible** through ventilation and air conditioning;
- **Free and unrestricted access to cold drinking water**, which is easily accessible and clearly marked;
- Space should be set aside for people to **rest and cool down**;
- When a club or venue is very hot, DJs should introduce periodic **5 or 10 minute breaks/reduced tempo** in the music to encourage people to rest and rehydrate;
- **Event staff must be trained to be able to identify people intoxicated with drugs**, alcohol or both, and comply with protocols on when to alert the Safety Officer / Control Team or call emergency services;
- Where possible **drug workers on site** at the event can support providing all of the above. However, it is vital that the precise role of drug workers is agreed before an event – they are not substitutes for medics or stewards.
- **Where possible, accurate and appropriate harm reduction advice should be provided for event attendees** including posters in toilets and other areas about risk management and where to seek confidential advice and support; the information below is recommended by the DACT:



### Harm Reduction advice for attendees

- When dancing, **regular breaks should be taken to cool down** and drink small sips of water or non-alcoholic drinks;
- Do not drink more than **1 pint of water in 1 hour**;
- Replenish your body with **electrolytes** which serve as a supplement for hydration;
- **Try not to get over stimulated** – it is very easy to get dehydrated if you're dancing for hours, and anxiety can sometimes set in, causing a potential increase in paranoia;
- **Know your dosage and source**; start with a very small dose for example: a quarter of a pill and wait a couple of hours before taking more. Or **Crush, Dab, Wait** – i.e. *crush* up any pills or crystals into a fine powder, *dab* onto a wet finger to taste and then *wait* 1-2 hours for the effects of that dose before considering taking another. This is particular important advice when people are swallowing either unknown or very high purity substances (**The Loop 2015**);
- **Don't be afraid of seeking help** and give as much information as possible;
- **Avoid mixing drugs**, especially with alcohol or prescription medications;
- **Look after friends** and remain in a safe environment;
- If you are going to use drugs, **do not to use them alone** and always tell someone what you think you have taken;
- **Educate yourself** – learn about substances and their effects especially when poly drug use is involved;
- **Always have a plan to get home safely.**

### For confidential support and advice on drug or alcohol use please contact the following:

#### **Aged 18 and under?**

The Corner, 91-93 Division Street, Sheffield, S1 4GE – 0114 275 2051  
Please call for an appointment – open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

#### **Over 18?**

Non Opiate Service, 44 Sidney Street Sheffield, S1 4RH – 0114 272 1481

#### **Over 18 – alcohol**

Alcohol Service, 44 Sidney Street, Sheffield, S1 4RH – 0114 226 3000

For both over 18 services - either call for an appointment or drop in any time to the service and you are guaranteed to be seen by a worker – open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm.