



**EPPIC**

**EXCHANGING  
PREVENTION PRACTICES  
ON POLYDRUG USE  
AMONG YOUTH  
IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
SYSTEMS**

## **Project Overview**

### **EPPIC Kick-off meeting**

**Karen Duke, Middlesex University**

**Luxembourg**

**13-14 March 2017**



- **Funded by:** Third EU Health Programme (2014-2020): Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA)
- **Duration:** January 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 – December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019
- 'epic' → EPPIC



# Partner institutions



Co-ordinator: Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, Middlesex University (**UK**)

- Change Grow Live (**UK**)
- Aarhus University (**Denmark**)
- Eclectica (**Italy**)
- European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research (**Austria**)
- Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences (**Germany**)
- Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology (**Poland**)

# Young People & Substance Use



- Adolescence & young adulthood are key periods for initiation into substance use and for use to become established
- **Polydrug use** among young people is increasing (EMCDDA, 2009; Kokkevi et al, 2014)
- Increasing use of **NPS** among new groups of young people in Europe (Grund et al, 2016)
- Substance use may disrupt important **life transitions**
- Interventions are needed to **prevent** onset into different forms of substance use, **reduce** escalation into heavy use and **reverse** problematic use (Stockings et al, 2016)

# Young People & Crime



- Motoring, drugs and theft offences prominent among young people (Pruin & Dunkel, 2015)
- Early adulthood is key time for criminal careers (desist or continue with offending)
- ‘Growing out of crime’/‘growing out of drug use’
- Need for criminal justice responses which are flexible and tailored to the individual



# Vulnerability & problem drugs use



- Young offenders identified as **vulnerable** or **at risk** of developing problem drug use (EMCDDA, 2008)
- Importance of **social structural factors** (ie. social exclusion & low socio-economic status) in contributing to vulnerability
- But little evidence of bespoke interventions and attention paid to young people in contact with the CJS in relation to prevention policy & practice

# Prevention interventions for young people in contact with CJS



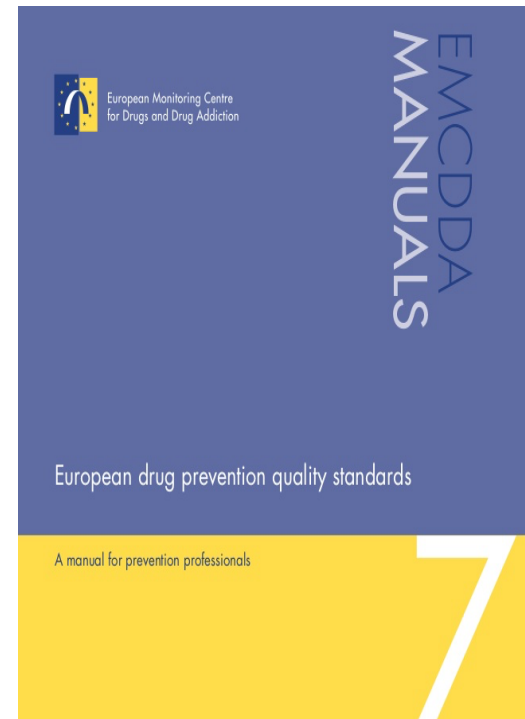
- Includes: diversion to either voluntary or mandated treatment/education through arrest referral, drug courts or community orders; treatment & education programs in prisons and on release
- Responses to polydrug use (incl NPS use) varies between and within countries:
  - raising awareness & training
  - online counselling/information exchange
  - user-led, peer support and experts by experience approaches

# European drug prevention quality standards (EDPQS) (Brotherhood & Sumnall, 2011)



*“quality standards are not a goal in themselves, but their ultimate aim is to produce better outcomes for target populations, including how target populations experience interventions (eg. are they meaningful to them) as well as behavioural changes (ie as well as increased health and well-being” (Brotherhood et al, 2015)*

- None of the work thus far has focused on the perspectives of young people in CJS settings or the application/adaptation of the guidelines to this group



# General objectives of the project



To gather knowledge, exchange best practice & identify transferable innovations & principles of good practice on interventions to prevent illicit drug use, the development of polydrug use and use of NPS among vulnerable young people in the criminal justice system (CJS)

To develop a set of guidelines adapted to the development of initiatives aimed at the target group based on European Drug Prevention Quality Standards

To initiate a European knowledge exchange network for practitioners and stakeholders working with young people in the CJS

# Specific objectives of the project



1. Collect & disseminate existing knowledge & new data/knowledge on evidence for effective approaches & interventions to address illicit drug use, polydrug use and use of NPS by young people in touch with the CJS (WP4)

2. Based on the perspectives of young people & stakeholders, analyse the potential for interventions/innovative approaches to influence drug using trajectories (prevent/delay/reverse/interrupt onset/continuance of polydrug use and NPS use) among young people in touch with the CJS (WP5).

3. Using data collected in 1-2, examine the appropriateness of the existing European drug prevention quality standards to the CJS context & develop a set of guidelines adapted to initiatives aimed at drug using young people in touch with CJ agencies (WP6)

# Specific objectives of the project (continued)



4. Assess a) the extent to which identified intervention models, and b) the set of guidelines on good practice, are transferable across countries and cultures (WP7).

5. To manage the co-ordination of the project (WP1).

6. Set up dissemination mechanisms: website, linked online forum for knowledge exchange & collaboration between relevant stakeholders and other mechanisms for disseminating project findings at local, national and international levels (WP2).

7. Conduct process, outcome and impact evaluation of the project (WP3).

# Overview of Work Packages



WP4

Knowledge exchange on  
current evidence & practice

WP5

Drug using trajectories,  
innovative interventions &  
experiential evidence

WP1 Coordination  
WP2 Dissemination  
WP3 Evaluation

WP6

Guidelines for good practice &  
quality standards in the CJS

WP7

Cultural appropriateness &  
transferability

# Target Group: young people



- Young people aged between **15-24** who have been *in contact with the criminal justice system*
- A total of at least **240** young people in the **6** partner countries will be reached
- 'Voices'/ perspectives of young people
- Project cohort groups (national level) – representation of young people/organisations representing young people

Target group: Professionals/stakeholders working with young people (in CJS, youth work, education, social welfare, health etc)



Scoping survey  
(WP4)

Project cohort  
groups (national  
level)

Practitioner forum  
& Project website

Professional  
journals (eg. STOF)

Interviews  
(WP4, 5, 7)

Distribution of  
guidelines

EMCDDA/UNICRI  
& other  
international  
agencies

# Methods and means



- **Qualitative approach** – enables understanding of substance use and experiences of prevention interventions from the young person's perspective and from those who work with young people
- Use of common 'core' questions, coding and analysis frameworks will facilitate comparative analyses
- **Range of theoretical perspectives** – youth transitions, drug use transitions/trajectories (eg. normalisation), & desistance from crime theories

# Expected outcomes



1. Improvement of **knowledge & understanding** of prevention & intervention in young people's drug using trajectories with particular reference to the CJS and use of NPS among policy makers and relevant stakeholders
2. Increased **knowledge exchange activity** between researchers & practitioners and greater exchange among all stakeholders at national & European levels of experiences of 'good practice' approaches re: intervention for young people in touch with CJS

# Expected outcomes (continued)



3. Initiation of a new knowledge network & mechanism for continuing discussion & knowledge exchange between relevant practitioners and other stakeholders



4. Awareness & access to a set of quality standard guidelines for the design & development of interventions in drug use among young people in CJ settings.

## References

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