



UK Drugs Policy

By Adam Pawlak



Key Challenges and if they are still present today

- The Film 'Putting UK Drug Policy Into Focus' stated that there are several key challenges facing drug policy.
- Front line drug dealers for heroin & crack cocaine in the UK are mostly children, UK failed in making a change and fixing the organised crime alongside the drug problem.
- Children are easier to exploit and easier to be groomed into selling drugs.
- Merseyside 2024 stated 153 vulnerable people were safeguarded & identified as victims last year. Only 153 reported.



Key Challenges and if they are still present today

- Timestamp 1:11 – 2:14 see that heroin is by nature a pain reliever
- Not abusing because of pressure or surroundings but the pain they went through while younger or currently
- Not judged because of doing drugs but instead seeking help for mental health
- Newton-Hughes, Lawton, Flynn and Todd 75% of people who abuse drugs experienced trauma in their lifetime. Needs to be focus on people's life and health rather than what drugs

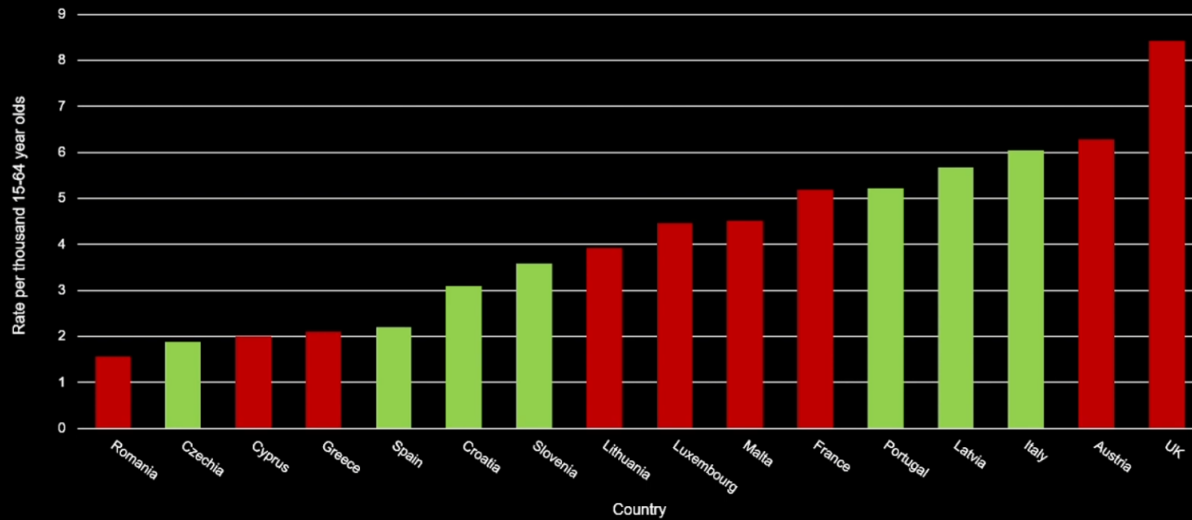


(Speaking - Kirstie Douse)

People using opioids illicitly in Europe

(See credits for detail of data)

Countries where it is not possible to be put in prison for the possession of drugs

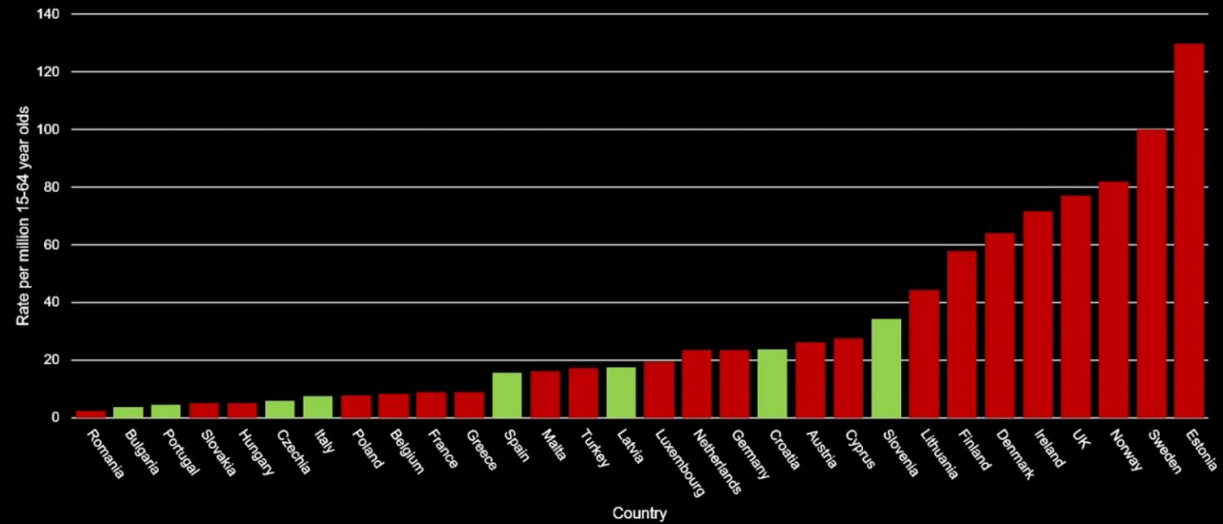




Drug related death rates in Europe

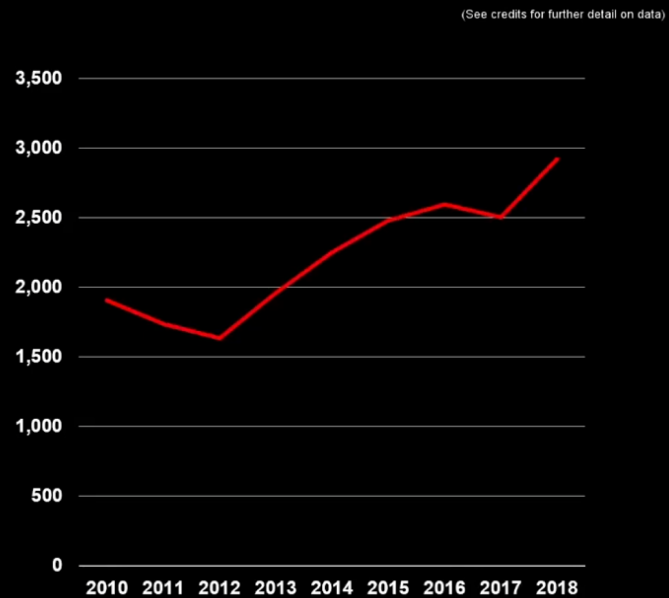
(See credits for detail of data)

Countries where it is not possible to be put in prison for the possession of drugs





Drug related deaths in
England and Wales are at
the highest level on record





Key Challenges and if they are still present today

- Major problem people being sent to prison for usage of drugs
- Stated in timestamp 5:14 – 5:34 prisons have extremely high usage of drugs
- Sending people to prisons could worsen them and the prisons overall
- After release could make their situation exponentially harder/worse
- Gregory 2025 states prisons situation is the worst it has ever been 'almost impossible to run positively'
- Overcrowding prisons, drugs usage getting worse because of boredom



Proposed Recommendations and whether the UK Drug Policy has implemented these

- Alongside key challenges there are many recommendations
- Drug consumption rooms all under supervision and safely
- Tran, Reid, Roxburgh and Day Safe Injecting Facility's improve people and minimise the risk of overdose. Provide with naloxone.
- Parkes et al., 2024. Why would we not want to keep everyone safe
- Views of family members that have someone doing drugs
- Woman speaks up would not turn someone down with cancer and make them find help
- Give people the help they need instead of sending them away.
- BBC 2025 no change to allow drug consumption rooms as it's a breach of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

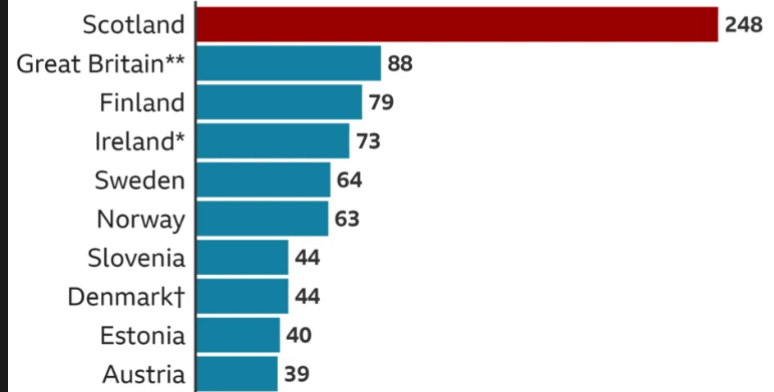


Proposed Recommendations and whether the UK Drug Policy has implemented these

- Portugal's success in decriminalising use of drugs
- Innocent not criminals
- Reduced the death from heroin to one third since start
- Cook 2023 Scotland is the highest country with death rates from drugs in UK & Europe
- Dropped by 279 and at lowest for five years
- Scotland death rate averages around 90 due to narcotics
- Portugal double the population but has less deaths due to the decriminalising which could save Scotland
- Busby 2025 The Guardian in 2016 confidential report that got leaked to decriminalise the use of personal drugs
- Home office secretary no simple way of making drugs legal and safe always has a backlash on themselves and family.
- UK still hasn't gone through with it

Drug deaths in Scotland higher than other European countries

European countries with highest deaths per million aged 15-64, latest available data





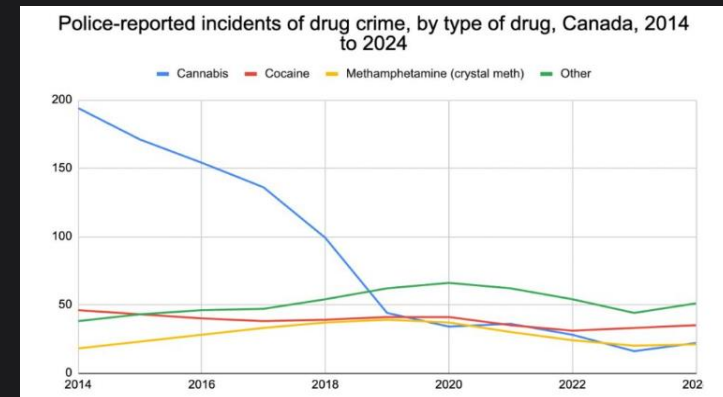
What areas should the drug policy within the UK prioritise and why?

- Finally, key areas should be drugs in prisons, many prisons overcrowded, easy to sneak drugs in, guards are focused on other things.
- Sneaking spice extremely easily, Committee 2024 833 deaths December 2022-2024 136 (16%) drug related, 'System is failing, and the human cost is unacceptable.
- Article by Giddings 2025 implies £40 million security features, £10 million anti-drone measures and more on overall security.



What areas should the drug policy within the UK prioritise and why?

- Another key area is legalising cannabis within the UK
- If legalised the crime would drop, we can see this due to Canada's crime rate dropped in 2018 by 55-65% younger males and females stated by Callaghan et al., 2021.
- Allowed to carry 5g of dried cannabis to share or use, no consequence
- Clark 2025 shows in 2024 drug crime was 31% lower than in 2019, following initial first year of legalising non-medical cannabis.
- Interesting fact in 2014 around 70,000 offences in Canada due to cannabis, around 66% dropped to 17% just 10 years later, major decrease.





What areas should the drug policy within the UK prioritise and why?

- Lastly legalise Drug Consumption Rooms, helps people on the street, transmitting diseases with dirty needles, focus on themselves improve themselves, seek help.
- Booth 2024 article 'Drug Consumption Rooms Could save Thousands of UK lives', supervise like other countries Portugal, Spain, Norway save lives.
- Buildings hold 20 to 400 users, plenty of space, not sharing equipment, spreading.
- Stop overdosing by providing naloxone if they did have one.
- On the other hand they could use these rooms to abuse, get high because they cannot afford it, big controversy



Background reading: Where did you access the initial reading and why?

- In order to complete my research on this assignment I used a combination of sources from the internet and google scholar. I used these sources because I knew they were trust worthy, reliable and would provide me with good information especially google scholar.



Planning: How did you decide which reading was relevant to your presentation?

- I used sources with authentic authors and up to date information, reliable sources, making sure it answers my questions exactly how I want it to.



Structure: How did you utilise the selected sources to structure your presentation

- I used the selected sources to find statistics, graphs, videos and just overall to get a good solid answer for my presentation.



Wider Reading: Did you use any additional sources to build upon your initial research?

- I did not use any additional research but I should have to make sure I have even more reliable sources



Reflection/Challenges: Did you face any challenges when conducting your research? What would you do differently next time?

- I faced a couple challenges definitely when I first started and finding resources and making sure they are reliable so for next time I would definitely make sure I use google scholar as it is a lot easier and it makes sure I have good information.



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