

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Adam Pawlak, 2508253, BMLC4004, UK Drugs Policy

In this short film 'Putting UK Drug Policy into Focus' we can see that there are several key challenges that were facing the drug policy within the UK. For example, in the timestamp 0:55 – 1:02 'front line drug dealers certainly for heroin and crack cocaine in the UK are children' this is a major problem as it clearly shows that the UK has drastically failed in trying to reduce the major drug problem and organised crime not only that but failed in trying to make sure they young people are safe from all of that. It is a lot harder for younger people to get caught as the police do not think that they will have drugs on them and children will easily get groomed into doing this as they get paid in new phones, shoes, money and they want to show off so they get exploited very easily. Looking at Merseyside 2024, it's clearly stated that this is still a massive problem as there were 153 vulnerable people who were safeguarded and identified as victims just last year and that's only the ones who were found meaning there were many more who are still going unnoticed. Another major problem is stated in timestamp 1:11 – 2:14 and it states that 'heroin by nature is a pain reliever' which implies that a lot of people that are abusing heroin are not doing it because of pressure or their surroundings but are doing it because of the pain that they are going through within their life if that's from their childhood upbringing or now with how much money they make or if they are homeless. People should not be judged based on doing drugs but they should be treated for their mental health and try help them mentally. According to Newton-Hughes, Lawton, Flynn and Todd they show that around 75% of people who have major substance usage and abuse drugs have experienced trauma within their lifetime which is clearly proven to be a problem about peoples current or past life problems that needs to be fixed and focused on more than what drugs they are doing. A major problem is that people who are using drugs and abusing them are getting put into prison but it is stated in 5:14 – 5:34 that prisons have extremely high usage of drugs themselves so sending people to prisons would in fact not reduce anything but it might actually increase it as they could find a drug they never used and then get addicted to resulting to them being released and being even worse that what they were when they came in. This is still a major problem as it is proven by Gregory 2025 and it clearly states that the drugs usage crisis in prison is so bad that it is being ruled as the 'worst it has ever been' adding onto that it so bad that he states 'almost impossible to run positively' this just proves that sending more people and overcrowding prisons not only is bad but the

drugs usage is only going to get worse due to people being bored and having nothing else to do.

Alongside outlining some of the major key challenges with the UK drug policy the film provides multiple recommendations for example to introduce drug consumption rooms which is where they allow people to come and do drugs but its all under a supervision making sure that they are doing it safely. Tran, Reid, Roxburgh and Day say that SIF's (Safe Injecting Facility) help improve people injecting and how much they do but not only that they minimise the risks of overdose as they are able to help them straight away but not only that allow them to provide them with naloxone if they unfortunately do get an overdose. Parkes et al., 2025 Have an article 'Why would we not want to keep everyone safe' explaining that this is a good idea and giving the views of other family members and a woman speaks up and says that they would not turn someone down with cancer to go find help and chemotherapy they would give them treatment. Implying that they in fact should help people doing drugs instead of sending them away as a lot of them feel 'disgusted'. BBC 2025 elaborates that UK will not have any change to allow drug consumption rooms and have no meaning to breach the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Moreover, in the film it shows that Portugal has looked at people doing drugs and ruled them as innocent people and not criminals, furthermore since they started decriminalising people possession of drugs they have 'reduced deaths from heroin to one third' since the original start. Cook 2023 Emphasises that Scotland is still the highest country in the UK and Europe with the most deaths from drugs, but it has fallen by 279 and at the lowest level for five years. On an average Scotland has a death rate of about 90 people due to narcotics. In Portugal there were far fewer deaths despite having almost double the population. Decriminalisation could in fact save Scotland the same way it did Portugal. Busby 2025 explains in the article written in 'The Guardian' that in 2016 there was a confidential and private repeal to make decriminalise the use of personal drugs and was meant to be kept in public but ended up getting leaked. A home office secretary said that there is no simple way of making drugs legal and safe for people to use without having backlash on themselves and their family and that is why in the UK this is still not going through.

Finally, key areas that should be prioritised in my opinion definitely drugs in prisons due to the fact that there is so many people going to prisons in general and overcrowding the place that drugs are so easy to sneak in as the guards are more prioritised on other things as there is just so many people. Touching back on the part where they can sneak substances inside easily spice is extremely easy all it takes is a simple letter, making it wet with spice and then smoking it after it arrives without anyone noticing. The Committee 2024 has stated that out of 833 deaths in prisons between December 2022 – December 2024 136 or 16% was ruled out as drug-related deaths and he also states that 'The system is failing, and the human cost is unacceptable'. An article written by Giddings 2025 implies that there was £40 million spent on security another £10 million on anti-drone measures and more on the overall prisons. Another key area I think they should prioritise is cannabis legalisation and I think that cannabis within the UK should be legalised. My reasoning behind is that if cannabis was in fact legalised there would be a lot less crime as nobody would be fighting over it and the crime would drop, and we can see this because recently Canada the crime has dropped ever since implementing legalisation of cannabis 2018 by 55-65% amongst younger males and females stated by Callaghan et al., 2021. They are now allowed to carry 5g of dried cannabis on them for themselves or even to share without being penalised. Clark 2025 also shows that in 2024 the overall drug crime was 31% lower than it was in 2019 following the initial first year of legalising non-medical cannabis. A very interesting fact is that in 2014 there was around 70,000 offences in Canada due to cannabis which is around 66% for all drug crime and after 10 years it drastically dropped to just 17% which is a huge decrease. A major area that should be focused on is allowing Drug Consumption Rooms in the UK as this will not only help people on the street from getting HIV and other transmitted viruses through dirty needles but also once they come into the room they would be able to focus on themselves and maybe even drop doing drugs overall with the help they receive. Booth 2024 has an article called 'Drug Consumption Rooms Could save Thousands of UK lives', and it shows that people could be supervised in the UK just like they are in other countries Portugal, Spain, Norway and this could seriously save people's lives. Each building holding 20 to 400 users so there would be plenty of room to help people get clean and use clean equipment rather than sharing dirty ones and spreading diseases. Furthermore, they could prevent a lot more overdoses as they are

looked after so the use of naloxone which would completely stop someone from overdosing and losing their life. On the other hand, this could also be a problem as people could come in and abuse this 'free' system just so they can get high if they possibly cannot afford it themselves so there is a big controversy around this topic.

Referencing

BBC (2025). *UK Government will not change law for more legal drug rooms*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly9yx4xg1zo> (Accessed: 7 December 2025).

Booth, R. (2024). *Drug Consumption Rooms Could save Thousands of UK lives, Study Finds*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/jan/11/drug-consumption-rooms-could-save-thousands-of-uk-lives-study-finds> (Accessed: 7 December 2025).

Busby, M. (2023). *UK drug advisers recommended decriminalising possession in 2016, leak reveals*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/sep/19/uk-drug-advisers-recommended-decriminalising-possession-in-2016-leak-reveals> (Accessed: 7 December 2025).

Callaghan, R.C., Vander Heiden, J., Sanches, M., Asbridge, M., Hathaway, A. and Kish, S.J. (2021). *Impacts of Canada's cannabis legalisation on police-reported crime among youth: early evidence*. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34085338/> (Accessed: 7 December 2025).

Clark, S. (2025). *Cannabis legalisation drives significant decline in Canadian drug crime*. Available at: [https://stratcann.com/news/cannabis-legalization-drives-significant-decline-in-canadian-drug-crime/#:~:text=Although%20cannabis-related%20arrests%20were,%25\)%20of%20all%20drug%20crime](https://stratcann.com/news/cannabis-legalization-drives-significant-decline-in-canadian-drug-crime/#:~:text=Although%20cannabis-related%20arrests%20were,%25)%20of%20all%20drug%20crime) (Accessed: 7 December 2025)

Committee, J. (2024). *Tackling the drugs crisis in our prisons*. Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5901/cmselect/cmjust/557/report.html> (Accessed: 6 December 2025).

Cook, J. (2025). *Could decriminalisation solve Scotland's Drug Problem?*. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-66570190> (Accessed: 6 December 2025).

Giddings, A. (2025). *HMP Brimingham death prompts concerns over drug supply*.

Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c74j43gxpkr0> (Accessed: 7 December 2025).

Gregory, A. (2025). *Drugs Crisis in jails 'worse than ever' as seizures by prison officers*

near record-high Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prisons-drugs-trade-seizures-addiction-b2760132.html> (Accessed: 6 December 2025)

Holland, A. (2025). *Putting UK Drug Police into Focus – full film*. Dr Adam Holland.

Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj_5JkgxmRU (Accessed: 6 December 2025)

Merseyside Police (2024). *News more than 130 arrested and 153 vulnerable people safeguarded in County Lines week of action*. Available at:

<https://www.merseyside.police.uk/news/merseyside/news/2024/december/more-than-130-arrested-and-153-vulnerable-people-safeguarded-in-county-lines-week-of-action2/#:~:text=During%20County%20Lines%20Intensification%20Week,people%20at%20risk%20of%20exploitation> (Accessed: 6 December 2025)

Newton-Hughes, E., Lawton, J., Flynn, K. and Todd, C. (2024). *Reflections on introducing trauma informed practice to an NHS substance use service: Supporting service users, staff and systems*. Available at:

<https://explore.bps.org.uk/content/bpscpf/1/382/95> (Accessed: 7 December 2025)

Parkes, T, Price, T and Foster, R. (2022). *'Why would We Not Want to Keep Everybody safe?' The Views of Family Members of People Who Use Drugs on the Implementation of Drug Consumption Rooms in Scotland*. Available at:

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12954-022-00679-5> (Accessed: 7 December 2025)

Trav, V., Reid, S.E., Roxburgh, A. and Day, C.A. (2021). *Assessing Drug Consumption Rooms and Longer Term (5 Year) Impacts on Community and Clients*. Available at:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34815725/> (Accessed: 7 December 2025)