



UK DRUG POLICY

Implementing change

Presented by Gwen Jones

Introduction

during this presentation I shall be answering three different questions in which I shall be discussing challenges within our legislation, recommendations for change, and finally key focus areas. including struggles with funding, decriminalisation, and much more. with regards to the short film 'putting UK Drug policy into focus' with contributions from well informed and field experts. directed by Dr Adam Hollands, public health physician.

Question A

- legislation based on ideology not evidence
- Organised crime and the drug market



Legislation

ideology

- Dr Jason Horsely
- stated that our legislation is built off of ideology over evidence.
- claims 'evidence approach'
- no intention to alter our current legislation.

public opinion

- Duncan Stephenson
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of the public in favour of our drug policy.
- RSPH, House of Commons select committee, the Royal College of Physicians and some of the media.

Drug market

- Neil Woods former undercover police officer - compared substance misuse from 1960's till videos release 2020 and correlation to increase in drug market.
- dependant heroin users increase from 1049 to 300,000.
- expressed how the drug market and organised crime increased due to restrictions of drugs in the UK.
- (National Crime Agency, 2022) - human trafficking/modern slavery approximation.

RECCOMENDATIONS

- decriminalisation
- naloxone
- drug consumption rooms



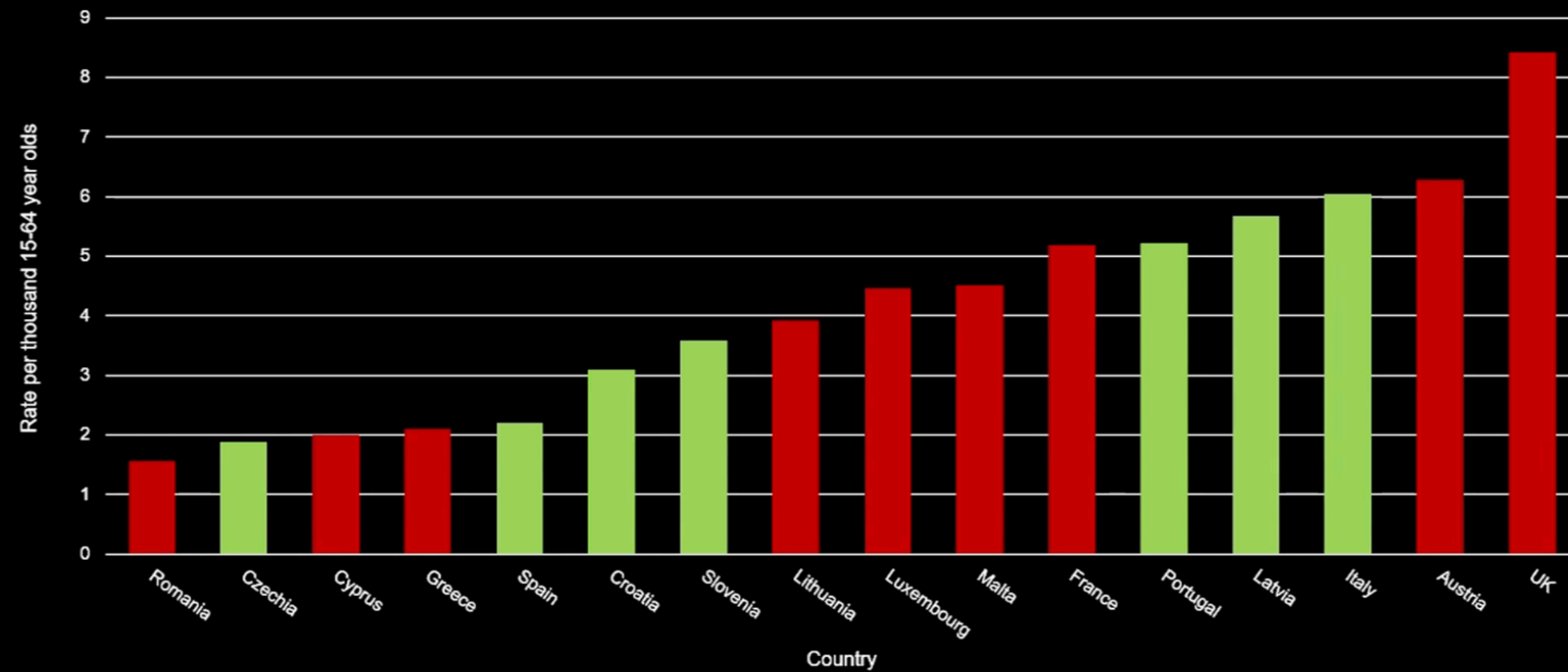
Decriminalisation

- Ann Fordham, executive director of the international drug policy consortium
- correlating the opioid use in European countries
- possession for such a drug can result in a penalty of up to 7 years in prison (GOV.UK, 2025).
- Scottish government proposal (gov.scot, 2023)

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



Naloxone

- Definitions
- (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2022)
- Jason Krew detective chief inspector
- Distribution (Department of Health & Social Care, 2024)
- drone transportations (Royall et al., 2023)
- Average ambulance arrival time of 15 minutes with category 1 situations (Baker, Garratt and Wilson, 2025)

Drug consumption rooms

- Kirstie Douse, Release, proposed methods to make allowances for these rooms such as cps and police guidance
- 1 in 8 of people who do inject drugs are hiv positive (UNODC World Drug Report, 2020)
- 1 in 3 hcv deaths are due to injecting. (WHO, 2016)
- Scottish implementation of DCR
- England and Wales (The Pharmaceutical Journal, 2025)

Key focus areas

1. Cannabis legislation
2. Early intervention
3. Funding for drug services



Cannabis legislation

- cost impact of cannabis users to the public due to convictions, trials, prison costs and more
- cannabis use for medicinal purposes
- benefits of legalising cannabis to the `uk from an economical perspective
- (Transform Drug Policy Foundation, 2025)

Attitudes towards medical cannabis



77%

support the recent legalisation of cannabis-based medicines to patients who could benefit



76%

would consider using a cannabis-based medicine if they had a condition where there was strong evidence of a benefit



69%

are **not concerned** that cannabis-based medicines will have **negative consequences** for society

(17% are concerned)

Funding

- current funding for drug services UK (Health, 2025)
- cuts in the UK budget for drug services (Rehabsuk.com, 2025)
- further funding cuts for more services in the UK (Toff, 2023)

Early intervention

- early intervention is vital for at risk students in the UK
- what is early intervention (Early Intervention Foundation, 2023)
- derivation areas in scotland and correlation with drug use (Shaw and Egan, 2007)

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Thank you!