

Subject: 'Spiking'

Good Morning to you All,

Drugs Education can be at its most effective if delivered at key periods within young people's lives. With the festive season looming, and out of Covid lockdown now, I thought this would be a good time to highlight a 'specific problem' that has surfaced recently.

No doubt many of you will have picked up through News and Media reports recently circulating about the growing concerns surrounding 'Spiking'.

I though it may be helpful to provide you a little more information about this.



Traditionally 'Spiking' a term that refers to somebody adding something to your drink (such as alcohol, drugs or both) without that person being aware.

Almost 200 drink spiking incidents have been reported to police forces across the UK over the past two months, the National Police Chiefs' Council said on Friday (22nd October).

The NPCC said there have been 198 confirmed reports of drink spiking in September and October across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, plus 24 reports of some form of injection.

I have seen over the many years I have been involved in Drugs Education, trends come and go in respect of this. It tends to be 'sporadic' rather than the 'norm' and can appear randomly in various parts of the country (as we are seeing in Manchester and Nottingham and other places right now).

Any reports of 'Spiking' is concerning and in addition to the traditional reports of 'Drink Spiking' (which is by far the most common form of 'spiking') we are hearing of reports of people being 'spiked by injection'. A recent incident in which 'a suspected injection' was reported happened in a nightclub in 'Nottingham' in September involving a 19 year old victim Sarah Buckle. (see below)



Sarah was on a night out with friends in a nightclub in Nottingham when she suspects that she was 'spiked by injection in her hand'. You can clearly see from the bruising on her hand above that it does certainly look like this could have happened and she certainly displayed all the 'typical signs and symptoms' associated with a 'spiking incident'..

I have spent a week or so researching the possibilities of 'spiking by injection' which I have to say is very rare in comparison to 'spiking of drinks'. I have concluded that there has been a number or reports that strongly suggest this has taken place, but reiterate it is very rare.

Any reports about a 'suspected spiking incident' whether that be 'spiking of a drink or suspected injection' should be **taken very seriously and the police informed asap.**



Here are some of the common drugs that have been associated with 'spiking'.

- **GHB** – This drug has effects similar to that of ecstasy and most often comes in the form of a liquid or powder. Its effects take place in 10 to 20 minutes. This drug can be very dangerous but becomes even more dangerous when added to alcohol. Effects of GHB include inability to speak properly, poor motor coordination, sleepiness, amnesia, hallucinations and short-term comas. GHB is odourless and colourless, although it may have a slightly salty or bitter taste to it. GHB has recently been upgraded from a Class C Drug to a Class B Drug as per the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. There are also other offences linked to this particular drug such as ***The Sexual Offences Act 2003*** which states that ***it is an offence to administer a substance, like GHB and GBL (GBL is a bi product of GBL which is converted by the body. The effects are the same) to a person with intent to overpower that person to enable sexual activity with them.*** This is punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment.
- **Ketamine** – Ketamine is meant to be used among veterinarians as an anaesthetic for animals. It most often comes in liquid form and it typically injected. Use of this drug creates an out of body experience which becomes more extreme the more you take of the drug. The name of this effect is a "K-hole". Boredom, nausea, confusion, amnesia and vision problems are other effects of ketamine. This depressant's effects take place in about 5 to 20 minutes. Ketamine is also a Class B Drug as per the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Other common problems associated with this drug is 'bladder damage'.
- **Rohypnol** – This drug is a popular drug of choice for drink spiking and most often comes in pill form This depressant is similar to the drug valium, but much more potent. Effects of this drug include slurred speech, inability to concentrate, poor coordination, dizzy feelings, lack of inhibition, nausea and amnesia. It takes approximately 15 to 30 minutes to feel the effects of this drug. In more recent years, a blue dye has been added to this drug as a way of preventing drink spiking. This dye however cannot be seen in dark coloured beverages or bottles.

What are the Effects of Drink Spiking?

The effects of drink spiking can differ slightly for each person. Reactions differ based on a person's age, sex, size and on what type of drug or alcoholic beverage was given. **Common effects include:**

- Unconsciousness
- Decreased inhibitions
- Paralysis
- Inability to protect ones' self
- **Memory loss *** (this is a classic sign) *****
- Nausea, vomiting
- Muscle spasms
- Poor coordination
- Euphoric feelings
- Sleepiness
- Respiratory complications
- Slurring of speech
- Dizziness

Some people who have been affected by drink spiking feel as if they have had more alcohol than they actually did or sense that they have had sex but do not remember it. Other people wake up

feeling almost hung over and have no memory of certain periods of time. Severe cases can lead to anxiety and potential **trauma treatment**.

Rohypnol (or Roofie) and Gamma Hydroxybutyrate (GHB) are the most commonly known 'date-rape' drugs. Both drugs can be used to commit physical and sexual assaults as they can sedate or incapacitate a victim, making them more vulnerable to attack.

If your drink has been spiked with a date rape drug it's **unlikely that you will see, smell or taste any difference**, (maybe a 'slight bitter or salty taste') no matter what type of drink you are having. Most date rape drugs take effect within 15-30 minutes and symptoms usually last for several hours. *'Date-rape drugs' can be odourless, colourless and tasteless. They also leave the body within a short amount of time making them hard to detect.*

What should an individual do if they suspect they have been 'spiked':

Unfortunately, in many cases of drink spiking (and now reports of 'spiking by injection', the victim does not even realise anything is wrong until the event has passed and they wake up uncomfortable and with memory loss. Most people who have their drinks spiked eventually blackout. A blackout can last up to 12 hours and is followed by memory loss.

See attached NHS Advice on this (which is very good advice) – in addition to this I would advise any individual whom suspects they have been a victim of spiking to report this to the 'police as soon as possible. The Police have a number of options from taking blood, urine, saliva samples and even DNA samples if suspected 'sexual assault or rape' has taken place. There is a window of approx 12-72 hours in which the suspected 'spiking' substance can be detected in the body (this does vary) but even if the individual suspects that this has happened outside these time periods, **please encourage them to report the incident.**

Advice for Staff dealing with individuals whom have reported a 'suspected spiking incident':

- Try and reassure the victim, keep them as calm as possible.
- Assess the situation – does the victim need medical assistance – if so call ambulance.
- If victim is responsive explain the options in respect of getting an examination and samples taken. If sexual assault or (god forbid) rape suspected, then it is imperative that the Police are immediately informed.
- Advise the student to retain any clothing (including underwear) he or she was wearing at the time they suspect the 'spiking' has taken place. This will be needed for 'forensic examination' and can provide the police with vital DNA evidence.
- If the student is a boarder – treat their room as a 'crime scene' in other words re-locate the student to another room if possible until Police have completed their examination of the room and any other items contained within (ie: clothing etc..).
- Parents will obviously need to be informed and I would suggest that you raise this incident with all students, as often the people conducting these type of offences will work a particular area/location before moving on.
- Gather any other information which you think may assist the police, ie: names of other persons that were out with the victim, the Police will then pick up the investigation and do thorough checks on the venue's, locations they may have visited.
- It is highly unlikely that the 'victim' will be able to recall anything – but his or her friends may be able to help.
- Retain any CCTV footage you may have that may assist the police in their enquiries.

I have now started to highlight the issue of 'spiking' in the student Drug Awareness Presentations I deliver in particular for the older groups which I hope will be of great benefit to them.

I am also in the process of sourcing 'testing kits' for students to use if they suspect 'spiking'. These are very simple to use, and can be used to test any drink and on surfaces. ([more information to follow on this](#))

'Spiking' is not happening everywhere in the country, but if you are hearing about reports locally then please do raise the awareness of students to this.

Finally, can I again take the opportunity to thank those of you for booking your Drug Awareness events with me early (this is really helpful and ensures that you get the dates you want) and secondly to remind you of the training available:

- **Student Drug Awareness Presentation.** Target age group would be year 9 onwards.
- **Staff Drug Awareness Training** – anything from short CPD sessions to full day Courses available.
- **Parental Engagement Drug Awareness Presentations.**
- **Oral Saliva Drug Screening Course** (max of 10 staff per course).

Please do get back to me if there is anything further I can assist you with.

Keep up the great work you all do and stay safe.

Kind Regards

Dave

Tel: 01642 763229

Mob: 07737656982

Email: dave.parvin@drugsenseuk.co.uk