

# INTELLIGENCE / DRUG WARNING ALERT

## Background

Police and the Coroner have continued their investigations following the drug related deaths that occurred between December 2016 and February 2017, and have confirmed that Fentanyl was found in the toxicology reports in of the two deaths. It is important to know that Fentanyl is problematic to identify. This would suggest that some batches of drugs being sold may be contaminated with the anesthetic fentanyl which is more potent than street heroin. In relation to the death:

- Two cases there is evidence of prescribed medications and illicit medications use (Quetiapine, Metazipine, Pregablin, Diazepam and Alcohol) on top of the Methadone prescription
- Retesting and further Toxicology Reports have shown that Fentanyl was present; we cannot conclude at this stage that this contributed to the deaths.

## Advice

It is important to bear in mind that heroin is an extremely dangerous drug and using it always has the potential to be fatal, regardless of the strength or contents of a particular batch. Anyone who uses drugs needs to be aware that it is never possible to be sure what you are taking, and that the risk of mixing drugs and alcohol, as well as personal tolerance levels, cannot be calculated. Factors including the impact of very-long-term drug use and ongoing health conditions can also increase the risk for an individual in taking drugs”.

- Fentanyl is odourless and colourless substance and cannot be identified in batch.
- Fentanyl overdose can cause difficulty in breathing, nausea and vomiting, dizziness and increased blood pressure
- The risk of mixing different drugs and alcohol, as well as personal tolerance levels, cannot be calculated and is extremely dangerous. This should always be discussed with service users
- If you are aware of someone using a range of drugs you can discuss your concerns with Renew.
- Heroin users need to be aware that the amount of fentanyl in a £10 bag of heroin need only be 1/50th of the total quantity (about 2 milligrams) to be a lethal dose

## Key messages to service users and clients

- Always use a test dose to check the strength of heroin
- Smoke rather than inject to reduce the risk
- Do not use with other depressant drugs including alcohol
- Always stay with someone for at least 4 hours after using
- Always keep your naloxone kit with you and make sure others around you know how to use it.
- If naloxone is issued, remember to still call an ambulance as the effect of naloxone wears off after approx. 20 minutes, enough time for an ambulance to arrive.

**Contact Details for Renew Substance Misuse Treatment Services**

**ReNew on: 0800 1615 700**

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