

ACMD Member biographies

Details

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs makes recommendations to government on drug harms, including classification and scheduling under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and its regulations. It is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Home Office.

This document provides more information about the current members of the ACMD.



Professor Owen Bowden-Jones (Chair)

Professor Owen Bowden-Jones is a Consultant Addiction Psychiatrist at Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust and Honorary Professor at University College London. National roles include Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, President of the Society for the Study of Addiction, Policy Fellow at University of Cambridge and board member at the International Society for the Study of Emerging Drugs. Owen is the past-Chair of the Faculty of Addictions at the Royal College of Psychiatrists and has been an adviser to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the European Union Drug Agency.



Professor Judith Aldridge

Judith Aldridge is Professor of Criminology at the University of Manchester. National and global drug policy concerns have motivated her research for over two decades into drug use and drug markets. For more than a decade, her research has focussed on how drug markets have been facilitated by technological developments supporting anonymous internet activities. She has authored over 90 publications in the drugs field. She has acted in an expert and advisory capacity with organisations in the UK and internationally.



Professor Anne Campbell

Anne Campbell is a Professor in Substance Use and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. She has established an international reputation for work within the drugs and alcohol sector. Her combined work in both arenas has resulted in distinctive and leading research, which has influenced UK drug policy and practice reform. Anne is currently working on 'wearable technology' to detect opioid overdose deaths, drug related deaths in Northern Ireland and labelling for alcohol products using face recognition software and treatment for alcohol related brain injury. She is also developing technology to engage people with substance use issues, who are transitioning from prison into community. In 2023, Anne was named Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to Drug Policy and Practice. Anne is currentl chair of the ACMD's Recovery Committee.



Dr Caroline Copeland

Dr Caroline Copeland is a Senior Lecturer at King's College London where she heads a research group specialising in substance use and drug-related mortality. She leads the National Programme on Substance Use Mortality (NPSUM) and serves as an expert advisor on novel psychoactive substances (NPS) to the European Union Drug Agency (EUDA). She has also sat on the ACMD NPS sub-committee as a co-opted member since 2019. With over 30 high-impact publications since 2020, her work has helped to advance understanding of drug-related harms and reflects her dedication to improving public health outcomes for people who use drugs.



Professor Colin Davidson

Colin, originally from Annan in Dumfriesshire, has a BSc in Biology and Psychology (University of Edinburgh) and a PhD in Neuropharmacology (QMW, University of London). Colin's early research focused on antidepressants, and at St Andrews University, the brain reward pathways. Moving to the Department of Psychiatry at Duke University (USA) he spent 9 years on NIH (NIDA) funded work developing novel treatments for stimulant abuse. Since 2010, he has researched new psychoactive substances/legal highs, funded through the EU MADNESS project. Colin is the UK representative on FELASA and was previously Head of School of Pharmacy & Biomedical Sciences at UCLan.



Mohammed Fessal

As a qualified pharmacist, Mohammed has over 20 years of experience across the NHS, private and voluntary sectors. Currently Director of Pharmacy at CGL, a voluntary sector organisation specialising in substance misuse, Mohammed is passionate about supporting the most vulnerable in society and tackling discrimination. Mohammed is also currently a Non-Executive Director at WMAS where he Chairs the People Committee, and sits on the CQC Controlled Drugs National Sub-Group. Mohammed has previously worked as a specialist advisor for the CQC, been a member of the Approved Premises Governance Board, and sat on the Drug Advisory Council for Anguilla.



Bethan Gibbs

Consultant specialist social worker with 17-years' experience working across substance misuse and addiction services, including residential rehab. Main areas of expertise are young people and substance use, children and the impact of parental substance misuse, and families affected by addiction. Most recently Bethan has been working as a consultant specialising in parental substance misuse and as an expert witness instructed to undertake PSM impact assessments within court and PLO. Presently Bethan is based within a CAMHS transitions service but continues to have her own small private training and consultancy practice, delivering substance misuse training to social care workforces and social work students in Islington and across London.



Professor Amira Guirguis

Professor Amira Guirguis is a leading academic and pharmacist with extensive expertise in substance misuse, drug detection, and novel psychoactive substances. As the MPharm Programme Director at Swansea University and an independent prescriber in substance use disorders, she pioneered the UK's first licensed pharmacist-led drug-checking service, bridging research, policy, and public health practice. Her research integrates pharmacovigilance, netnography, and analytical chemistry, with a strong focus on harm reduction. A prolific author with over 100 publications, she has supervised numerous doctoral projects and holds influential pharmacy professional and regulatory roles in the UK and Ireland, shaping education, practice, and healthcare policies.



Dr Hilary Hamnett

Dr Hamnett has worked as a forensic toxicologist in the UK and New Zealand and has written journal articles and book chapters on a number of topics related to drugs and toxicology, including drugs and driving, novel psychoactive substances and the representation of poisons in fiction. One of her areas of specialty is cognitive bias and how it affects decision making in forensic science.



Jason Harwin

Jason is a former Chief Police Officer, having completed over 30 years distinguished service in 4 forces. Latterly, whilst the Assistant Chief Constable and then Deputy Chief Constable, he was the NPCC lead for drugs, a position held for 5 years. This involved working Cross Government, Criminal justice partners and treatment services in delivering evidence informed practice. He was the Strategic Police lead and subject expert for the independent review of drugs Policy led by Dame Carol Black, national Harm to Hope 10year Strategy and the Strategic Police lead for Project ADDER and the national co-ordinated response to needle spiking.



Professor Graeme Henderson

Graeme Henderson is a Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Bristol. His longstanding research interests relate to the mechanisms of action of opioid drugs, the processes underlying the development of drug tolerance and how interactions between opioids and other drugs (polypharmacology) can enhance the likelihood of overdose. He is an author of Rang & Dale's 'Pharmacology', now in its 10th edition. He is an Honorary Fellow of the British Pharmacological Society, a member of the scientific committee of Drug Science and a trustee of the Bristol Drugs Project and of Collective Voice.



Professor Katy Holloway

Katy Holloway was appointed Professor of Criminology at the University of South Wales in July 2013. Previously, she worked as a data analyst at the Institute of Criminology (University of Cambridge) after completing her PhD there in 2000. Katy has been researching substance use for over 20 years. She has conducted systematic reviews, evaluations of interventions and many empirical research studies using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The philosophy of harm reduction underpins Katy's research and she works closely with third sector substance misuse services across Wales. She is also a member of a range of advisory boards and working groups.



Dr Carole Hunter

Retired as the Lead Pharmacist, Alcohol and Drug Services, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde where she was a member of the working groups developing Glasgow's Supervised Drug Consumption Room (SDCR) and Heroin Assisted Treatment service. She has extensive experience in community pharmacy in Scotland and England and established one of Scotland's early pharmacy needle exchanges. She has been a member of several Scottish Government advisory bodies and is a former chair of the National Naloxone Advisory Group. In 2020 was designated as a Fellow of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.



Professor Stephen Husbands

Stephen's current research includes drug development projects relating to the treatment of drug abuse, depression and new low abuse liability analgesics. A further interest is the detection and quantitative and qualitative analysis of street drugs, particularly hard-to-detect and rapidly evolving classes of drugs, such as the synthetic cannabinoids, benzodiazepines and the nitazenes. He has recently been, PI or co-Investigator on a number of NIH-funded grants, and on several grants funded by UK research councils. Stephen has long-standing NIH-funded collaborations with researchers across the US, while the drug detection work has local collaborators and UK funding.



Professor Roger Knaggs

Roger is a clinical academic pharmacist. His current position provides teaching and research opportunities whilst maintaining regular specialist clinical practice in pain management. Roger's main research interests focus on the appropriate use of analgesic medicines and associated clinical outcomes and healthcare utilization. He aims to promote the importance of evidence-based pain management within pharmacy and to highlight the role of pharmacy within pain management. In addition, he has associations with other professional bodies and healthcare policy and government organisations, including the British Pain Society, Faculty of Pain Medicine, Care Quality Commission and NICE.



Sapna Lewis

Sapna Lewis is a senior lawyer working for the Welsh Government. She currently leads on the government's participation in the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry. As such Sapna has an in-depth understanding and experience of devolution, government decision making structures and policy development across the four nations. Sapna has a particular interest in healthcare and prior to joining Welsh Government, Sapna was a Senior Manager within the Welsh NHS working closely with clinicians, community health councils and the public to address concerns regarding the provision of healthcare including serious incidents, near misses and medical negligence.



Fiona Spargo-Mabbs

Fiona Spargo-Mabbs OBE is Director and Founder of drug education charity the Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation. Having worked in education as a teacher, manager and national lead in her specialism working with vulnerable families, Fiona founded the DSM Foundation in 2014 in response to the death of her 16-year-old son Dan having taken MDMA. As well as working directly with young people, parents and professionals herself, Fiona is an award-winning author of books for parents of adolescents, and works closely with others to influence change in drug education nationally. In 2023 she was awarded an OBE for services to young people.



Dr Richard Stevenson

Dr Richard Stevenson is a consultant in Emergency Medicine based at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Dr Stevenson sits on several groups that monitor the trends of various drugs in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Richard is the clinical governance advisor for Police Scotland and volunteers as a Special Constable with the British Transport Police. He is a Fellow of the College of Medicine and is a Member of the Faculty of Forensic Legal Medicine.

Professor Paul Stokes

Professor of Mood Disorders and Psychopharmacology at the Centre for Affective Disorders, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London (KCL).



Professor Harry Sumnall

Harry is a public health researcher in the School of Psychology, LJMU and undertakes work ranging from pre-clinical studies to policy development and analysis. He has specialisms in young people's drug use, including prevention interventions and systems. Other current research interests include public and structural stigma, public understanding of drug policy, alcohol marketing, violence prevention, and interventions and support services for people at higher risk of drug related harm.



Professor Simon Thomas

Simon Thomas was Professor of Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, a consultant physician and clinical pharmacologist at Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and clinical lead for the UK National Poisons Information Service until he retired from clinical work in 2022. He has a longstanding clinical and research interest in the epidemiology and clinical effects of recreational drug use, with a particular focus on newly emerging compounds referred to as New Psychoactive Substances. He is currently chair of the ACMD New Psychoactive Substances Committee, which monitors use of these substances in the UK and provides advice to government when needed on how to address the social and health harms associated with these compounds.



Professor Derek Tracy

Professor Tracy is the Chief Medical Officer of South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, the provider of the widest range of NHS mental health services in the UK, and in partnership with the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience, King's College London, a global leader in mental health research. Derek is Deputy Chair of the Cavendish Square Group of London CMOs, and his PhD is in integrated healthcare systems. He is an honorary Professor at Brunel Medical School, and an honorary Senior Lecturer at King's, Imperial, and University College London. He is a deputy editor at the British Journal of Psychiatry.

Rosalie Weetman

Following a role as voluntary sector CEO, and having previously worked in local and national Probation services with a focus on drugs and alcohol, Rosalie joined Derbyshire County Council where she now leads the Inclusion Health portfolio which includes mental health and suicide prevention, trauma-informed practice, sexual health and substance use. In 2019 Rosalie was appointed to the Health and Social Care Committee as a special advisor to their enquiry on the impact of UK drug policies on public health. In 2021/22 she undertook a secondment as a programme manager in OHID supporting the effective use of supplementary grant funding.



Dr David Wood

Dr David Wood is a Consultant Physician and Clinical Toxicologist at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and Reader in Clinical Toxicology at King's College London. His specialist interests and expertise are in the use of and the acute harms related to the use of recreational drugs, new psychoactive substances and misused medicines. He co-leads the European Drug Emergencies Network Plus (Euro-DEN Plus) which monitors this use and harms. He is an expert advisor to the European Union Drugs Agency, World Health Organisation and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the area of recreational drugs and NPS.