

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 David Wood (Chair)

Professor David Wood is a Professor of Clinical Toxicology and Consultant Physician at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, King's Health Partners and King's College London and Chair of the UK Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. His specialist interests and expertise are in the use of and the acute harms related to the use of recreational drugs, novel psychoactive substances (NPS) and non-medically used (misused) medicines. He co-leads the European Drug Emergencies Network Plus (Euro-DEN Plus) project and registry which monitors this use and associated harms. He is an expert advisor to the European Union Drugs Agency (formerly known as the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction), World Health Organisation and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the areas of recreational drugs and NPS.



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 Steve Allsop

For Over 40 years, starting in Scotland before moving to Australia, Steve Allsop has been involved in alcohol and other drug prevention, treatment and policy research and practice, and service management. He has worked in academic, prevention, treatment and government services. He has been the Director of two Australian national drug research centres, in first in Adelaide, subsequently Perth. For many years he worked with the Western Australian Government Drug and Alcohol Office, continuing to contribute as current Chair of the WA Alcohol and other Drug Advisory Board.



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 currently 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 45 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 (QMUL, 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 Professor of Neuropharmacology and was previously Head of School of Pharmacy & Biomedical Sciences at the University of Lancashire.



Professor Karen Ersche

Karen Ersche is a Professor of Addiction Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge and an adjunct Professor of Translational Addiction Research at the Central Institute of Mental Health in Mannheim at the University of Heidelberg in Germany. Her work has gained international recognition, earning several prestigious awards, including the Jacob P. Waletzky Memorial Award, which is given to researchers for groundbreaking conceptual or empirical research on the drivers of drug addiction. She is also an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow, a Fellow of Clare Hall at Cambridge, a Trustee of the Society for the Study of Addiction, and the Editor-in-Chief of *European Addiction Research*.



Mr 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.



Professor Amira Guirguis

Professor Amira Guirguis is a leading academic pharmacist and internationally recognised expert in substance misuse, drug detection, novel psychoactive substances, and harm reduction. She is Professor of Pharmacy and MPharm Programme Director at Swansea University Medical School, and an independent prescriber specialising in substance use disorders. She pioneered the UK's first Home Office-licensed pharmacist-led drug checking service in a community setting, integrating advanced analytical techniques to bridge research, policy, and frontline practice. With over 100 peer-reviewed publications and supervision of numerous doctoral projects, her interdisciplinary work, spanning pharmacovigilance, netnography, analytical chemistry, and chemometrics, advances in-field detection and evidence-based harm reduction. As Chief Scientist at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), she leads the science and research strategy to keep science at the heart of pharmacy, shaping practice, policy, innovation, patient care, and public health. She contributes to professional standards through regulatory roles with the General Pharmaceutical Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland.



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.



Mr 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.



Professor Keith Humphreys

Keith Humphreys is the Esther Ting Memorial Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University in California. His research addresses addictive disorders and the translation of science into public policy. His public policy work includes testimonies to U.S. House and Senate Committees and presenting addiction science findings in the Canadian and UK Parliaments. He served on the White House Commission on Drug-Free Communities during the Bush Administration and as Senior Policy Advisor in the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy under President Obama. To recognize his service to addiction-related scholarship and policy, Queen Elizabeth II made him an Honorary Officer in the Order of the British Empire in 2022.



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 Sunjeev Kamboj

Sunjeev Kamboj is a professor of translational clinical psychology at University College London and an honorary consultant clinical psychologist in the North London Foundation NHS Trust. He co-directs the Clinical Psychopharmacology Unit at UCL. His initial training was in medicinal chemistry and neuropharmacology, followed by clinical psychology. His research focuses on developing novel pharmacological and behavioural interventions for substance use and trauma-related disorders.



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 worked with other professional bodies and healthcare policy and government organisations, including the British Pain Society, Faculty of Pain Medicine, Care Quality Commission and NICE.



Mrs 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.



Dr Lorna Lewis

Lorna earned her PhD in Forensic Toxicology from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, in 2016. She also holds an MSc in Forensic Toxicology from the University of Glasgow and a BSc (Hons) in Analytical and Forensic Chemistry from the University of Strathclyde. As the Principal Investigator for Forensic Toxicology at the Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science, University of Dundee, Lorna leads the forensic toxicology research portfolio. Lorna is a Co-Director for the National Drug Testing and Research Laboratory and also serves as the Programme Lead for the part-time distance Drug Analysis and Toxicology MSc program.



Detective Sergeant Jon Privett

Jon has served in the Metropolitan Police since 2013, working in Neighbourhoods and proactive policing, followed by the Criminal Investigations Department (CID). He then specialised in drugs supply cases, working across the Met to improve efficiency and outcomes. In 2018 Jon became an expert witness in drug trafficking and since regularly gives opinion evidence in court. Since 2020, Jon has helped roll out 'Drugs Focus Desks' both internally in the Met and nationally, and worked on Project ADDER since its inception in London before a move back to CID.

Mrs 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.



Professor Harry Sumnall

Harry is a Professor in Substance Use in the School of Psychology and Public Health Institute, LJMU and his research interests range 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. Harry currently Chair's the ACMD Prevention Standing Committee.



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.

