

ACMD

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

ACMD Chair: Prof David Wood
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Rt Hon Sarah Jones MP
Minister of State (Minister for Policing and Crime)
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

11 March 2026

Dear Minister,

Re: ACMD plans for the delivery of advice

Having started in the role of Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) at the beginning of 2026, I have now met the Chairs of the ACMD Standing Committees and Working Groups as well as the ACMD Full Council to agree proposed timelines for completing current reviews. I have set out below our plans for the delivery of advice, which includes previous ministerial commissions as well as work the ACMD has chosen to undertake of its own volition.

Reports being finalised for publication

Drug use in ethnic minority groups (self-commissioned)

Expected publication: end of April 2026.

1-ethylbromazolam (self-commissioned)

Expected publication: end of April 2026.

Government Commissioned Workstreams

Drivers of powder cocaine use

Status: In progress, expected completion by Summer 2026

Initially the ACMD looked at the drivers of powder cocaine use in young people. The scope of this review has been expanded to include adults and evidence around the injection of powder cocaine.

Internet facilitated drugs markets

Status: In progress, expected completion by end of 2026

The ACMD review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of online drug markets, to inform an effective enforcement guide for monitoring and intervening in drug trafficking on the internet. This work covers not only dark web marketplaces but also clear web and social media platforms.

Cannabis based products for medicinal use

Status: In progress, expected completion by Summer 2026

The working group is undertaking an extensive review of the evidence around the use and availability of these products in the UK, which they are analysing alongside the results of the public call for evidence.

Safer Streets and Violence against women and girls

Status: In set-up, expected completion by end of 2027

The previous three-year government commissioned work has included the ACMD undertaking reviews in the government's key strategies around "Safer Streets" and "Violence against women and girls". The ACMD Council will be reviewing these strategies this Summer, to develop a plan of work to deliver reports on drug use issues related to these strategies. It is anticipated that these pieces of work will be delivered over 2026 and 2027.

Self-commissioned workstreams

Drug Use in the LGBTQ+ Community / Chemsex

Status: In progress, expected completion by Summer 2026

This report will explore the issues related to substance use in LGBTQ+ communities, particularly in relation to 'Chemsex', their associated harms and possible harm reduction responses.

Prevention: Development and Transitions

Status: In progress, expected completion by Summer 2026

The Prevention Committee is reviewing the needs and development of prevention interventions for young adults to prevent drug use at key transition points in their lives.

ACMD advice on 2-benzyl benzimidazole and piperidine benzimidazolone opioids

Status: In progress, expected completion by Summer 2026

Following the sixth addendum to this report, the NPS Committee is drafting further addendums to incorporate further substances, which will include where appropriate generic definitions for these additional compounds.

Pregabalin and Gabapentin Harms Assessment

Status: In progress, expected completion by end of 2026

These drugs are licensed for use for conditions such as epilepsy and neuropathic pain. This work aims to review whether current controls of these medications are sufficient.

Safe inhalation pipes and review of Section 9a of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971

Status: In progress, expected completion by end of 2026

There is increasing evidence that safer inhalation pipes reduce harm to users, but supply of these is not permitted under Section 9a of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The ACMD is establishing a working group to undertake a review of this evidence.

Definition of drug misuse death

Status: In set-up, expected completion by end of 2026

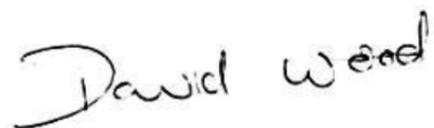
The 2025 ONS report on deaths related to drug poisoning in England and Wales in 2024 included a sentence which referred to the definition of a “drug misuse death” having been established by an ACMD cross-UK working group in 2000. We have been unable to confirm that the ACMD established this definition and so have proposed a working group to review the definition of drug use and drug misuse related deaths, not only in England and Wales but also in the other devolved nations.

Response to previous ACMD report recommendations

The ACMD acknowledges the complexity the Home Office has collating responses from a number of different government departments when providing an overall government response to the recommendations in an ACMD report. We would particularly welcome the Government's response to "*A whole-system response to drug prevention in the UK*", as these will inform the current "*Development and Transitions*" workstream. It is possible that the responses to this report will also cover the responses to the recommendations in the earlier ACMD letter "*ACMD vulnerable groups: young people's drug use*". In addition, the responses to the "*Alkyl nitrites: ACMD exemption consideration*" and "*Synthetic cathinones: an updated harms assessment*" will be invaluable to the current "*Drug Use in the LGBTQ+ community / chemsex*" workstream.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss any of the above workstreams and the Government's response to the above ACMD reports, as well as to better understand the Government's future priorities for the ACMD.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Wood". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Professor David Wood

Chair of the ACMD