

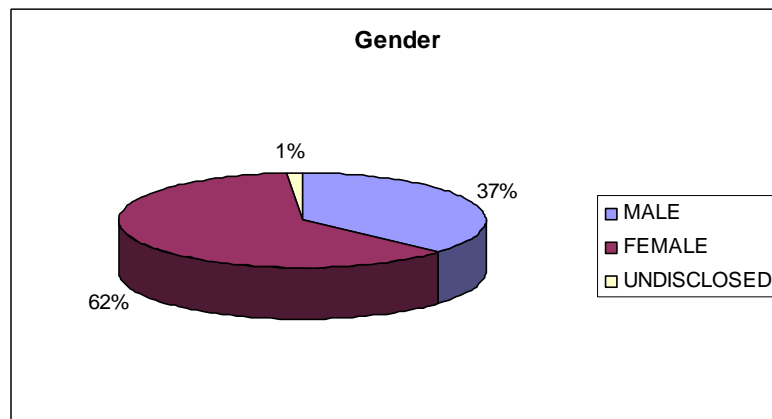
Evolution Festival Report

The Evolution Festival takes place annually on the Newcastle/ Gateshead Quays. This year it was held over the May bank holiday and NECA were present to promote the stimulant service and give out advice and information around use. It was also decided to use this opportunity to conduct some research around the prevalence and trends of stimulant use.

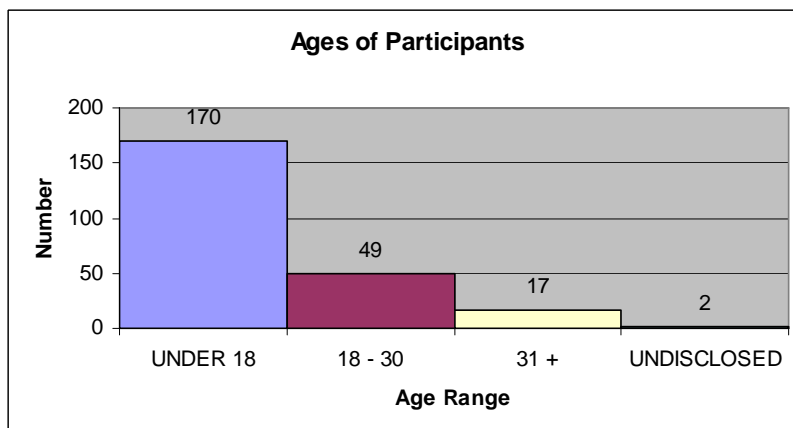
A short, anonymous survey was designed and in order to encourage individuals to participate, it was decided that those who completed a questionnaire would be entered into a prize draw to win a variety of prizes. The weeks leading up to the event were spent talking to different businesses and a number of prizes were donated for this purpose. These included a Toni&Guy hair voucher; Driving Lessons with Smile, Paintballing Tickets, Cinema tickets and passes to Beamish Wild Ropes and the Centre of Life.

The questionnaires involved 5 short questions around the use of stimulant drugs and the participant's knowledge of where to get advice and information if it was required. The questionnaire also asked for data such as gender, age, ethnicity and postal area in order to explore particular demographics.

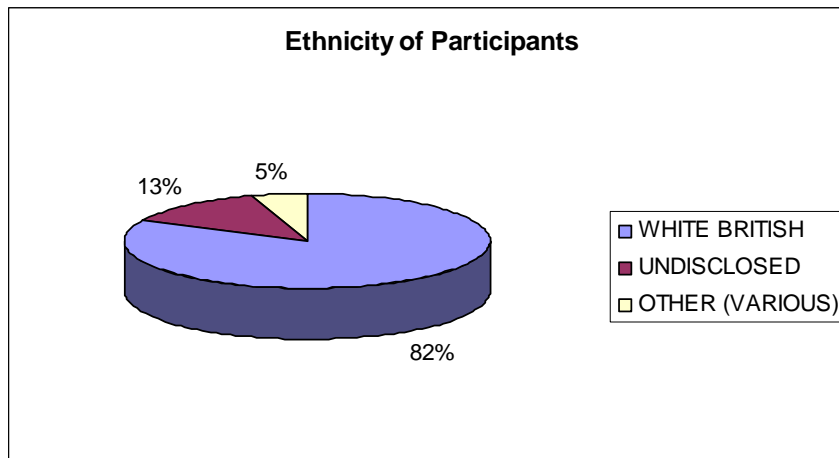
Breakdown of participants



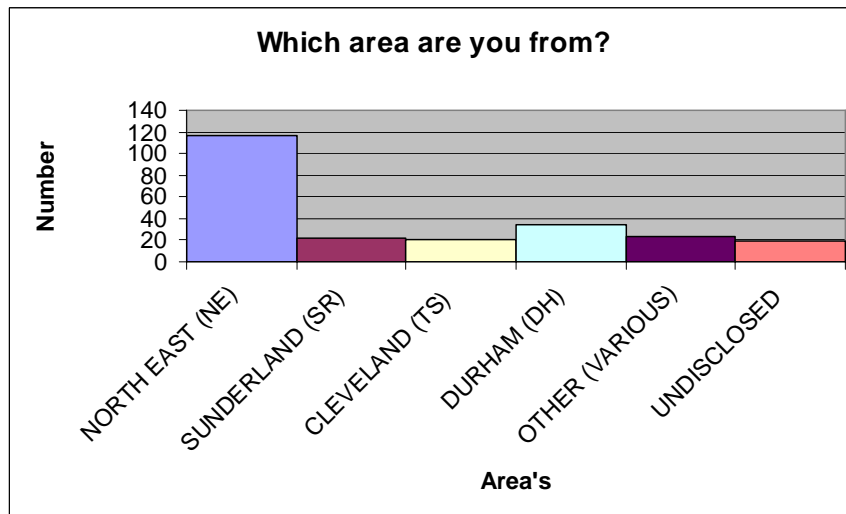
238 questionnaires were completed and handed back, 37% of those who completed the questionnaire were male, 62% were female and a total of 1% did not disclose their gender.



The age ranges stated on the questionnaires showed a range of 10 years of age to 50+ years of age, and the majority of questionnaires were completed by individuals who were 18 or under, accounting for 170 of the completed surveys.



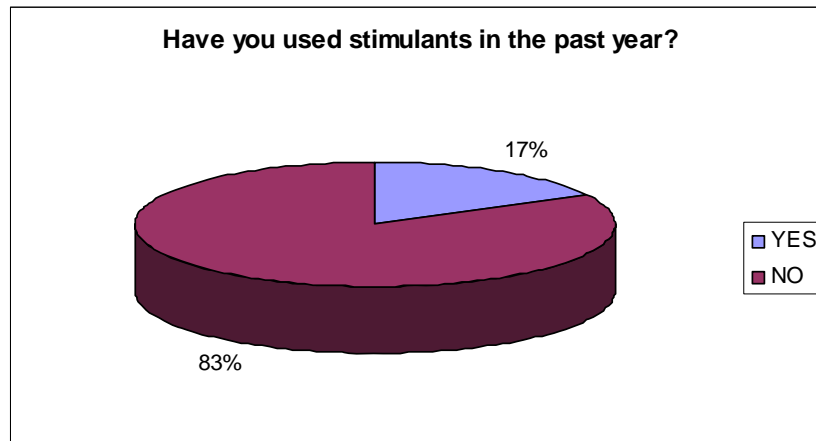
The majority of participants stated that their ethnicity was (a form of) White British, accounting for 82% of the responses. 13% of the participants failed to disclose their ethnicity and the remaining 5% of participants stated various other ethnic backgrounds including Chinese, Russian and Thai.



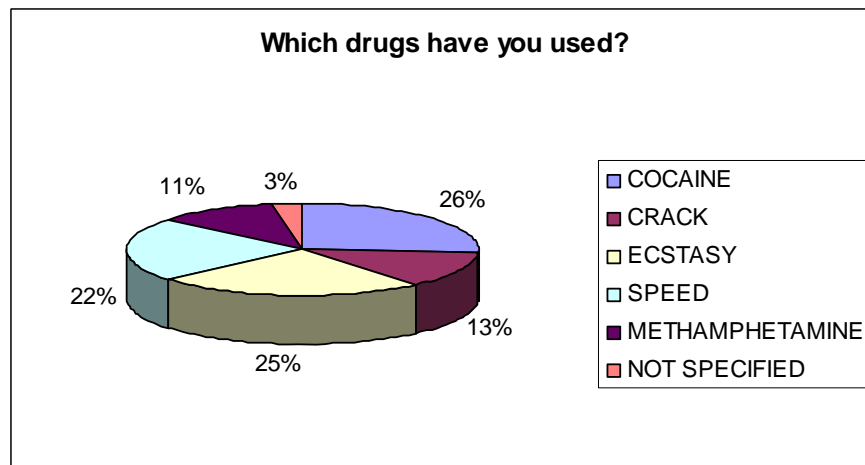
The survey asked participants to disclose their postal area in order to explore which areas they were from. As the festival was held on the Newcastle/Gateshead quays, it is no surprise that 49% reported areas in the region of Newcastle. 15% reported to live in the Durham area, 9% reported to live in the Sunderland and Cleveland/Teesside areas and 8% did not disclose their postal area. The remaining 10% consisted of various other areas reported such as York, Leeds, Gloucestershire and Doncaster. Two individuals were also from Belfast, Ireland.

As we provide services around the Newcastle area we were particularly interested in any “hotspots” that arose from the data. On careful exploration however, it seems that there are no particular areas of Newcastle with high instances of stimulant use, instead the data seems to show that use is relatively widespread.

The Survey

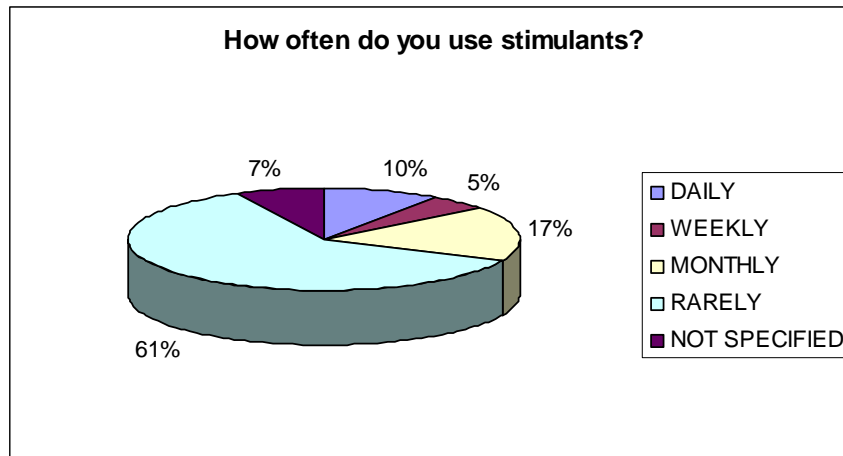


Question 1 of the survey asked the participant if they have used stimulant drugs in the past year. The majority (83%) reported no they had not used stimulant drugs in the past year and 17% reported that yes they had used stimulant drugs in the past year.

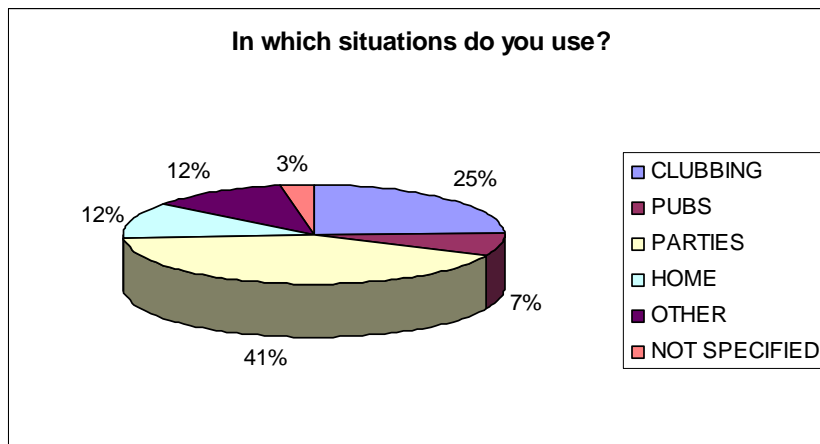


Question 2 expanded on this further, asking those who had used stimulant drugs in the past year, which drugs had they used. The greatest number of people reported the use of cocaine (26%), followed closely by ecstasy use (25%) and amphetamine (speed) use (22%). Crack cocaine use was reported to have a value of 13% and Methamphetamine use followed with a value of 11%. The remaining 3% declined to disclose the specific drugs they used.

Of those participants who answered yes to using stimulant drugs, 31% reported poly drug use.

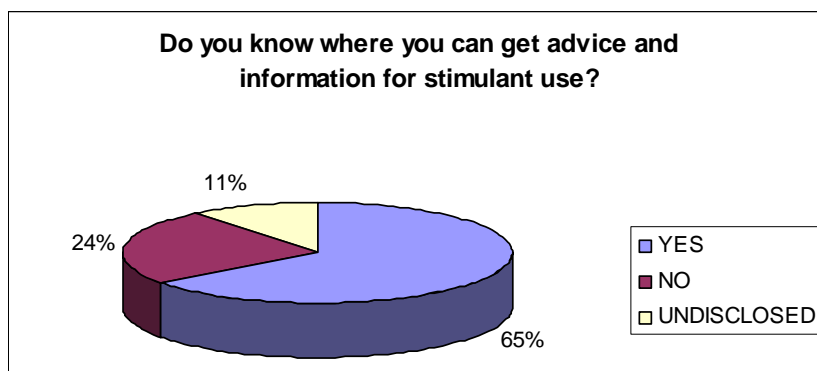


Question 3 of the survey asked how regularly participants use these particular substances. The majority of participants stated that they used these substances rarely (61%). This was chased with 17% of participants stating monthly use, 10% stating daily use and 5% stating weekly use. The remaining 7% did not disclose the frequency of which they used these substances.



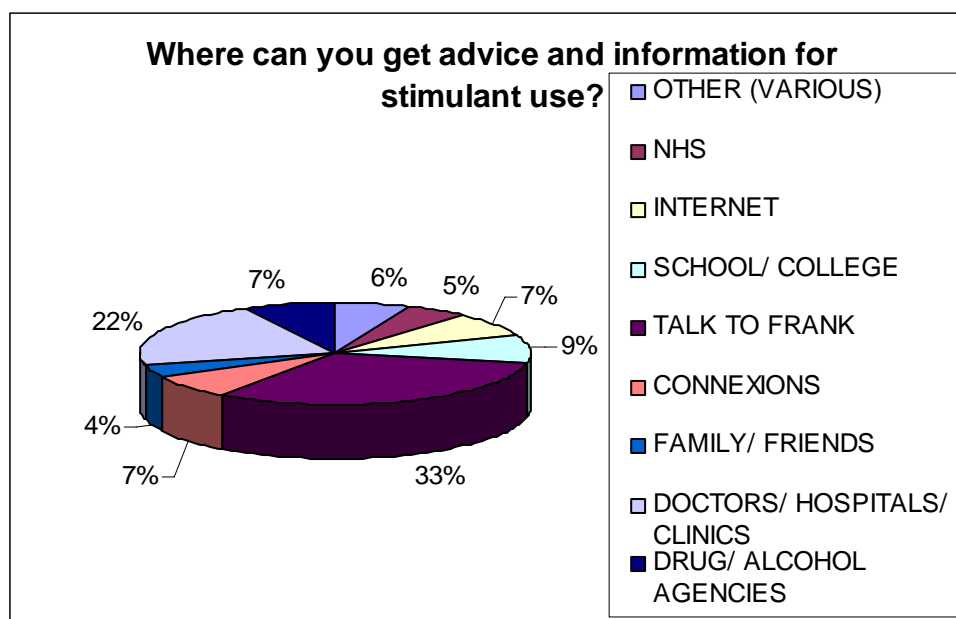
Question 4 asked participants about the situations in which they use these particular substances. The majority of participants stated that they use these substances at “parties” (41%). The next most popular situation stated was “clubbing” with 25% of the answers, followed by “home” and “other” with 12% respectively. Where participants have answered “other”, the survey asked them to specify. Answers to this question included “camping”, “on the street” and “at gigs”.

The final set of questions on the survey relate to whether or not the participants are aware of places where they could get advice and information for stimulant use.



Question 5 of the survey asked participants if they know where to get advice and information on stimulant use, if they required it. 65% of participants stated that yes they did know where they could get advice if they needed too. 24% of participants are unaware of where to get help, and the remaining 11% of participants did not answer the question.

Again where participants stated yes to the above question, the survey required them to specify where they would go to for help.



The questionnaires stated a number of different responses which have been condensed into categories for simplicity. The majority of participants stated they could get help from “Talk to Frank”, this accounted for 33% of all responses. The second most popular answer was advice from “doctors/ hospitals/clinics” with a value of 22%. As well as including G.P/doctor, hospitals and clinics, this category also included responses such as health centres and walk in centres.

The remaining categories were as follows. “School/ college” made up 9% of responses and “connexions” and “internet” accounted for 7%. A number of responses such as Matrix, Needle Exchange, Streetwise, NECA and Turning Point were condensed into the category of “drug and alcohol agencies” and also accounted for 7% of the answers.

5% of participants stated NHS direct as a source of advice and 4% of participants responded that they would go to various family or friends. The remaining 6% of participants stated a number of answers which have been grouped into the category

“other”. This category included responses such as “community centres”, “church”, and various ambiguous statements.

All in all it seems our attendance at the festival had a positive influence. It allowed for the promotion of services and a number of people asked questions around substance misuse. It also prompted a number of people to ring the services for advice.

Unfortunately these individuals were under the age of 18 so we were unable to offer our services, however they were directed to D’n’A services.

Despite the fact that the majority of those who visited our marquee and completed the survey were under the age of 18 (our target group was between 18 years and 30 years), the data gathered is still extremely valuable as it gives an idea of the extent to which stimulant drugs are used, how often and in which situations. It also identifies where some education around substance use and the speciality services that deal with such issues may be useful.