

Supplementary Information 1 (SI1)

**Semi-structured Interview Guide**

Opening statement:

“Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. Before we start I need to make sure you’re aware that everything that we discuss is confidential. I will be recording our conversation and may need to make some notes but this will be kept secure and separate from any information that could identify you. If I use any quotes from our discussion they will not identify you directly. If you tell me any information that makes me concerned that someone may be likely to suffer harm I may need to look into this further and I may need to break confidentiality to protect them. Before we start do you have any questions or concerns?”

“So we’ll make a start: if you have any questions or change your mind about speaking to me as we go along then please let me know.”

Questions:

“I would like to find out more about the use of NPS amongst the people who are currently using our service so will be asking you some questions around this theme.”

*(Explain NPS definition if needed)*

*Explore history of substance misuse (5mins):*

- “What substances (e.g. heroin, cannabis, alcohol) do you have experience of using and how/when do you use them?”
- Have you taken NPS before?”

*Explore type and pattern of use of NPS that have been taken before, (10mins):*

- “What types of NPS have you used? (e.g. cannabinoids, speedy ones)
- How did you take them? (e.g. smoke them, swallow pills, skin-popping)
- How did they fit in with your other substance misuse?
- Where did you get them from? (e.g. headshop, online, friend, relative, dealer)
- How often did you use them? (e.g. every day, a couple of times a week)

*Explore positive/negative experiences of NPS use (10mins):*

- “What did you like about them?”
- Is there anything you didn’t like about them?
- How did they affect your mental health?
- Have they affected your physical health?”

Closing statement:

“Is there anything that you would like to add or talk about that we haven’t covered?”

“Do you have any questions?”

“Thank you for your time.”

43 SI2: *Summary of Themes and Sub-themes*

44 Table SI2: Summary of number of participants who mentioned each of the themes and sub-themes.

	Theme	Sub-theme	Number of participants
Type and pattern of NPS use	NPS type	Cannabinoid ONLY	1
		Stimulating ONLY	1
		'Other' (not otherwise specified) ONLY	1
		Stimulating & Cannabinoid	7
		Stimulating, Dissociative & Hallucinogenic	1
		Stimulating, Cannabinoid & Sedating	1
	Source	Friend ONLY	1
		Online ONLY	1
		Headshop ONLY	6
		Headshop & Online	1
		Headshop, Friend, Online & Other (newsagent)	1
		'Street dealer' & Friend	1
		'Street dealer' & Headshop	1
	Frequency	Occasional	3
		Daily (several times)	5
		Binging	2
	Route of administration	Smoking ONLY	3
		Nasal ONLY	1
		Intra-venous injection ONLY	1
		Smoking & Intra-venous Injection	2
		Nasal & Intra-venous injection	1
		Oral, Nasal & Smoking	2
		Nasal, Smoking & Intra-venous Injection	2
	Concomitant use	Cannabinoid NPS to end stimulant NPS use	2
		Opiates to end stimulant NPS use	1
		Benzodiazepines to end NPS use	1
		Cannabinoids with tobacco	4
		Potentiating effects	1
		Displacement (prescribed opiates)	1
		Displacement (illicit opiates)	2
		Displacement (alcohol)	1
	Preference	Accessibility	4
		Avoid dealers	2
	Harm reduction	Changed route of administration	1
		Safer injecting training	1
		Changed dose	1
	Affordability	Budgeting	2
		Cheap	1
		Dealing	1
		Bulk-buying	1
		Cannabinoids with tobacco	1
Positive experience	Psychological effects	Escapism	3
		Relaxation	4
		Happiness	4
		Euphoria	1

		Confidence	2
		Alertness/Energy	5
		Improved subjective experiences	3
		Overcome and control previous negative experiences	1
	Physical effects	Weight loss	3
		Weight gain	1
		Analgesia	1
	Preference	Strength	3
		Quality	3
		Legal status	2
		Affordability	3
		Curiosity	2
		Boredom	1
		Duration	2
		Onset of action	1
Negative experiences associated with NPS use	Physical effects	Administration site	3
		Tremor	2
		Eczema	1
		Sweating	2
		Itching	1
		Cardiac	3
		Coughing	1
		Seizures	1
	Psychological effects	Personality changes	1
		Suicidal ideation	1
		Concentration	1
		Dependency/Addiction	4
		Cravings	1
		Impaired activity of daily living	3
		Self-neglect	1
		Loss of control	2
		Confusion	1
		Impaired memory	1
		Panic attacks	1
	Preference	Affordability	1
		Strength	5
		Quality	3
	Legal	Police involvement	1
		Detained (Mental Health Act)	1