

NAVIGATOR



The Drugs Supply Chain
Qualitative Research Report
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BACKGROUND

The term 'supply chain', is used in this report to refer to the entire process by which drugs are produced, transported, broken down, and sold to the end user.

COI / Home Office wished to understand this area further from a consumer perspective for the following reason.

- To explore the potential for developing messages which could help to undermine drug usage and favourable perceptions of drugs, drug dealers and drug users. Some possible examples:

Transportation

- the way drugs are transported by swallowing 'loaded' condoms, or by concealment in bodily orifices is potentially distasteful, particularly to teenagers, who often display squeamish sensibilities.

Environmental

- growing 'coca' plants is disastrous for the balance of the soil, and effectively renders it sterile for long term use.
- chemicals used in the production of cocaine are highly environmentally unfriendly.
- closer to home, ecstasy 'factories' generate quantities of toxic waste which often end up in local watercourses.
- the fact that most of the major grocery retailers and DIY chains, as well as other large corporates are taking environmental issues very seriously and communicating their efforts to be environmentally friendly to customers and the city suggests that this may be an area for exploitation.

Political

- the drugs economy is so lucrative that it overwhelms some national economies and destabilises political regimes.
- anecdotally young people are deeply critical of capitalist enterprises influencing democratically elected governments. Could this distaste be extended to the drug trade?

Exploitation of workers

- those working on the 'shop floor' in the drugs trade are often paid a pittance.

- in Columbia the waste from cocaine production, a highly addictive and dangerous substance known as 'Bazuka', is sold to local children, or given as payment for working in the drugs trade.
- there may be similar stories of exploitation closer to home, whereas those further up the distribution chain are often wealthy.
- teenagers expect high moral standards, and can react negatively to those that breach them, for example, Nike's reputation has been recently dented by the revelation that it paid workers in some third world countries very low wages.

Exploitation of children

- there are reports of drugs being sold to very young teenagers in certain cities in the UK, sometimes in a deliberate attempt to promote addiction.
 - research has indicated that teenagers dislike the idea of younger siblings taking drugs, and this could be used in connection with the above.
- There may be ways of undermining positive feelings towards 'social supply' and encouraging a less stigmatic perception of addicted dealers.

Social Supply

- drug users seem relatively tolerant of this concept, even though it effectively means their friends are making money out of them.

Addicted dealers

- anecdotally it seems addicted dealers are often looked down on by their customers, despite the fact that their addiction is effectively being exploited by the drugs trade.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Understand current awareness and attitudes to the 'supply chain'
 - how much do people know or even think about this subject
 - what are their feelings towards those parts of the chain they have contact with
 - what perceptions do they have of the 'upstream' elements and what are their feelings about these elements
- Understand in particular, attitudes and feelings towards drug users' suppliers
 - repertoire of sources used
 - feelings about these sources
 - is there any sense of differentiation, eg, between 'social suppliers', addicted dealers, and 'for profit' dealers
 - do they ever think about where their contacts obtain their supply from
- Gain reactions to descriptions and statements regarding various elements and issues surrounding the supply chain, including the following...
 - environmental
 - exploitation of minors, and of third world labour
 - political
 - methods of transportation, - 'hygiene', etc

RESEARCH METHOD AND SAMPLE

The primary target group for the research was defined as 16-30 year old drug users, with an emphasis on 16-24 year olds.

A secondary target group was defined as drug rejectors, and cannabis users who rejected use of class A drugs.

It was thought that friendship group discussions of 4-5 respondents would be the most appropriate method for conducting the research, as given the nature of the subject it was thought that their responses would be more honest, and less inhibited or distorted by exaggeration or posturing.

Recruitment was conducted without exposing respondents to questionnaires in order to avoid any suggestion that details might be recorded and passed on to a third party. Recruiters utilised established contacts to gain introduction to others, and to reassure, as it was felt that a 'cold' approach would not have been successful. Questionnaires were given to recruiters but only for them to use as a 'guide' for the type of respondent to be recruited. Copies are contained in the appendices.

- 16-18 x 6 groups, single, still living in parental home

Drug users

- 1 x male BC1 working regular
- 1 x female C2D working dabblers
- 1 x male C2D FTE dabblers
- 1 x female BC1 FTE regular

Non users and class A rejectors

- 1 x female C2D working Cannabis using class A rejector
- 1 x male BC1 FTE Drugs rejector

- 18-24 x 4 groups, single, or married / cohabiting, but without children

Drug users

- 1 x male BC1 working regular
- 1 x female C2D working regular
- 1 x male C2D FTE regular
- 1 x female BC1 FTE regular

Non users and class A rejectors

- 1 x male C2D working Cannabis using class A rejector
- 1 x female BC1 FTE Drugs rejector

- 25-30 x 6 groups, single, or married / cohabiting, but without children

Working

- 1 x male BC1 working regular
- 1 x male C2D working regular
- 1 x female BC1 working regular
- 1 x female C2D working regular

Working

- 1 x male C2D Drugs rejector
- 1 x female BC1 Cannabis using class A rejector

- Research was conducted from the 5th to the 17th March 2003 in the following locations
 - Staines, Middlesex
 - Enfield
 - Erdington, West Midlands
 - Oldham
 - Leeds
 - Wallington, Surrey
 - Hedge End, Southampton

Definitions

- ‘Dabblers’
 - have smoked Cannabis
 - enjoy ‘dance music’ and clubbing
 - have taken Ecstasy and/or Cocaine ‘once or twice’, or ‘a few times’, some admit to still taking Ecstasy and / or Cocaine
- Drug rejectors
 - have **not** smoked Cannabis
 - have **not** taken Ecstasy or Cocaine
 - enjoy ‘dance music’ and clubbing
 - in answer to the question - *if a friend offered you Ecstasy or Cocaine at a party or a club would you take it?* – say that they definitely would **not**

- Cannabis users but rejectors of class A
 - smoke Cannabis ‘fairly regularly’
 - have **not** taken Ecstasy or Cocaine
 - enjoy ‘dance music’ and clubbing
 - have friends who they believe have taken Ecstasy and/or Cocaine
 - in answer to the question - if a friend offered you Ecstasy or Cocaine at a party or a club would you take it? – say that they definitely would **not**

- Regular
 - have smoked Cannabis
 - enjoy ‘dance music’ and clubbing
 - take Ecstasy and/or Cocaine ‘fairly regularly’

PROCEDURE

The discussion guide employed was as follows, copies of the stimulus material are contained in the corresponding sections within this report.

- Moderator introduction, explanation of purpose of discussion and reassurance of confidentiality
- Where do 'people' get drugs from
 - portfolio of sources
 - regular vs occasional
 - feelings about these various sources
 - are some more or less socially acceptable than others?
 - has this been something they have ever thought about, or is just somewhere they go to get something
- Have they ever thought about what lies beyond their immediate sources
 - if so, what brings these elements to mind
 - prompt with list of dealer types, who do they feel they have contact with
 - feelings about different types, language to describe them
- Have they ever thought about where and how drugs are made, for example, who produces them, possible exploitation, effects on environment, etc
 - do they consider these issues for anything else they buy, eg, food, coffee, trainers (Nike example), etc, etc
 - have they ever been concerned by these things, if so, explore examples and circumstances
 - should we think about these issues more than we do
- Introduce stimulus examples
 - do any of these seem to give pause for thought
 - what is the basis of this relevance, eg, macro / political / environmental / affects others, or personal / local / affects me
- What do they feel people should know about in order to make decisions about drugs, - perhaps in context of things we buy generally
 - does it matter where this comes from, eg, do they feel differently if Greenpeace say them, vs Home Office

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Few drug users had thought beyond their immediate personal experience of the supply chain to wonder what the distribution network which supported it might have been like, or by what means drugs were produced. The respondents' immediate experience was that of a cottage industry with drugs supplied by longstanding contacts, and where buyers and suppliers were often part of the same social network. If pressed to think, users could accept that something much larger and perhaps more sinister lay beyond this, but they found it hard to equate this to their own experience. Perceptions of this more remote world were driven by the media. Media images dominated perceptions of the drugs world held by non users without friends who used drugs who had no *direct* contact of any sort with the drugs world.

Some of the supply chain facts presented were thought provoking in different ways. An understanding of the chemical and toxic ingredients used and discarded in their manufacture served to emphasise the potential dangers presented by drugs, which reinforced the views of non users to avoid them, and of users to take care how they used them. There could also be a more subtle change in the way the drugs industry and drug consumption was viewed, as it was clear that there *were* negative consequences beyond the personal risk to the user, which meant that taking drugs was not purely a personal decision. In addition the sheer scale of the industry was a surprise to all.

In itself this information is unlikely to provoke wholesale behavioural change, or lead to non users confronting users. It might however provide additional reasons for avoiding drugs in the first place, taking more care, using them less, and so on. The wider harm done by the drugs industry to the environment and society could also allow non users to have a slightly different perspective on drugs, that is they could feel justified in seeing drugs as 'wrong' rather than just 'not for them'.

Drug users were likely to see the effect of their own behaviour in relation to environmental and social issues as minute. As a result they felt little inclination to change their behaviour, as they felt that this would have little effect on these macro level problems. This is a common response when faced with this kind of decision, whether it is to do with drugs or anything else where the responsibility for a problem is effectively shared by many. While it may not be impossible to overcome this individual 'inertia' to provoke action it would undoubtedly be a difficult communications task.

Some of the supply chain issues would be much more powerful if they could be evidenced by examples closer to home. The closer the example can be to those concerned, in geographical, and / or emotional terms the more impact it is likely to have. Ideally people should feel that these problems are occurring in places, **near** where they live, and in places **like** where they live. For example, those in Enfield would feel close to events in Hertfordshire, whereas Glasgow would seem both a long way away, and a place they see as crime ridden and desperate where awful things might be expected to happen anyway.

If 'supply chain' issues are used to help undermine drugs usage and the drugs industry it will be important not to appear to be singling drugs out for an unfair proportion of blame, or to be seen to be otherwise distorting the facts to make negative points. This will certainly be the case for environmental issues where the impact of 'big business' in its many forms is already well known. In this instance it will probably be sufficient simply to make it clear that drugs share the blame with other industries. In other instances, for example crime, there was more general agreement that drugs were to blame from drug users and non users alike, although by this these drug users were thinking specifically of Heroin and Crack. There was a feeling across the sample that crime was reaching worrying levels. Many had been directly affected by it, or had direct connections with those who had.

Another issue found generally concerning, prompted by exploitation of youth in the supply chain, was the age at which children and teenagers were seen to be starting to use drugs. Everyone, even the most hardened and youngest of users, felt that this was a worrying and unacceptable trend. This might also be an issue which could be harnessed to positive effect?

RESEARCH FINDINGS

THE SUPPLY CHAIN OVERALL: SALIENCY, UNDERSTANDING, ATTITUDES

Few had given any thought to what lay beyond their direct experience of drugs. In this sample, drugs used by respondents were Cannabis (all forms), Ecstasy, Cocaine, and very limited usage of Crack Cocaine by no more than a couple of respondents. Cannabis was seen to be an 'everyday' drug, as to a lesser extent was Ecstasy. Cocaine was seen to be a more serious drug, other than by regular users, and was less commonly used across the sample. Heroin and Crack were seen as drugs apart from others and viewed with real fear.

Drug users' concept of the 'supply chain' (although this was not a term used by respondents) was largely limited to their own immediate contacts. This was also true of non-users and Class A rejectors with drug using friends. These perceptions were augmented by those gleaned from media sources, both factual (news and documentary), and entertainment (drama, film, comedy, crime, soaps, etc). In contrast non-users without drug using friends drew their impressions of the supply chain *primarily* from the media.

This resulted in two contrasting pictures of the distribution 'network', that of a 'cottage industry' for users and non users with using friends, and of 'organised crime' for non users without using friends.

Impressions of drugs production were much more vague, with many having 'no idea' how drugs originated. Some knew of literally 'home grown' drugs in the case of 'grass'. Otherwise there were vague impressions that drugs originated in remote foreign lands, including Columbia and Afghanistan, principally with Cannabis, Cocaine and Heroin in mind. Ecstasy was thought more likely to be produced closer to home in urban areas although few had any clearer idea than that.

Overall, respondents displayed little curiosity in the concept of the supply chain. Drug users felt there was simply no reason to think further than 'their deal', and non users saw drug usage as someone else's decision and habit. This type of attitude probably typified much of their wider consumer behaviour across all categories.

"It's interesting but it doesn't really matter."

Female, 16-18, Working, C2D, Cannabis using class A rejector, South

"When I'm, out shopping I buy what I like, you see it, you don't think beyond what you see."

Male, 25-30, Working, BC1, Regular, South

DISTRIBUTION: DEALERS

Drug users obtained the majority of their supplies from long standing contacts irrespective of the drugs concerned. These were often people they had known or known of for years as friends or friends of friends, people they had gone to school with, or others who had grown up in the same neighbourhood.

“I hang around with them. They’re not in my close group of friends. Just people who were at college who I still know.”

Male, 16-18, Full time education, C2D, Dabblers, South

Sometimes a mutual acquaintance or friend had effected an initial introduction, although those concerned may already have been familiar to each other by sight.

These contacts generally went beyond the merely transactional, and were established, comfortable social relationships. Often buyers and suppliers were part of the same social groups or networks. The buyer – supplier relationship was seen to be mutually beneficial. Buyers spoke of their suppliers in proprietary terms, eg, ‘my bloke’, and often felt they had a ‘favoured client’ status.

Perceptions of typical ‘dealers’ were in line with their experience that they were ‘normal’ people, of all types, although probably aged from about 18-30. Also that supplying drugs was not central to the lives of suppliers but was a ‘sideline’ activity that earned relatively small amounts of ‘extra’ money, and perhaps paid for the supplier’s own drugs. Essentially drugs buying and supplying had the character of a community activity.

These perceptions were shared by non-users with drug using friends.

In contrast, non users without contact with drug users saw a much darker picture, as their impressions were driven by the media, so their picture of drugs suppliers was of a world of ‘low life’ full of addicts, drug pushers, and violent criminals.

Drug users and their non using friends accepted that this dark side existed, but felt that their impressions represented the norm, and that this more unpleasant side was the exception rather than the rule. They also speculated that it might be true of drug dealing at a ‘bigger’ level than their contacts operated at, or was more the case with Heroin and Crack, which they described as ‘dirty’ drugs.

There was no sense that drug users felt exploited by their usual suppliers, and it seemed that they saw their activity as much as a service as commercial activity. Drug users felt that they were not ‘ripped off’ in terms of the price they paid for their drugs, as there was generally seen to be a ‘going rate’ for most drugs, so they knew whether prices were fair or not. If this fluctuated then this was generally blamed on disruption of supply which affected their supplier as much as

them, and was outside his or her control. Suppliers were also perceived to take extra risks in obtaining the drugs, and selling them on as this was known to incur potentially heavy penalties. Putting this aside they were also seen to have to go through a certain amount of 'hassle' to obtain their drugs. All in all drug buyers felt that their suppliers deserved to make some money out of their transactions.

"I hate having to go down to Handsworth to score if my man is out. It's not safe."

Male, 18-24, Full time education, C2D, Regular, Midlands

Drug users also felt that there were benefits in their established relationships. The familiarity of each party with the other conferred a social ease and comfort on the transaction, and relieved them of the awkwardness and embarrassment of having to approach strangers. They also felt that buying from their 'usual' source made it more likely that their purchases would be of consistent type and quality, and therefore less likely to have unpleasant or unpredictable effects. This was more an issue with Ecstasy and Cocaine than with Cannabis. Buying from an established source was also felt to eliminate the risk of getting 'ripped off' in the transaction, and meant less risk of being found out as the supplier's status was known.

At the same time drug users also felt that there were benefits in the relationship for their supplier. Suppliers would know in advance who they could sell their drugs to, so this would mean there would be less effort involved on their part, and there would be less financial risk for them, as they had established demand for their drugs. Also, there would be less risk of being found out, as they would be selling to those they knew were bona fide drug users.

Respondents described three common patterns of drugs supplied by dealers:

- Cannabis only
- Cannabis + Ecstasy
- Ecstasy + Cocaine

No one had regular contact with either Heroin or Crack dealers. Some respondents believed that these drugs were sold in tandem by the same people, while others thought that there were 'Heroin only', and 'Crack only' dealers.

Feelings towards different drug dealers reflected attitudes towards the drugs they were believed to supply. 'Cannabis only' users in general tended to favour 'cannabis only' dealers. Otherwise both Ecstasy and Cocaine were seen to be broadly acceptable. Few felt they would countenance a dealer known to sell Crack or Heroin even if they would also supply other drugs, as this type of dealer was seen to inhabit a much darker world.

*“There’s a phone box down the end of or our street.
That’s where the losers pick up their crack and smack.”*

Male, 18-24, Full time education, C2D, Regular, Midlands

*“This is about making money pure and simple. Dealers
want to get kids addicted and make money from them.”*

Female, 18-24, working, C2D, Regular, North

*“Trainspotting got it right, it’s definitely the lowest of the
low.”*

Female, 18-24, working, C2D, Regular, North

In some cases the final distribution links for drugs took the form of a ‘co-operative’ type of arrangement, whereby a group of friends would pool their finances, and one would then buy the drugs on behalf of the others. The bulk ‘deal’ would then be broken down, and sold on or shared, depending on the scope and nature of the arrangement. The ‘lead’ buyer might get his drugs for nothing as part of the transaction. Girls were perhaps more likely to get their drugs through a (male) friend in this way. There did not seem to be an understanding that in the eyes of the law this type of arrangement might be seen as being as serious as more commercial dealing.

Drug users saw no incentive to try to buy from other than their established sources, as this was seen to involve additional risk and effort for no extra benefit.

Some felt they would rather go without drugs than go to someone other than their usual supplier. This doctrine was part of ‘safe’ drug taking for some Ecstasy and other class A users, whereas for those Cannabis users that felt this way it simply did not seem worth the hassle.

*“With puff it don’t matter so much cos if it is bad isn’t going
to be a good smoke, it ain’t going to do anything bad to
you.”*

Male, 25-30, Working, BC, Regular, South

Others, faced with this problem felt they would probably ask for a personal recommendation from friends or acquaintances, and that this would usually be successful, often leading them to people who they knew or knew of anyway.

*“It’s not a problem. If one person hasn’t got some you just
phone someone else up.”*

Female, 18-24, Working. C2D. Regular, North

A minority admitted to buying from unknown suppliers on odd occasions, often when already under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This had usually meant them approaching someone with a known reputation in a pub or club, or going to a pub or minicab firm with a known reputation and making tentative enquiries.

“There’s often someone we know dealing, then it’s ok.”

Female, 16-18, Full time education, BC1, Regular, Midlands

“The taxi firm is the most familiar one, you get a cab and something on the side or you just go to the office. I think it works well.”

Male, 25-30, Working, BC, Regular, South

There were frequent assertions from respondents that it would not be hard to find a new supplier should they wish to do so. Many users reported receiving frequent unsolicited offers of drugs for sale, which they maintained they had politely rejected. They felt it was wise to be extremely wary of such unsolicited offers fearing they could lead to being ripped off, could be a police trap, that the drugs might be unsafe, etc, etc. A minority thought they might respond if they were temporarily without drugs and felt in need of them.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE 'UPSTREAM' DISTRIBUTION CHAIN AND PRODUCTION OF DRUGS

The majority of respondents felt they had relatively little contact with what they described as 'serious' dealers. What little contact there was among the sample seemed to depend on where they lived, and the pubs and clubs they frequented. Some felt they had occasionally brushed shoulders with a larger scale drug dealer, but only by chance and never by design, while some more downmarket Ecstasy users did have contact with or were directly aware of more significant dealers.

There was however very little curiosity in the activities of such people, as with the exception of some of the more downmarket Ecstasy users mentioned above they were not buying drugs from them.

Equally, it was felt that it would not be acceptable to ask a regular supplier where they obtained their drugs from, or any questions other than those reasonable to establish the quality of his or her merchandise. They thought such questioning would make the vendor suspicious, and this might lead to supply being withdrawn.

"I've got this guy called Chris. He has his phone on most evenings and weekends. He delivers, and beyond that I have no contact and don't really want to know anything more."

Male, 18-24, Full time education, C2D, Regular, Midlands

Respondents had to rely on their imagination when asked what lay beyond their immediate drug supplying contacts. This was usually a collage of media driven and stereotypical images of big crime / big business, South American jungles, remote mountains in Afghanistan and so on. They assume there would be a series or chain of contacts before the drugs reached their supplier but had no idea what form these might take. As a result this upstream world felt very remote.

"There'll be a Mr Big somewhere in this country who'll probably fund it. They'll bring it in in large amounts, and then it will move down through intermediate and smaller dealers to street dealers."

Female, 16-18, Working, C2D, Dabblers, North

"I reckon it'd go through about 5 different people before we get hold of it."

Female, 25-30, Working, BC1, Regular, Midlands

A few had more direct experience of an 'upstream' world of drugs, but of a much 'cosier' sort than that described above, comprising friends or acquaintances who grew their own 'grass', or small scale 'runs' to Holland for Cannabis, and occasionally Ecstasy, often as part of a 'weekend break'.

REACTIONS TO ‘DEALER TYPES’

The list of dealer types exposed to respondents was as follows.

- *Importers*
- *Wholesalers*
- *Midmarket drug brokers*
- *Retail level dealers*
- *‘Charitable’ traders, who do it to support a cause, eg, terrorist groups*
- *Networks of friends collaborating in drug dealing*
- *Sideliners – legal businesses that trade in drugs as a sideline*
- *Opportunistic irregulars – people who get involved in a variety of activities, illegal and legal, including drug dealing*
- *Criminal diversifiers – criminals who get involved in drugs*
- *Addicted dealers, selling drugs to support their own habit*
- *Retail specialists – organised drug dealing enterprises employing several people in different roles*

Drug users felt they only had direct contact with ‘retail’ level dealers, and ‘networks of friends’, and the distinction between the two was felt to be blurred anyway. A few, as previously described, felt they had some contact with those dealing on a more significant level.

The other dealer types were felt to reflect the perceived scale and financial value of the drugs trade. While none had ever considered that such types of people might be involved it made perfect sense that they would be once presented with them. The different types involved were also felt to reflect the fact that drugs were thought to be the most profitable activity for criminals to engage in. Drugs were seen as part and parcel of organised crime, rather than a diversification for crime organisation. ‘Terrorist’ connections were seen in a similar light.

“I’ve heard the IRA or UDA do this stuff, but that’s Ireland, isn’t it.”

Female, 18-24, Working. C2D, Regular, North

Drug users did not feel that drugs in themselves represented a ‘criminal’ (as distinct from ‘illegal’) activity but agreed that some of those who traded in them could be criminals.

“Drug gangs always control the doors of clubs. I guess if you look at the Hacienda in Manchester to see the extent of institutionalised drugs crime. You had gangsters on the door, gangsters inside, they all had guns...”

Female, 18-24, Full time education, BC1, Regular, North

A large proportion of the sample claimed to be aware of addicted dealers. They described these people as ex friends or acquaintances, who they described as having ‘lost it’, or people they saw around their neighbourhoods who they assumed were addicts because of their appearance and behaviour, or known problem characters in the neighbourhood. Addicted dealers had also featured in the media in soaps and drama.

All respondents, drug users and non-users alike, felt they would have nothing to do with such people, or any addict come to that. Addiction was associated with Heroin and Crack, drugs which the vast majority of drug users shunned to the point of seeming fearful of them. Addiction driven behaviour was felt to lie far outside acceptable norms, with respondents quoting examples of addicts stealing from friends and family, of their lack of concern for their personal appearance and hygiene, and their connection via the drugs they used to a much more unpleasant and criminal world.

For these reasons drug users felt addicted dealers were likely to present a greater risk than most because they were thought to be often motivated by short term desperation. This meant that they might sell poor quality or unsafe drugs, or, might cheat their customers if that represented the best route to feeding their own habit.

“They’d be more pushy, they need to make more money so they’d cut it up to get more out of it, they’d do what they could get away with.”

Male, 18-24, Working, BC1, Regular, South

Drug users felt that addicted dealers might have stolen to fund their drug purchases or might have sold drugs to ‘kids’. These activities were thought reprehensible, and might also have meant they were more likely to attract police attention. Addicted dealers were also thought more likely to fall out with their upstream suppliers

Drug users also thought that addicted dealers would only sell the drugs they were addicted to, Heroin / Crack, which would be of no interest anyway.

Feelings towards addicted dealers were dependent on the individual's own involvement with drugs and the closeness of contact they had ever had with addicted dealers.

Non users, especially those without using friends were likely to have highly negative and prejudicial feelings towards addicted dealers, often using phrases such as 'scum of the earth' to describe them. These respondents found the idea of addiction distasteful. This was further compounded by the addicts' dealing in drugs, with the possibility of spreading addiction. These respondents had little understanding of the forces that might lead to addiction talking about it as an almost active choice on the part of those concerned.

The majority of the drug using respondents felt they simply wanted nothing to do with addicted dealers or the world they felt they inhabited. Their attitudes were not judgmental, but stopped short of sympathy. These drug users had only encountered addicted dealers directly very occasionally, or via hearsay, or via the media.

Some drug users had much more direct contact with addicted dealers. These respondents lived on or near problem areas or estates, and felt surrounded by the effects of problem drugs, problem drug users and problem dealers. They attributed the constant threat of petty crime to drugs and drug addiction. As a result they took a much harsher view of addicted dealers, referring to them in similar terms as used by non-drug users, but clearly their feelings were much more deeply negative.

These negative feelings did not however extend up the chain to those supplying the problem users and dealers. Such users thought the problem lay in the **way** drugs were used rather than the drugs themselves, albeit that they accepted that this would mean avoiding Crack and Heroin. They felt they had been able to keep their drug use within 'sensible' limits, and that it had not created problems for others. This had served to fuel their feelings to the point where there was a sense of resentment of the addicts (whether dealing or not) who were perceived to create problems for the wider drug using and non-drug using community.

In contrast, the same respondents' feelings towards 'higher level' dealers in their neighbourhood seemed tinged with 'respect'. It was clear that while the results of their activities were despised these people were themselves seen as aspirational characters having money and power, and status in the neighbourhood.

Some non-drug users had similar 'direct' contact with addicted dealers to that described above, and as a result similarly deeply held views. For these respondents the spectre of addiction and its effects was another reason for having nothing to do with drugs. However, unlike their drug using counterparts they condemned all levels of the drugs trade in similarly strong terms, feeling that the higher level dealers were profiting from their actions, and completely escaping any consequences.

Addicts, and by implication addicted dealers' links with petty crime were well known. During the fieldwork period proposals had been announced by the Home Office to reduce crime by treating addicts, and this subject was raised in the course of discussion. Some viewed the announcement in a pragmatic light, feeling that the end justified the means, and that this was a problem that could only be tackled by treating addiction.

Others condemned the initiative, focusing on the help they felt the addict was receiving 'at their expense', rather than thinking of the possible end benefits. To them, it seemed unfair that addicts should be receiving this help when they believed many other more deserving cases, for example, OAPs, teachers, nurses, were not getting the financial support from government that they needed.

Non users (without direct contact with drug users) were likely to adopt the latter, condemning stance, whereas drug users generally agreed with the approach, recognising the power of addiction to drive its victims to crime.

Those with more direct experience of crime related to drugs were likely to have strong mixed feelings. They accepted that the problem of addiction needed to be solved but often lived in poorer areas where the lack of resources generally was also very evident.

CLASS A DRUG USERS REACTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS: OVERALL

Supply chain ‘facts’ (copies contained within findings reported on each section) were most likely to give drug users ‘pause for thought’ at a personal level, that is, in relation to the drugs they themselves consumed. This was because the seemingly toxic nature of the ingredients that went into drugs and the by products of drug production brought to mind the possible negative effects of drugs.

“Before I didn’t have any idea what was in it (Cocaine). I didn’t think there was that much in it. I’d be frightened.”

Female, 16-18, Working, C2D, Dabblers, North

“I didn’t realise that much shit – ammonia, kerosene and sulphuric acid went into it... no wonder I get nose burn every now and then.”

Male, 25-30, Working, C2D, Regular, South

Respondents found it hard to link their own use of drugs to the macro level environmental and social consequences outlined in the stimulus material. The sheer scale of the examples were in complete contrast with their own experience of a ‘cottage’ drug industry, and their own consumption seemed so tiny by comparison that they felt that their using or not using drugs would have absolutely no impact whatsoever. They also observed that at the times they were likely to want to take drugs such issues were unlikely to seem of any relevance, and would probably not come to mind.

“Yeah it is fucked up, but what difference is one gram going to make to a rain forest – same as any charitable cause.”

Male, 25-30, Working, BC1, Regular, South

Further discussion suggested that analogous non drug issues would be treated in a similar way. For example, much has been made in the media of the effect on Nike’s brand image of their exploitation of third world labour. However, these respondents, while disapproving of this policy, had not changed their brand loyalties because of it.

“You might feel bad for the first 10 minutes, then you think... but they are fashionable.”

Male, 25-30, Working, BC1, Regular, South

To an extent this was because the macro level issues were found hard to grasp. It might however be possible to dramatise with appropriate creative treatment the

idea that many people taking a small action can add up to a big effect. Differing levels of intelligence, class and education seemed to have a bearing on how easily the arguments were grasped, as did the individual's breadth of outlook. Some were simply not concerned about anything that did not directly 'touch' them, whereas others were prepared to engage with such issues.

Having said all this, there was a sense that the macro level consequences of the 'supply chain' introduced an area of 'nagging doubt' for class A users.

"It won't make me stop, but it doesn't make me feel better about it."

Male, 18-24, Working, BC1, Regular, South

Some acknowledged that while in practical terms their ceasing to take drugs would make no difference this was not an 'honourable' argument against changing behaviour.

Understanding the wider impact of the drugs industry meant drug usage was no longer a purely personal decision. It was clear that drug consumption **did** have consequences for others even if these were sometimes arguable, and even if they did feel remote, and even if each users personal contribution to the downside was infinitesimally minute.

CLASS A REJECTORS AND NON DRUG USERS REACTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS: OVERALL

These respondents felt the supply chain facts provided fresh support for their views in relation to drugs.

At a personal level, that is with the possibility of personal harm in mind, the facts gave substance to what many had always believed, that such drugs might contain unpleasant and potentially dangerous chemicals because their manufacture clearly entailed the use of such products.

These respondents were much more able to see a connection between the macro level consequences of the drugs industry and the drugs consumption of class A users. This response was perhaps predictable, as there was no implication that **they** themselves needed to change, in the same way as those who don't drive cars would probably be much more likely to accept that the internal combustion engine should be banned to help preserve the planet.

Having knowledge of the macro level consequences meant that non users could now feel that taking drugs was not a purely personal decision for users. This seemed to represent a shift from a 'live and let live' attitude to drugs whereby use of drugs or class A drugs could be rejected from a personal perspective, but drugs per se could not be rejected as that would have meant making rules for others. The wider damage caused by drugs changed this subtly, because it was clear that drug usage did have consequences for others. As an analogy, getting drunk and sleeping in a ditch would be seen as a personal if foolish choice, because no one but the individual concerned is harmed, but drink driving would be seen to be wrong because it puts others at risk. However, this analogy exaggerates the case in order to make the point, and it is important to see this shift of attitude in realistic terms. The effect is relatively subtle and it will not lead to non users confronting users and demanding they change their ways, although it could provide another strand of reinforcement for existing attitudes.

The macro level consequences served to further undermine drugs and drug usage for these respondents, and in particular the supposedly 'cool' nature of drug culture. It also gave them the right to hold the opinions they did.

ALL GROUPS REACTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS: OVERALL

There was a common reaction of surprise to the sheer scale of the drug industry as conveyed by some facts. Many felt that they had known that drugs were 'big' but had not realised the true extent of the industry's scale.

This could sometimes change perceptions of suppliers of drugs. Once again it should be stressed that this was a relatively subtle effect. Understanding the scale made drugs suppliers part of a big industry, and the 'small end' of a big business rather than independent free agents. Suppliers could seem less glamorous as a result.

REACTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS: RAIN FOREST DESTRUCTION

Rain Forest Destruction

Since about 1985, **Colombia** has lost over a million hectares -- that is roughly 3 million acres -- of tropical rainforest areas in Colombia. Drug traffickers in Colombia are also responsible for dumping over 370,000 tons of chemicals every year. These are chemicals that are used in the process of making cocaine which, in essence, amount to about two Exxon Valdez every year.

The coca and poppy cultivation in the **Andean** jungle is significantly damaging the environment in the region. The main threats to the environment are deforestation caused by clearing the fields for cultivation, soil erosion caused by several factors, and chemical pollution from insecticides and fertilisers. Additionally, the process of converting coca and poppy into cocaine and heroine has adverse effects on the environment as well.

In **Bolivia**, slash-and-burn clearing of new coca fields resulted in the destruction of nearly 40,000 hectares of forest land in the Chapare region during the '80s and the '90s.

Peruvian coca cultivation in the early 1970s amounted to only some 16,000 hectares and largely served the needs of the natives. Between 1970 and 1987, the destruction of rain forests from coca cultivation in the Upper Huallaga Valley alone equalled more than 200,000 hectares, according to a study conducted by a Peruvian forestry expert. Across Peru's entire Amazon River basin, coca plantings, along with processing and trafficking activities, caused the destruction of another 700,000 hectares of jungle -- 10 percent of the total rain forest destruction in Peru this century -- according to a 1987 study.

In 1986 alone, traffickers in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley dumped more than 100 million litres of poisonous waste -- gasoline, kerosene, sulphuric acid, and toluene -- into the watershed of the Huallaga River in the course of producing coca paste, according to a report from Lima's National Agrarian University.

According to statistics published by the **Thai** government, the shifting cultivation of both legitimate subsistence crops and opium poppies along the country's northern highland border with Burma removed forest cover at a rate of 130,000 hectares per year between 1961 and 1985. Along the **Thai-Burmese border** the dumping of chemical wastes from the conversion of opium gum into heroin is poisoning the water for natural wildlife and for downstream use. The process of refining heroin requires a significant amount of water, and the resulting chemical-laden effluent flows back into the area's ecosystem.

Rainforest Destruction – Effects

Although the full extent of the drug trade's environmental impact cannot be assessed, severe tropical deforestation and watershed pollution clearly occur. The local consequences on soils, hydrology, and biodiversity are often devastating and may delay the introduction of substitute crops for years.

Recent observers over-flying the jungle describe it as a patchwork quilt of green broken by patches of grey desolation. In addition to causing soil infertility, the topsoil runoff fills waterways and rivers with sediment changing their courses, causing flooding, and killing fish and aquatic plant life by lowering the oxygen content of the water and smothering the river bottoms. Locals who used to depend on the large fish in the rivers for food, no longer find any fish large enough to eat.

The pesticides used by the growers travel through the soil into the ground water and eventually into the rivers and streams. Pesticides are inherently toxic to the insects but they can also harm larger animals and people in greater concentrations. Fish and other aquatic life are particularly susceptible to this contamination.

Another source of pollution is the fertiliser used by the growers, which also enters the water systems after chemically "burning" the more sensitive vegetation of the region. The fertiliser in the water encourages the algae to grow at increased rates while killing the organisms that feed on it. As a result, the algae overwhelms other aquatic plant life and restricts water flow.

A study conducted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in 1993 of cocaine production in the Chapare region of Bolivia showed that production of one kilo of cocaine base required the use of three litres of concentrated sulphuric acid, 10 kilos of lime, 60 to 80 litres of kerosene, 200 grams of potassium permanganate, and one litre of concentrated ammonia.

Cultivating crops of illegal drugs is threatening some of the world's rarest birds and plants. Half the forest cleared each year is being lost to the burgeoning number of coca and poppy fields, says a Colombian scientist.

At a general level few respondents had any great interest in environmental issues. The majority accepted that damage to the environment was a serious issue but at a personal level they were apathetic.

They made their purchasing decisions on the basis of what was right for them, and this principle invariably held sway over environmental issues when the two came into conflict, even for the more environmentally concerned / aware

At the same time, some were simply not interested in things that did not directly affect them or touch their lives in some way.

"It sounds horrible and selfish but it doesn't affect me."

Female, 16-18, Working, C2D, Dabblers, North

The examples presented were literally far away, and also 'emotionally' far away, in that they were not places that respondents could easily identify with at all.

"People don't care about their environment here, so they're not going to be bothered about abroad."

Female, 18-24, Working, C2D, Regular, North

“You don’t think about what’s happening on the other side of the world.”

Male, 18-24, Working, BC1, Regular, South

There was some awareness of the wider deforestation issue, although knowledge was often patchy. Most respondents with awareness of the issue usually linked it with one or several of, farming, mineral extraction, tree felling, and McDonalds. Some assumed that the situation was far worse than it actually was, believing that only a small proportion of the rain forest remained and that its total loss was inevitable and imminent without understanding the implications this might have.

“It’s a tragedy, but it’s going to go anyway.”

Male, 16-18, Working, BC1, Regular, South

The fact that cultivation related to drugs made a significant contribution to deforestation was a surprise, particularly the scale of that contribution.

Users and some non-users accepted these facts but challenged the implications stemming from them. They asserted that there were many causes of deforestation, and that drugs was only one of these. Was the presentation of the facts supposed to suggest that deforestation stemming from drug production was in some way worse than that stemming from other causes?

“It’s a drop in the ocean in comparison to what Shell and Esso are doing.”

Male, 25-30, Working, BC1, Regular, South

“If someone wants to build an office block and there’s a tree in the way it goes.”

Female, 25-30, Working, C2D, Regular, South

Then there was the chicken and egg nature of supply and demand. Does the responsibility lie with those who buy drugs, or those who produce them, and if the latter, who has the right to say what those in other countries should and should not do? In relation to the last thought, some pointed out that those involved in the production of drugs might not have had many other choices.

“If it stopped the drugs trade in these countries local economies would collapse.”

Female, 18-24, Full time education, BC1, Regular, North

It soon became clear that this was a complex and tangled issue in a moral sense, and part of a far bigger issue and set of considerations.

As previously noted, drug users felt that the effect of their consumption would not make a noticeable difference as it was so small compared to the scale of the problem. While they accepted that there would be a difference if all drug users acted they did not accept this as a conclusive argument for changing their behaviour.

“It’s bad, but it’s not my fault cos I’m buying it.”

Female, 16-18, Full time education, BC1, Regular, Midlands

The ‘ingredients’ and ‘waste products’ associated with drug production provoked a much stronger reaction than deforestation, primarily because of the implication for the drugs themselves. Waste by products like kerosene, sulphuric acid, ammonia, and so on, sounded unpleasant and dangerous, and this called into question the ingredients that might remain in the drugs.

“It makes it feel very toxic. You don’t think what’s behind it, it makes you feel ill.”

Female, 18-24, Full time education, BC1, Rejectors, South

This reinforced existing predispositions not to use these drugs, and the need to take care for those that did.

“It doesn’t make you feel great about shoving it up your nose.”

Male, 16-18, Working, BC1, Regular, South

The high ratio of waste product to end product was also found striking. It suggested a careless disregard of the side effects of production, and to some, hinted at a similar lack of care in the end product.

“One to seven is a lot, that’s mad, you never think of it like that.”

Female, 16-18, Working, C2D, Cannabis using Class A rejectors, South

REACTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS: AMPHETAMINE AND ECSTASY

Dangers Of Ecstasy Production

Ecstasy makers are dumping lethal leftovers by the roadside.

Toxic and explosive chemicals from illegal drug factories are polluting the countryside. According to a report published this week, Dutch police found 107 000 litres of waste last year by roadsides, in fields and even in the water near a children's bathing beach.

Acetone and ether are explosive and put innocent bystanders at risk as well as the drug makers. In March this year, a burning car exploded as Dutch fire-fighters approached. It was packed with drums of Ecstasy waste. "Of the thirty-three labs we shut down last year," says Ens, "twenty were given away by explosions."

Dangers Of Amphetamine Production

Amphetamine manufacture usually begins with a cold remedy—such as ephedrine or pseudoephedrine—or a compound with a similar chemical structure. The chemicals used to transform these raw materials to amphetamine are often highly toxic, flammable, explosive or carcinogenic. The production of 1 kilogram of amphetamine generates 7 kilograms of leftovers including hydriotic acid, red phosphorus, benzene, freon, hydrogen chloride gas, ethyl ether and sodium hydroxide.

In the Tahoma State Forest in the shadow of Mount Rainier, hikers and hunters have been displaced by men in moon suits searching for contamination from amphetamine labs and roping off sickly brown "dead zones" where poisonous by-products were dumped.

"It poses a danger to anyone out there in the woods," said forester Bob Brown of the Washington Department of Natural Resources. "Somebody could get killed or injured very badly by this stuff."

The Tahoma forest was closed last month until at least June 10 after authorities discovered a lab including open containers of a solution with a pH of 14 - corrosive enough to burn flesh off bones. A blast of anhydrous ammonia, a meth ingredient that leaches moisture from whatever it touches, could "take your eyeball and shrink it down to the size of a raisin," says Ashford Fire Chief Jim Gregory.

Amphetamine makers dump battery acid, solvents and other toxic materials into rivers or the ground. Much of the waste is highly flammable and explosive - another danger anticipated for the summer forest fire season.

As with the facts relating to the rain forest, reactions were driven primarily by the ingredients and waste products, and the ratio of waste to end products.

"Christ, the amount of shit chemicals left over!"

Male, 16-18, Working, BC1, Regular, South

This information tended to provoke an immediate 'ugh' reaction, and highlighted the chemical nature of these particular drugs, reinforcing the possible risks of usage as had been the case for Cocaine and Heroin in relation to damage to the rain forest. The 'toxic' nature of the by products could also resonate with the less positive experiences of some users, while the idea that the drugs were produced in 'factories' also challenged perceptions of drugs as a cottage industry.

"It makes you think you've just taken something like rat poison."

Male, 16-18, Working, BC1, Regular, South

Users of the drugs responded to the information by claiming they would be even more careful in future to take care over their sources of supply.

Otherwise the irresponsibility of the places where waste chemicals were dumped could provoke condemnation as it seemed to be putting innocent bystanders, particularly children, at risk which suggested a focus on profit and a ruthless disregard for others.

The locations cited, Holland and Tahoma National Park could feel closer to home than the 'rain forest' examples had done. Holland was literally 'closer to home', and a place which some respondents had visited, and which everyone knew to be a country not unlike our own. While 'Tahoma National Park' was known to be a long way away, the fact it was a 'park' meant respondents could draw some parallels between it and places they had visited in the UK.

However, both places still seemed far away, and local examples would have had far more impact.

"Oh well that's another place off the holiday list."

Male, 25-30. Working, C2D, Regular, South

At one level this would simply be because the dumping could have direct effect on their lives. In addition it seemed that 'local' and indiscriminate dumping of chemicals would have been more likely to suggest a direct link to the drugs they were buying with the implication that they should share in the guilt. Such examples would also create a much more pronounced groundswell of anti drug sentiment among non users.

REACTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS: EXPLOITATION

Exploitation

- *Those working on the 'shop floor' in the drugs trade are often paid a pittance*
- *In Columbia the waste from cocaine production, a highly addictive and dangerous substance known as 'Bazuka', is sold to local children, or given as payment for working in the drugs trade*
- *Those who grow the crops from which drugs are made receive only one percent of the money the drugs generate at street prices*
- *The overriding factor which perpetuates child prostitution is drug addiction and dependency on their dealers who become their pimps*
- *In Peru, drug pushing is a means of survival for women abandoned by their husbands*
- *Increasingly children and women are being used to smuggle drugs, as dealers believe they have less chance of being stopped by customs*

'Worker exploitation' was thought characteristic of much of commerce and industry, whether legal or illegal. Respondents argued that shop floor workers were often paid a pittance in relative terms to those running the organisations they worked for. Many were aware that farmers in the UK had publicly aired their grievances over the low prices grocery multiples paid for their goods, and that this imbalance was even greater when the ultimate producer was a third world farmer. Nike's much publicised exploitation of workers in the third world was also known.

However, these were felt to be worse cases than those presented for drugs and not directly comparable. This was because these were all legitimate businesses, conducted with approval of the state. This endorsement was felt to be the main 'crime', as it demonstrated a hypocrisy on the part of the governments concerned as they were prepared to accept and even venerate businesses founded on exploitation.

Many claimed they felt indifferent to this issue, or did not feel sufficiently strongly for it to affect their behaviour. In some cases these respondents had continued to buy Nike goods despite knowing of the company's exploitation of third world labour, which supported their assertion that their attitudes towards drugs would probably not change if similar facts were to emerge.

"I don't like the thought of exploitation but I still wear Nikes."

Male, 18-24, Full time education, C2D, Regular, Midlands

'Exploitation' of this type was felt to be as much a reflection of inadequate labour protection and state indifference to the plight of their citizens as to mendacity on the part of the organisations concerned, as those who worked in the drugs industry were often felt to have few alternatives.

Involvement of children did touch a nerve across the sample, particularly among 25-30 year olds, and was universally condemned as evil. All agreed they would have nothing to do with a dealer who they suspected of selling drugs to children, or exploiting children in other ways, but predictably no one believed their contacts were guilty of such crimes. Most of the examples quoted in the stimulus had occurred in other countries, and those that were closer to home related to areas where they might have expected something of this nature to happen. For example, the perceptions of those without any direct experience of Glasgow tended to be of a city racked by poverty, squalor, drug addiction and crime. Therefore there was much less surprise that the drugs trade could also reach depths far below their own experience in that city. The same would have been equally true of any area with a bad reputation. There was general agreement that in a 'bad' area the way that drugs were sold, bought and used was also likely to be 'bad'. For, example they believed that addiction to crack cocaine, and the problems of crime relating to it were much more likely to be in evidence on run down council estates.

The stimulus relating to 'Exploitation' led to wider discussion of drug use among 'children', and in particular the age at which usage was believed to start nowadays. A common view was that increasingly Cannabis usage was felt to start at about 10-11 years and Ecstasy at 13-14. Drug using respondents maintained that older siblings and school friends usually provided 'first drugs', not dealers, and that drugs were more accessible to younger age groups partly because of lower prices, for example, Ecstasy at £3 a pill.

"Kids do it in the park these days."

Male, 18-24, Full time education, C2D, Regular, Midlands

Once the subject was raised everyone, even the most hardened and youngest of users in the sample felt that the age of first drug usage was worrying and unacceptable, partly because it was seen to be a progressive trend. The fact that these views could be expressed with considerable strength of feeling, in some cases by those who might have been thought unlikely to have felt concern, suggests that it might be possible to harness this issue to positive effect?

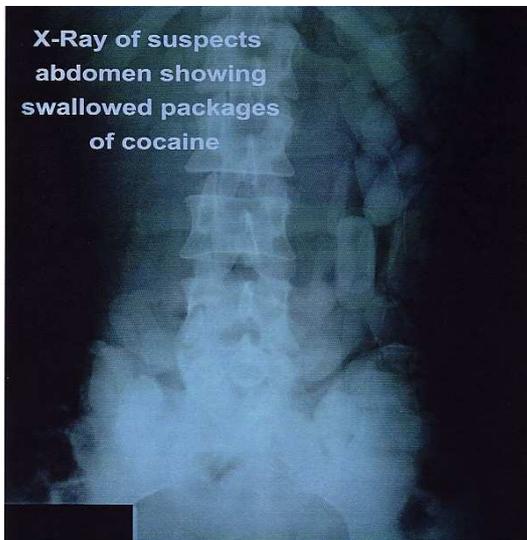
REACTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS: TRANSPORTATION

Transportation

- *Drugs are often transported by swallowing 'loaded' condoms, or by concealment in bodily orifices.*

"They don't see how they get them into the clubs, one bloke was selling them in a cigarette pack, but his big stash was in his pants, when we searched him they all fell out. And, those pants were disgusting... like Rik Mayall's in The Young Ones, really vile, skid marks all over them, all over the tablets..."

- *There are reports of pets and other animals being used in the same way.*



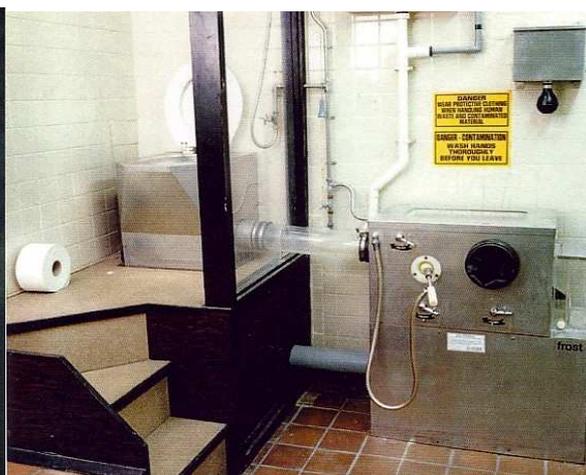
X Ray Stomach contents



Operation to remove



Drug packages removed



'Toilet' for obtaining faeces

Immediate reactions to this material were dominated by the risk the transporters were seen to be taking.

“One of them bursts and you’re dead.”

Female, 16-18, Working, C2D, Dabblers, North

“You feel sorry for them, going to such an extreme, what if they burst? They must be desperate.”

Female, 16-18, Working, C2D, Cannabis using Class A rejectors, South

This smacked of either desperation, or greed or both, sparking corresponding emotions on behalf of the transporters.

Among users these reactions were usually followed by a profound sense of disgust at the thought that drugs could reach them having been transported in someone’s digestive system. Most were then quick to assert that *their* drugs did *not* reach them this way, that they only bought them from one person, and he did not do that, and so on. While this may have been the case there was also a sense that they did not want to admit the possibility that it could be. Other respondents were prepared to accept that drugs could have reached them like this, but admitted that they tried not to consider the possibility and pushed the thought out of their minds.

“You think of fishing boats coming ashore in Cornwall..., you don’t think it’s been shoved up someone’s backside.”

Male, 18-24, Working, BC1, Regular, South

“Best not to know...”

Male, 18-24, Full time education, C2D, Regular, Midlands

Reminding drugs users of the possibility that drugs could reach them this way would highlight a negative in relation to drug usage, although users questioned whether it would affect their behaviour at the point of purchase or consumption. The likely ‘normality’ of these situations would almost certainly be far removed from such unpleasant thoughts, and the urgency of consumption would be likely to overwhelm any reservations. The thought might help to reinforce a tendency for them to take care who they buy their drugs from.

“Those pictures are awful, but in all honesty on a Friday night I’m not going to think about them.”

Female, 18-24, Working, C2D, Regular, North

As with the other negative thoughts presented 'transportation' added weight to the convictions of non users, who had a 'blackly humorous' reaction to the idea of what some of their friends might be swallowing or sniffing!

"It made me think even more, yeah, I'm right to say no to E."

Female, 18-24, Full time education, BC1, Rejectors, South

The use of pets or animals in transportation was condemned as strongly as the use of children

"That is sick."

Female, 25-30, Working, C2D, Regular, South

REACTIONS TO SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS: CRIME

Drugs Create Crime

- Overall, more than 80% of all crimes involving theft of any description are drug related
 - burglaries – theft from homes
 - street crime and mugging
 - theft from cars
- This is while local dealers grow rich on the profits, many making in excess of £10,000 per week

The link between drug use and crime was felt to be a widely known fact.

Users and non users with using friends were quick to point out that Crack and Heroin were likely to drive this behaviour, and that use of other drugs was much less problematic. For these people the link with crime was another reminder of why they wanted nothing to do with these drugs. This sentiment was particularly poignant in the West Midlands, as two innocent teenage girls had recently been shot and killed in Aston in what had been assumed to be a drug related incident.

Drug using respondents, and non users with drug using friends believed that it was Crack and Heroin dealers who were likely to grow rich, rather than those dealing in other drugs, as they felt the power of addiction could be used as a lever to increase demand, prices and profit.

Non users without drug using friends were more likely to see the link with crime as a more generic drugs issue.

However, everyone agreed that levels of drug related petty crime were unacceptable. Many had themselves been victims in one way or another, or had immediate family, relatives or friends who had been. The strength and unity of opinion on this issue was similar to that relating to children taking drugs.

The 80% statistic could support the view of those who believed addicts should be treated, but predictably led others to call for much harsher treatment.

“It’s all done by the Crack and Smackheads. Should round them up and shoot them.”

Female, 18-24, Working, C2D, Regular, North

SOURCES OF SUPPLY CHAIN FACTS

There was a certain amount of suspicion evident among drug users that supply chain facts might have been magnified or otherwise distorted in order to build a case against drugs. The need to be seen to be even handed would therefore have to be borne in mind in any communication.

'Source' would be part of this, although this is subject dependent. For example, a 'government' source in relation to environmental damage in the rain forest might lead to the motives for disseminating the information being questioned, whereas a 'government' source in relation to crime or 'childhood' drug use might not have the same effect. The government is seen to have legitimate expertise and interest in the issue of crime but not in the environment, unless the consequences are much closer to home than the examples presented.

The manner in which facts are delivered might also be important. A relatively low key approach which simply establishes that the drugs industry is one of a number of culprits in relation to the issues concerned might be more productive in the long run than setting out to create the link in isolation. Therefore the link should be established for example, as part of disseminating information about environmental damage, than part of disseminating information about drugs.

The identity of appropriate sources should be considered. Lobby groups for the various issues explored did not necessarily command the respect that might have been expected. For example, Greenpeace was seen in very negative terms and was felt to be a self serving organisation, populated by self serving individuals.

"They are just a bunch of nutters aren't they? Eco-terrorists or something like that."

Male, 25-30, Working, BC1, Regular, South

What constitutes an appropriate source would be dependant on factors including the issue, the extent to which drugs are being made culpable, and the level of action which seems to be being asked for as a result of the information.