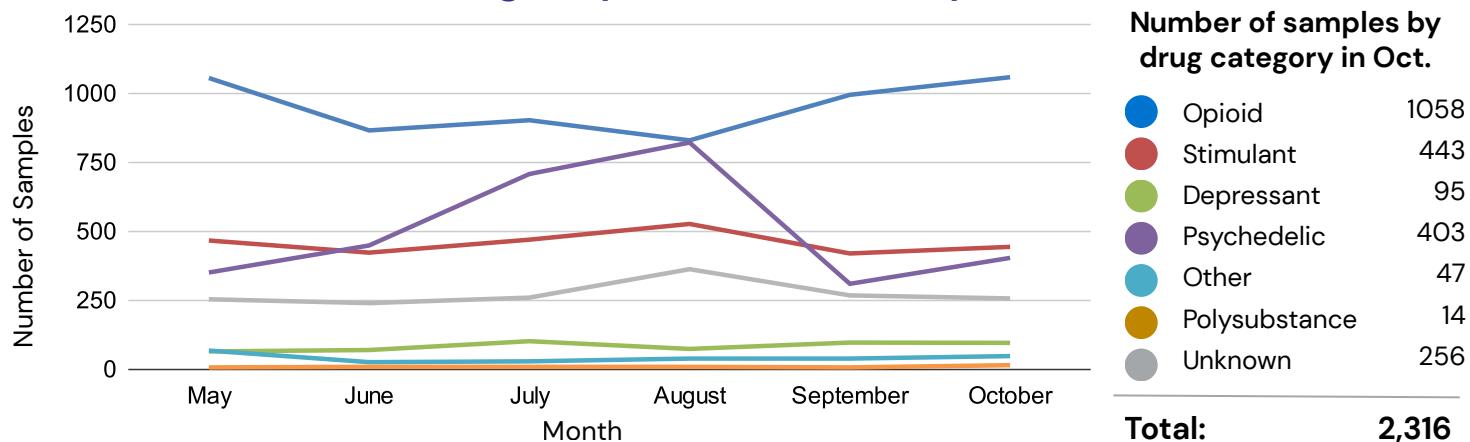




## Key findings

- In October, **2,316** drug checks were performed by community drug checking sites in BC (**61** access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines decreased to **42.2%**. Desalkylidiazepam remained the most common detected by FTIR.
- There has been an influx of novel benzodiazepines detected by FTIR in unregulated opioids over the past several months. In October, this included nifoxipam, ethylbromazolam, clobromazolam, and meclonazepam.
- The overall median concentration of samples containing fentanyl and/or fluorofentanyl fell to **11.8%** (see page 3). When considered separately, the median concentration of fluorofentanyl in unregulated opioids rose to **9.1%**, while fentanyl decreased to **5.1%**.
- We continue to monitor an increase in carfentanil and tranquilizers (primarily medetomidine) detected in opioids this year. Among samples sent for secondary testing with Paper-Spray Mass Spectrometry in October (**n=295**), medetomidine was detected in **99** samples, carfentanil in **40** samples, and xylazine in **33** samples.

### Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



### Number of samples tested by region

Vancouver Coastal Health region: 1322 (**57%**)

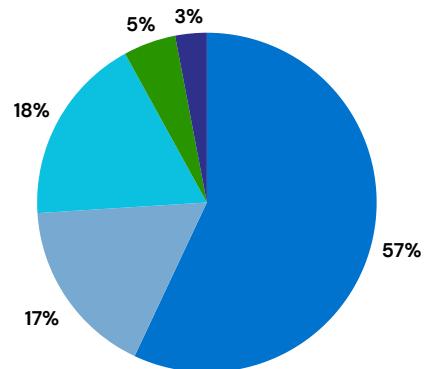
Fraser Health region: 402 (**17%**)

Interior Health region: 406 (**18%**)

Island Health region: 117 (**5%**)

Northern Health region: 69 (**3%**)

**Total: 2,316**



## Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	992	50	16	1058
Stimulant	426	16	1	443
Depressant	38	55	2	95
Psychedelic	384	12	7	403
Other	28	12	7	47
Polysubstance	12	1	1	14
Unknown	0	0	256	256
<b>Total</b>	<b>1880</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>2316</b>

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents.

## Opioids

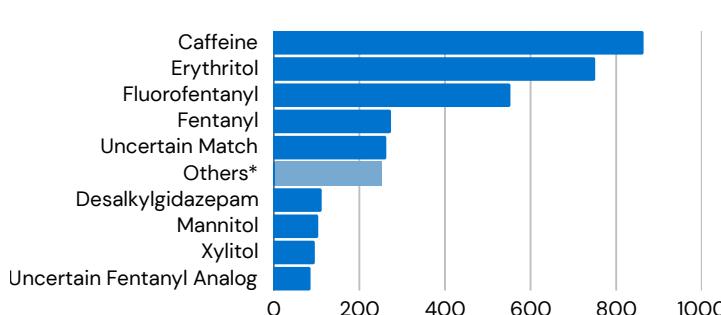
### Number of opioid samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	95	11	0	106
Heroin	9	11	0	20
Fentanyl and Heroin	1	0	0	1
Other Opioid	1	0	0	1
Down	842	21	2	865
Pharmaceutical	28	7	14	49
Opium	16	0	0	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>992</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1058</b>

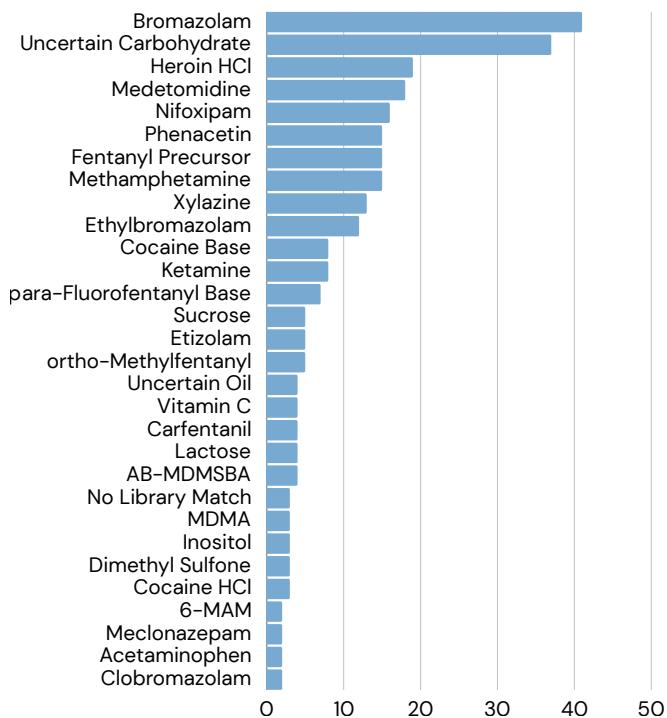
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

## Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=992)

### Main components



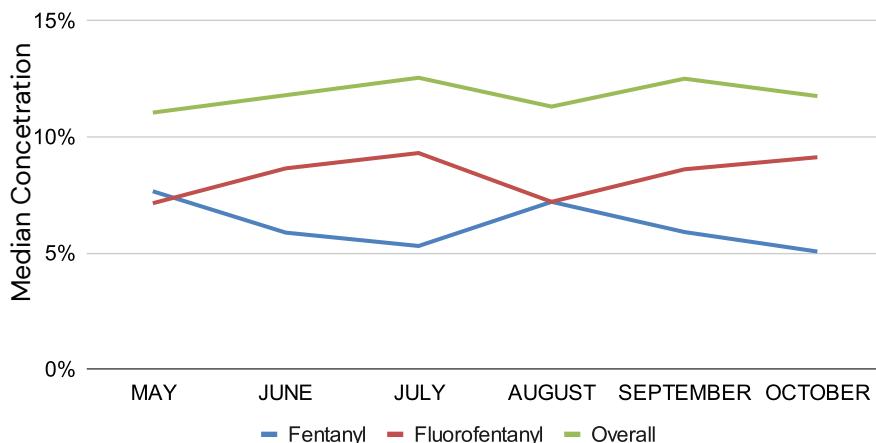
### Other components



Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

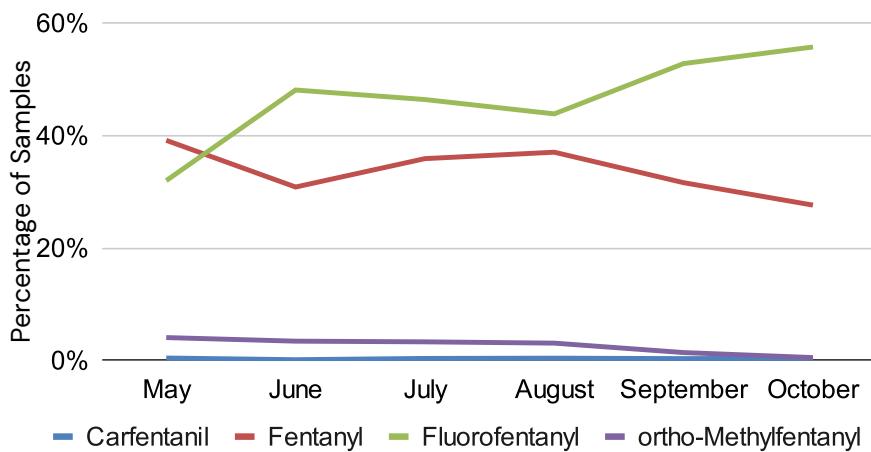
## Median fentanyl concentration of unregulated opioids, past 6 months

Concentrations were estimated using a validated quantification model for the purposes of this report with aggregated data. To learn more about the QUANT3 quantification model visit [here](#).



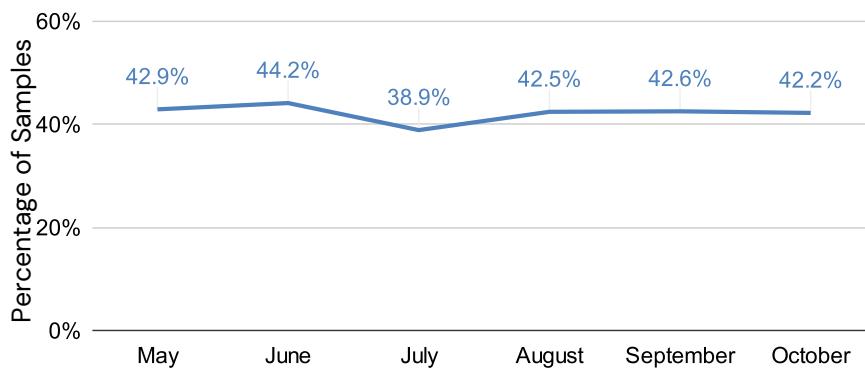
- In October, the overall median concentration of unregulated opioid samples containing fentanyl and/or fluorofentanyl was 11.8% (n=884).
- The median concentration of fluorofentanyl rose to 9.1% (n=529), while fentanyl decreased to 5.1% (n=698). Almost half of all unregulated opioids contained both fentanyl and fluorofentanyl (n =343).
- Most unregulated opioids contain fentanyl and/or fluorofentanyl HCl at concentrations between 5% and 15%, but sample concentrations can range from trace amounts to most of the mixture.

## Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



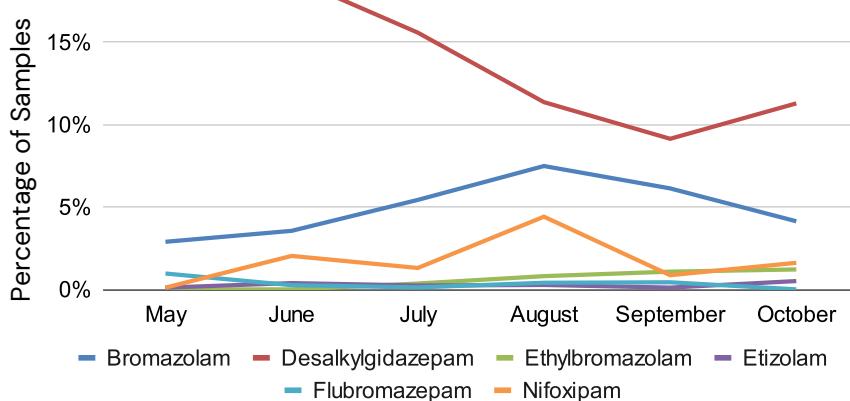
- In October, fluorofentanyl detection rose to 55.7% while fentanyl detection by FTIR continued to decline (553 of 992 samples). Detection of ortho-methylfentanyl also decreased, detected in only 5 samples this month.
- We note there has been an uptick in samples containing carfentanil this year. In October, carfentanil was detected by FTIR in **4 opioid samples**.
- The true number of samples containing carfentanil is expected to be higher than what is observed by FTIR, as it is usually contained in concentrations below the detection limit (<5%). Please see the **Secondary Testing section** of this report for more information..

## Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



- During the month of October, 42.2% of all expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines (**446 samples of 1058 checked**).
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true number may be higher, as some benzodiazepines may be missed by test strip.

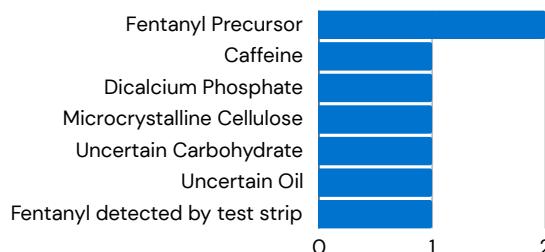
## Types of benzodiazepines detected by FTIR, past 6 months



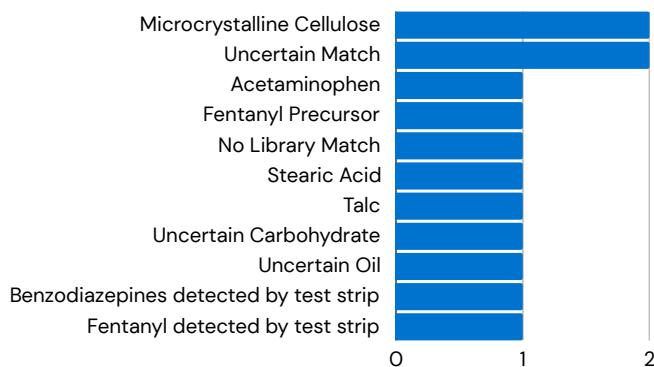
- In October, 15.1% of all unregulated opioid samples (**150 of 930 samples**) contained benzodiazepines in concentrations high enough to be detectable by FTIR (>5%).
- Following a **4-month decline**, the most common benzodiazepine, desalkylidiazepam, increased in detection in October (**112 samples**).
- We are continuing to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines detected in opioids, such as nifoxipam (**16 samples**), ethylbromazolam (**12 samples**), clobromazolam (**2 samples**), and meclonazepam (**2 samples**).

## Components detected in pharmaceutical opioids (where expected drug was absent)

### Hydromorphone (N=2)



### Oxycodone (N=5)

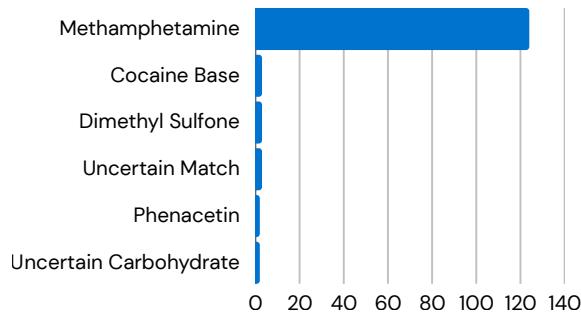


- In October, a total of **49 samples** were submitted expected to be pharmaceutical opioids. Oxycodone (N=19) and hydromorphone (Dilauidid) (N=21) were most common. Of these, **7** did not contain the expected drugs and instead contained other unexpected active component.
- Among the hydromorphone samples, a fentanyl precursor, n-propionylparafluoronorfentanyl base, was the most common unexpected component detected, followed by fentanyl/analogs, as detected by test strip.
- Among oxycodone samples, the most common unexpected components detected were a fentanyl precursor, (n-propionyl parafluoronorfentanyl base), and fentanyl/analogs and benzodiazepines, as detected by test strip.

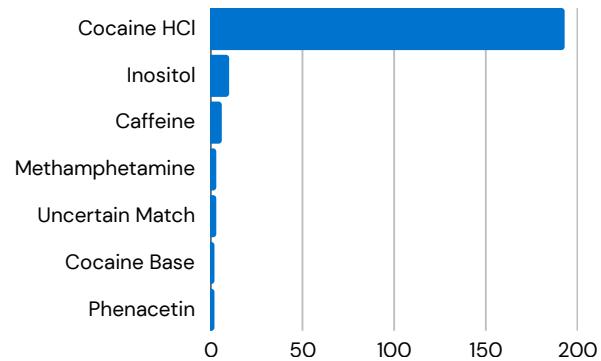
## Non-Opioids

### Components detected in stimulants

#### Components in methamphetamine (N=129)

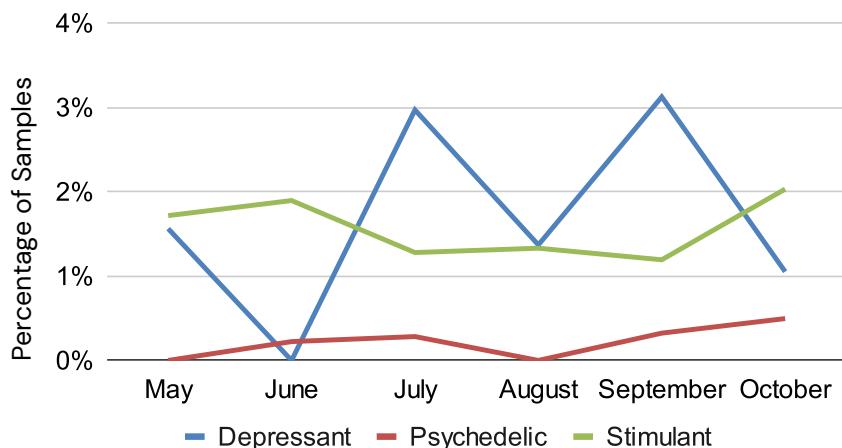


#### Components in cocaine (N=197)



Additional components detected a single time of samples have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on our [dashboard](#)

## Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months



- In October, a total of **12** non-opioids (**9 stimulants, 2 psychedelics, and 1 depressant**) tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR and/or test strip.
- Of these, **3 of 7** fentanyl-positive crack cocaine samples were expected to be cross-contaminated by the service user, noting that they were stored with opioids prior to drug checking.

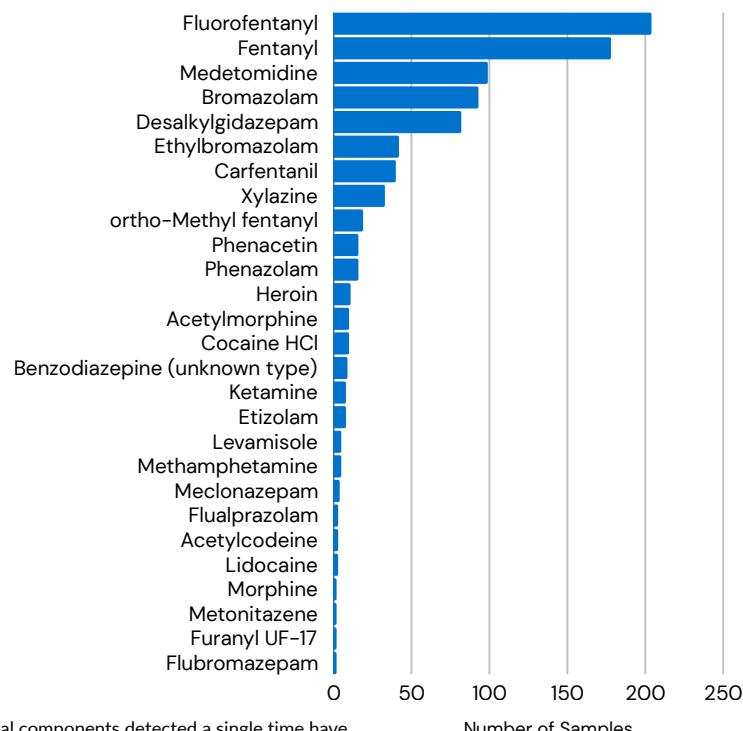
## PSMS Secondary Testing Results Summary

A subset of samples were sent for secondary testing provided by Substance at the University of Victoria, using Paper-Spray Mass Spectrometry (PSMS). PSMS is a highly sensitive technology, and can detect components in samples below the detection limit of the FTIR (<5%). Below is a summary of all active components detected in opioid samples sent in confirmatory testing. For more information about Substance please visit their [website](#).

### Total opioids sent to Substance

Health Authority	Number of Samples
Fraser Health	143
Interior Health	78
Vancouver Coastal Health	28
Northern Health	26
Island Health	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>

### Active components detected (n=295)



To save space, additional components detected a single time have been omitted from this chart: Acetylcodeine, Acetylmorphine, Cocaine Base, Etizolam, Flubromazepam, Heroin, MDMA

## Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
October 1, 2025 Kamloops	Down	Fluorofentanyl, medetomidine*	N/A	N/A	Purple chunks and pebbles sold as down tested positive for fluorofentanyl and medetomidine in Kamloops.
October 9, 2025 Cranbrook	Down	Carfentanil*	N/A	N/A	Light green chunks and flakes sold as down tested positive for carfentanil in Cranbrook.
October 17, 2025 Vancouver	Down	Para-fluorofentanyl, nifoxipam, medetomidine, heroin, uncertain match	Positive	Positive	Brown granules sold as down in Vancouver tested positive for para-fluorofentanyl, heroin, the benzodiazepine nifoxipam, and medetomidine, a non-opioid tranquilizer more potent than xylazine.
October 22, 2025 Vancouver	Down	Fentanyl, fluorofentanyl, medetomidine*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples (dark purple chunks, light purple and pink pebbles, white granules) sold as down in the DTES of Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl, fluorofentanyl, and medetomidine, a non-opioid tranquilizer more toxic than xylazine. These samples have all caused overdoses.
October 27, 2025 Cranbrook	Down	Carfentanil, fentanyl*	N/A	N/A	Dark brown chunks or powder sold as down tested positive for carfentanil and fentanyl in Cranbrook.
October 31, 2025 Vancouver	Down	Carfentanil, fentanyl analogs, benzodiazepines, xylazine, medetomidine*	N/A	N/A	Multiple samples (brown granules, blue pebbles) sold as down in Vancouver tested positive for carfentanil, sometimes in combination with other fentanyl analogs, benzos, and tranquilizers such as xylazine and medetomidine.

All spectrometry results are determined by FTIR, with the exception of the following:

\* Results provided by complementary testing partner [Substance](#) using Paper Spray Mass Spectrometry

Health authorities and community organizations issue further toxic drug alerts from sources other than drug checking.  
See their respective websites or social media accounts for more alerts.

To subscribe to the provincial drug alert and response system, text the word JOIN to 253787 (ALERTS).

## About this data

Data represented in this report is collected from our partner sites across the province using Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometry in combination with BTNX fentanyl test strips and benzodiazepine test strips when applicable. We note the FTIR spectrometer has a detection limit of approximately 5% concentration (McCrae, 2019).

**Depressant includes:**  
benzodiazepines,  
etizolam, GHB, hypnotics

**Opioid includes:**  
"down", heroin, fentanyl  
(unregulated opioids), and  
pharmaceutical opioids

**Polysubstance includes:**  
cross-category mixtures

**Psychedelic includes:**  
MDMA and related, 2C-family,  
tryptamines, ketamine, LSD

**Stimulant includes:**  
methamphetamine,  
"speed," cocaine and  
crack cocaine,  
cathinones

**Unknown includes:**  
samples where the individual  
was unable to identify an  
expected substance - this  
includes found samples.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of [our partners](#) to collect this data.

To find drug checking services in your area please visit  
[our site locator](#).