

# Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary's response to the Coroners Reg. 28 report

The constabulary's response is set out in red below the original question raised.

1. I heard evidence that illegal drugs were freely available to purchase at the festival. One of Ben's friends described how dealers would walk through the campsites shouting the names of the drugs they were offering to supply. I was told this took place as regularly as every twenty minutes and that they saw nothing done to try and disrupt this trade. I am concerned that an unchecked, open and free trade in unlawful drugs will create a risk of future deaths.

The Management of an event, including drug supply and its prevention are the responsibility of the organisers in line with the nationally agreed "Purple Guide". The Police play an active role via the Safety Advisory Group and review its position regularly. The Constabulary will continue to do so and feedback nationally but notes that the 2025 Boomtown event showed evidence of the changes discussed at the inquest, coming to fruition, as there were less incidents.

2. I heard evidence that those found bringing unlawful drugs into Boomtown are not ejected from the site unless they are considered to be carrying quantities that are consistent with being a drug dealer, or they have associated dealer paraphernalia. Those who are found in possession of unlawful drugs who are not considered to be dealers have their drugs confiscated and are allowed entry onto site. I am concerned that as a consequence there is no disincentive for festival goers who attempt to take drugs into Boomtown and that the policy gives rise to a situation where those who have had drugs taken from them will want to replace them. I am concerned that these factors give rise to a demand for, and a market in, the sale of illegal drugs at Boomtown. I heard evidence from a senior officer of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary who was Gold Commander for Boomtown who also expressed a concern about this policy. I am concerned that this, combined, with the first concern, give rise to risk of future death.

The Constabulary remain concerned about this policy but it is a matter to be considered by the Safety Advisory Group as the Constabulary does recognise that the Organisers policy is in line with National guidance and the basis for this policy was articulated by the organisers at the inquest. The Constabulary will manage this concern by working with the SAG and event organiser. As a result of measures brought in through the continual improvement cycle, the event improved in 2025 compared with 2024 and further improvements are expected in 2026, in relation to the concerns raised.