

Cannabis Spice & Legal Highs Group



GROUP REPORT 2017

web: www.cslhg.org
email: cslhginfo@gmail.com
contact: 07379 915 190





Principles, Values and objectives

The Cannabis, Spice and Legal Highs group aims to provide information, advice, assistance and support to long-term chronic users and to families, support workers and concerned others. We do this principally through mutual aid support groups hosted in local venues where experience and advice is shared in a non-judgmental abstinence based user-led environment. We also embrace and utilise, web, social media and emerging technologies to assist our delivery model.

We believe all drug users have the ability to turn their lives around and make positive, sustainable change to our own circumstances and the communities we live in.

We feel we have a unique membership and with it a responsibility to service users of cannabis, spice and legal highs who would not normally access traditional services.

Issues affecting our work include; anxiety, depression, isolation, confidence, sleep & insomnia, psychosis, paranoia, schizophrenia, unemployment, homelessness, poverty, offending, child support & custody issues and institutionalisation.

Our typical target member is currently sat in a bedsit in West Yorkshire, isolating, anxious and unfit for work or social activity. Our aim is to promote the principles and ethos of our group deep into the community so all potential members have access to our meetings and support network.

We have seen numerous examples of success in our diverse cohort, supporting members with serious lifelong addictions and watching them grow and develop into volunteering, employment and general health and happiness.

Group Member Testimonials

After 20 years of cannabis use I'd finally had enough, after seeing my worker he advised me about this group, it was hard and I was so scared at first but the advice and help I got from this group was amazing.

I am now 22 months clean.

Coming to this group was the best thing I ever did.

JD- Abstinent since 03/02/2016



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Group Member Testimonials

*This group has helped me realise why I
smoked cannabis and helped me stop.
It's a real friendly atmosphere and confidential.
I didn't think a group like this existed,
it's really different from any other group.
People here support each other and I'm happy to be part of it.
My thoughts of groups have now changed.*

Steve – Abstinent since 22/11/2016



1.0 Context

Latest statistics from the Home Office Crime Survey for England and Wales 2015/16

As in previous years, cannabis was the most commonly used drug, with 6.5% of adults aged 16 to 59 having used it in the last year (around 2.1 million people)

Among younger adults aged 16 to 24, cannabis was also the most commonly used drug, with 15.8% having used it in the last year (around 975,000 young adults).

1.1 Significant Research

*Research found that those who had used mostly ‘Skunk’-like (high potency THC) cannabis were **twice as likely to be diagnosed with a psychotic disorder** if they had used it less than **once per week**, nearly **three times more likely** if they used it **at weekends**, and **five times more likely if they used it every day**. “Proportion of patients in south London with first-episode psychosis attributable to use of high potency cannabis: a case control study” Lancet Psychiatry. 2015.*

2.0 Group Background and Information

Despite being the most commonly used illegal drug, cannabis has the lowest levels of specialist mutual aid support within user-led addiction services. The recent advent of spice and legal highs use has left users even less well catered for. Cannabis users with serious addictions manifesting in prolonged and daily use often report difficulties in accessing and engaging in traditional drug support pathways. Our group was established with the help of the Change Programme and the Bridge Project to provide mutual aid and peer led support to such users.

The group was formed in March of 2015 as a collaboration between Bridge staff and service users. Meeting in the Vault Café group room at Unity Recovery Centre close to Bradford city centre. The remit was to provide an alternative to other mutual aid groups that had no specialist history in providing support to the three main substance misuse categories of cannabis, spice and legal highs. Over the years the group developed the model and expanded to host two regular weekly meetings.



3.0 Support and Statistics



We are an adult, abstinence based self-help, user-led, mutual aid support group sharing personal experience and best practice. Up to December 31st 2017 we have hosted 159 regular meetings utilising 4 different venues.

Since our formation, we have seen over 200 individual members attending our 159 weekly meetings. We regularly see attendances between 15–25 with a mix of approximately 90% cannabis, 8% spice and 2% legal high use. The group is often the first port of call for many of our members. We regularly refer clients to the Change Programme, AIM group, BRAVE Project, SMART and Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)/Narcotics Anonymous (NA).

In 2017, the group meetings were supported by 3 experienced drug practitioners and 1 manager from the Change Programme, contributing approximately 94 contact hours. Bridge staff/trustees further contributed 16 hours attending meetings. In supporting our Reflections management meetings, Bridge staff also contributed 16 hours in addition to a Bridge Trustee delivery of a membership workshop.

3.1 2017 Attendance data

Confidential data is recorded tracking parameters such as: individual attendance, sex, year of birth, first, second and third drug of choice, date of abstinence and assigned drug worker. Anonymity is preserved through the use of a unique reference membership number.

2017	#	Members	Visitors	Bridge Staff/Trustees
Number of meetings Bradford	52	626	68	48
Number of meetings Shipley	11	37	1	0
Reflections Meetings	11	72	3	16
Workshops	6	39	2	2
Social Events	8	48	1	0
Unique Individuals	125	102	16	8
Attendance 2016	650			
Attendance 2017	729			
Increase	+12.2%			

Group Member Testimonials

*The group is fantastic and I get a lot out of it.
My worker at the time said I might benefit from the group and she was right.
I'm now 12 months clean so proud of myself.
Kev – Abstinent since 09/01/2017*



4.0 Media Technology & Promotion

Our support group is extended beyond our regular meetings by the use of technology and social media. We incorporate, mobile phone and SMS communication, group chat, Facebook messaging, Twitter, Google apps, Open tools, QR codes and media networking in addition to hosting a website and traditional print and promotional material.

Technology is one area where we promote the sharing of skills and knowledge within our membership, particularly through our workshops and shadowing of service roles.

In November, we participated in the making of an ITV programme 'The Kyle Files' investigating cannabis support and the issue of legalisation. The broadcast is due for release in March 2018.



<https://www.cslhg.org/>

4.1 Facebook and Social Media

facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/cslhg/>

We administer and moderate a secret Facebook page allowing communication, networking and the distribution of literature outside of normal support hours. The page primarily acts as a 24-hour support channel allowing members to reach out to other members for advice and support whilst not in-group while still maintaining confidentiality. Members are entitled to join this group after attending 4 regular meetings. Administrators are elected within the group to moderate and develop Facebook policy.

We also run a public Facebook page to allow contact, information requests and generate support and understanding. There is no prerequisite to view this page which acts as a promotional platform. This page is indexed and searchable creating greater awareness of the group's presence and activities.

twitter

<https://twitter.com/cslhginfo>

The group maintains a **Twitter account** promoting group meetings and activities. The group has a strict non-political policy associated with this account. Volunteer members maintain this brand.

We regularly tweet under the following hashtags;

[#cslhg](#)

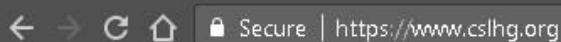
[#substanceabuse](#)

[#mentalhealth](#)

[#legalhighs](#)

[#spice](#)

[#cannabis](#)



4.2 Web Presence & Strategy

The group owns the domain [cslhg.org](https://www.cslhg.org) and runs a website giving background information about the group, meeting locations and times, information and research about cannabis, spice and legal highs. We also host a live chat client and a contact form. Promotional material is integrated through social media, traditional media and QR codes.

The website will become our main focal point of contact and information. We welcome: back links, promotion and reviews.

5.0 Meetings & Events

We host a number of events in addition to our regular meetings. We also run workshops and presentations at local universities, colleges, community centres and health care establishments.

To date we have run 6 workshops exploring issues and information concerning: Power of 3-Detox, Recovery and Rehabilitation Method, Narcotics Anonymous Public Information, Mindfulness Techniques, Facebook and Social Media, Constitution, Identity and Independence.

We currently run 2 regular meetings in the Bradford/Aire Valley area.

TUESDAY MEETING 6:00 - 8:00 pm

ShIPLEY Fire Station

1 Shipley Fields Rd, Shipley BD18 2DG

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Shipley+Fire+Station/@53.8242023,-1.7707536,1792m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0x93bf2d1cf3379c67!8m2!3d53.8242023!4d-1.7707536>

FRIDAY MEETING 12:30 - 3:00 pm

The Vault

Trafalgar street, BRADFORD. BD1 3DN

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/The+Vault+Cafe/@53.7994152,-1.7596623,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m13!1m7!3m6!1s0x487be14d96f6b085:0xf47ea04ac3eb4b04!2s30+Manningham+Ln,+Bradford+BD1+3DN!3b1!8m2!3d53.7990129!4d-1.7578062!3m4!1s0x487be14d8e3c7485:0xa55375ef3fd6a011!8m2!3d53.7994121!4d-1.7574736?hl=en>



6.0 Expansion and Growth

Due to increasing demand, we recently established a second weekly meeting in the newly opened Shipley Fire Station, servicing the Aire valley corridor and opening up support to the communities of Skipton, Keighley, Bingley, Saltaire, Shipley, Windhill, Idle, Thackley and Greengates. We also plan to establish a third meeting in central Leeds in the near future. The clear majority of our members are abstinent of all street drugs; we do however have a small minority of members at the end of their addiction. We have a strict policy of not using on the day of attendance and we do not allow children, drugs or paraphernalia at the venue.

We have made connections and are establishing links with similar groups nationally in order to share best practice and develop closer ties.

6.1 Constitution

We are working towards greater independence by seeking to develop a constitution and investigate our options to establish ourselves as a charitable organisation, allowing us to access funding, to develop and expand our model. We welcome support and assistance.

Our rules and procedures are in the process of being developed and documented. In addition, we are working towards PQASSO standards and charity commission guidelines. We are receiving advice and assistance from a range of sources including Bridge trustees, senior management and staff, Bradford CVS and other established local and national charitable bodies.

We currently have group rules and procedures in addition to our online Facebook group policy. A sub-group of admins steers this process, accountable to the membership through the Reflections management meeting. (see 7.0 Governance & Future Plans)

Group Member Testimonials

If you have a cannabis habit and want to do something about it, then this group is for you. After 20 years of addiction, I've been with the group for the past year and a half and it's helped me in many ways. It's a good place to be with plenty of support and will be your 1st step to tackling your addiction.

Steven – building motivation whilst reducing and tackling my demons.



7.0 Governance and Future Plans

We plan to replicate our model in other areas initiating similar user-led support groups built around an abstinence base. We self-manage our operations with regular consultation and involvement from stakeholders through monthly Reflections meetings where direction and policy is developed. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of every month. Group representatives or individuals wishing to attend should email cslhginfo@gmail.com for details of our next meeting.

Our plans for the coming year are centred on constitution and expansion. We have realistic ambitions to, expand into Leeds, develop a cannabis, spice and legal highs substance information training package, explore social enterprise business models and promote our brand online, nationally and throughout the district.

7.1 Finances and Match Funding

In 2017, the group made an application to the Recovery Fund, administered by Bradford Metropolitan District Council to the value of £ 192.75 to cover costs relating to the group's communication budget.

Recovery Fund Application Awarded- 24/11/2016 - Linda Peacock

Outstanding balance from 2016	£ 83.79	Total £ 83.79
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Recovery Fund Application Awarded - 14/12/2017 – Colin Stansbie

Domain name and web hosting	£ 111.75	
Smart phone and sim	£ 21.00	
Social media adds promoting website	£ 60.00	
TOTAL	£ 192.75	
Outstanding balance from 2017	£ 57.01	Total £ 140.80

Meetings are staffed by a facilitator, who chairs the meeting, 2 x Admins who assist with membership and support the facilitation and a member to manage tea, coffee and breaks. Time given by those involved is all on a voluntary basis and for 2017, this equates (as of 8/12/2017) to 16 volunteer hours x 48 regular meetings = 768 hours. In addition, a further 34 volunteer hours is attributed to the 11 Reflections management meetings and the 6 workshops we have run. Support for delivery of group is also provided by the Bridge Project with the time of a practitioner for the Friday meeting on Bridge premises (96 hours).

In addition, members have self-funded costs such as. Tea/coffee, sundries, photocopies etc to the approximate value of £50



8.0 Contact Details

Voice mail: 07379 915 190
email: cslhinfo@gmail.com
web: <https://www.cslhg.org>
Facebook: fb.me/cslhg
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/cslhinfo>
#cslhg <http://twubs.com/cslhg>

9.0 Acknowledgements

The group has received support from The Bridge Project and particularly the Change Programme since it's conception. We have a particular debt of gratitude to Sue Knowles, Marcus Dorey, Eileen Broomhead, Michael Ritchie, Joe Kean, Claire Percy, Tony Gibson, Gary Joseph, Melva Burton, Tracey Hogan, Jon Royle and Martin Brook of The Bridge Project. Michael Fox and Marion Coates of The West Yorkshire Fire Service. Colin Stansbie of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Department of Health and Wellbeing.

Group Member Testimonials

*I had just managed to get clean when I first came to this group.
It helped me maintain my recovery through the early stages
and it still, after more than 3 years, inspires and motivates me.
In my involvement with the group I have seen countless examples
of remarkable people overcoming serious addictions and circumstances,
changing their lives and communities for the better.
People really can and really do recover.*

Dave – Abstinent since 30/10/2014



10.0 Referral Form

Contact Request email to: cslhginfo@gmail.com	
Name of Referrer:	
Name of Client:	
Organisation:	
Email:	
Contact No:	
Comments:	
Today's Date:	



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