

WEDI NOS

The logo consists of the text 'WEDI' stacked above 'NOS' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A red ECG line starts at the bottom left, crosses the 'W' in 'WEDI', and continues horizontally across the 'I' in 'WEDI' and the 'N' in 'NOS'. A white silhouette of a person stands inside the 'I' in 'WEDI', with a grey shadow cast to the right. The entire logo is set against a white background.

Collecting • Testing • Informing



December 2023

- **451 samples analysed** (106 NTE samples, 345 community based submissions)
 - 66 substances identified either in isolation or combination
 - Samples received from across UK
 - 30 services
 - Including: Health, Substance Misuse Services, Mental Health, Housing and Homelessness, Night-Time Economy venues and Welsh hospitals
 - Alongside samples submitted anonymously by individuals

Sex / age profile of sample providers



- Sex (where listed n= 344 of 363 community samples)
 - Male: 81% (n= 263)
 - Female: 19% (n= 63)
- Age
 - Range: 16 to 67yrs (Median: 36yrs)
 - Male age range: 16 to 67yrs (Median: 36yrs)
 - Female age range: 18 to 62yrs (Median: 33yrs)

Community Submissions

(comparing top 10 purchase intent vs top 10 post analysis)

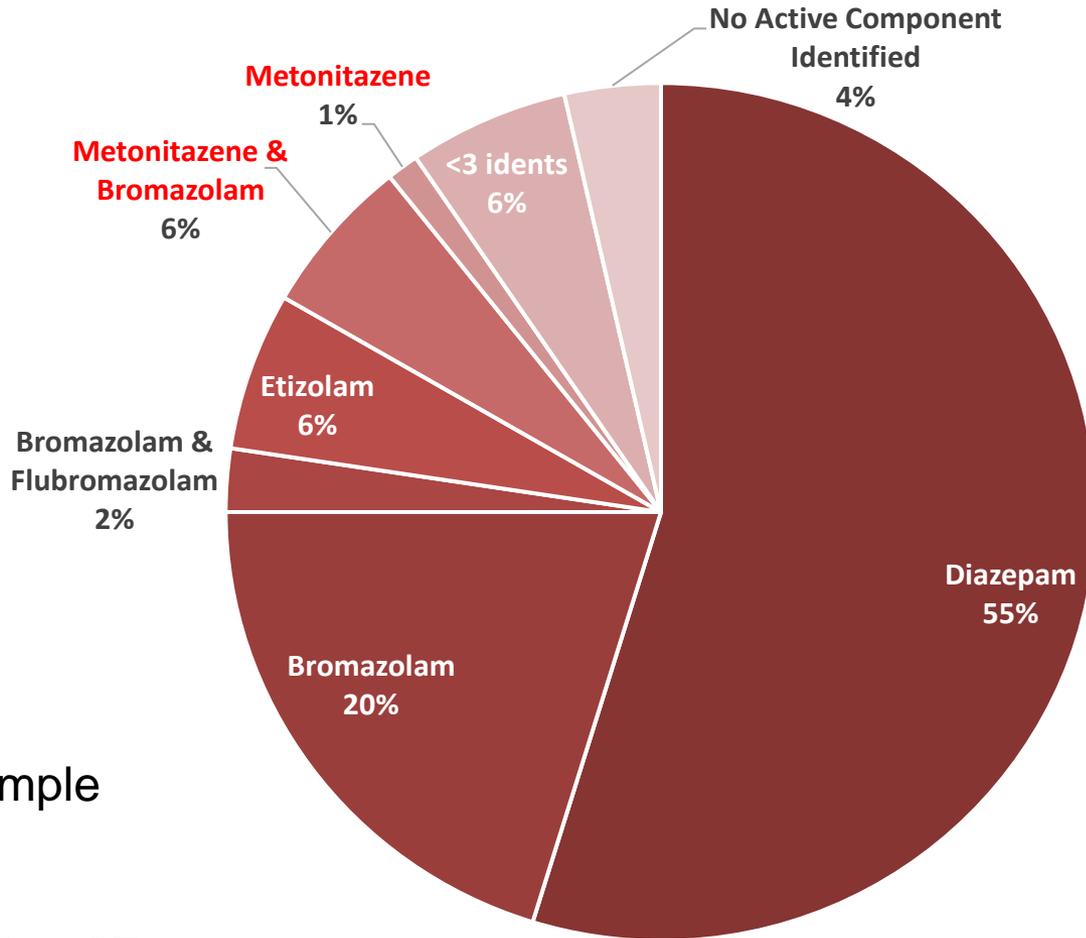
No.	Community purchase intent	Community post analysis
1	Diazepam	Diazepam
2	Cocaine	Cocaine
3	MDMA	MDMA
4	Heroin	Bromazolam
5	Alprazolam	Caffeine
6	Unknown	Paracetamol
7	Ketamine	Heroin
8	THC	Noscapine
9	Zopiclone	Noscapine
10	Amphetamine	Amphetamine

Benzodiazepines

- 11 Benzodiazepines identified
 - Diazepam (85 purchase intent / 47 identifications)
 - Bromazolam (0 purchase intent / 32 identifications)
 - Alprazolam (15 purchase intent / 14 identifications)
 - Etizolam (2 purchase intent / 6 identifications)
 - Clonazepam (4 purchase intent / 6 identifications)
 - Flualprazolam
 - Flubromazolam
 - Lorazepam
 - Nitrazepam
 - Clonazolam
 - Nitrazolam

Identifications <5

Contents of samples submitted as Diazepam: December 2023 (n=85)



Diazepam sample providers:

Age range: 20 to 67yrs
Median: 38yrs

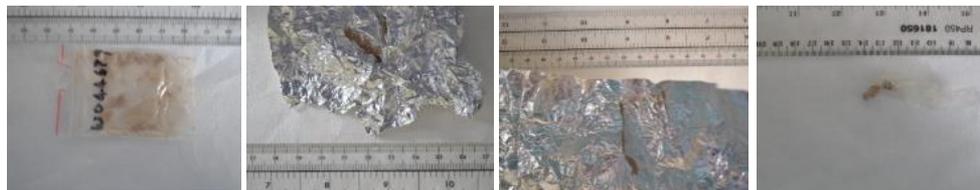
Nitazenes within the heroin market



Public Health Wales have been notified of four suspected fatal drug poisonings and several non-fatal drug poisoning events that have occurred in the Adamsdown/Roath area of Cardiff between 23rd December 2023 - 1st January 2024.

It was reported that the individuals concerned were believed to have injected heroin.

Whilst cause of death and post-mortem toxicology remain unconfirmed, forensic analysis of paraphernalia seized at scene of one of the incidents has detected the presence of metonitazene, monoacetylmorphine, cocaine, paracetamol, caffeine and benzocaine.



In 2023, WEDINOS received and analysed seven samples, five from England and two from Wales, in the belief, they were **heroin**, that were profiled following analysis as containing nitazene(s), (Jun 23=1, Sept 23=2, Nov 23=1, Dec 23=2, Jan 24=1).

Nitazenes identified were isotonitazene and metonitazene. With one sample containing an unconfirmed nitazene (the most recent sample received in January 2024 from Cardiff, Wales).

Nitazenes were originally developed in the 1950s as analgesics. Found to have potent analgesic effects, the clinical development of nitazenes was abandoned due to the increased risks of adverse events. Currently, there are no drugs of this class approved as human or veterinary medicines.

Isotonitazene has potent analgesic effects. In mice studies isotonitazene was found to be 500 times more potent than morphine. However, studies in rodents should be interpreted with caution as they do not accurately reflect opioid toxicity in humans.

Metonitazene was around 10 times more potent than morphine as an analgesic

The Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) states individuals may be unaware of the inclusion of nitazenes, the high potency of some of these compounds provides a substantial risk of severe and potentially fatal overdose.

The ACMD report – A review of the evidence on the use and harms of 2-benzyl benzimidazole ('nitazene') and piperidine benzimidazolone ('bromorphine-like') opioids can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/acmd-advice-on-2-benzyl-benzimidazole-and-piperidine-benzimidazolone-opioids>

Clinical management of toxicity with nitazenes recommends the use of **Naloxone** as an antidote. Individuals using heroin, or those concerned in the care of individuals using heroin should speak to their local drug treatment service about **Naloxone** or visit **DAN 24/7** and see their click and collect service (for those living in Wales) <https://dan247.org.uk/naloxone-click-and-deliver/>

08/01/2024