

Appendix A

Drug Expert Witness – Professional Experience

Mr Phillip Chalke

1. I am a retired Police Officer having worked for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary for 27 years from January 1998 to January 2025.
2. My role within the Constabulary at the point of retirement was as a full time Drug Expert Witness based within the Forensic Services Department at Southampton Police Investigation Centre.
3. My role as a full time Drug Expert Witness involved the preparation of independent drug reports to assist the courts and the court process. These related to cases of simple possession matters to more complex supply, importation, and conspiracy investigations across the Constabulary and on a regional level.
4. I have provided over 575 reports and given oral evidence as a Drug Expert Witness in multiple trials from local Magistrates Courts to regional Crown Courts.
5. I joined Hampshire Constabulary in January 1998 and was posted to Basingstoke. As a uniformed officer, I conducted numerous pro-active searches of individuals and their vehicles. A number of these searches were intelligence-led, but the majority were based on my experience and knowledge about drug users, dealers, and their methodology.
6. These searches regularly resulted in arrests in relation to possession of Class A and Class B drugs allowing me to see firsthand how the various types of drugs were packaged in preparation for supply.
7. I have planned, obtained, and executed numerous search warrants relating to the supply of controlled drugs. These have resulted in gaining valuable experience of how drug users prepare, package, and store their drugs including secretion within body cavities.

8. I was able to gain insightful knowledge during the house searches as to the types of lifestyle and values those involved with controlled drugs have, within the various levels/roles of the controlled drug market.
9. **June 2008**, due to my pro-active approach to reducing crime, I was seconded to the Basingstoke Tasking Team, a group of like-minded individuals investigating criminals who wish to make a negative impact on the community through their criminality which included drug offences.
10. The Tasking Unit predominantly investigated inquisitive crimes such as burglaries and vehicle thefts however these would, for a majority of investigation, inevitably lead to those involved with the buying of controlled drugs in order to fund their habits as end users.
11. The subsequent arrests and interviews of end users allowed me to gain a working knowledge of the cost implications involved as a user of drugs and the lengths that they are prepared to go in order to obtain their next 'hit'.
12. **July 2008**, I was successful in passing the Level One Foot Surveillance and Log Keepers Course.
13. The week-long intensive course equipped me to plan and conduct surveillance operations surrounding those involved in crime. A number of these operations involved the observation of drug users meeting up with their respective drug suppliers in public spaces, which enabled me to get close to the meeting points and personally observe first-hand how exchanges of controlled drugs took place, and the language used.
14. Working within a covert capacity I was regularly conducting searches of persons on the street, within premises and Police custody relating to the use and or supply of controlled drugs. From this I gained knowledge on how different substances are packaged, deal sizes and methods employed for concealment such as plugging and cheeking as the detained person had little opportunity to dispose of the product.

- 15.** As a direct result of controlled drugs being located, I have conducted numerous searches of premises utilising search powers. These searches allowed me to gain knowledge and experience of how drugs are prepared for immediate supply, items associated with both the use and supply of drugs such as digital handheld scales, cling film, foil, grip seal bags, documentation relating to drug supply, commonly known as paraphernalia.
- 16. January 2011,** I was successful in my application to join the Priority Crime Unit at Basingstoke Police Station involving investigations of a more complex nature, which included but not exclusively, drug supply offences and those involved in the cultivation of Cannabis plants.
- 17.** I have been involved in the dismantling of numerous Cannabis Cultivation Sites, ranging from basic under-the-stairs cupboard types to commercial-sized grows with over 1500 plants in various growth stages. I have seen multiple set ups using a variety of equipment such as heat lamps, water irrigation systems, ventilation ducts, filters, timers, and chemicals to produce cannabis for personal and/or commercial benefit.
- 18.** I have visited a Home Office-approved professional Cannabis growing facility in the South of England to observe the operation and gain knowledge from the various employees on the different methods employed to maximise the yield of the plant and how to manicure the buds for onward supply.
- 19. May 2011,** I attended an LGC Forensics course for the use of Home Office approved drug testing kits, Marquis Reagent and Cozart allowing me to conduct presumptive testing of Heroin, Morphine, and Amphetamine with the BDH Field Drug Testing Kits and I can visually identify herbal Cannabis and Cannabis resin. I have also completed the trainer's course to teach others the Home Office-approved methods of testing-controlled drugs with the use of the Early Drugs Identification Tests (EDIT).
- 20.** I have tested thousands of drugs seizures over the years including Cannabis in herbal and resin form, Cocaine, Heroin, Amphetamine, MDMA in tablet, powder and Crystal form as well as Mephedrone and Ketamine.

- 21.** I have examined hundreds of seizures of controlled drugs including separating wrappings and examining individual deals of Heroin and Crack Cocaine, Cannabis, Amphetamine, Ketamine and MDMA (Ecstasy).
- 22. February 2012,** I completed the Tier 2 Serious and Complex Interviewing Course.
- 23.** The two-week Tier 2 course provided me with a number of techniques and best practices for interviewing those persons involved in a higher level of crime which included those supplying drugs.
- 24. January 2013,** I was successful in applying for a role within the Investigations Department at Basingstoke Police Station, as an experienced investigator I was embedded with the Criminal Investigations Department (CID).
- 25.** My role involved many aspects of drug-related work such as investigation and intelligence gathering. This included reading and disseminating drug-related intelligence, and being involved at various stages of drug investigations, from development to execution to investigation and case file building.
- 26.** I have been the Case Officer for numerous investigations relating to drug offences, ranging from simple possession to more complex cases of conspiracies and supply for profitable gain.
- 27. April 2018,** I attended a Nationally Accredited Police Drug Expert Witness course in Fareham. This was a foundation course that provided input on interpreting mobile phone data, dealer's lists, forensic statements, drug slang terms and guidance on providing valuations for drug seizures.
- 28.** The course included receiving input from professionals involved in the illicit drug industry as well as recovering drug users and persons who had previously been drug dealers.
- 29.** The combination of my experience with illegal drug operations and the completion of the course allowed me to complete Drug Expert Witness reports to assist the courts in matters within my area of expertise.

- 30. May 2018**, I successfully applied for the pro-active role within a team under the banner of Operation Hawk.
- 31.** The team focused primarily on dwelling burglary offences however these often transformed into offences relating to the using and supplying of drugs allowing for further interactions with those involved in illegal drugs.
- 32.** I was able to conduct numerous intelligence interviews of persons held in custody and in prison for drug related matters to keep abreast of current prices for various drug commodities.
- 33. October 2019**, I completed a National accredited County Lines course giving insight into the complexities of a County Lines operation.
- 34. March 2020**, I completed the trainer's course to teach others the Home Office approved methods and use of the Early Drugs Identification Tests (EDIT).
- 35. October 2022**, I completed the TIC-TAC Professional training allowing me to identify medication and illicit drugs in multiple pill forms using a national database.
- 36. March 2023**, I completed the Organised Crime - Drugs Expert Evidence course giving insight into the importation of drugs and onward supply covering forms of payments and subsequent division of bulk purchases.
- 37. April 2023**, I successfully applied to become a member of the Serious and Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) within Hampshire & IOW Constabulary.
- 38.** The role involved the investigation of those who wish to cause the most harm to society which included drug suppliers and importers. The investigations often used multiple covert tactics such as surveillance teams, technical equipment, and live time mobile communications data.
- 39.** I have been part of the planning and execution process for a number of these investigations which were heavily drug related crimes, using routes from London and Liverpool to Hampshire.

40. I was the lead officer imbedded within the Serious and Organised Crime Unit dealing with the emerging change to the local drugs market known as “County Lines.” Involving predominantly young males from outside the force area establishing drug supply lines in the county.
41. This trade exposed me to tactics used in organized crime groups, including “plugging” of drugs and “cuckooing” of local drug users or vulnerable individuals.
42. As a case officer, I have seized hundreds of drug lines from dealers and users, had them examined, and read thousands of mobile phone reports to understand how these groups operate and the language they use.
43. In my capacity as a SOCU officer, I have travelled across the UK in order to interview and gather evidence on those higher up the drug supply chain, organising the logistics, recruitment and finances relating to importation of Kilo amounts of Cocaine and the onward distribution network.
44. **September 2023**, I successfully applied to become a member of the full-time Drug Expert Witness team within Hampshire & IOW Constabulary.
45. The role of Drug Expert Witness within the Constabulary came with several responsibilities. I have listed below those, which I conducted on an almost daily basis:
- Provided advice to colleagues regarding the investigation into drugs supply.
 - Reviewed and quality assured submissions of drugs to forensic providers.
 - Examined and tested controlled drugs within Evidential Drug Identification Testing (EDIT) guidelines.
 - The examination and testing of suspected controlled drugs for urgent cases/remand.
 - Provided insights and valuations of seized controlled drugs.
 - I maintained knowledge around the pricing of controlled drugs within Hampshire and bordering counties where applicable.

- I maintained knowledge of drug types and trends prevalent across Hampshire.
- I interpreted thousands of mobile phone messages for drug codes/slang relating to the supply of drugs.
- I provided Drug Expert Witness reports for court.
- I reviewed and quality assured reports submitted by drug expert witnesses across the whole of Hampshire.

46. I have delivered drug awareness training to Student Police Officers at Hampshire Constabulary's Training School.

47. I have worked at large-scale music festivals in differing roles including covert observations watching drug dealing taking place, searching officer and as the Drugs Expert co-ordinator for Boomtown, Winchester, where I was involved in the planning and decision-making process for the event, assessing and reporting on numerous quantities of illicit drugs.

48. I have worked within the Boomtown music festival for approximately 10 years which has allowed me to interact with those that attend and gain valuable insight into the varieties of illicit drugs consumed within the footprint of the event.

49. Until the point of retirement from the Police, I was a member of the Drug Expert Witness Valuation Association for approximately 7 years. This is a professional group led by the Police which incorporates the views, experiences and knowledge of Police officers, Prison officers, Probation staff, Border agency staff and other relevant professional bodies. Persons from this group will meet on a regular basis to discuss drug trends and valuations.