

The Drug Expert Witness Service

CV – Adrian Lugg

I recently retired as a Detective Constable within Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary. Trained as a Drug Expert Witness in 2018 I went on to become one of three full time Drug Expert Witnesses for the Force.

I am trained to provide expert evidence in Organised Crime and Drug Trafficking cases and have experience in providing Drug Expert Witness reports in Encrochat investigations. These often involve thousands upon thousands of messages requiring review and interpretation. In addition to this, I am experienced in supply investigations concerning Heroin and Crack Cocaine including County Lines, Cocaine including Albanian supply methods, MDMA / Ecstasy, Ketamine, Cannabis including cultivation, and Amphetamine. I have 10 years of Festival experience, working at the Boomtown Festival near Winchester, the Isle of Wight Festival, Victorious, and Bestival before it moved out of Hampshire.

At Hampshire and IOW Constabulary, I was responsible for the allocation of other Drug Experts upon receipt of requests from case officers. I conducted the majority of the Quality Assurance/Peer Reviews of Drug Expert Witness reports for Hampshire Drug Experts. I sat on the Strategic Drug Related Harm panel, advising the Force on matters concerning drug safety for officers and staff. In 2023 I implemented safety equipment to allow safer testing of drugs in force and provided training to all other Drug Experts in Hampshire and IOW Constabulary in relation to the Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice [Version 1] which came in to force on 2nd October 2023.

Upon my retirement in February 2025, I had assisted the Court process by providing over 750 reports and attended Court to give live evidence in excess of 30 times since 2018.

Chronological experience

1. I joined Hampshire Constabulary in 2011 where I was initially posted to the Safer Neighbourhood Investigation Team at Southampton Police Station.
2. In 2013 I became the beat officer for the Northam area of Southampton which provided me with regular contact with those involved in the use and supply of drugs including (but not limited to): Heroin, Crack Cocaine and Cannabis.
3. Part of my role as the beat officer allowed me regular access and contact with those using drugs as well as agencies providing support for those with drug addiction

problems such as: Drug Treatment Agencies, Housing and Social Services affording me the opportunity to gain knowledge and insight into the lifestyle and difficulties posed by those engaged in the use of drugs.

4. As a Uniformed Police Constable I conducted searches of individuals and their vehicles. Some of these searches were intelligence led, but as I gained experience and knowledge about drug users and dealers which included the way they operated I was able to focus and target certain known areas.
5. These searches regularly resulted in either the detention for a further search or led to the arrest and subsequent search of the property operated or controlled by the individual.
6. I along with other Officers, executed numerous search warrants which resulted in me gaining experience of how drug users and dealers existed and operated.
7. I interacted with the dealers and users, who were able to give good accurate knowledge on pricing, quantities and the street language used by drug users and dealers.
8. I have conducted observations of addresses and locations used for the supply of drugs gaining first-hand experience of how the street supply of drugs is conducted.
9. I have investigated offences of drugs possession through to possession with intent to supply leading to the successful convictions for those involved.
10. As part of this process it has included the reviewing of forensic reports identifying and quantifying drugs seized, mobile phone downloads containing text messages relating to drugs use and supply, interview transcripts and officers reports.
11. I have seized phones from dealers and users; and had them examined. I have then read the mobile phone reports which has provided me with knowledge of how these groups work and operate their dealing networks.
12. I have read thousands of pages of text messages from mobile phone reports sent between drug dealers and their customers. I have seen the terminology and methodology employed by these groups in order to frustrate law enforcement activity.
13. I have conducted intelligence interviews with users and suppliers of controlled drugs gaining information on methods of drug use, supply and deal sizes & pricing for commodities including (but not limited to) Heroin, Crack Cocaine, Cocaine and Cannabis.
14. I have written statements for court around the impact of drugs supply within communities that have assisted with providing the courts with an overview of the harm caused by the supply and use of drugs.
15. Through this I was able to build up a good knowledge around drug dealers and the way they operated.

16. In February 2017 I became a member of the Western CID at Southampton within Operation Hawk which was a proactive unit focussed on the most prolific offenders surrounding burglary and drug supply.
17. This unit also incorporated the Drug Related Harm Team. That role enabled me to continue to have regular contact with those affected by the use or addiction of drugs.
18. I have been involved as a Police Officer with dealing with the emerging change to the local drugs market that has continued to the present day which is known as "County Lines".
19. 'County Line' drugs supply involves predominantly young males from outside the force area coming into the county to establish drug supply lines. This emerging trade exposed me to tactics used in organised crime groups involved in the supply of drugs, such tactics included "plugging" of drugs and "cuckooing" of local drug users or vulnerable individuals within the local area.
20. As part of that role I conducted regular proactive operations targeting Organised Criminal Gangs involved in the supply of drugs including Heroin and Crack Cocaine, Cocaine and Cannabis. During these plain clothes operations I was offered Heroin and Crack Cocaine by those selling drugs in Southampton on a number of occasions.
21. I have been exposed to an extensive variety of controlled drugs and provided perspective regarding their format, colour and consistency from various trafficking scenarios.
22. In 2015 I attended the London Drug Gangs presentation provided by a former convicted drug gang member at Hampshire Constabulary Training headquarters.
23. I have worked at large scale music festivals as a search officer and spoken with users and dealers of drugs. I have been able to observe individuals using drugs and the effects upon these persons who have used controlled substances such as MDMA, Cocaine, Ketamine and Cannabis.
24. In early 2018 I attended and completed a Drug Expert Witness course at Southwick Park in Hampshire.
25. Gained knowledge first hand after speaking to a drug user who became a drug dealer. This allowed me greater a depth of knowledge that could only have been gained by speaking so someone with this sort of experience. He showed me how crack cocaine and heroin are packaged for sale, and showed me how they are used by someone taking them. I have been shown how this particular dealer made deal lists, what slang words he used and methods used in the transportation of controlled substances.
26. I have witnessed how drugs are plugged and unplugged.
27. In the middle of 2018 I became a member of the Drug Expert Witness and Valuation Association (DEWVA).

28. I worked with officers from Hampshire and Sussex and shared knowledge around personal experiences with drug users and dealers. This allowed me to maintain knowledge around the pricing of controlled drugs within Hampshire and bordering counties.
29. In May 2018 I was trained in the use of the Thermofisher TruNarc hand held drug detection device by Hazmat, for the detection of Mephedrone & Ketamine.
30. Trained in the use of Bruker Alpha-Analyser to test Ketamine, Mephedrone and other chemical based drugs.
31. Trained in the use of the Drug ID II drug testing kit for the presumptive identification of Cocaine & Crack Cocaine.
32. Trained in the use of the marquis (BDH) drug testing kit for the presumptive identification of Heroin & Amphetamine.
33. Trained in the use of the MMC drug testing kit for the presumptive identification of MDMA (Ecstasy)
34. Trained to identify Herbal Cannabis, Cannabis Resin & Cannabis Female Flowering Head (Bud/Skunk).
35. Attended the Isle of Wight Festival in June 2018 where I spoke to drug users, giving me the chance to talk to them about pricing and the risks they were prepared to take bringing their own drugs with them.
36. Worked at Boomtown Festival in August 2018 where I spoke to other drug expert witnesses, including those working for the Festival itself. Also spoke with drug users, gaining further insight into how drugs were smuggled into the Festival.
37. In September 2018 I moved from the Operation Hawk team to the main CID team, still at Southampton Central police station. I continued to meet and speak to drug users, cuckoo victims and drug dealers.
38. Attended Cannabis refresher training day in October 2018 provided by DrugsTraining.com.
39. Attended MDMA refresher training day in November 2018 provided by DrugsTraining.com.
40. Attended annual DEWVA conference in Stratford upon Avon in November 2018. This event was attended by over 250 Drug Experts from all over the UK. This included:
 - a) County Lines – Lived experience from St Giles Trust.
 - b) Peer Review – National guidance.
 - c) Cannabis harvesting & manicuring – best practice.
 - d) Text message interpretations.
 - e) Illicit drug Production.
 - f) Cannabis Production.
 - g) Crack Cocaine Production.

- h) County Lines – Drug Expert Witness overview provided by the Metropolitan Police.
 - i) Identifying the trial issues & provision of expert evidence.
41. In January 2019 I completed a 2 week Serious and Complex interview training course.
 42. In February 2019 I attended a home office approved research location specialising in the production of Cannabis Plants. During which I saw & handled both THC & CBD plants at varying stages of growth from cutting to fully mature & harvested crops. I also observed Cannabis 'Mother Plants' being prepared and used to provide cuttings. I received inputs from specialists in the production of Cannabis plants, life cycle, timings, equipment and this also included an overview on risks from infestations.
 43. In March 2019 I attended training on how to harvest and manicure Cannabis plants.
 44. In April 2019 I became a Trainee Detective Constable and attended a 5 week detective training course.
 45. In August 2019 I attended the Boomtown Festival as a Drug Expert Witness making this the 7th year of working at Boomtown.
 46. In October 2019 I attended a 3 day course on County Lines which included an input on drug gang culture, exploitation, grooming, drill music and the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
 47. Attended annual DEWVA conference in Stratford upon Avon in November 2019. This event was attended by over 300 Drug Experts from all over the UK. This included inputs on current peer review guidance, steroid abuse, CBD vs THC in Cannabis, NCA report on current drug trends and inputs from the Drug Enforcement Agency, Canadian Police and from a senior prosecutor.
 48. I formally completed my training to become a Detective Constable at the end of November 2019.
 49. Between 2019 and 2021 I was seconded on to the Major Crime Investigation Team on different occasions. The majority of my taskings whilst on this team centred on the investigation into murders involving the use and/or supply of drugs.
 50. In March 2020 I successfully completed the Evidential Drug Identification trainer's course provided by Hampshire and Surrey Police and have since provided a number of courses to train Officers and Staff how to evidentially test certain drugs for possession cases.
 51. In October 2020 I was made a temporary full time Drug Expert Witness for two months, covering the whole of Hampshire. During this time I was exposed to more in depth investigations such as those being run by the Op Monument team who are specifically targeting those running County Lines operations in Hampshire.
 52. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic I kept in regular contact with other local drug expert witnesses and those associated with drugs work. This was to discuss prices, methodology and trends used by those involved in drug supply.

53. I have attended many Cannabis production sites, commonly called Cannabis Factories. They have ranged from one or two plants on a windowsill in someone's bedroom through to an industrial sized factory in 2021 where there were 1,700 Cannabis plants at varying levels of growth. All but the smallest I have seen were set up in a similar fashion with large bulbs, fans, ducting, nutrients, hoses, water butts, electrical sockets/wiring, and black-out sheets. The larger sites had more equipment to assist the growing process for the larger amount of plants growing.
54. In May 2021 I attended and completed a 5-day Organised Crime Drug Trafficking course enabling me to provide reports in drug investigations involving organised crime groups who import drugs into the UK for example.
55. At the beginning of September 2021 I was seconded to the full time Drug Expert Witness team for 4 months.
56. Attended annual DEWVA conference in Stratford upon Avon in November 2021. This event was attended by over 300 Drug Experts from all over the UK. This included inputs on current peer review guidance, CBD vs THC in Cannabis, NCA report on current drug trends and an input from an ex-heroin user on the benefits of Police carrying Naloxone.
57. In January 2022 I was made a permanent full time Drug Expert Witness within the counties of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.
58. Attended annual DEWVA conference in Stratford upon Avon in November 2022. This event was attended by over 300 Drug Experts from all over the UK. This included inputs from the NCA in relation to current drug trends/prices, a specialised Doctor who prescribes medicinal Cannabis in the UK, a King's Council Barrister and from a reformed international Cocaine importer.
59. Attended a 2-day CPD event in November 2022 in relation to providing expert evidence using best practice.
60. In August 2023 I attended the Boomtown Festival near Winchester where I provided advice to police and festival staff in relation to drugs seized throughout the 4 day festival. I spoke to those attending the festival who had had drugs taken from them at the entry gates. They told me the prices they had paid for their drugs, how the drugs affect them and how much they would now have to pay after having their drugs seized from them. I witnessed low level drug taking at the festival.
61. During 2023 I provided advice to the Force around the release of new guidance and codes of practice in relation to drug testing and the provision of Expert Evidence. I acted as a technical point of contact for the Drug Experts within Hampshire and IOW Constabulary and those in surrounding forces. I wrote and implemented policies and procedures as a result. The force now has better equipped facilities for drug testing.

62. The Forensic Science Regulator introduced their Code of Practice [Version 1] on 2nd October 2023. This instigated a change in some of the work carried out by Drug Experts and those testing drugs. The Code of Practice contains Forensic Science Activities which made it illegal to carry out certain tasks without being accredited to ISO standards to do so. This stopped Hampshire and IOW Constabulary from weighing drugs, testing drugs outside of the EDIT process, or even stating which class a particular drug fell into. I wrote and delivered a training input within Hampshire and IOW Constabulary and made recommendations on how to proceed in light of these new restrictions.
63. The supply and purity of Heroin from Afghanistan dropped considerably during 2023 causing the emergence of other drugs / products being put in the Heroin to bulk it out and / or increase the strength. Drugs known as Nitazenes and another called Xylazine were found in batches of Heroin and drugs purporting to be Heroin throughout the Country. In December 2023, both drug types were found in Hampshire and IOW. I provided safety advice and wrote risk assessments around handling these drugs and continued to monitor what was happening in other forces around the country. Some Nitazenes are hundreds and thousands times more potent than Heroin.
64. In November 2023 I attended the annual DEWVA conference in Stratford upon Avon. This event was attended by over 300 Drug Experts from all over the UK. This included inputs from the NCA in relation to current drug trends/prices, a senior Doctor within the NHS in relation to drug trends seen in the NHS setting, a Drug Forensic Scientist, His Majesty's Prison Service, and legal barristers in relation to the provision of DEW evidence both written and in court.
65. In April 2024 I attended a seminar where I was given inputs on drugs in UK prisons, drug importation into the UK and how the borders are policed, and on Cannabis "light" which is Cannabis flowers that contain predominantly CBD.
66. In May 2024 I attended a facility that grows Cannabis plants in order to provide the Cannabis flowers for medicinal purposes. The facility grows both THC plants and CBD plants and at the time of the visit, over 40,000 plants were being grown in various stages of development. While there I refreshed my training in regards to manicuring plants and also made some Cannabis resin using a bubble hash method. I received an input from a leading Cannabis botanist in relation to the lifecycle of a Cannabis plant.
67. In mid 2024, I became a Technical Manager for Hampshire and IOW Constabulary, in addition to continuing my role as a Drug Expert Witness. I wrote new procedures around working in laboratory conditions when testing drugs, setting up drug testing locations around the force, and the provision of training around these new procedures.

68. August 2024 brought another Boomtown Festival, for which I was the Force's drug lead. I wrote a plan for how the DEW team were going to support the festival and police requirements, test drugs safely following the changes introduced in the Forensic Science Regulator's Code of Practice [version 1]. I worked at the festival again that year, making it my 10th time of working there. I provided advice to Drug Expert Witnesses working for the festival company itself and to high ranking police officers within the event.
69. In November 2024 I attended the annual DEWVA conference in Stratford Upon Avon. This time, I received inputs from the NCA, HMP prison staff, a pharmacist who not only dispenses Cannabis medication but also take medicinal Cannabis themselves, and from two lawyers on report writing and disclosure.
70. Up to the end of 2024, I had been involved in a total of over 750 investigations requiring the need for Drug Expert evidence, to support the Court process. I had given live evidence in Crown Court in 25 cases and in Magistrates Court in around 5 cases up to that point.
71. I retired from Hampshire and IOW Constabulary in February 2025 and started The Drug Expert Witness Service, providing Drug Expert Witness advice and reports for police forces and solicitors nationwide. I am a member of Independent Drug Expert Alliance (IDEA) which provides ongoing CPD opportunities for its members.