



**EXCHANGING
PREVENTION PRACTICES
ON POLYDRUG USE
AMONG YOUTH
IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE
SYSTEMS**

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Background of the project
Young offenders are considered one of the most vulnerable or at risk groups of developing drug addiction and they are likely to be affected by serious problems, including health and social inequalities. In spite of that, very little attention has been paid to young people in contact with the Criminal Justice System (CJS) in terms of research and drug prevention policy and practice.

The Project

- addresses issues of health, healthy environments, and social inequality of a vulnerable group of young people (those in touch with CJS) who are at greater risk than their peers of developing problem drug use, including polydrug use and use of new psychoactive substances (NPS).
- identifies and describes drug using trajectories of the target group and key intervention points to facilitate prevention and intervention efforts and to promote healthier lifestyles.
- identifies and develops tools (e.g. guidelines for quality assurance) and mechanisms (e.g. Criminal Justice Practitioner Forum) to facilitate the implementation of 'best practice' approaches in EU member states.
- facilitates the exchange of knowledge across partner countries and across other EU member states - research based and experiential knowledge, shared and jointly developed.

Duration: 2017-2019

Methodology

- Collection and analysis of existing knowledge as well as the generation of new knowledge from research.
- Examination of existing European drug prevention quality standards, assessment of the relevance of existing standards for the development of prevention initiatives for the target group and the development of a new set of guidelines.
 - Working collaboratively with practitioners and other stakeholders relevant to the CJS and to drug prevention work with young people.
- Setting up systems to encourage knowledge exchange and communication across disciplines and across European countries.

Target group:

- Young people aged between 15 and 24 who have been in contact with the CJS in six European countries
- Professionals dealing with prevention and drug treatment, policy makers and other stakeholders

Project partners:

Karen Duke and Betsy Thom: Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, Middlesex University (UK) **coordinator**
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Franca Beccaria and Sara Rolando: Eclectica (Italy)
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