

As the Crime and Drug Manager for the Boomtown Festival in 2017, I was keen to maximise our efforts to reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs at the festival and developed a strategy which sought to reduce the supply and demand for illegal drugs as well as reduce the harms they caused.

A key part of this strategy was the use of Multi Agency Safety Testing (MAST) delivered by The Loop. My view was that this pioneering new service could add significantly to Boomtown's efforts to educate festival goers about the use of illegal drugs and therefore potentially reduce the harms caused by those drugs. I was also aware that Boomtown would be the largest festival that the MAST service had been delivered to so was keen to ensure that the service delivered as promised and was professional in its approach.

The Loop delivered their MAST service over 3 days at the festival having more than 1100 drug samples handed in for analysis and delivering fifteen-minute interventions to over 2,000 people who handing the drugs in for analysis. The importance of this real time analysis came to the fore when a particularly dangerous substance was identified which enabled both the Loop and Boomtown to publish harm reduction alerts to all those at the festival which I truly believe was responsible for keeping those negatively impacted by the drug so low in number.

The Loop were very professional in their approach at the festival with the actual setup of the laboratory and area for delivering the interventions particularly impressive. The Loop's management team on site were easy to work with and were very respectful to the established processes of the festival and ensured analytical data from that day's testing was delivered in time for the daily Festival Management meetings.

Having been a Police Officer for 33 years and a recently retired Police Drugs Lead, I was very pleased to see that The Loop understood and fully complied with the provisions of the Misuse of Drugs Act which added to our confidence about the service provision.

The most telling impression of the MAST service at the festival came from both the Medical and Welfare providers on site who reported a significant reduction in serious drug related incidents and attributed this in no small way to the impact of MAST on site.


Overall, I found the MAST service delivered by The Loop to be professional and very effective in helping to achieve our objective to reduce drug harms at the festival. I would thoroughly recommend this service to other festivals and hope they return to Boomtown next year.

Paul Bunt


Boomtown Crime & Drug Manager



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