**What is ‘Spiking’?**

‘Spiking’ is giving someone alcohol or drugs without their knowledge, usually with the intention to make them vulnerable. Most reported cases of spiking involve victims having their drinks altered, either by adding an illegal substance such as a ‘date rape’ drug or having alcohol (or more alcohol) added. ‘Spiking’ someone is illegal, yet victims often don’t report it.

The experience of being ‘spiked’ can be very scary, both physically and emotionally. It can also be distressing for the victim’s friends and family.

‘Spiking’ is something that should not happen, everyone should feel safe to enjoy themselves without the fear of having this happen to them. In light of recent reports, we would like to share supportive information and safety advice to young people across Sheffield.

**How to tell if someone has been ‘Spiked’?**

It can be difficult to recognise the signs and symptoms of spiking, as these can look very similar to alcohol intoxication. But it can be helpful to look out for the following:

* A rapid and noticeable change in behaviour (such as being okay and then appearing heavily intoxicated in a short space of time).
* Difficulties speaking, like slurred speech.
* Blurred vision and problems with balance and coordination.
* Confusion/memory loss/blackouts.
* Hallucinations & paranoia.
* Nausea and Vomiting.
* Loss of consciousness/appearing non-responsive.

**I think I have been ‘spiked’, what should I do?**

It can be difficult to recognise the above symptoms, as they may come on very quickly, but if you are able to:

* Tell someone you trust and ask them to stay with you.
* If you are in a bar/club, alert security, or a member of staff.
* If you feel in danger or unwell call or text 999 (if registered for text support).
* When able, and if comfortable to do so, make a report to the police at the earliest opportunity - many substances will be undetectable after 72 hours, and some after 12 hours, so doing this as early as possible is advised.
* If concerned about sexual assault, services such as Rape Crisis or SRASAC (Sheffield) provide support to victims of sexual assault and violence.

**I think my friend has been ‘spiked’, what should I do?**

It can be very distressing to witness the signs and symptoms of a friend being spiked, try to stay as calm as possible:

* Support them to a safe space and stay with them – call another friend for further assistance if possible.
* If you are in a bar/club, alert security, or a member of staff.
* Try to prevent them from drinking any/anymore alcohol.
* Keep talking to them and offering reassurance.
* Don’t let them go home on their own, or with anyone they don’t know/trust.
* Call an ambulance if their condition deteriorates.

**Can you ‘tell’ that a drink has been ‘spiked’?**

It can be incredibly difficult to detect that a drink has been ‘spiked’, but if you notice any changes to the appearance or taste of a drink pour it away, if in a bar/club alert security or staff. Whilst many reports of ‘spiking’ include the use of substances (for example GHB/Rohypnol/Ketamine), ‘spiking’ can also be the process of using alcohol to intentionally intoxicate someone, which can also be difficult to recognise.

**How can I prevent being ‘spiked’?**

Spiking should not happen and having a drink spiked is never the victim’s fault, but feeling fearful of it happening and wanting to protect yourself and feel safe is natural:

* ‘Spikey’s’/bottle-stops, and items like ‘Stoptopps’ can be a good resource to keep your drink protected.
* Avoid accepting drinks from people you don’t know.
* Avoid leaving drinks unattended.
* If you witness someone acting unusual or attempting to gain access to yours or someone else’s drink – report them/the incident immediately.