



A FILM BY VICE  
DIRECTED BY WILLIAM FAIRMAN & MAX GOGARTY  
A Peccadillo Pictures Release

# CHEMSEX



*"Vulnerable gay men with issues around sex, new drugs that tapped into that problem and changing technology. What they call the perfect storm"*

Chemsex: the name given to the rising phenomenon which refers to the use of drugs in a sexual context. Often referring to group sex that can last for days, the allure of chemsex has led to many young men being trapped in a vicious circle of sex, addiction and dependence.

This powerful and potent film tells the stories of gay men whose lives have been affected by the crisis; from self-confessed 'slammers' to sexual health workers, from those who deny there's a problem to those who 'got out alive'. Offering unprecedented access, CHEMSEX is a brave and unflinching journey into the hidden world of modern, urban gay life.

**On DVD and On-Demand 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2016**

**DVD Extras:** *DJ Fat Tony Interview; 'Lord Fowler Interview' Public Health England Interview with Kevin Fenton; Terrence Higgins Trust Interview; Royal Vauxhall Tavern Q+A; Matt Spike's Photo Exhibit: Poetry Reading at Manbar*

**UK / English / 2015 / 83 min / Cert: 18**

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## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT – WILLIAM FAIRMAN & MAX GOGARTY**

CHEMSEX is a confessional show-and-tell about a community's search for intimacy and belonging, in what are all too often the wrong places. This search creates a parallel reality, a secret world where people hide their addiction in plain sight, living in a cycle of extreme pleasure and pain, validation and isolation.

What started as a look into a 'healthcare emergency,' soon evolved into a complex revelation. It wasn't the sex or the drugs that shocked. Neither was it the danger or the consequences. It was the realisation that, for the majority of people, it was intimacy and not lust nor hedonism that was the driving force behind their behaviour.

The decision to turn a camera on this subject came from seeing first-hand how this community were starting to respond to this crisis. From anonymous voices on social networks to an NHS sexual health clinic creating the first ever position for a drugs worker on premises, it became clear to us that 'chemsex' was pushing people's physical and mental health to breaking point, not to mention the resources of those on the frontline trying to stem this epidemic.

The film, we hope, touches upon wholly universal notions of internalized shame, cycles of self-destruction and eventual redemption through this very modern and little known health emergency.

## DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHIES



**William Fairman** is a Director at VICE. He has produced and directed some of their most popular and acclaimed documentaries such as Fashion Week Internationale and The Debt Collector and previously oversaw all of their UK online video content, leading their multi award winning Rule Britannia strand. Fairman is now Showrunner of 'Gaycation', a forthcoming LGBT travel and culture series hosted by, Ellen Page.



**Max Gogarty** started his career in writing, where he won a BAFTA Craft Award for his work on Channel 4's Skins at the age of 19. He then moved into documentaries, developing C4's Fried Chicken Shop at Mentorn Media and producing the Grierson-shortlisted documentary Payday at Pulse Films. Formerly head of development at VICE UK, Max is now Content Editor at BBC Three, developing and producing a number of films for the channel's proposed move online in 2016. CHEMSEX is his first feature length documentary.

## BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

This [VICE.com](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/the-week-long-meth-fuelled-sex-parties-taking-over-londons-gay-scene) article from 2013 was the starting point for the directors' investigation into the world of chemsex: [http://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/read/the-week-long-meth-fuelled-sex-parties-taking-over-londons-gay-scene](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/the-week-long-meth-fuelled-sex-parties-taking-over-londons-gay-scene)

Statistics in a chemsex study from 2014 by 56, Dean Street Clinic - a specialist chemsex support clinic in London - showed that 3,000 gay men had used recreational drugs access to their services each month. 70% reported no 'chem-free' sex in previous 6 months and 98% had never accessed statutory drug use support.

[Source: <http://www.chemsexsupport.com/mediscript-1-year>]

## **CREW**

Producer / Director: William Fairman

Producer / Director: Max Gogarty

Exec Producer: Al Brown

Exec Producer: Kevin Sutcliffe

Exec Producer: Jacqueline Edenbrow

Composer: Daniel Harle

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