

Detective Sergeant Neil Woods (Ret.)

Derbyshire, England

Neil Woods served with the Derbyshire Constabulary for 26 years as a Detective and Detective Sergeant. For thirteen of those years, he worked undercover on drug cases, purchasing heroin and crack cocaine and infiltrating organized crime. He also trained social workers and youth social workers on the effects of drugs and taught undercover techniques throughout Yorkshire and East Midlands. He received the Chief Constables Award for bravery during an undercover operation and a number of other commendations.



Neil's years as an undercover officer taught him how terribly the Drug War harms those to whom nobody listens. "Early on in my undercover work, I met an intelligent, homeless heroin addict in Brighton convinced he would not survive the winter. Society had abandoned him to live at the mercy of criminals." He believes that the perspectives of officers with front-line experience are being ignored. "Every time we performed a 'clampdown' on the gangs, two things would happen. New suppliers stepped up their brutality in competition for the freshly shaken-up market, and society's most vulnerable also got a 'clampdown' to terrify them into not speaking to the police."

He joined LEAP to raise awareness of the need for regulation. "My daughter can't get served alcohol at a bar or supermarket. When she is old enough, if she chooses to drink she will be protected. She won't go blind drinking moonshine, and she won't get shot by brewery bosses competing for her business. Other drugs are harmful too, and our children need protection." Neil lives in Derbyshire and provides expert testimony on drug cases for the Crown Prosecution Service. He is a board member of the Drugs Expert Evidence and Valuation Association (DEEVA).