



Skills for Security

Fact Sheet - 1

Update and Classification of Drugs





Introduction

The purpose of these fact sheets is to keep you up to date with current legislation and practices. We will do our very best to ensure any update is released to you via the website as a downloadable document. When the workbooks get revised we will update each edition accordingly.

In this fact sheet we will be looking at illegal highs and remind you of the categories of drugs as it stands as of June 2016. We will also look at the offences committed around the use and supply of drugs and medical procedures you may need as a first aider to deal with someone who you find suffering as a result of taking drugs. First let us look at these illegal highs and determine what they are.



Illegal Highs

Illegal Highs come under three categories of Sedatives (making users feel relaxed or euphoric), Stimulants (making users feel energised), or psychedelics (altering perceptions and making users hallucinate). Highs are also known as NPS, 5-IAI, New Psychoactive Substances, Silver Bullet, New Drugs, MDAT, Eric 3, Dimethocaine, Bath Salts. These Highs gives the user similar effects as more common drugs such as Cannabis, Cocaine or Ecstasy. However, the make-up of the drug is regularly changed so it would not fall under the Misuse of Drugs Act. The problem is that as one type of drug is made illegal the recipe is altered, a new drug is made this then falls outside of the legislation. In the past these drugs were served over the counter in 'Head' shops along with other drug kit. The drug was advertised as being made for research and included labels on the packets that stated that the chemical was, 'not for human consumption.' This was another way of ensuring the product fell outside UK legislation.



As with any medication these illegal highs were often more dangerous than some of the drugs



which were banned and often caused severe illness or death. The reason for this was dealers would blend anything in to the drug such as fertilisers, rat poison. Drugs which have been illegal for some time were cut and included in this deadly cocktail. Many of the substances included were not tested as safe so the outcome of taking these were unknown. These drugs are sold in a variety of forms - powder, pills, liquids, capsules, perforated tabs and smoking mixtures, to name a few.

These drugs are now classed as **New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)** so no matter how the drug is altered they will fall under this category. Research from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) showed that there were 97 recorded deaths from legal highs in the UK in 2012, up from 12 in 2009. The CSJ, an independent think tank, says that the UK has the highest number of legal high users among young people in Europe. Clearly some action was needed to deal with this immediately.



What to look out for



As we have already said these drugs are sold in a variety of forms - powder, pills, liquids, capsules, perforated tabs and smoking mixtures. So when carrying out any type of search we need to keep this in mind and look for clues based on their delivery into the body. Commonly these types of drugs are snorted but they have been known to be injected in to the body. Delivery by injection is the most dangerous way to take any type of drug. Smoking is either by a joint

or by using a pipe/bong. So when searching venues, premises or persons look out for the tools of the trade. It is a point to note that great care must be taken to ensure you do not puncture yourself with any needles. Not only do you risk being affected by the drug but also risk infection through the exchange of bloods such as Hepatitis, Aids etc. Some users have also been known to drop drugs in to the eye and the effects are almost instant



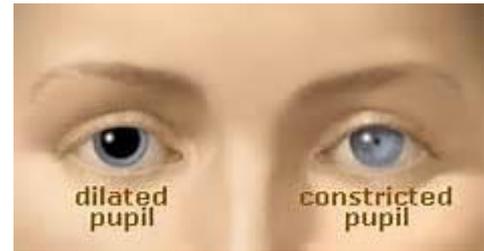
Illegal Highs are sold in what would appear in the first instance as sweet packets, however they will try to hide the drug and repackage them especially now they are illegal. NPS are normally sold as powders, pills or capsules. The powders can range from white to brown to yellow in colour and from flour-like to little crystals in consistency. While the pills and capsules can range in size, shape and colour. The smoking mixtures tend to come in colourful packaging, often with labels describing the contents as incense or herbal smoking mixture, and the contents look like dried herbs or plant cuttings. Although they look herbal, they are actually plant material sprayed with potent chemicals.





Effects of taking illegal highs

The effects of taking illegal highs on the human body is unknown due to the fact that the drug itself is made up of all types of chemicals some of which are unknown to this day. The effects can vary and commonly take about an hour to be absorbed by the body and into the blood stream. Individuals may experience a sudden energy rush, sweat, sickness, drowsiness, dizziness and even heart palpitations. Pupils may be dilated some drugs will cause the pupils to go small, others will cause them to go large. Overheating or comma and in some cases death. Hallucinations, aggressive or erratic behaviour may be present and show total disregard for their safety. Some users like drinking excess alcohol will feel they have some form of superpower that makes them invincible and end up doing stupid things like climbing scaffolding or nearby buildings.



Treatment

The main treatment for those who have taken drugs is the same and that is to monitor the airway, breathing and circulation. If they are unconscious, place them in the recovery position. When commencing CPR be aware that they may have taken drugs and so the airway



may be contaminated. If you can, use a face shield to give you additional protection. If they vomit, try and keep a sample so the laboratories can test what has been taken but remember again cross contamination. Always wear gloves and if there is any signs of packaging or external clues that might help diagnose the drug then note it or pick it up and give them to the ambulance personnel along with the time taken if you have access to that information.

Law and Legislation

The UK Psychoactive Substances Act came into effect on the 26 May 2016, which banned NPS. This legislation makes it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, import or export (including over the internet) any psychoactive substances. Possession of a psychoactive substance is not an offence, except in a 'custodial institution' such as a prison or young offender's institution. Products such as nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, food and medicinal products are exempt from the Act. The Home Office has also said that "Poppers" or alkyl nitrates do not fall under the Act. Supplying NPS to someone else, including your friends, or buying them from internet sites based abroad to be delivered here, can mean you can get a prison sentence and/or a fine. The maximum custodial sentence available in a



solemn prosecution under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 is 7 years.

The legislation gives powers to law enforcement to take action against all suppliers of NPS. There are provisions for civil sanctions, prohibition notices, and prohibition orders to enable the police and local authorities to adopt a proportionate response. The Act doesn't replace the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) so laws around existing illegal (controlled) drugs will remain the same.

Possession

This is where you get caught with drugs that you're going to use yourself. A report will be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service or in Scotland the Procurator Fiscal to decide whether to prosecute you or not. Depending on the Class of drug you're caught with and individual circumstances, you may get up to 7 years' imprisonment or an unlimited fine or both.

Supply (Dealing)

You don't have to be a big-time drug dealer to be charged with supply-related offences. If you're caught with drugs and it looks like you've bought them to sell, or give to your friends, you could be charged with 'possession with intent to supply' or 'supplying drugs'. Either offence can mean up to life imprisonment or an unlimited fine or both.

The Misuse of Drugs Act divides drugs into three classes - A, B and C. Class A drugs carry the heaviest penalties.

Class A

Drug: 2CB, Amphetamines, Cocaine, Heroin, LSD, Magic Mushrooms, MDMA - Ecstasy, Mescaline, Methadone, Methamphetamine, Opiates, Opioids and Painkillers, PCP, PMA.

Possession: Up to 7 years in prison, or a fine, or both.

Production or dealing: Up to life in prison, or a fine, or both.



Cocaine can come in blocks or powder



Heroin white or light brown in colour. Can be heated up and injected in to body



Class B

Drug: 2-DPMP, Amphetamines, Cannabis, Codeine, Mephedrone, Methoxetamine or MXE, Naphyrone, Opiates, Opioids and Painkillers, Synthetic Cannabinoids.

Possession: Up to 5 years in prison, or a fine, or both.

Production or dealing: Up to 14 years in prison, or a fine, or both.



Cannabis plants require a lot of heat and power to harvest. They are often grown in the home. Due to the amount of power needed to farm Cannabis the power supply to the home is often tampered with so it does not go through the meter. It is often taken from the property nearby. Foil is used to redirect heat on to the plants and prevent heat source being picked up by helicopter. Cannabis has alternated between Class C and B and active debates go on to legalise the drug. Cannabis seeds can be used in birdseed or as bait in fishing. But, it is illegal to grow cannabis seeds into plants. Cannabis is not recognised as having any therapeutic value under the law in England and Wales, and a person can commit any of the range of offences including possession and supply.

However, there is a cannabis-based product – Sativex – which can be legally prescribed and supplied in limited circumstances.

In 2006 the Home Office licensed Sativex so that:

- Doctors, at their own risk, could privately prescribe the drug,
- Pharmacists could possess and dispense the drug, and
- Named patients with a prescription could possess the drug



Under Article 75 of the Schengen Agreement the UK allows residents of other EU States which have signed up to this to travel with their prescribed narcotic or psychotropic substances, including Cannabis, into the UK as long as they have a certificate authorising this from their own country. The certificate is valid for up to 30 days. This only applies to residents of other Schengen states, and not to UK residents who are prescribed Cannabis in another country.



Class C

Drug: Anabolic Steroids, Gamma hydroxybutyrate, Ketamine, Khat, Phenazepam, Piperazines, Tranquillisers.

Possession: Up to 2 years in prison, or a fine, or both.

Production or dealing: Up to 14 years in prison, or a fine, or both.



Ketamine is often used in general surgery to induce a trance like state prior to Entonox or laughing gas. It is used as a pain relief and can be in liquid or tablet form. It is also used as a tranquillizer for animals.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure they are in charge of any motor vehicle and will be prosecuted when driving a motor vehicle whilst unfit from taking drugs. It is important to stress that some members of the community go to public events and deliberately spike drinks for sex. Look after yourself, do not accept drinks off strangers and do not let your drink leave your sight. Ask someone you trust and know to look after it whilst you are away. If you are unsure about any substance or medicine found, please consult your local police who will be able to offer you more advice.

As of this date there are more arguments to make all drugs legal irrespective of their categorisation. Some say that this is down to the policing of drugs failing and that it should not be a criminal case but a referral to the health services for further treatment like any other addiction such as alcohol, cigarettes etc. I wait to hear the outcome of this but as it stands today nothing has changed from the above. If it does become legal we will inform you. This fact sheet has not been designed to replace any course but used in conjunction with other such material.



Every opportunity has been made to ensure this information is accurate however Skills for Security cannot be held responsible for any changes made to the legislation and therefore cannot be held responsible whatsoever. By downloading this document, you have agreed to these terms.