
Recent law changes mean you could face up to a seven year prison sentence for giving or selling these drugs. With any drugs you never know what you getting and they can be incredibly harmful.

Find out more on the following pages.



THE LAW ON SO CALLED "LEGAL HIGHS" HAS CHANGED

So-called "legal highs" (psychoactive substances) are substances which seek to mimic the effects of drugs such as cocaine and ecstasy, but are not currently controlled as class A, B, or C drugs.

It is now illegal to supply any so-called "legal highs" for human consumption. This includes selling them or giving them away for free (even to friends) when they are going to be taken for their psychoactive effects.

Importing them from abroad will also be a crime.

Police will take action where they find people committing these offences. Punishments range from a prohibition notice, which is a formal warning, to 7 years in prison.

Police and other agencies also have new powers. They will be able to stop and search people they think are supplying and they will seize and destroy so-called "legal highs" where they find them.

Drugs that are already illegal, such as cocaine, ecstasy, heroin and a number of so-called legal highs that have already been controlled as class A, B or C drugs, are not affected by these changes to the law. It is a crime to have these drugs in your possession at all. Police will keep taking action when they find these substances as before.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF SO CALLED "LEGAL HIGHS"?

A psychoactive substance is defined in the new law as a drug which is capable of affecting a person's mental functioning or emotional state, but is not currently controlled as a class A, B or C drug. The sections below give examples of this in more detail.

In fact, for many so-called 'legal highs', there has been little or no useful research into the short or long-term risks from human consumption. Psychoactive substances have widely different strengths and effects on different people. You can become addicted too.

The three main categories of drugs do not detail every reported risk of every single 'legal high'.

- **Stimulant psychoactive substances** which act like amphetamines ('speed'), mephedrone, naphyrone, cocaine or ecstasy can make you feel overconfident and disinhibited, induce feelings of anxiety, panic, confusion, paranoia, and even cause psychosis, which can lead you to put your own safety at risk. This type of drugs can put a strain on your heart and nervous system. They may give your immune system a battering so you might get more colds, flu and sore throats. You may feel quite low for a while after you've stopped using them.
- **'Downer' or sedative psychoactive substances** similar to cannabis, benzodiazepines (drugs like diazepam or Valium), or GHB/GBL, can reduce inhibitions and concentration, slow down your reactions and make you feel lethargic, forgetful or physically unsteady, placing you at risk of accidents. This type of drugs can also cause unconsciousness, coma and death, particularly when mixed with alcohol and/or with other 'downer' drugs. Some people feel very anxious soon after they stop taking 'downers', and if a severe withdrawal syndrome develops in heavy drug users, it can be particularly dangerous and may need medical treatment.
- **Psychedelic or hallucinogenics'** which act like LSD and magic mushrooms can cause confusion, panics and strong hallucinatory reactions ('bad trips'), and their effects can make you behave erratically and put your own safety at serious risk – including from self-harm. Some psychedelic drugs create strong dissociative effects, which make you feel like your mind and body are separated. Both of which can interfere with your judgement, which could put you at risk of acting carelessly or dangerously, and of hurting yourself, particularly in an unsafe environment.

If you are worried about drugs and want further confidential help and advice you can visit talktofrank.com or call FRANK on 0300 123 6600