

Novel Psychoactive Substances

City of London Substance Misuse Team

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Novel psychoactive substances (Legal Highs)

Briefing for City of London Police Officers

What are legal highs?

Legal highs are psychoactive (brain altering) compounds often made synthetically in the lab for recreational use. They contain similar chemicals to those in illegal drugs, such as amphetamines, MDMA (ecstasy) or cannabis. To get around the Misuse of Drugs Act, typically a few molecules are changed in the lab to avoid them being officially classified as illegal.

Just because it's sold as legal, doesn't mean that it's safe – the buyer can't know for sure what chemicals and substances are in what they have bought, so it is possible that **what is sold as a legal high may contain illegal substances and/or very damaging substances.**

What's in legal highs?

Testing of legal highs has found that some drugs sold as legal:

- Contain substances that are illegal and extremely harmful
- Do not contain the advertised active substances
- Contain chemicals that have never been used in drugs for human consumption, and so they haven't been tested to show that they are safe or unsafe
- Give no indication of the psychoactive substances in the list of ingredients
- Police in Strathclyde have carried out an extensive range of tests of drugs sold as legal highs and found 19% actually contained illegal drugs.

What do legal highs look like?

Most legal highs are sold as pills, capsules, powders, seeds, crystals and liquids. The pills vary in size, shape and colour and sometimes have distinct markings printed or carved into them. The powders vary from white to brown in colour and from flour like to little crystals in consistency.

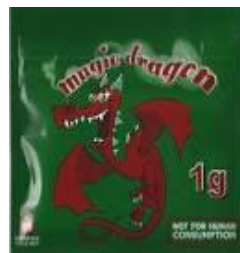
- Pills, tablets and capsules tend to be swallowed
- Powder tends to be snorted
- Crystals tend to be snorted
- Seeds tend to be smoked
- There have also been reports of people injecting legal highs



What are legal highs called?

There are an increasing number of legal highs in the UK and the Government estimates that one new legal high comes onto the market every week. Some legal highs are known by their brand name. Many brand names or street names are similar to the names of illegal drugs (e.g. XTC, K-Kane, Snow Blow, Speedway) to give the consumer an indication of what effects they have, and many are sold in packaging with symbols that refer to illegal drugs.

See appendix for a list of street names and commercial names.



What are the effects and risks of taking legal highs?

	Stimulant	Downer or sedative	Psychedelic or hallucinogenic
Similar to	amphetamines (speed), cocaine, or ecstasy	benzodiazepines (drugs such a valium or diazepam), and cannabis and GHB/GBL	LSD, magic mushrooms and ketamine
Effects & risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • energized • excited • physically active • fast thinking • very chatty • euphoric • overconfident and disinhibited • anxious, panicked, confused, paranoid and even psychotic. • Sore nose • Bleeding from the nose • Confusion • Irritability • Aggression • Time distortion • Hallucinations • Pupil dilations • Blurred vision • Headache • Elevated blood pressure • Chest pain • Dry mouth • Suppressed appetite • Dizziness • Nausea • Seizures • Disturbed sleep patterns • Muscle spasms • Overheating of the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • euphoric • relaxed • sleepy • reduce inhibitions and concentration • making you feel forgetful, • slowed reactions. • Lethargy • Physically unsteady so at a greater risk of accidents • Unconsciousness, coma or death if mixed with alcohol or other 'downer' drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • altered perceptions and hallucinations • euphoric • Warmth • Detachment from the world around • Confusion • Panic attacks • Erratic behavior

What are legal highs sold as?

Suppliers aren't allowed to sell legal highs for human consumption; they are required by law to print the words 'not for human consumption' on the packaging. Sellers get round the law by selling legal highs for a number of different purposes, including:

- Research chemicals
- Bath salts
- Plant food
- Pond cleaner
- Air fresheners
- Room odourisers
- Chemical reagents
- Herbal highs
- Herbal incense
- Herbal remedies

It is estimated that legal highs are available to buy on around 700 websites worldwide, 140 of which are in the UK. Legal highs are also sold at head shops, stalls at music festivals, and by dealers in nightclubs, and pubs.

The law

The Government changed the law in 2010 to allow new drugs to be subject quickly to a TCDO (Temporary Class Drug Order). This outlaws the import and supply (rather than banning its possession) of the substance. However, the labs that manufacture these drugs can make small molecular changes and quickly produce a whole range of new and untested drugs. So, even with this new legislation in place, it is extremely difficult for the authorities to keep up with the many new substances entering the market.

Club drugs

Club drugs are different to legal highs as generally they have already been legally classified and more is known about them, but they may be used in similar situations. These drugs are typically used in pubs, clubs and parties. They are called club drugs to differentiate them from heroin and crack, which are the drugs typically associated with the most problematic and damaging use. Club drugs may be illegal (e.g. ketamine, mephedrone, GBL/GHB, cocaine and MDMA (ecstasy)) or legal (some synthetic cannabinoids or research chemicals). They are usually bought through friends, a regular dealer or from someone in a club.

Appendix A
Street names and brands of NPSs (legal and illegal)

<p>Numbers 2-DPMP 5-EAPD 5-IAI 5-meo-DALT 6-APB</p>	<p>A Afghan incense Alchemy AMT Annihilation Aroma Ayahuasca</p>
<p>B Bz Banshee dust Bath salts Beans Beladonna Benzo fury Black ice Black jacks Black mamba genesis Blast Bliss Blizzard Blow Blue lotus Blueberry crush Bomb powder Bombay blue extreme Bubble Bubblegum kush Bud factory Bullet BZP</p>	<p>C C original Cebil/Yopo seeds Chalk Charge Charge+ Charly Sheen Cherry Bomb Chill out Chill zone Chillax Chillem black China white Ching Clockwork Orange Cloud 10 storm Columbiana Critical haze</p>
<p>D D2PM Desoxypipradol Devils Blood Devils drop Diphenylmethlpyrrolidine Disco biscuits DMC (Dimenthocaine) DMT Doob Doves Doves dance Doves red</p>	<p>E Eclipse El blanco Energy-3 Ephedrine Etizolam Euphoria Exodus Exodus- - Mary Joy Exodus – damnation Experience xscape</p>

<p>Dream Dream herb Dust till dawn Dutchy DXM</p>	
<p>F Fairy dust Fly Agaric Forula X Fury XC Fusion</p>	<p>G GBL Gogaine Gold dust Gold seal Green ganuales Grove love</p>
<p>H Happy caps Happy joker Hawaiian baby woodrose Herbal Ecstasy Herbal haze Hibena caps High beams High grade</p>	<p>I iBlaze Ice bud Indo kratum – Red vein borneo Ivory wave</p>
<p>J Ja rush Jack & Jills JoKane Jolly crystal bomb (JCB) Jumping beans</p>	<p>K K-Kane 1G K-Kane 3G K2 Kana extract Khat King B King cobra Kratom Kratom extract Kratom leaf Kryptonite</p>
<p>L L-high Lady B Lime fantasia London underground devils Loop</p>	<p>M M-CAT Maca booster Mad cat Magic beans Magic crystals Magic dragon Magic silver Marley Mary J MDEX Meow Meow(Methedrone) Methedrone Methylone</p>

	<p>Miaow Miaow (Methedrone) Mind Melt MKAT MMCAT Morning Glory Move energy MPA Mr Bad Guy Mr White MXE (Methoxetamine)</p>
<p>N Naphyrone NBOMe NRG-1 NRG-2 NRG-3</p>	<p>O Ocean Snow Odyssey One Wish Orange X-Tra</p>
<p>P Pablo Pandoras Box Pheonix Pimp Grade Pink Champagnes Pink Panthers Poke Poke Extreme Poppers Private Reserve Psyclone – Mary Joy Psyclone Powder Pulse Purple Bomb Purple Ohms Purple Wave Pyrazolam</p>	<p>R R2-D2 Race Rapture Raz Recharge Red Rockets Red Vein Borneo Revolver Rockstars Rush</p>
<p>S Salvia Divinorum Salvia Extract Salvia leaf San Pedro San Pedro Cactus Scope Sectioned Sensate Sensation Silent Black Silly Walk Sirus</p>	<p>T Tantric The Sidfewinder Toxic Waste Train Wreck Tribe</p>

Skullcap Smileys 2 Smileys UK Smokey Snow Snow White Sinic Boom Sparkle (MDAI) Sparkle E Spellbound Spellweaver Spice Spice Gold Spike 99 Spun Out Stealth Bomber Sub Zero Super Charge Sweet leaf Synthacaine	
V Valerian Vanilla Sky Viper Voyager	W Warrier White lady White MM White Rockets White Widow
X Xtacy	Y Ypd Out Yukutan Fire
Z Zen ZZ1	