



HM Government

in association with



Cannabis:

The law
has changed



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Cannabis has been reclassified up from a **Class C** to a **Class B** drug.

This means that there are more severe penalties for people caught in the possession of cannabis.

IF YOU ARE 18 AND OVER AND CAUGHT WITH CANNABIS

If you are caught with cannabis, the police **will** take action.

You can be arrested – even if it is the first time that you have been caught.

As well as confiscating your cannabis, the agreed police response will be to:

- Give you a cannabis warning if it is the first time you have been caught with cannabis.
- Give you a Penalty Notice for Disorder if it is the second time you have been caught with cannabis. This is an on-the-spot fine of £80.
- Arrest you if it is the third or more time you have been caught with cannabis. If you are convicted of possession, you can be sentenced to a maximum of five years in prison and given an unlimited fine. You will also have a criminal record.

IF YOU ARE BETWEEN 10 AND 17

If you are caught with cannabis, the police **will** take action. You can be arrested – even if it is the first time that you have been caught. You can also be referred to a Youth Offending Team at any stage.

As well as confiscating your cannabis, the agreed police response will be to:

- Give you a reprimand if it is the first time you have been caught with cannabis.
- Give you a final warning and refer you to a Youth Offending Team if it is the second time you have been caught with cannabis.
- Arrest you if it is the third or more time you have been caught with cannabis. If you are convicted of possession, you can be sentenced to a maximum of five years in prison and given an unlimited fine. You will also have a criminal record.

If there are aggravating factors present the police will escalate their response accordingly.



IF YOU SUPPLY CANNABIS TO OTHER PEOPLE

If the police think that you are dealing cannabis, they will arrest you. If you are convicted of supplying or intending to supply cannabis, you can be sentenced to a maximum of 14 years in prison and given an unlimited fine. If you sell cannabis near schools, you can get a stiffer prison sentence.

THE RISKS OF USING CANNABIS

Using cannabis can harm both your physical and mental health. There is already evidence that cannabis use is associated with a higher risk of future mental health problems. These health risks could be worse if you are young, you smoke a lot and you smoke strong cannabis, like skunk.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Cannabis:

- can make you become anxious, panicky, suspicious and paranoid
- affects your co-ordination
- increases your heart rate and affects your blood pressure
- can cause lung disease and may increase the risk of cancer in long-term heavy users
- can affect your fertility
- can make you feel lethargic and sap your motivation.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS TO YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

There is evidence that regular cannabis users have an increased risk of developing serious mental health problems, including schizophrenia. It is possible that using strong cannabis, like skunk, might increase these risks. You don't know how it will affect your mental health in the future.

You shouldn't take cannabis at all if you've a history of mental health problems, depression or paranoia.

For more information,
talk to FRANK on 0800 77 66 00
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