



London Borough
of Hounslow

VISIONS

is the drug and alcohol service providing support for young people in Hounslow.

**CANNABIS. MARIJUANA.
WEED. SKUNK.**



**NPS. SPICE. MCAT.
BALLOONS.**



**COCAINE. COKE. GEAR.
CHARLIE.**



**ALCOHOL. BEVVY.
BOOZE. JUICE.**



CANNABIS. MARIJUANA. WEED. SKUNK.

It's the most widely-used illegal drug in Britain. It comes from parts of the cannabis plant, and is often grown in a stronger form known as skunk. It is a mild hallucinogen and usually has a sedative-like effect that makes some people feel chilled out and euphoric and others feel sick and unwell.

It can also alter your senses, so that you might see, hear or feel things differently and can for some create anxiety and panic.

What does it look like and how is it taken?

- Cannabis can look like a solid dark lump, or it can be dried leaves, buds, stalks and seeds called 'grass'. Cannabis oil is less widely used or available.
- It is often rolled (usually with tobacco) into a 'spliff' or 'joint', smoked on its own in a special pipe or bong, or cooked and eaten in food.

What are the effects?

- You can feel relaxed and talkative and become hungry after smoking (referred to as the 'munchies'). However you can also become anxious and paranoid with some people even experiencing mild hallucinations.

What are the risks?

- Cannabis affects how your brain works. It can make you paranoid or trigger panic attacks. Regular use can lead to ongoing problems with anxiety.
- Cannabis can make it difficult for you to concentrate and learn, make your memory worse and make you feel generally less motivated and lacking in energy.
- As cannabis is largely mixed with tobacco, the same risks apply as they do with smoking, including an increased risk of lung diseases like tuberculosis and lung cancer.
- In some people cannabis use has also been linked to triggering serious, long-term mental health problems.

Is it against the law?

- It is a Class B drug and is illegal to have, sell, grow or supply.

ALCOHOL. BEVVY. BOOZE. JUICE.

It's easy to forget that alcohol is a powerful drug. Technically speaking, it's a depressant which can slow down your body's responses in all kinds of ways. Just enough can make you feel great, too much and there can be serious consequences but like any drug, everyone reacts differently.

What does it look like and how is it taken?

- Alcohol is available in various liquids such as beers, spirits, wine and fruit flavoured alcopops.
- Alcohol is measured in units which are found on alcohol packaging. Different drinks have different numbers of units. For adults, it is advised that to lower health risks, it is safest not to regularly drink more than 14 units a week and not all in one binge.

What are the effects?

- Immediate effects vary depending upon what has been drunk, age, gender, physical build, mental state and other factors such as how much you have eaten. In the short-term, most users feel relaxed and happy with lowered inhibitions and increased confidence.
- Some people can feel sad or angry.
- Decision making and co-ordination are affected and reaction times slow down.
- Nausea and sickness are common effects, during or after drinking.
- For some excessive use can lead to mood swings, risk taking, aggression, accidents, blackouts and unconsciousness.

What are the risks?

- Drinking, particularly binge drinking (over 3 units in one day) will usually cause a hangover (headaches and sickness are the most common affects).
- Risky behaviour such as unprotected sex and accidents are common.
- Alcohol is more harmful to teens than adults because the brain and body are still developing.
- Psychological and physical dependence on alcohol or 'addiction', can creep up on you, making it hard to stop.
- Alcohol poisoning can result from excessive drinking, particularly if mixed with drugs. This is potentially very dangerous, or even lethal.
- 'Passing out' after excessive drinking can lead to people choking on their vomit and ultimately suffocation.
- Long term or excessive use of alcohol causes all sorts of illnesses such as chronic liver disease, stomach cancer and heart disease.

Is it against the law?

- Although alcohol is legal, it is against the law for anyone under 18 to buy or attempt to buy.
- It is illegal for an adult to buy or attempt to buy alcohol on behalf of someone under 18.

COCAINE. COKE. GEAR. CHARLIE.

Powder cocaine (also called coke), freebase and crack are all forms of cocaine. They're all powerful stimulants, with short-lived effects – which means that they temporarily speed up the way your mind and body work, but the effects are short-lived.

It can give you a powerful high but afterwards can leave you feeling really down. It can also make you feel very confident, alert and awake, but some people can get over-confident, arrogant and aggressive and end up taking risks.

What does it look like and how is it taken?

- Cocaine is a white powder that is snorted up the nose, sometimes using a straw or a rolled note.
- It can also be dabbed on the gums, or less often dissolved and injected.

What are the effects?

- The positive effects are relatively short, lasting around 20 to 30 minutes. In that time you can have a strong sense of wellbeing. You may feel alert, energetic and have increased confidence.
- You may also become aggressive, or paranoid and over confident leading to risky behaviour.

- Once the effect starts to wear off, you can experience a long 'comedown' when you then feel depressed, run down and unwell (often having flu like feelings).

What are the risks?

- Regular snorting can damage the cartilage in your nose, leaving it misshapen.
- As it speeds the body up, it can cause chest pain and heart problems, which can be fatal.
- It can cause anxiety, paranoia and panic attacks.
- Taken with alcohol, it is more dangerous, as the substances interact in the body to produce a toxic chemical called cocaethylene, increasing the risk of a heart attack.
- Regular use can lead to, or trigger, mental health issues including anxiety and depression, and leave people run down and exhausted.
- People can start to crave increased amounts to feel the same 'high', creating an expensive and more risky habit.
- Sharing equipment (such as straws or needles if injecting) can put you at risk of getting serious infections such as hepatitis (B and C) and HIV.

Is it against the law?

- It is a Class A drug. It is illegal to have, sell or supply.

NPS. SPICE. MCAT. BALLOONS.

New psychoactive substances (NPS) were previously called “legal highs” until the law changed in 2016. This refers to a wide range of chemically based substances, which produce similar effects to illegal drugs (like cocaine, cannabis and ecstasy).

Some more common NPS's are NOS (Nitrous Oxide), synthetic cannabinoids (such as Spice) and various powders and pills with stimulant and hallucinogenic qualities.

What does it look like and how is it taken?

- NPS are sold in many different forms such as powders, pills, smoking mixtures, liquids, capsules, or on perforated tabs and can be taken in many different ways.

What are the effects?

- The main effects of NPS are similar to other drugs and are generally categorised under one of these types:

Stimulants (e.g. Benzo Fury) - speeds your body and brain up making you feel energised, fast-thinking, chatty and euphoric but also paranoid, anxious and aggressive.

Depressants (e.g. Pyrazolam) – slows your body and brain down. It can make you feel relaxed or sleepy and reduce inhibitions but also reduce concentration and slow down your reactions.

Hallucinogens (e.g. Bromo-Drangonfly) – can alter your perceptions and can make you hallucinate (see, hear or smell things that aren't there). This can lead to accidents and risky behaviour.

Cannabinoids (e.g. spice) – are often very strong and seen as their own category as they can be both sedatives (depressants) and hallucinogens.

What are the risks?

- Many risks are similar to those connected to other similar illegal drugs. However, because new substances and changes in their ingredients are constantly made, the biggest risk is not knowing what the effects will be at any time.
- These substances will not have been tested and the consequences of long-term use won't be known, meaning you are gambling with your health.
- Often NPS are sold as being 'safe' or natural and are thought to be less harmful than well know illegal drugs. This is not true. They can take any form and many harmful and even fatal effects have been shown.

Is it against the law?

- NPS are illegal to produce, supply, or import (even for personal use) for human consumption. Many have been classed as either class, A, B or C or are under the Psychoactive Substances Act.

Are there other substances young people use?

Whilst the substances listed above are the most common substances used by young people, there are many other harmful drugs you may want to understand more about. A full up to date list can be found at www.talktofrank.com

Can we talk about it?

You can't prevent someone from coming into contact with drugs and alcohol, but by talking openly with them about these issues, you may be able to help them make positive choices and stay safe. It's never too early to raise the subject, and it's far better to have factual information than to be misinformed.

Where do I get help or advice?

If you are under 18 living in the borough of Hounslow and would like support around drug and alcohol issues (even those of your parents or carers) then please contact our free service:

Visions – Young Person's drug and alcohol Service for Hounslow

T: 020 8583 6441 (Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm)

E: visions@hounslow.gov.uk

W: www.visionsyphounslow.co.uk

Follow us on Twitter: [VisionsHounslow](https://twitter.com/VisionsHounslow)







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