

Terms of Reference for a review into legislative options to tackle New Psychoactive Substances

New psychoactive substances - "legal highs" - pose a significant global and domestic challenge. The Home Office will lead a review, with an expert advisory panel, looking at how the UK's legislative response can be enhanced beyond the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to maximise its impact and the enforcement response to this new drugs market. It will build on the work of the Home Office's International Comparators Study, which is being progressed in parallel.

The review will :

- analyse the problem we are seeking to address and consider;
 - the nature of the new psychoactive substances market;
 - the effectiveness and issues of the UK's current legislative and operational response.
- identify legislative options for enhancing this approach;
- consider the opportunities and risks of each of these approaches, informed by international and other evidence; and
- make a clear recommendation for an effective and sustainable UK wide legislative response to new psychoactive substances.

Its findings will be presented to Home Office Ministers in Spring 2014.

Areas of external expertise

Membership will comprise experts drawn from the following key areas:

- Enforcement agencies and prosecuting authorities
- Local Authorities
- Medical and social science
- Forensic
- Academia

Additional members will be invited to join the review where a need arises. Consultation with additional experts and interested parties, including other Government departments, and Devolved Administrations, will be conducted by Home Office officials throughout the review. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs will be kept apprised on the progress of the review.