



**Dear Festival Organiser,**

One of the great traditions of our summers is our music festivals. At this time of year, you will be making final preparations for your own events.

We have a common interest in ensuring that the public enjoy these events in a safe and healthy environment. I am sure that you are working with the appropriate authorities to achieve this.

We are aware, and this may be your experience, of the availability of illegal and so-called 'legal highs' or new psychoactive substances (NPS) at festivals. Substances sold as 'legal highs' are not necessarily legal and can be far from harmless.

I would ask you to be alert to the possibility that NPS are marketed as "legal" and misleadingly labelled – such as "not for human consumption" or "research chemicals" may contain illegal substances. They are also advertised as branded products can often contain a range of compounds – including illegal drugs – which are rarely consistent and different to those advertised on the packet, or at the point of sale. More recently, we have also identified NPS that are sold in the form of pre-loaded paper doses ('blotters' or 'tabs') and potentially have similar psychedelic and hallucinogenic effects to LSD.

Analysis of samples from festivals under the Home Office's Forensic Early Warning System (FEWS) confirms that the more established illegal drugs – such as MDMA, cocaine, cannabis and amphetamines – continue to remain the majority of drugs encountered at summer festivals. However, we have seen a rising number of white powders and pills of NPS both in single substances as well as mixtures, and in many cases, mixed with illegal drugs.

I ask you to ensure that your efforts, in collaboration with the police, to tackle illegal drugs encompass action on the open sale and availability of NPS.

I also wanted to highlight the concerns we have about the availability of gases such as nitrous oxide which were seen at summer festivals last year. These also have the potential to be harmful. Whilst there may be legitimate reasons for nitrous oxide to be present at your festival for catering purposes, I further ask that you remain alert to its availability for misuse, whether in small canisters or in cylinders, and take steps to prevent its sale at events.

The full results from FEWS will be cascaded to your local police force and the senior responsible officer(s) who may be in charge of policing your festival. If

you wish to find out further information about the results, please contact your local police force.

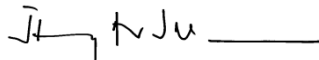
Our FEWS activity at music and dance festivals is part of our wider work on tackling the NPS market in the UK. You may wish to consider reading the cross-Government NPS Action Plan, published as an annex to the Drug Strategy annual review at [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/118345/drug-strategy2010-review-may2012.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118345/drug-strategy2010-review-may2012.pdf), which sets out the full range of objectives on tackling this trade. If you would like general information about the Home Office FEWS, my officials can be contacted on 020 7035 3533.

Please refer anyone seeking information on the risks and dangers of so called "legal highs" or NPS, as well as illegal drugs, to the FRANK website ([www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)) or the confidential helpline (0800 77 66 00).

I wish you a very enjoyable summer festival season and appreciate your effort in ensuring our great summer tradition is held with public safety at its heart.

I am copying this letter to your local authority and police force.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Browne', followed by a horizontal line.

Jeremy Browne MP  
Minister of State