

LEGAL HIGH STATEMENTS

Statement 1 - For professionals:

There are currently many herbal substances available on the market, which are promoted as having the same or similar effects to illegal drugs. While many of the various capsules, powders, pills and potions contain natural products it is important to remember that this doesn't necessarily make them safe to use.

As there is no regulation or control over the content of these 'herbal highs' it can be difficult to know exactly what has gone into them. Subsequently, it would be difficult to predict what the exact effects or side effects would be, particularly if they were mixed with other drugs or food.

Although such substances make a virtue of their legal status, this only means that they conform to the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act. However, users of herbal or legal highs should be mindful that the Medicines Act makes it illegal to sell some herbal drugs without a license. It is also worth noting that many substances have a historical, ritual and/or cultural use across many diverse communities, so information should be handled sensitively.

In today's society where we have access to the world via multimedia, young people are increasingly exposed to words, music and images surrounding drug use. Good drug education, in both formal and informal settings, should take account of a wide range of substances, including herbal or legal drugs. In-keeping with the ethos of harm reduction advice, the bottom line is that **every** drug has a potential risk attached to it, so provision of accurate information can enable young people to make healthy and informed choices.

The Hertfordshire Drug Education Forum is currently compiling data on the use of herbal & legal highs, so any information gathered by colleagues would be gratefully received.

Further information and enquiries can be made to:

Richard Boxer, Drug Education Consultant & Chair of Herts Drug Education Forum
richard.boxer@hertscc.gov.uk or 01438 844044

Statement 2 - For young people:

The following is the Addaction statement on the youth website 'The Site'

There are lots of herbal substances promoted as having the same effects of illegal drugs. But it's important to remember that just because something is natural it doesn't mean it's safe.

The contents of herbal drugs are not regulated or controlled, therefore little is known about what goes in them. As a result, it's not possible to know what the effects or side effects may be. Another danger is that it's not clear what will happen if the herbal drugs are taken with other drugs or food.

It is also important that you are aware that the Medicines Act makes it illegal to sell some herbal drugs without a license.

If you have a problem or question about drugs then talk to FRANK at: www.talktofrank.com or phone 0800 77 66 00

If you are concerned about your drink or drug use then speak to the Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Service for Herts (A-DASH) at: 01923 427 288