

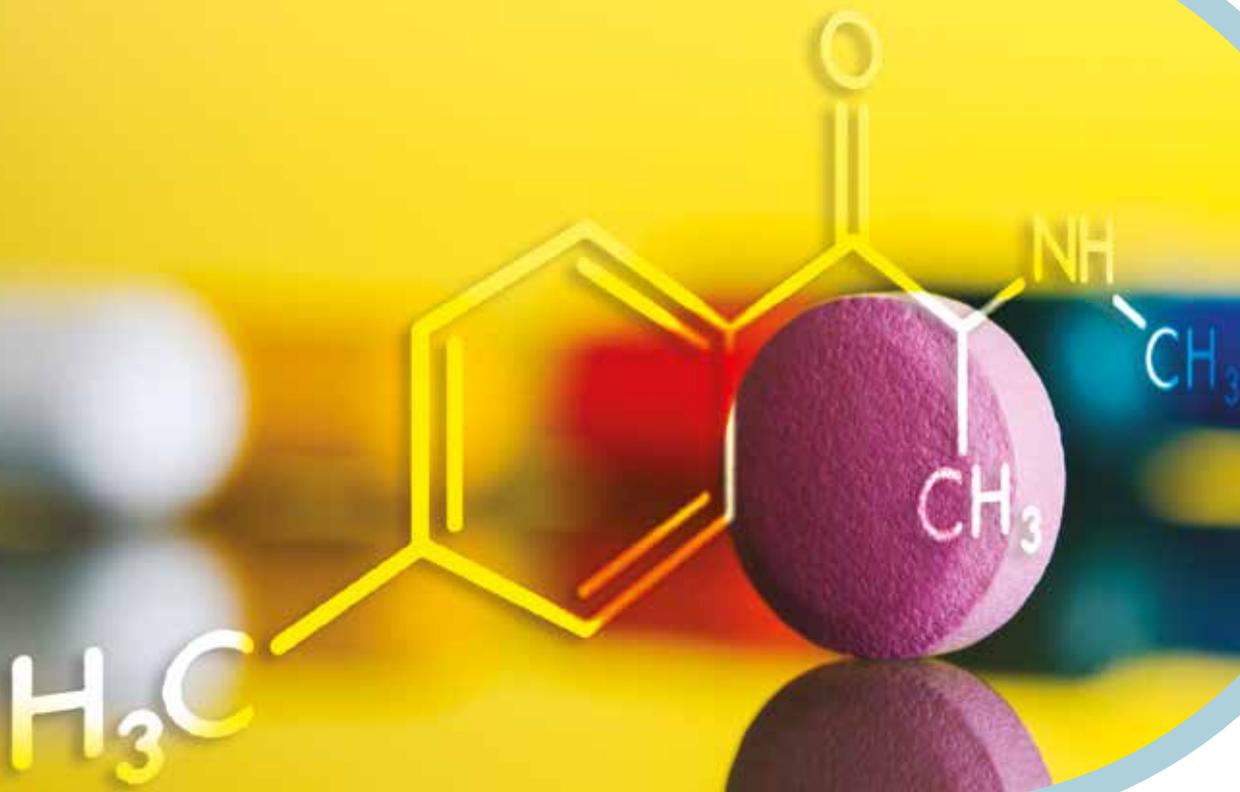
Psychoactive Substances

Psychoactive Substances (also called 'Legal Highs' or 'New Psychoactive Substances' (NPS)) are substances used in the same way as illegal drugs such as cocaine or cannabis. The last few years has seen the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) report close to 100 new psychoactive substances hitting the streets each year.

These drugs can cause impairment and lead to significant health issues or death.

In the United Kingdom a number of these drugs are captured in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and those which are not are captured under the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016.

Psychoactive substances include a huge range of substances but examples of just a few are mephedrone (meow meow), naphyrone, BZP, GBL, and synthetic cannabinoids (such as those found in spice products), methoxetamine, O-desmethyltramadol, desoxypipradrol (2-DPMP), naphyrone and other synthetic cathinones, benzofuran compounds.



The risks

Psychoactive substances can carry serious health risks. The chemicals they contain have in most cases never been used in drugs for human consumption before, so haven't been tested to show that they are safe.

Users can never be certain what they are taking and what the effects might be. It is likely that a drug sold to a user may contain substances that they were not expecting to be taking.



There are 3 main categories of legal high:

- **‘Stimulant’ psychoactive substances** which act like amphetamines (‘speed’, mephedrone, naphyrone), cocaine or ecstasy
Effects: feelings of overconfidence and disinhibition, induced feelings of anxiety, panic, confusion, paranoia, and even cause psychosis, which can lead to individuals putting their safety at risk.
- **‘Downer’ or sedative psychoactive substances** similar to cannabis, benzodiazepines (drugs like diazepam or Valium), or GHB/GBL
Effects: reduction in inhibition and concentration, slowing down of reaction time, feeling of lethargy, forgetfulness or physical unsteadiness, placing the user at risk of accidents.
- **‘Psychedelic’ or ‘hallucinogenic’ psychoactive substances** which act like LSD, magic mushrooms, ketamine and methoxetamine
Effects: can cause confusion, panic and strong hallucinatory reactions (‘bad trips’), effects can make users behave erratically, putting their own safety at serious risk.



Psychoactive Substances in the Workplace

Psychoactive substances (legal highs) are now all controlled, can lead to impairment, and can cause significant health risks meaning they fall under the same employment legislations and standards as other drugs, such as cocaine and cannabis.

Psychoactive substances are not detectable using traditional workplace drug testing panels. One reason is that traditional tests are antibody based. There is always a lag between the appearances of a new substance on the market and any new test based on this technology, if one ever becomes available. Currently there is very limited and ineffectual coverage for many of the psychoactive substances which are now widely abused. With a huge number of new substances being introduced each year there is no chance for traditional testing methods to keep up.

LGC utilise the latest state of the art mass spectrometry techniques to offer a broad coverage, sensitive and most importantly 'current' screening and confirmation service to detect the use of these new compounds in the workplace. This is an extremely broad coverage workplace drug test that can rapidly be adapted to new threats and industry requirements.

Coverage

LGC methodology can react rapidly to the latest threats and can also cover all the compounds detected as part of a conventional workplace test. Our UKAS accredited screen covers but is not limited to the following drug groups:

- Piperazines
- Phenethylamines
- Tryptamines
- Cathinones
- Synthetic cannabinoids
- Aralkylamines – (e.g. 5 APB, methiopropamine)
- Aminocyclohexanes (ketamine, methoxetamine etc)
- Inoidanes

For further information on Psychoactive Substances, please contact us on:

+44 (0)1638 720500

www.lgcgroup.com/enquiries



www.lgcgroup.com/legalhighs

Science for a safer world

Brazil • Bulgaria • China • Czech Republic • France • Germany • Hungary • India • Ireland • Italy • Netherlands
Poland • Romania • Russia • Scandinavia • South Africa • Spain • Turkey • United Kingdom • USA

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any retrieval system, without the written permission of the copyright holder. © LGC Limited, 2014. All rights reserved. 5028/CS/1016