



Drugs



Advice Centre

Manchester Metropolitan Students' Union

99 Oxford Road Manchester
Contact us: 0161 247 6533

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Legal consequences

The Misuse of Drugs Act sets out the maximum penalties for being in possession of a drug, and supplying drugs (this includes intending to supply, selling, sharing and giving away). As with all crimes the police will handle each case on its own merits. The interpretation of who is a dealer or supplier of these drugs is made by the police and the courts and not the individual. Even if you are dealing 'not for profit' supplying drugs carries heavy penalties.

Your case will be heard either in a Magistrates Court or a Crown Court. It will depend on the class of drug involved, whether you were in possession or supplying and the quantity of drugs involved.

Magistrates Court (Maximum penalties)

Class	Possession	Supply
Class A	6 months imprisonment and/or £2,500 fine	6 months imprisonment and/or £5,000 fine
Class B	3 months imprisonment £2,500 fine	6 months imprisonment and/or £5,000 fine
Class C	3 months imprisonment and/or £1,000 fine	3 months imprisonment and/or £2,500 fine

Crown Court (Maximum penalties)

Class	Possession	Supply
Class A	7 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine	Life imprisonment and/or unlimited fine
Class B	5 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine	14 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine
Class C	2 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine	14 years imprisonment and/or unlimited fine

Classification

Class A	Ecstasy, Cocaine, Heroin, LSD, Morphine, Opium, Hallucinogenic mushrooms, Crack
Class B	Amphetamines (Speed), Codeine, Methadrine, Dexedrine, Cannabis Resin and leaf
Class C*	Tranquillisers eg. Valium, Anabolic Steroids, GHB, Ketamine

If you are found with any amount of drug you may be prosecuted. Persistent flouting of the law may lead to imprisonment.

Your rights if you're arrested

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED FAIRLY AND WITH RESPECT BY THE POLICE.

You do not have to say anything to the police; BUT if you are later charged with a crime and you have not mentioned, when questioned, something that you later rely on in court, then this may be taken into account when deciding if you are guilty.

There may be good reasons why you do not wish to say anything to the police, and you should not be intimidated into answering questions. Get a solicitor down to see you in the police station as soon as possible. It is wise not to discuss the case with the police until you have consulted privately with a solicitor.

Unfair treatment / complaints

If you want to challenge anything the police have done then get the names and addresses of any witnesses and make a written record as soon as possible after the event. It should be witnessed, dated and signed. If you are injured, or property is damaged, then take photographs or video recordings as soon as possible and have physical injuries medically examined.

If you have been treated unfairly then complain to a civil liberties group such as Release or contact a solicitor about possible legal action.

If you are stopped in the street by the police

If they are not in uniform then ask to see their warrant card.

Ask why you have been stopped and at the end ask for a record of the search.

You can be stopped and searched if the police have a reasonable suspicion that you are in possession of:

- controlled drugs

- offensive weapon or firearms

- carrying a sharp article

- carrying stolen goods

- if you are in a coach or train, going to, or you have arrived at, a sports stadium

There are other situations where you can be stopped and searched, for example:

If police fear there might be serious violence in a particular area they can stop and search anyone in that area for up to 24 hours. In these circumstances the police do not need to have a reasonable suspicion that you are carrying a weapon or committing a crime. This very wide power can be used at raves, demonstrations etc.

You run the risk of both physical injury and serious criminal charges if you physically resist a search. If it is an unlawful search you should take action afterwards by using the law.

In a police station

You always have the right:

- to be treated humanely and with respect.
- to see the written codes governing your rights and how you are treated.
- to speak to the custody officer (the officer who must look after your welfare).
- to know why you have been arrested.

You also have the right

- to have someone notified of your arrest (not to make a phone call yourself).
- to consult with a solicitor privately.

The police can normally hold you without charge for up to 24 hours. For certain serious offences, this can be extended to 36 hours or, upon application to a Magistrates' Court, 72 and then 96 hours. If the offence is linked to terrorism they can hold you for longer periods, at the moment 28 days. The government are debating whether to increase this to 42 days. After being charged, you should be released unless there is good reason for keeping you detained.

For information and help in dealing with the Police, the courts or drug problems please come into the Advice Centre or contact Release. RELEASE: Legal Helpline. Tel: 0845 4500 215. 11am-1pm, 2pm-4pm Monday to Friday

Academic & Career Consequences

In some cases being in the same room as someone taking or supplying drugs can lead to problems. It is not just criminal records and heavy fines that students need to be aware of when engaging in any activities that involve drugs. Most universities and colleges will expel students from their premises if caught in possession of, taking or supplying drugs. This can mean that if caught you could be homeless very quickly with no favourable reference for future accommodation. In addition most universities or colleges may inform the police, not to mention throw you off your course of study. This would make it very hard to apply successfully for a course at another university or college.

Students should be aware that increasingly employers are introducing mandatory drugs tests for potential employees. As some drugs can stay in the body for a month or more this can cause serious implications. Drug conviction can also create difficulties when applying for some travel visas.

People's attitudes to drugs vary and not everyone may share your opinions. What some people may think is harmless recreational drug use could be seen as a serious breach of the law and carry heavy moral judgements. You should bear in mind all these factors before you engage in any activity that involves illegal drug use. You should also be aware that most careers in medicine, health, law, accountancy and social work are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. This means all convictions and cautions must be declared on applications no matter how long ago they took place.

Basic Drug Safety

Whilst we do not condone the use of drugs, we do feel that it is important that if you are going to take drugs you do so as safely as possible. Therefore here are some general drug safety tips:

- 1) Research the drug. Know what the effects (good and bad) are. Know what dosage you should be taking, remembering that a long term user may have built up a tolerance to the drug and be taking much higher doses than would be suitable for you.
- 2) It's better to take drugs around friends who know what you're taking and who can help out during the come down or if things go wrong. Don't use this to force other people into taking drugs, and don't do it if it's making them uncomfortable.
- 3) The effects and strength of drugs can vary depending on who you are with, your mood, your fitness or your size. Often drugs exaggerate your current mood, so if you are depressed, drugs may give you a massive downer rather than lifting you out as you were expecting
- 4) Mixing drugs is dangerous. If you are taking prescription or over the counter drugs, be very wary about mixing with other drugs. There may be unintended side effects.
- 5) DO NOT DRIVE under the influence of drugs. The police are looking out for drivers using drugs more and more. You could lose your license, be fined, or imprisoned. Remember, the effects may still be present for many hours afterwards.
- 6) Illegal drugs are not quality controlled and are often cut with other products. Equally, they could be purer than you were expecting. Try to avoid buying from strangers, sticking only to dealers that you know and trust.
- 7) Drugs can often be very expensive. Try not to borrow money off friends or family or buy "on credit". Set a limit on what you spend.
- 8) Drugs can increase your confidence or libido. Please remember to practice safe sex to avoid STIs and unwanted pregnancies.
- 9) Never inject drugs on your own. Always use clean needles and equipment and never share equipment with others. Needle Exchanges do exist in Manchester, contact one of the agencies listed in the back for further details.
- 10) If you are taking drugs whilst out in town, remember that all clubs must provide tap water free of charge and to keep yourself hydrated.

Types of Drugs

Alcohol

What is it?

Alcohol is produced when sugars are fermented by yeasts.

The strength of alcoholic drinks is expressed as the percentage of alcohol by volume (abv), and intake in units of alcohol.

Legal Aspect

It is illegal to buy alcohol if you are under 18.

The effects of alcohol

It can make you feel more relaxed and confident

Your reaction times slow down and make you clumsy

The more you drink the more it becomes difficult to judge speed and distance accurately, making drinking and driving very dangerous

You may become dependent upon alcohol

It causes many hospital admissions for physical illnesses and accidents

The risks of drinking alcohol

Excessive drinking can lead to severe hangovers, stomach pains (gastritis), vomiting blood, unconsciousness and even death.

Drinking too much over a long period of time can cause liver disease and increases the risk of some kinds of cancer

Having an accident

Mixing alcohol with other drugs is very dangerous

If you are a pregnant woman, drinking can harm your unborn child

Alkyl nitrites (poppers)

What are they?

Alkyl nitrites include amyl nitrite, butyl nitrite and isobutyl nitrite. They are clear or gold-coloured liquids that come in small bottles. Trade names include Ram, Thrust, Rock, Hard, Kix, Liquid Gold and TNT.

Legal Aspect

Amyl nitrite is classed as a prescription only medicine.

How are they taken?

The vapours are inhaled.

The effects of alkyl nitrites

They give you a rush of energy as the heart rate accelerates.

The risks of taking alkyl nitrites

Nausea and headaches.

Loss of balance and fainting, especially if doing physical activity such as dancing.

Regular use can cause skin problems around the nose and mouth.

Risk of death if swallowed or if you have blood pressure or heart problems.

Amphetamines (speed)

What are they?

Stimulants available as a powder or tablets. Also known as speed, whizz and sulphate.

Legal Aspect:

Class B drug.

How are they taken?

Swallowed, smoked, sniffed or mixed with liquid and drunk. Sometimes injected.

The effects of amphetamines

Make you feel bursting with energy.

Make you extremely talkative.

The risks of taking amphetamines

Feeling tired, depressed and hungry when the drug wears off but then having difficulty sleeping.

Feeling tense and anxious.

Regular, heavy use can make you feel confused, depressed and panicky and cause heart problems.

Addiction and tolerance.

Occasionally, aggression, violent mood changes and hallucinations.

Anabolic Steroids

What are they?

Natural steroids include common human hormones, however, adaptations of these hormones have been developed which promote muscle and bone growth and can be prescribed medically.

They are also used (often against the rules) in sporting to gain an advantage over non-steroid using athletes, or for cosmetic purposes.

Legal Aspect

Class C / Can be sold by pharmacists under prescription

How are they taken?

Pills, injections or patches.

The effects of taking steroids

Increase in muscle mass

The risks of taking steroids

Increased blood pressure

Harmful cholesterol levels

Acne

Premature baldness

Liver and heart problems

Reduced sexual function and temporary infertility

Cannabis

What is it?

The most common illegal drug in Britain. Cannabis is also known as marijuana, grass, blow, weed, hash, joint, spliff, ganja and dope.

Legal Aspect

Was upgraded from C to B class drug January 2009.

How is it taken?

Usually smoked on its own or with tobacco. Can be cooked and eaten.

The effects of cannabis

Makes you feel relaxed and friendly.

The risks of taking cannabis

Feeling panicky and anxious

Confusion and having accidents

Feeling dizzy and sick

Can cause bronchitis and lung cancer

Can affect memory

Cocaine

What is it?

Stimulant available as a powder. Also known as coke, snow, charlie and C.

Legal Aspect

Class A drug.

How is it taken?

Sniffed or injected.

The effects of cocaine

Makes you feel alert, confident and energetic.

The effects are strong and fade quickly.

The risks of taking cocaine

Can make you feel tense and panicky.

Dangerous for people with heart or blood pressure problems.

Can make you feel very depressed and tired when the effects wear off.

Addiction - you can spend huge sums of money on the drug.

Feelings of anxiety and paranoia if used regularly.

Crack

What is it?

Crack is a smokable form of cocaine, available as crystals. It's also known as rock, wash and stone.

Legal Aspect

Class A drug.

How is it taken?

It is smoked.

The effects of crack

Makes you feel more confident and energetic.

The effects are more intense than cocaine but only last a few minutes.

The risks of taking crack

Can cause chest and lung problems.

Dangerous for people with heart or blood pressure problems.

Can make you feel very depressed and tired when the effects wear off.

Dependence, which can lead to spending huge sums of money on the drug.

Feelings of anxiety and paranoia if used regularly.

Ecstasy

What is it?

A stimulant drug with a hallucinogenic effect like a mild LSD. Also known as E and doves.

Legal Aspect

Class A drug.

How is it taken?

Tablets of different shapes and colours are swallowed.

The effects of ecstasy

Gives a rush of energy followed by a sense of calm.

Makes you feel close to others with a greater awareness of your surroundings.

Sometimes you see and hear things that are not real.

The risks of taking ecstasy

Feeling panicky, anxious and frightened.

Feeling spaced out, dizzy and having accidents.

Regular use can result in sleep problems, lethargy and depression when the drug wears off.

Can make the arms, legs and jaw muscles stiffen up.

Risk of overheating if you dance for long periods in a hot atmosphere which can be very dangerous and can kill.

Also dangerous for people with heart or blood pressure problems.

GHB (gammahydroxybutyrate)

What is it?

Has a medical use as an anaesthetic and is used as a depressant drug.

Legal Aspect

Class C drug.

How is it taken?

A colourless, odourless liquid that is swallowed.

The effects of GHB:

Small doses feel like the effects of having a few drinks.

Larger doses cause various unpleasant effects.

The risks of taking GHB:

Vomiting, nausea, stiff muscles, dizziness, fits and collapse.

Coma and death

Very dangerous if mixed with alcohol.

Can burn the mouth.

Heroin

What is it?

A brownish powder made from opium poppy, also known as gear, H, junk, scag, smack, junk brown.

Legal Aspect

Class A drug.

How is it taken?

Injected, smoked or sniffed.

The effects of heroin

Slows you down and makes you feel drowsy and separate from the real world.

The risks of taking heroin

Nausea, vomiting and dizziness drowsiness and sedation.

An overdose can lead to coma and death.

Impossible to know how pure the heroin is and so can overdose by mistake.

Addiction and getting off heroin is difficult because of the unpleasant withdrawal symptoms.

Injecting heroin can damage veins, cause gangrene, and increase your risk of getting HIV or hepatitis.

Ketamine

What is it?

Has a medical use as an anaesthetic. Is used as an hallucinogenic drug.

Legal Aspect

Class C.

How is it taken?

Swallowed as a tablet or snorted as a powder. Sometimes mixed with ephedrine (a stimulant drug) and passed off as ecstasy tablets.

The effects of Ketamine

Makes you hallucinate

During a trip you may be unable to move much, if at all, and can feel dizzy

Effect depends on your mood and where you are.

The risks of taking Ketamine

The trip can be frightening

Numbs pain, therefore increasing the risk of injuring yourself without realising it

Heart failure and breathing problems

Very dangerous if mixed with alcohol, ecstasy or amphetamines

LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide)

What is it?

A hallucinogenic drug, also known as trips, acid, tabs and microdots.

Legal Aspect

Class A drug.

How is it taken?

LSD comes as small paper squares with a picture on them. They are sucked and swallowed.

The effects of LSD

The kind of trip you have depends on how much LSD you take and your mood

It is common to see and hear things, for colours to seem very bright and for things to appear to speed up or slow down.

The risks of taking LSD

Feeling hot, sick and dizzy.

Having a bad trip that makes you feel anxious, panicky, afraid or even paranoid.

People with mental health problems can really flip out and make their situation worse.

Accidents are more likely.

Some people have flashbacks to a previous trip that can be disturbing.

Magic mushrooms

What are they?

Wild mushrooms, particularly the Liberty Cap mushroom, that are taken as a drug. They are also known as happies, mushies, sillies and shrooms.

Legal Aspect

Class A drug.

How are they taken?

They are eaten raw, cooked or stewed into tea or an infusion.

The effects of magic mushrooms

They cause hallucinations like a mild LSD experience.

They often make you laugh a lot.

Effects are very dependent on your mood and expectations.

The risks of taking magic mushrooms

Nausea and stomach ache.

Accidents due to clumsiness and confusion.

Picking and eating poisonous mushrooms by mistake.

Having a bad trip that makes you feel anxious, afraid or even paranoid.

Some people have flashbacks to a previous trip that can be disturbing.

Methamphetamines

What are they?

Also known as meth or crystal meth (when in crystals for smoking).

Legal Aspect

Class A Drug

How are they taken?

Smoked ("chasing the white dragon"), injected (particularly dangerous as higher doses used by addicts can be fatal to non-addicts, in addition to the normal needle sharing concerns). Can also be dissolved in a liquid and drank, inserted or snorted.

The effects of methamphetamines

Make you talkative

Euphoria

Increased sexual libido

The risks of taking methamphetamines

Loss of appetite

Insomnia

Agitation, fascination with repetitive tasks

Lack of caution regarding sexual activity leading to STIs or other sexual damage

"Meth Mouth" – rapid loss/decay of teeth

Addiction & Tolerance

Solvents (gases, glues and aerosols)

Where are they found?

Found in gas lighter refills, fuel cannisters, hairspray, deodorants, tins or tubes of glue, some paints, thinners and other products.

Legal Aspect

There are restrictions on shopkeepers selling these products to anyone under 18.

How are they taken?

Fumes are sniffed or sprayed into the mouth or nose.

The effects of solvents

Like getting very drunk very quickly.

Feeling light headed and dizzy.

Having dreams and visions (hallucinations).

The risks of using solvents

Vomiting, nausea and drowsiness, loss of balance and control and increased risk of accidents, especially if used in dangerous places.

Loss of consciousness with a risk of choking on vomit.

Suffocation if solvents are inhaled from a plastic bag.

Dependency.

Dangerous to mix sniffing with drinking alcohol.

Sniffing or spraying gas into the mouth can result in instant death. One person dies every week from sniffing solvents.

Tranquillisers

What are they?

Medical drugs used to treat anxiety, depression and insomnia. Examples include Valium, Mogadon, Temazepam and Ativan.

Legal Aspect

Class C penalties apply with regard to supply.

How are they taken?

Capsules or tablets that are swallowed or injected.

The effects of tranquillisers

In small doses make you relaxed.

In larger doses make you drowsy, lethargic and sometimes forgetful.

The risks of taking tranquillisers

Tolerance can develop quickly.

It is easy to get dependent on tranquillisers.

Injecting Temazepam is very dangerous.

An overdose can cause unconsciousness and death.

Mixing with other depressants, such as alcohol, can be very dangerous.

What to do in an emergency

Drug use can be dangerous and it is important to know what to do in an emergency situation. The lives of friends and people around you could depend on you knowing basic first aid.

Tense and panicky

This is more common if someone has been on LSD and magic mushrooms, but can also happen with amphetamines, ecstasy and high doses of cannabis. If someone is really tense and panicky on drugs, take the following steps:

- Calm them down and reassure them;
- Talk quietly and explain that the panicky feeling will gradually go away;
- Keep them away from loud noises and bright lights;
- Help them if they overbreathe (hyperventilate) - when someone breathes very quickly and gasps for breath, they often get dizzy and feel sick.

Drowsy but conscious

This usually happens if someone has been taking downers such as alcohol, tranquillisers and heroin but it can also happen with solvents. To help:

- Put them in the recovery position and keep talking to them;
- Try to stop them becoming unconscious - don't put them to bed as they might lose consciousness in their sleep;
- If they want a drink give them sips of lukewarm water, not coffee;
- Call for medical assistance.

Unconscious

This usually happens if someone has been taking downers such as alcohol, tranquillisers and heroin. It can also happen with solvents and poppers and to people who react badly or overheat on amphetamines or ecstasy. To help:

- Put the person in the recovery position;
- Loosen any tight clothing that might restrict their breathing;
- Keep them warm (unless they are overheating);
- Check their breathing, if they are not breathing be prepared to do mouth-to-mouth resuscitation;
- Call an ambulance as soon as possible.

If someone is overheating

- Move them to a cool place - possibly outside;
- Splash them with cold water to cool them down;
- Remove unnecessary clothing;
- Call an ambulance.

Dehydrated

People can become dehydrated if they have taken amphetamines or ecstasy and exerted themselves. These drugs raise the body temperature but also give an energy boost so that people often dance for long periods, getting even hotter.

People can lose up to a pint of liquid an hour and become overheated and dehydrated which can be very dangerous and has been the main reason for ecstasy-related deaths. Although it should be noted that taking too much or too quickly can cause bloating.

The warning signs include:

- Cramps in the legs, arms and back;
- Failure to sweat;
- Headaches, dizziness and vomiting;
- Suddenly feeling very tired;
- Fainting.

Dehydration can be prevented by:

- Taking regular breaks from dancing and relaxing in a cool place;
- Drinking water, fruit juice or a sports drink and avoiding alcohol;
- Sipping drinks regularly and drinking no more than one pint an hour.
- Drinking too much can be as dangerous as not drinking enough water.
- Wearing cool clothes and not wearing a hat

Contact the Advice Centre for more information or help:

Manchester:

3rd Floor, Students' Union,
99 Oxford Road, Manchester, M1 7EL
Tel: 0161 247 6533
Fax 0161 247 6314
E-mail: s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk

Opening Times

Monday	9.30am - 4pm
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	9.30am - 4pm
Thursday	9.30am - 4pm
Friday	9.30am - 4pm

There is an Advice Service at Didsbury, Gaskell, Hollings and Crewe

Phone 0161 247 6533 to make an appointment.

We also operate a telephone service between 10-12 noon each weekday or e-mail your enquiry to s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk

National Helplines & Websites

You can call the National Drugs Helpline (“Talk to Frank”) on 0800 776600. This is a 24-hour, seven-days a week, free and confidential telephone service that offers advice and information for those who are concerned, or have questions, about drugs.
www.talktofrank.com

The service is available to anyone. Callers might be drug users, recovering or past users, friends, family, colleagues or contacts of drug users. The Helpline also provides confidential counselling to callers with any drug-related problem.

Release (0845 4500 215) operate a confidential helpline offering advice on drug use and legal issues. www.release.org.uk, e-mail; ask@release.org.uk | 1am-1pm, 2pm-4pm Mon-Fri

Families Anonymous (0845 1200 660) runs self-help groups around the country for families and friends of people with a drug-related problem. www.famanon.org.uk

Narcotics Anonymous (0845 373 3366) is a community-based organisation. It runs a network of self-help groups for drug users based on the Alcoholics Anonymous model. They also run online meetings.
www.ukna.org, e-mail; NAHelpline@ukna.org

Alcoholics Anonymous (0845 7697555) provides confidential information, help and advice about alcohol. www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Drinkline (0800 917 8282) offers free confidential advice on alcohol and alcohol abuse.

Local Helplines & Websites

Alcohol and Drug Services – (0161) 834 9777.
Website: www.alcoholanddrugservices.co.uk

Lifeline – (0161) 839 2054 www.lifeline.org.uk
Freephone 0800 707 6646

Manchester Drugs Service (central) – (0161) 232 7359



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