

Current drug trends amongst young people

July 2021

Overview

There are concerns across Staffordshire about three new drugs trends young people may be exposed to; edibles, vaping liquids and purple drank.

Edibles

Edibles are food products that may contain cannabis and potentially other harmful drugs. There are many forms of edibles that are out in circulation such as sweets, gummies and lollipops. They usually contain or are marketed as containing – a number of chemicals, many of which are harmful and controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971) including tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC is the psychoactive compound in cannabis and can make people feel a range of effects, while cannabidiol (CBD) is the non-psychoactive chemical compound which does not have the same effect.

Any amount of THC, whether it is concentrated or whole, is illegal in the UK and any CBD product containing THC is illegal in the UK. These sweets are widely available on the internet and via social media and can be easily accessed by young people. The packaging is often deliberately targeted to attract young people. There is no quality control of these products.

What are we worried about?

The amount of cannabis in these products can vary and sometimes other harmful drugs are added too, which isn't always made clear. The effects of consuming edibles are unpredictable and it can be very easy to accidentally take a larger dose. Edibles take between 1-3 hours to have an effect as the food is absorbed into the bloodstream through the liver. Therefore, the person taking them may consume a larger amount of the drug not realising the delay in effects. As edibles may look like other products, there is also the risk someone may ingest them without

realising they contain drugs, this could include other children in the home.

Some side effects may include:

- Paranoia
- Nausea and vomiting
- Hyperactivity
- Elevated heart rate
- Hallucinations
- Impaired mobility
- Panic attacks

Examples



Purple Drank

Purple Drank also known as Barre, Sizzurp, Syrup, Lean is a fizzy drink that contains cough syrup, codeine, which is often taken for pain relief and promethazine, which is mainly used to help people sleep. Dextromethorphan (DMX) is also found in some cough and cold medicines and is a dissociative drug and when people take too much, it can make them psychotic.

These drugs are mixed in with the fizzy drink which is used to cover up the taste of the cough syrup and makes a purple cocktail – which is why they are called Purple Dranks.

What are we worried about?

These products are targeted to young people and they may have harmful health effects. They are likely to be consumed in a social environment with effects starting within 30-60 minutes, lasting for about six hours. Often, young people have been known to also consume alcohol as well as the Purple Dranks which increases the risk of overdose and may result in poisoning. Long term use of codeine may require increased amounts to get the same

effect. Cravings may be experienced when someone stops taking it. They can get feelings of withdrawals such as cold sweats, sickness, throwing up and not being able to sleep.

Regular users of DXM also develop tolerance. Some users may have cravings and feelings of withdrawals. Longer term use can lead to psychosis and damage to thinking and memory skills.

Some side effects may include:

- Mild energy lift (initially)
- Mild hallucinations
- Drowsiness

Vaping liquids

While e-cigarettes have health benefits over smoking cigarettes; it is important that the vaping liquid has been quality controlled. There are a number of vaping liquids available from unlicensed sources such as the dark web or advertised on social media that have not been controlled. A number of which contain illegal, harmful substances.

There have been cases reported of young people using liquids believed to contain tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC is the psychoactive compound in cannabis and can make people feel a range of effects and is illegal in the UK.

Further concerns are raised after reported cases that young people had suffered adverse effects following vaping what was believed to be THC later identified as a far more potent substance.

What are we worried about?

Vaping liquids may contain substances other than what they are labelled as. The effects of inhaling these unregulated products can be unpredictable and potentially very dangerous.

Some side effects may include:

- Paranoia
 - Collapsing
 - Anxiety
 - Urination
 - Confusion
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What can you do?

We recommend monitoring food packaging/wrappers, looking for wording such as CBD or THC suggesting the items are cannabis oil infused.

Please be mindful of the medical needs should a child present with symptoms, or if you suspect they have consumed a drug-infused substance. In a medical emergency always call 999.

If you have any local information or intelligence please share it with Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111, via their website or Staffordshire Police by direct messaging on Facebook or Twitter, online chat via the website or by calling 101.

Support services**Stoke on Trent Community Drug & Alcohol Service (CDAS)**

01782 221090

referrals@sotcdas.org.uk

T3 stars

Covering all areas of Staffordshire; Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Staffordshire Moorlands, Stafford & Stone, Rugeley, Cannock & Burntwood, East Staffordshire & South Staffordshire but excluding Stoke-on-Trent.

Suite 1, 7-8 Mill Street, Stafford ST162AJ

01785 241393

t3stars.stafford@humankindcharity.org.uk

Talk to FRANK

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/cannabis>

0300 1236600.

For referrals:

Staffordshire County Council's First Response Service

0800 1313 126 (Mon – Thurs 8:30am to 5:00pm and Fri 8:30am – 4:30pm)

0845 6042 886 (emergency duty service out of hours)

Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD) (Stoke-on-Trent)

01782 235100 (Mon – Fri 8:30am – 6pm)

01782 234234 (emergency out of hours team)

ChAD.referral@stoke.gov.uk



