



NEW  
PSYCHOACTIVE  
SUBSTANCES

**RANDOX**  
TESTING SERVICES

## WHAT ARE NPS

New Psychoactive Substances, formerly known as legal highs, are substances which produce the same or similar effects as many illegal drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy and cocaine. With many NPS it is extremely difficult to know their potency and therefore how they will affect the user.

To try and address the serious effects 'legal highs' were having on users, the Psychoactive Substances Act was introduced on the 26th May, 2016. The act made it an offence to produce, supply, or offer to supply, any substances that are likely to produce psychoactive effects, regardless of its potential for harm.

Some of the more prominent NPS have been given a classification and placed on the Misuse of Drugs Act. For example, K2/Spice and Black Mamba - types of psychoactive substance that gained popularity due to their widespread availability and similarity to cannabis, are now Class B controlled drugs.



## NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

CAN BE DIVIDED INTO 4 GROUPS ...



### SEDATIVES

Cause reduced concentration and slowing of reactions, leading user to feel physically unsteady and lethargic.



### HALLUCINOGENICS

These substances cause psychedelic reactions which can lead the user to act erratically, putting their own safety at risk.



### STIMULANTS

These substances temporarily cause an increase in alertness and energy, while also putting a strain on the nervous system.



### SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

Large doses can lead to life-threatening intoxication. Also affect the central nervous system, causing seizures, high blood pressure, rapid heart rate and increased body temperature.

## RISKS OF NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Due to the uncertainty of the contents of NPS the risks associated with such substances can vary dramatically.



Coma



Hallucinations



Drowsiness



Seizures



Reduced inhibitions



Dependence/  
Addiction



Excited or  
paranoid states



Serious injuries  
and death

## THE FACTS

Use of NPS in the last year is concentrated among young adults aged 16 to 24. Around 1 in 40 (2.6%) young adults took an NPS in the last year. This equates to around 162,000 people.

DrugWise, 2016

Nearly a million people (937,000) aged 16-59 said they had used an NPS at least once.

Home Office, 2016

## THE EVOLUTION OF NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES LEGISLATION

NPS have been around for a long time, and manufacturers were always able to find a way to get around existing legislation. Back as far as 1968 the Medicines Act was introduced to enforce laws on the creation, manufacture and supply of medicines. This made it illegal to sell, supply or advertise NPS for human consumption. This was then followed up by the Misuse of Drugs Act in 1971, making it an offence to possess, supply or manufacture certain non-medical drugs.

The issue with these acts is that the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act classifies illegal drugs based on their chemical composition. This then meant manufacturers of NPS could alter a substance's chemical make-up to get around this legislation, thus making the substances legal. They could also label them as 'Not Suitable for Human Consumption' and market them as bath salts, incense or plant food as another way to get around existing laws.

In 2008/2009 there was a noticeable surge in the importation, distribution and selling of NPS. This prompted an update to the Misuse of Drugs Act in 2010, followed by another in 2011. This update meant any NPS not classified as a class A, B or C drug could be placed under a temporary class drug order, if the substance was causing concerns.

In 2014 a review was carried out to see what could be done to tackle the issues NPS were having on society. This review then led to the creation of the Psychoactive Substances Act which was implemented on the 26th May 2016 – making it illegal to produce, supply or offer to supply any substances that are likely to produce psychoactive effects.

## WHERE RANDOX TESTING SERVICES COME IN:

Randox created the first Synthetic Cannabinoids (JWH/AM) and 'Bath Salts' (MPDV) tests in 2012. As new NPS emerged onto the market, Randox continued to be at the forefront of testing, by creating next generation Synthetic Cannabinoids tests (UR144 and JWH250) in 2013. These tests were a milestone in the fight against the highly dangerous NPS and provided a way for laboratories and companies to stay on top of the developing drug trends.

As the landscape of NPS is ever changing, at Randox we are continually striving to create innovative tests for psychoactive substances. We continue to develop our test menus and grow our range of tests.



## NPS WE CURRENTLY SCREEN FOR:

AB-CHMINACA	PNPI
WH-018	Etizolam
AB-PINACA	PNP11
Mephedrone	Fentanyl 1 (Fentanyl/Norfentanyl)
AH-7921	Salvinorin
Mescaline	Fentanyl 2 (Acetyl Fentanyl)
Alpha PVP	U47700
MT-45	Fentanyl 3 (Carfentanil/Remifentanil)
BZP	UR-144
Naloxone	Fentanyl 4 (Sufentanyl)
Carfentanil/Remifentanil	W-18/W-19/W-15
NBOMe's	Fentanyl 5 (Ocfentanil)
Clonazepam	



For more information on our tests for  
psychoactive substances contact:

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