

UK Upgrades Cannabis Classification From C To B

Cannabis has been reclassified as a Class B drug in England and Wales, amid concerns that it impacts on mental health, according to a BBC report.

The reclassification of the drug, which was a Class C, has come into effect despite complaints that the new laws are "illogical". According to the BBC report, ministers went against their advisers to upgrade the drug because of worries about its impact on mental health. Class C includes substances such as tranquillisers, some painkillers, GHB (so-called 'liquid ecstasy') and ketamine. Possession of Class C drugs is treated largely as a non-arrestable offence. Magistrates welcomed the reclassification, but said planned fines for possessing small amounts undermined the more serious classification. They said it sent the signal that cannabis was not as bad as other Class B drugs. There are plans to introduce a 'three-strikes' system for cannabis possession, starting with a warning, then an £80 spot fine for a second offence. Scotland and Northern Ireland have opted out of the penalties arrangement for England and Wales, retaining the former system for Class B drugs. Only when a third offence is committed will the person be liable for arrest and prosecution. Currently, police can only warn or prosecute people caught in possession of cannabis. The maximum prison term for possessing cannabis rises from two to five years with its reclassification. Home Office Minister Alan Campbell said: "Cannabis is a harmful drug and while fewer people are taking it than before, it poses a real risk to the health of those who do use it." source : gleanerjm.com