

SORTED

Substance Use and Misuse Team

Cannabis Parent/Guardian Resource

Introduction

Cannabis is one of the most popular substances used amongst young people in the UK, and across the world. There are many misconceptions around the short and long term effects, and there can be many different reasons why young people choose to use cannabis. With a variety of information out there, from fact to opinion, it can be difficult to navigate as a young person or as a parent/guardian of one. This resource has been created to provide information to support conversation with your child about cannabis. You will read about what cannabis is, the short and long term effects, as well as the legalities to help you make the most informed decisions to keep your child safe and happy.

What Is Cannabis?

Cannabis is a plant which contains two main components THC and CBD. THC is the psychoactive element and causes the 'high' effect experienced by cannabis users. CBD is the element that is believed to have therapeutic benefits, there is still research is still being done on this. It is the most common drug used by young people in the UK today and it can be used in lots of different forms.

You can read more about cannabis on the talktofrank website
[Cannabis](#) | [Weed](#) | [Effects of Cannabis](#) | [FRANK](#)
 (talktofrank.com)



Cannabis plant the drug derives from.

What Does Cannabis Look Like?

Cannabis can come in different forms, example are shown in the images.

Cannabis leaf/weed/marijuana - dried leaves and flowering part of the plant, it resembles dried herbs and is most common in the UK.



The left image shows dried and most likely imported cannabis, the right image shows fresher most likely UK grown cannabis.



Cannabis resin/Hash - dark/brown black lump.



THC = illegal
 CBD = legal
 Cannabis oil - sticky, thick, yellowy/brown liquid



Edibles - food infused with cannabis i.e. sweets and brownies, often versions of branded products with an indication they contain cannabis such as a THC marking. Increasing in popularity.

You can read more about these different forms and the way it can be used and/or consumed at Drugwise.
[Cannabis – DrugWise](#)

How Do I Know My Child Has Used Cannabis?

The effects of using cannabis can depend on the amount of THC/CBD, your child's mood, the environment and how often it is used. The short term effects are listed on right and can be signs your child has used cannabis.



ATTENTION

- Blood shot eyes
- Dazed/dreamy demeanour
- Short term memory loss
- Faint/feeling sick
- The giggles
- The munchies
- Dry mouth
- Paranoia
- Anxiety



You can watch more about the short term effects on this talktofrank video.
[FRANK: Cannabis Side Effects - YouTube](#)

Will Cannabis Affect My Child's Health Long Term?

There are long term effects to using cannabis. It can increase the risk of psychotic illness such as schizophrenia as well as mental health issues.

Schizophrenia = delusions and hallucinations.

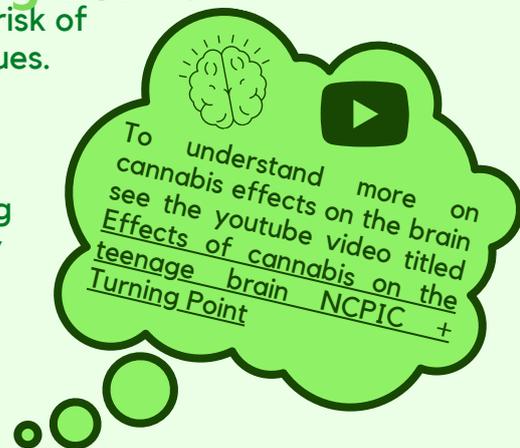
- Delusions – believing things that are not true
- Hallucinations – seeing things that are not really there

Risk of schizophrenia is increased if you use cannabis from a young age, frequent use, stronger cannabis i.e. skunk, and family history of schizophrenia.

Mental Health -

- Anxiety and paranoia
- Hallucinations

These can happen during use, and may settle when stopped, but use can also aggravate existing mental health issues.



You can read more on the NHS website about the mental and physical effects associated with cannabis use.

[Cannabis: the facts - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

Will My Child Get Into Trouble For Using Cannabis?

Cannabis is an illegal Class B drug. There are consequences for the **illegal** possession, supply and production of cannabis.

Possession – having (possessing) cannabis in any form including edibles can get you up to 5 years in prison, unlimited fine or both.

Supply - supplying cannabis which includes giving it to your friends for free or sharing it with them can get you up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Dealing - selling cannabis for any sized financial gain can get you up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Trafficking - moving it around the country on transport or through private vehicle etc. can get you up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Production - producing cannabis whether growing for self consumption or to be sold can get you up to 14 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both.

Young people who use cannabis are at increased risk of child criminal exploitation (CCE), and to be groomed into County Lines operations, see below for more information.



To read more about the legality of cannabis please see the government website [Drugs penalties - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk). To learn more about county lines and CCE, see The Childrens Society website [What Is County Lines? | The Children's Society \(childrensociety.org.uk\)](http://childrensociety.org.uk).

How Can I Help My Child?

It can be difficult to know the best way to support your child if you are concerned. Speaking with professionals already working with your child is the first step such as teachers, and key workers.

Below are local and national services to find more information and support for your child.

Local

- Adolescent Development Services SORTED
 - sorted@hillington.gov.uk
 - 01895 250 721
- ARCH Hillingdon
 - 01895 207 777
 - arch.hillingdon@nhs.net

National

- Childline - 0800 1111
- Frank - talktofrank.com
 - 0300 123 6600
 - frank@talktofrank.com
 - text - 82111
- youngminds - youngminds.org.uk
- ADFAM - adfam.org.uk
- Samaritans - samaritans.org
- The Childrens Society - childrensociety.org.uk
- MIND - mind.org.uk
- CYPMHS - NHS mental health support
 - nhs.uk - [search CYPMHS](http://search.CYPMHS)

