

ACMD

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

Update on recent advice to the UK Government on Novel Psychoactive Substances

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Chair of the UK Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

Commission on Narcotic Drugs 63rd session

“The adverse health consequences of and risks associated with new psychoactive substances have reached alarming levels”

3rd inter-sessional meeting

Tuesday 20 October 2020

About the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD)

- **The ACMD is an independent expert advisory committee**, with a statutory duty to advise the UK Government on matters relating to the misuse of drugs in the UK.
- **Membership across a variety of disciplines**, including pharmacology, toxicology, pharmacy, criminology, medicine, law enforcement – among others
- **The ACMD has played a key role** in providing scientific advice to the UK Government to take a number of measures on tackling NPS, including making legislative changes.

Systematic approach to NPS

- The ACMD has a dedicated sub-committee, which systematically monitors evidence on changing prevalence of NPS in the UK and emerging harms.
- The ACMD systematically reviews ‘watch list’ of NPS

Standard Operating Procedure for using evidence in ACMD reports



1. Identifying an emerging NPS and potential for harm

- Assess depth of available evidence – input from NPS Monitoring group

2. Collecting, analysing and presenting evidence

- Published research literature
- Evidence from UK government departments
- Evidence from non-UK sources

3. Consideration of health and social harms

- Domains of health and social harms
- Present conclusions and recommendations

Synthetic opioids: fentanyl and fentanyl analogues (Jan 2020)

Key conclusions

- Diversion rates and misuse of pharmaceutical fentanyls in the UK
- Rates of registered deaths
- Risk of fentanyls infiltrating the UK heroin market and increasing rates of drug-related deaths

Key recommendations

- Research to study diversion and non-medical use of strong opioids
- Reviewing international drug strategy approaches to fentanyl markets
- Training in the therapeutic use of strong opioids
- Toxicology analysis

Novel benzodiazepines (April 2020)

Key conclusions

- There is evidence of increased prevalence and harm for 3 novel benzodiazepines in the UK (**flualprazolam**, **flunitrazolam** and **norfludiazepam**).
- No evidence for legitimate medicinal uses of these substances in the UK.

Key recommendations

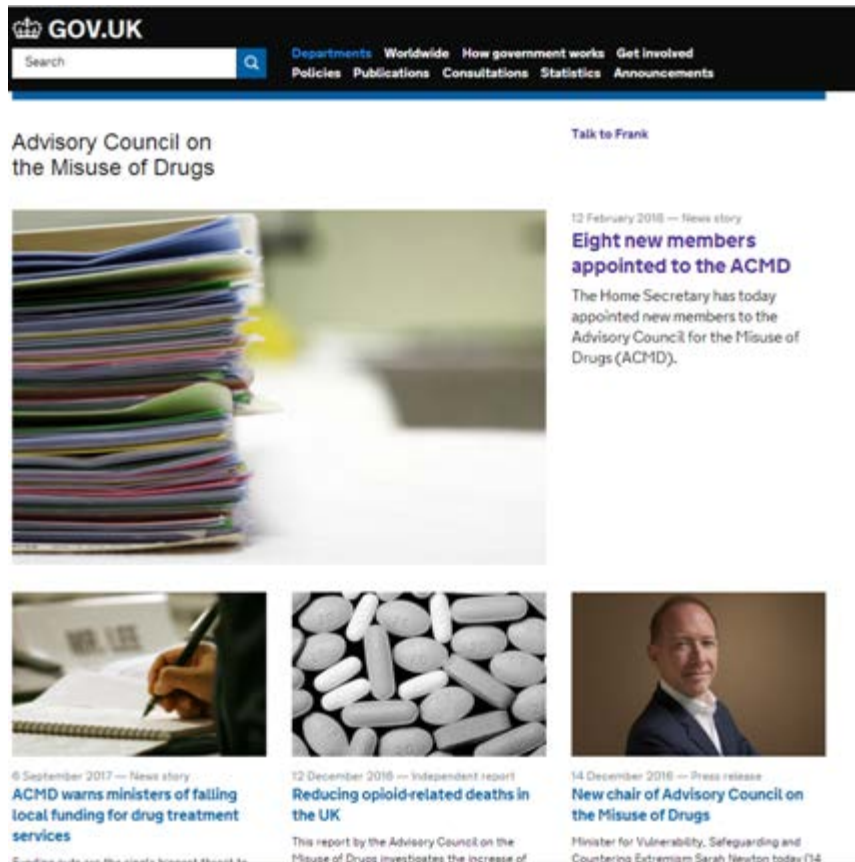
- **Flualprazolam**, **flunitrazolam** and **norfludiazepam** should be classified under Class C of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- Owing to their lack of medicinal use, these compounds should be scheduled under Schedule 1 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.

Upcoming ACMD reports on NPS

- **Synthetic Cannabinoid Receptor Agonists (SCRAs) (Oct 2020)**
Advice to include an updated harms assessment and recommendations to reduce harm
- **GHB, GBL and related compounds (Nov 2020)**
The ACMD will advise on classification, scheduling and other approaches to reduce the availability, demand, and harms of these compounds.

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Talk to Frank

12 February 2018 — News story
Eight new members appointed to the ACMD
The Home Secretary has today appointed new members to the Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD).

6 September 2017 — News story
ACMD warns ministers of falling local funding for drug treatment services

12 December 2016 — Independent report
Reducing opioid-related deaths in the UK
This report by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs investigates the increase of

14 December 2016 — Press release
New chair of Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs
Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism Sarah Newton today (14

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/advisory-council-on-the-misuse-of-drugs>

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