

Unhappy New Year for drug dealers

27 December 2005

Dealers who sell drugs near schools or use children as couriers could face stiffer penalties, the Government announced today.

This is one of a number of measures introduced by the Drugs Act 2005 coming into force on 1 January 2006 to target drug dealers. Also included are powers for police to request x-rays of dealers suspected of swallowing Class A drugs and tougher sentences to foil those who conceal drugs in their body cavities.

The measures are part of the Government strategy to focus on the substances that are most harmful and deal severely with those who supply drugs.

Home Office Minister, Paul Goggins, said:

"The damage caused to individuals and families by drugs can be devastating. Drug misuse can ruin lives and we are determined to tackle this by putting more drug dealers behind bars and getting more addicts into treatment.

The new measures will make sure courts are taking into account the vulnerability of young people when punishing those who target our schools to sell drugs to children and crack down on those who swallow or hide drugs to escape justice. "

The Drugs Act 2005 will also increase the maximum amount of time suspected drug mules arrested by the police can be held in custody from 96 hours to 192 hours. This will allow time for drugs to pass through the suspects system.

The Government also announced that from 1 January 2006 ketamine will become a Class C drug following the recommendation made in November 2005 by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD).

Mr Goggins said:

"Although ketamine use is relatively low in the UK, there has been an increase in use by clubbers in recent years. Ketamine presents serious health risks and must be subject to strict controls to provide a considerable deterrent to those seeking to import and supply the drug."

The full text of the Drugs Act 2005 is available at

Source: www.hmsa.gov.uk

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