

## Crystal meth to be reclassified as Class A drug

14 June 2006

Home Office Minister Vernon Coaker announced today (Wednesday 14 June 2006) that methylamphetamine, or 'crystal meth', will be re-classified as a Class A drug.

Mr Coaker said: "The decision to re-classify the drug is based on international experience and has been taken on the advice of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD).

"Countries have to decide how to respond to a drug when it has no significant prevalence but potential for serious social problems. Methylamphetamine is a very substantial problem in many countries outside the European Union (EU) but not within it. Reports that the United Kingdom (UK) is on the verge of a crystal meth explosion have been repeated for some years but to date there has been no reliable evidence to support this.

"However, international experience shows it has the potential to be extremely damaging to individuals, families and communities. It is on this basis that the ACMD recommend we reclassify it, fully supported by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) of England, Wales and Northern Ireland and we accept their advice."

Methylamphetamine is most commonly known by its street name of crystal meth. It is a derivative of amphetamine but it is much more potent than other forms of the drug, with potential for greater physical and psychological harm.

When smoked, the crystallised form of methylamphetamine, known as 'crystal meth', produces a very intense 'rush' similar to that produced by crack cocaine. This can quickly become highly addictive and long-term abuse can lead to severe addiction. Chronic use can also lead to psychotic behaviour, characterised by paranoia and hallucinations and violent behaviour. It is also known as speed, ice, crystal or yabba.

Simon Bray, ACPO lead on methylamphetamine and Commander in the Metropolitan Police Service, said: "ACPO is pleased that on the advice of ACMD, the Home Secretary has decided that methylamphetamine is to be reclassified as a Class A drug.

"The serious and well documented dangers associated with production and use of this drug in all its forms will now be substantially easier to combat as a result of this reclassification. It will also become possible to close down, for long periods, premises used as illicit 'meth' laboratories (a power for Class A drugs only). As a result of this change, police forces will now include methylamphetamine within their Class A enforcement strategies and people will be deterred by the penalties for making, dealing or using methylamphetamine."

**Posted:** 14th June 2006

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