

"**New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)** are a worldwide problem. Although now banned they are cheap and easy to obtain. Much has been reported on NPS use in prison and we undertook this inspection to identify good probation work.

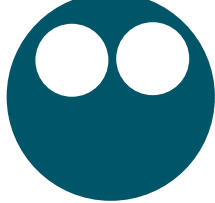
We did not find many examples of effective probation practice, but we did find some good initiatives by local partners. Unfortunately, this was often undertaken in isolation. If probation providers and their staff were made more aware of NPS use and how to tackle it, and if key information were passed from prisons to probation providers in the community, and between them and other key partners, then society would be safer and more lives turned around."

HM Chief Inspector of Probation Dame Glenys Stacey, November 2017

WHAT ARE NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES?

Stimulant-type drugs

drugs that mimic substances such as amphetamine, cocaine and ecstasy
e.g. Benzo Fury, Go-caine



Hallucinogenic drugs

drugs that mimic substances like LSD

Synthetic cannabinoids

drugs that mimic cannabis
e.g. Spice, Mamba



'Downer'/tranquilliser-type drugs

drugs that mimic tranquiliser or anti-anxiety drugs

26 May 2016
Psychoactive Substances Act enacted - the end of "Legal Highs"

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

620

New Psychoactive Substances being monitored by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, at the end of 2016.

1.6%

young men aged 16-24 who have used NPS

147,000

estimated users in England and Wales

75%

of NPS users have used other drugs

79

deaths of prisoners and probation service users associated with NPS 2013-2016

OUR INSPECTION

cases examined in detail

59

102

interviews with probation leaders and frontline staff

interviews with police, health and drug misuse professionals

33

25

interviews with service users and peer mentors

WHAT WE FOUND



The assessments and plans completed by substance misuse services were **sufficient** overall.

Probation workers do not know enough about NPS use to help service users into treatment and to reduce offending.



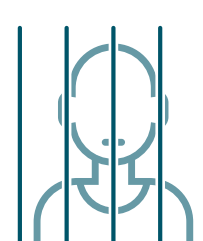
Probation providers did not always know what was available through substance misuse services.

The risks to children and vulnerable adults were not considered often enough.



Confidence, knowledge and awareness were the key areas that affected the quality of work for both probation and substance misuse services.

Prisoners were being released into the community with no information shared about their NPS use with probation or substance misuse services.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Justice should:

- work with the Department of Health to produce specific guidance for probation services on working in the community with offenders who use NPS.

Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service should:

- improve the exchange of information about users of NPS from prisons to probation providers and substance misuse services.

The National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies should:

- make sure assessments and plans consider the impact of NPS use on offending behaviour and public protection
- make better use of the Building Skills for Recovery accredited programme.

The National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Companies and substance misuse services should:

- provide joint training on NPS
- make sure that the protection of children and vulnerable adults is always considered
- improve information-sharing across all agencies.

Substance misuse services should:

- ensure that NPS use is clearly identified in the initial assessment and responded to appropriately in recovery planning
- use and share best practice regarding NPS treatment pathways, including clinical detoxification for NPS addiction.