



Mr Phil Monk
philmonk@wtuhq.org

Reference: TRO/0002260/20

13 February 2020

Thank you for your email of 4 February about cannabis. Your email has been forwarded to the Drugs Legislation Team, which has responsibility for policy in this area.

The interpretation of legislation is ultimately a matter for the courts. However, the Home Office can set out the Government's position on the legal status of cannabis in general terms.

This Government has no plans to decriminalise cannabis. Cannabis is controlled under Class B of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 as there is clear scientific and medical evidence that cannabis is a harmful drug which can damage people's mental and physical health, and harms individuals and communities.

The decriminalisation of cannabis would not eliminate the crime committed by the illicit trade, nor would it address the harms associated with drug dependence and the misery this can cause to families and society. Decriminalisation or legalisation would send the wrong message to the vast majority of people who do not take drugs, especially young and vulnerable people, with the potential grave risk of increased misuse of drugs.

In regard to your questions around cultivation of cannabis. As cannabis is a Class B drug it is unlawful to possess, supply, produce, import or export this drug without Home Office licence. The Home Office would not issue licences for personal cultivation. The Home Office receives and considers licensing applications from companies and individuals in England, Wales and Scotland if they wish to produce, possess, supply, import or export controlled drugs. Each application is considered carefully on its merits, taking account of the ability of the applicant to comply with regulatory standards in order to be issued with a licence under the terms of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.

Cannabis and cannabis extract products will also need to satisfy other regulatory requirements if they are presented as having medicinal benefits. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) are responsible for determining the safety, quality and efficacy of products used for medicinal purposes.

In regard to your point regarding the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), you may wish to contact the CPS directly for questions specific to their department. However, the CPS provides information on its website about how decisions are made as whether it is in the public interest to prosecute. This information is available at:

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/drug-offences>

On your point about “county lines” gangs, the Government acknowledges that county lines gangs have a devastating impact on our communities and is working to disrupt these gangs and put an end to the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults. In October 2019 the Home Secretary announced an additional £20m of targeted investment to increase our efforts against county lines activity over this financial year and next. £5m of this investment is already in operational use supporting activity across three pilot force areas in the largest county lines exporting regions and supporting and developing a number of wider national capabilities.

Yours sincerely,

Drugs Legislation Team

Email: Public.Enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk