

POLICY

Drugs

A realistic approach

The prohibition of drugs doesn't work. It does not protect society in any way, and makes it more difficult to minimise the harm caused by drug use. Addicts are treated as criminals, rather than patients in need of treatment. Every year, tens of thousands of people are put through the criminal justice system, needlessly paralysing the resources of the police, courts, and prisons. Families are torn apart, and people are made jobless and homeless just because they are criminalised by outdated laws. Drug barons are profiting from prohibition and using that money to corrupt those individuals and institutions that should protect society.

Prohibition neither prevents nor controls drug use. On the contrary, prohibition directly leads to the unregulated peddling of adulterated substances beyond the reach of the law. Green Party drugs policy accepts the reality of drug use and strives to minimise harm, both to the user and to society.

ONE WORLD. ONE CHANCE.

Vote Green Party 

A realistic policy on drugs would:

- Cannabis will be available through a limited number of regulated outlets, as under the Dutch model.
- Decriminalise small-scale possession of recreational drugs such as ecstasy.
- Ban advertising or sponsorship of alcohol and tobacco.
- Treat heroin addiction as a public health rather than a criminal issue.
- Ensure immediate funding for research into ways of halting drug addiction without withdrawal symptoms.
- Repeal the Public Entertainment (Drugs Misuse) Act (AKA Barry Legg Act), which has prevented harm reduction in clubs from taking place.
- Take the drug trade out of criminal control and place it within a regulated and controlled legal environment.

How could drugs be legalised?

A Royal Commission (or similar body) should be set up with the job of recommending a regulated framework of social, economic and health conditions for drug use and supply, within a legalised environment of drug use.

Won't the policy lead to more people taking drugs?

The evidence is to the contrary. Due to both the forbidden fruit effect and the nature of pyramid selling, prohibition tends to increase drug usage in the young. In Holland, where cannabis has been legalised, use among teenagers is significantly lower (29% of 15 year olds) than in the UK where it is an offence (41%).

Don't the health risks associated with cannabis use far outweigh any supposed medical benefits?

The main health risks associated with cannabis are due to it being smoked with tobacco. Cannabis is often a very effective pain relief treatment for patients with incurable conditions (e.g. MS, AIDS-related wasting syndrome). It is clearly unethical to deny them this.

Surely some drugs are more dangerous than cannabis though.

Yes, but prohibition makes the problem worse. As ecstasy and cocaine are illegal, for example, there are no controls on purity or dosage strength. This has directly resulted in deaths. In a legalised framework, drugs would not contain adulterants and impurities, and dosage would be accurately quantified. Users would be more willing to seek medical advice or treatment, which doctors would be able to offer freely. In addition, there should be more research into ways of helping to overcome addiction, such as the use of ibogaine in its ability to interrupt opiate addiction without withdrawal symptoms.

Shouldn't you be supporting the police in the war against drugs?

Prohibition doesn't work. The current drug laws criminalise millions of people. The artificially high price of addictive drugs directly causes further criminal activity. The Chief Inspector of Prisons recently stated that 72% of prisoners are jailed for drug law related crime. A change in the laws would alleviate overcrowding in prisons, release the Police to deal with serious crime, and herald a change in police-community relations.

To join the Green Party visit:
www.greenparty.org.uk/join

Find other policy information at policy.greenparty.org.uk
1a Waterlow Road, London. N19 5NJ. Telephone: 020 7272 4474