

News story: Government announces definition for cannabis-based products for medicinal use

The government has announced that cannabis-based products for medicinal use will be available for specialist doctors to prescribe legally and [today sets out which product categories the law-change covers](#).

The Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, committed in July to swift action on behalf of those whose medical conditions could potentially be eased by cannabis-based products and these products will be lawful later in the autumn.

Together with the Health and Social Care Secretary, the Home Secretary has now set out how cannabis-based products for medicinal use will be defined in order to make it lawful for them to be prescribed when specialist doctors believe this is appropriate.

Specialist doctors specialise in one field of medicine such as neurology or paediatrics. In the UK, specialist doctors are listed on the General Medical Council's (GMC) specialist register.

The Home Secretary's decision takes into account recommendations made by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) and the UK's Chief Medical Adviser.

The government has been clear it has no intention of legalising the recreational use of cannabis. Due to the known harms of smoking and the potential operational impact on misuse and diversion, smoking will remain prohibited.

Patients will not be able to get cannabis-based medicinal products from their general practitioner.

Home Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

After hearing of the cases involving sick children, I pledged to make cannabis products legally available for medicinal use as soon as possible.

Agreeing this definition means specialist doctors will be able to prescribe them to patients most in need later this autumn.

There will be strict controls in place and this is in no way a step towards legalising the recreational use of cannabis.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, said:

The Chief Medical Officer's review of the evidence was clear – cannabis-based products can be effective for some conditions. So from autumn specialist doctors will be able to prescribe them when they judge that patients will benefit.

However, these are largely still unlicensed medicines, so it is also important that we build a greater research base on the therapeutic benefit of these products so we can maximise their potential as medicines.

This decision as to which products will be made available is the result of work between the Home Office, ACMD, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

There are 3 broad requirements for products before they can be prescribed:

- the product is or contains cannabis, cannabis resin, cannabidiol or cannabidiol derivatives
- the product must be produced for medicinal use in humans
- it must be a product that is regulated as a medicinal product or an ingredient of a medicinal product

Until the autumn, specialist doctors will still be able to apply to the independent expert panel on behalf of patients wishing to access these products.