

# *Not For Human Consumption*



- *NWICN / NICDTF*
- *3rd June 2010*
- *WHAT'S THE STORY WITH 'HEADSHOP' HIGHS*
- *WHAT ARE THE RISKS*
- *WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?*

# What is a 'Head' Shop?

- 'Head' shops sell drugs and drugs paraphernalia for 'pot' or 'dope' Heads; They started in USA in 1970s; This is where the name came from, originally
- They sell pipes cigarette papers; incense; herbal remedies; organic cosmetics; natural plant highs and so-called 'legal highs'
- They are usually small brightly coloured shops called *Nirvana*; *Planet Love*; *Hemp Stop*; *Up In Smoke* & *Little Amsterdam*
- The first shop opened in North Inner City in 2004



# PARTY PILLS (BZPs) – The Beginning



- 'Head' shops started selling Party Pills about 5 years ago
- They were sold as natural, herbal & legal highs and were said to be *SAFE*
- *The pills were not natural, herbal nor were they safe!*
- The pills included a man-made chemical known as 'BZP' (Benzylpiperazine)
- After many complaints and long EU processes; 'BZP' was banned in Ireland in April 2009



# April 2009 to April 2010?



- In January 2010 there were 12 'Head' shops in the North Inner City; Half of these had opened in previous 18 months
- They were selling many so-called 'legal high' drugs
- Some shops were open 7 days a week and 24 hours a day
- Many shops also were selling over the internet and making home deliveries
- The shops have signs restricting under 18's; This is not a requirement it is a voluntary code; NICDTF received many reports of teenagers (U18s) being sold these products
- There were over a 100 shops in total across Ireland

# *WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?*

## *WHAT ARE THESE DRUG PRODUCTS?*

- There were about 70 different brand names
- They are variations of about 15 to 20 different chemical groups
- New brand names were appearing every month
- Common brands were:  
Spice; SNOW, Flake;  
Hurricane Charlie;  
SmokeXXX; Blow; Bonzai;  
Craic & Wildcat

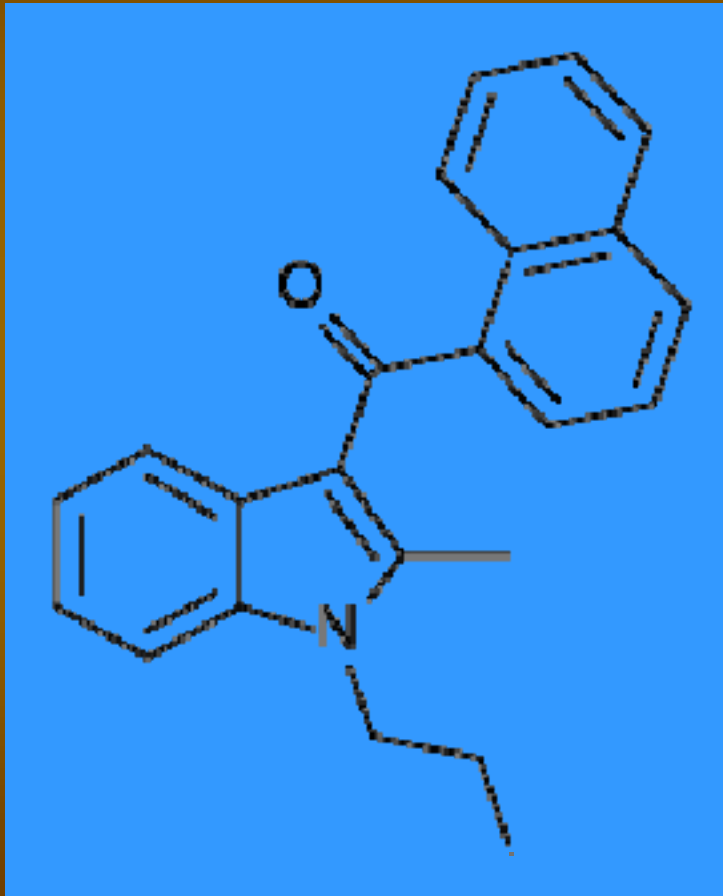


# Why Are People Taking These Drugs?

- People are looking for a buzz; Are curious; Are copying their friends; Are bored; Are becoming dependent
- These drugs mimic common illegal drugs: Hash; Cocaine; Speed; Ecstasy
- They were cheaper than illegal street drugs
- People believe they are safer because they were 'not illegal'
- They were being sold and marketed as safe; legal; natural and cheap



# What Are These Drugs? *INCENSE?* *BATHSALTS? PLANTFOOD?*



- The drugs were being sold as 3 main types of products
- 'INCENSE': Used as a leaf mixture to be smoked
- 'BATHSALTS': Powders that were snorted and sometimes injected
- 'PLANTFOOD': Tablets that were swallowed or crushed and snorted

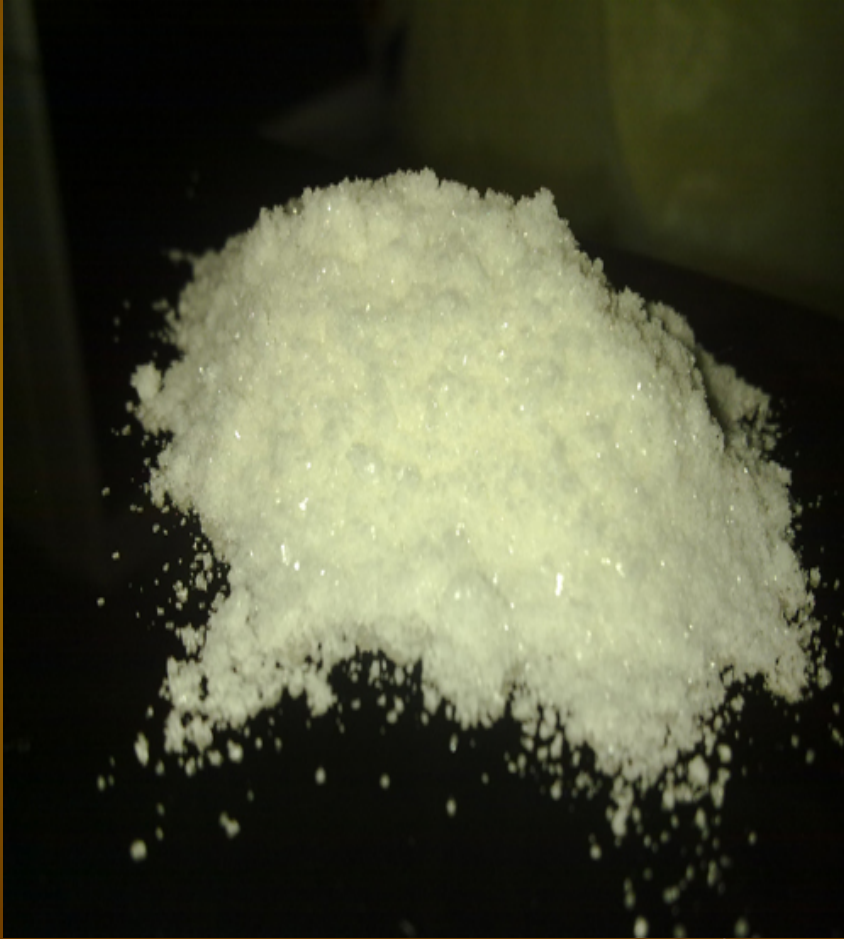
# *Incense? - Smoking Mixtures*

- The *Smoking Mixtures* (Incense and herbal mixtures) are like Cannabis/Hash; They are much stronger
- Many of them contain chemicals called *Synthetic Cannabinoids*; a few are natural plant mixtures
- They have *sedative effects*: *Being Stoned; Relaxed; Laid back; Chatty & Cheery*
- They have brand names like :  
Smoke XXXX; Spice: Bonzai; Sky High; Aura: Sense
- The 'Head' shops were also selling ready-rolled 'joints'





# Bath Salts? - Powders



- The *Powders* (sold as Bath Salts): are like Cocaine, Amphetamine or Ecstasy, often much stronger
- They contain chemicals called Cathinones; or MDPV; Many also contain Caffeine; Benzocaine or Lignocaine
- *They have empathetic effects: Openness; Closeness; Euphoria*
- And they have *stimulant effects: Being Alert; Energetic; Rushing; All-Night Partying*
- *They have brand names like: SNOW, Blow; Magic; Wildcat Hurricane Charlie & Ivory Wave;*

# Plant Food? -Tablets/Pills/Capsules

- The *Tablets/Pills/ Capsules* (sold as Plant Food) are like Ecstasy/E or BZP
- They may contain chemicals called Cathinones; MDPV; They also may contain Caffeine; Benzocaine or Lignocaine
- *They have empathetic effects: Openness; Closeness; Aroused and Euphoria*
- And they have *stimulant effects: Being Alert; Energetic; Rushing; All-Night Dancing*
- *They have names like: Doves; Fast Layn; Space E; Smileys XXX; Lime Fantasy & Craic*

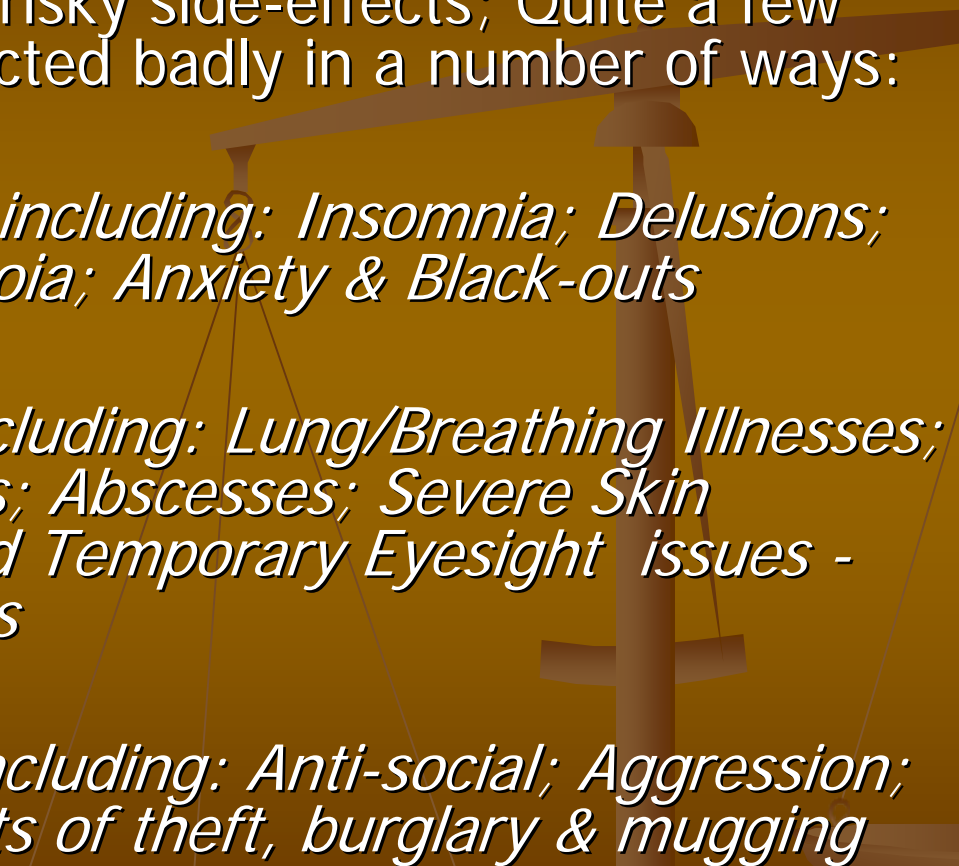


# What Local Community Drugs Projects found?



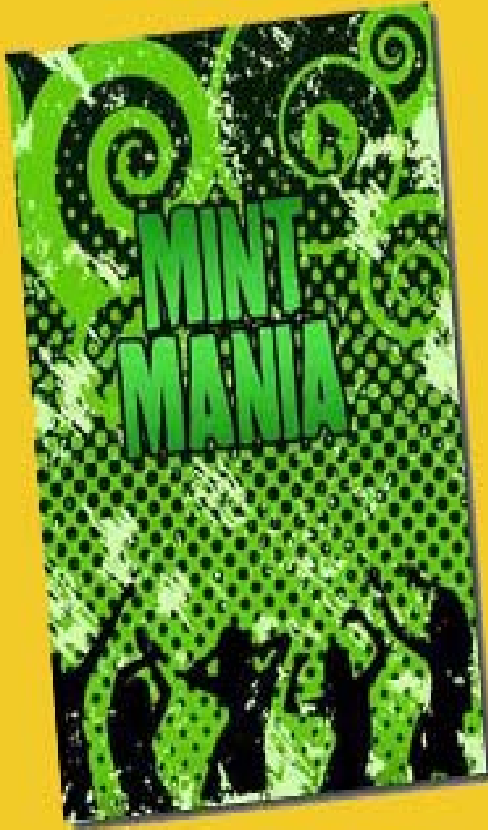
- From Oct '09 many people sought information & help  
NICDTF gathered information from Drugs Projects and Services
- Common findings included:
- Effects on teenagers (from as young as 13 years of age)
- Effects on adult drug users with existing health vulnerabilities
- Effects on rehabilitation of drug users in recovery; Often leading to full relapse
- Effects were reported as worse when these drugs were taken in combination with others drugs and especially with alcohol
- Increase distress to the families of the individuals taking these drugs

# Reported Dangers & Risks Of These Products

- Not everyone suffers risky side-effects; Quite a few people are being affected badly in a number of ways:
  - Psychological Effects including: *Insomnia; Delusions; Hallucinations; Paranoia; Anxiety & Black-outs*
  - Physical Reactions including: *Lung/Breathing Illnesses; Acute Heart Problems; Abscesses; Severe Skin Reactions/Rashes and Temporary Eyesight issues - blurring and blindness*
  - Behavioural Effects including: *Anti-social; Aggression; Violence; Criminal acts of theft, burglary & mugging*
- 



# Vulnerable Groups Using These Drugs



- *Some Groups of people seem more vulnerable to the risks of these drugs:*
- ***Young People:*** *The drugs can affect their mental state causing insomnia; aggression and black-outs; Contributing to criminal and violent behaviour*
- ***Polydrug Users*** *(People mixing drugs and /or drink): Worse side-effects and reactions are seen where the drugs are mixed with illegal street drugs and with alcohol*

# Vulnerable Groups Using These Drugs

- ***Problem Drug Users:***  
*Additional effects on weakened health;  
Breathing problems;  
Acute heart risks;  
Abscesses & severe skin reactions when injected*
- ***People with Mental Health Issues - Effects include: Hearing Voices;  
Experiencing Fits;  
Obsessions; Nervousness and Depression***



# Buyer Beware !



- These drugs are only being produced for sale in the last number of years
- In the short-term, there are not a lot of hard facts about them and their side effects and little is known about the longer term effects on people's health
- These new products have not been tested or approved *for human consumption under health and safety regulations.*
- There are detailed safety regulations in Ireland to sell products for human consumption



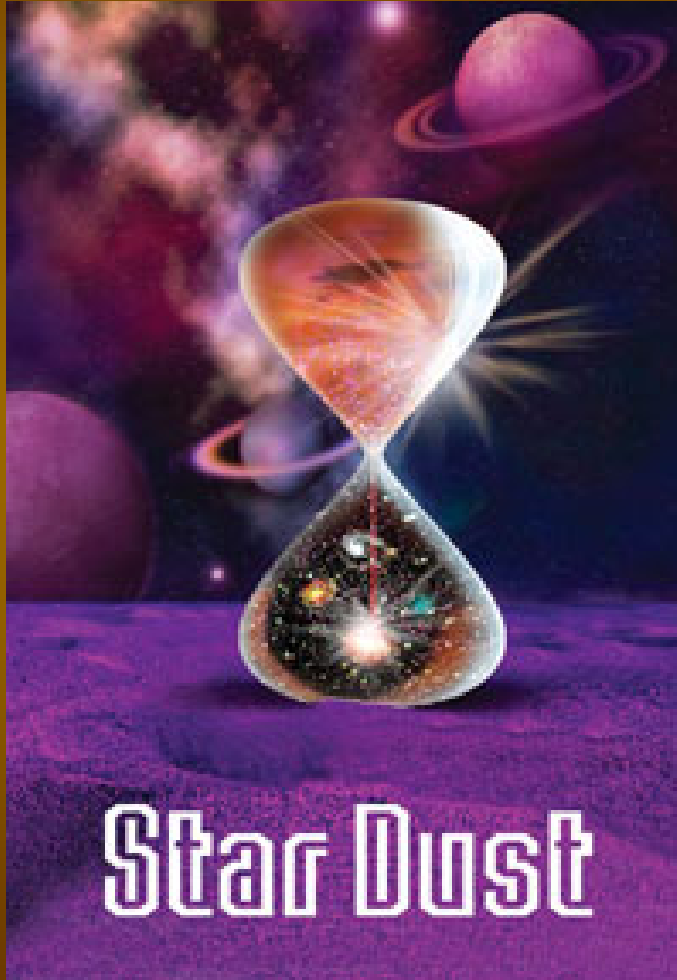
# *How Can These Drugs Be Sold 'Legally'?*

- The suppliers and sellers of the 'Head' shop highs are packaging, promoting and selling these substances as other types of products
- These drugs are being sold as 'Incense' or 'Plant food' or 'Bath salts' (which they are not), allowing them to by-pass the need for testing and pretending that they are 'legal'
- They have exploited a kind of loophole in the current law and regulations
- These drug products are 'NOT LEGAL'





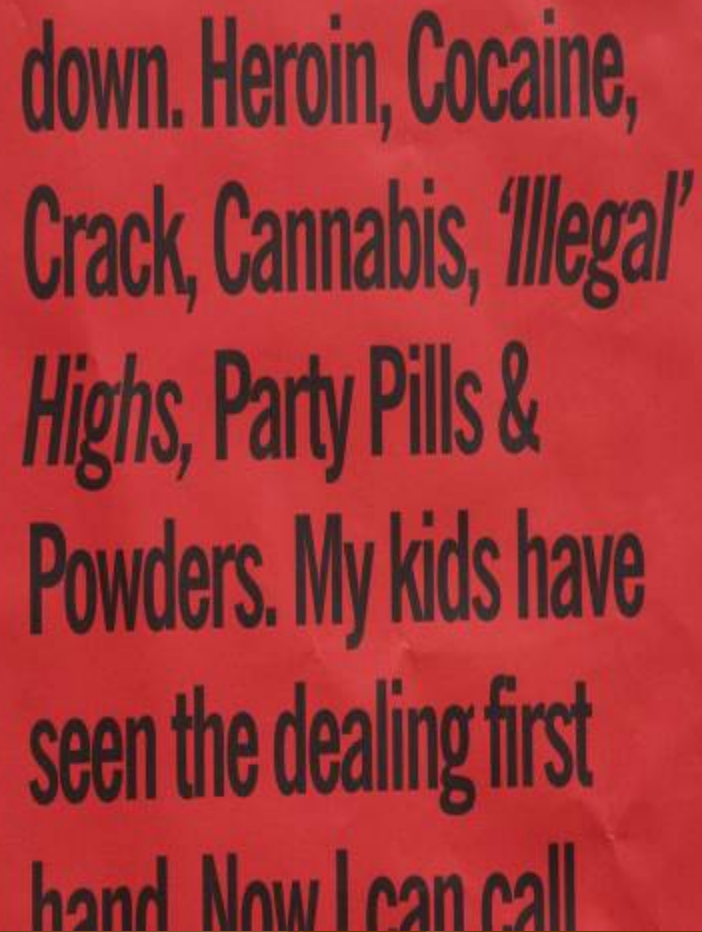
# *Labelled & Sold* **'NOT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION'**



- All the products are labelled as '*Not For Human Consumption*'; The drugs are only being bought for human consumption
- It is not officially permitted to sell a product that is intended to be ingested (eaten), inhaled or injected, regardless what the 'labelling' says as it is considered an unlicensed medicine
- In Consumer Protection law, it is misrepresentation and fraud to the public and especially to vulnerable consumers to sell a product as something that it is not; ***INCENSE; PLANT FOOD & BATH SALTS !***

# *May 2010 New Laws*

- Action on 'Head' shops & highs is included as part of National Drugs Strategy: by submissions of NICDTF
- Dept of Health & Children enacted a ban of many substances on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010
- A wide variety of chemical compounds, derivatives and analogues are included:
- Synthetic Cannabinoids; Found in 'SPICE' and other 'smoking' mixtures; Up to 170 different chemical types are included
- Benzylpiperazine (BZP) derivatives found in tablets/'plant food'; Approximately 50 variations were added to banned BZP



down. Heroin, Cocaine,  
Crack, Cannabis, 'Illegal'  
Highs, Party Pills &  
Powders. My kids have  
seen the dealing first  
hand. Now I can call

# A Changing Situation



- Included were active ingredient in Powders: Mephedrone, Methylone and 8 other *Cathinones*; 20 others are currently not banned
- One Pyrovalerone; MDPV is now banned; There are many more Pyrovalerones, derivatives and analogues not currently included; Pure NRG (now on sale) contains Naphyrone
- Other chemical groups are now being found in new products; Many are Cocaine analogues; like local anaesthetics Lignocaine found in Dublin in new products *Star Dust; Amplified; Entropy*

# *What Is Happening Locally?*

## LOCALLY:

- Issues on Planning; Health & Safety; Tobacco Control; Consumer Protection; Product Liability with respect to 'Head' shops are being examined and pursued with local and national agencies
- An Garda Síochána continue to monitor the shops and their activities in North Inner City
- Resulting from investigations by Gardai and local agencies the 'UBUZZ' 'Head' shop closed at end of April & Russian Smartshop on Talbot St; Open 24 hours/day 7 days/week; was closed down at the start of May





# What Else Is Happening?



- **NATIONALLY:** ~Over 250 chemical compounds were scheduled under the Misuse of Drugs Act on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010
- Of 102 'Head' shops only 36 now remain open in Ireland
- The government is bringing 'the Psychotropic Substances' Bill to the Dáil in 2010; This will forbid shops from selling suspect products without prior approval
- Research on 'Headshop Highs' is being carried out through National Advisory Committee on Drugs by Dublin Institute of Technology
- A National Awareness campaign will promote information on dangers & risks of these drugs; '**ILLEGAL OR NOT**'
- 'Illegal' Headshop Highs will be included as part of new national campaign for '*Dial To Stop Drug Dealing Freephone*' number
- At EU level *Mephedrone* & other Cathinones are being investigated under EU Risk Assessment Procedures throughout Europe

# *Keeping Up To Date*

- North Inner City Drugs Task Force continues to gather and provide information and support on related issues
- Further Information sessions are being planned; Info will be updated on [www.nicdtf.ie](http://www.nicdtf.ie)
- Info can be accessed through local projects
- Local NIC drugs projects are responding to individual family and community issues with Support; Info & Advocacy; Issues are raised by communities with NICDTF



# *Finally: A Word Of Warning!*



- Since the middle of February 11 shops have ceased trading; 3 new shops have opened; As of start of June only 4 shops remain open in the North Inner City
- There has been some success tackling problems on these issues: A lot of cooperation by all working together
- It's reported that the now the 'illegal' highs are available through local drug dealers in the area; 'Head' shops' are selling new products not yet controlled
- The risks of these situations will continue to cause problems and require all projects to respond by sharing information and providing support



# To Be Continued. . . .

