Action 104: Request to provide a report on Legal Highs following concerns

Legal Highs, Lethal Lows?
The National Challenge

- Increasing prevalence but data is poor
- Public and professional awareness is low
- Public services capacity is stretched
- Opiate focussed health services need to adapt
- Lack of legislation that can be kept up to date
Threat, Harm & Risk
North Yorkshire Overview

• Trading Standards Problem Profile
  – Scarborough – high risk of harm
  – Harrogate – medium risk of harm
  – Craven, Ryedale, Richmondshire & Selby – low risk

• Existing legislation
  – Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1986
  – Misuse of Drugs Act
  – Product Safety Regulations

Specific legislation required to tackle NPS problem
New Psychoactive Substances Bill
What problems will this address?

• How will success be measured?
• Proposed legislation is complex and will run alongside Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Supply of Intoxicating Substances and Human Medicines Act – confusion?
• Number of amendments required to tighten the current wording of the bill
• Prosecution required to prove that the substance is psychoactive and that it will have a psychoactive effect yet no chemical test for NPS and none in the pipeline
• Personal possession is not an offence
• No right of appeal to civil orders
So, what next?

Irish legislation saw a reduction in the number of young people presenting at A&E and closure of head shops

But…

• NPS usage continued to rise
• People now manufacturing their own
• Increased internet dealing
• Increased prevalence in prisons – more short term sentences = greater demand on substance misuse services
Next Steps for North Yorkshire Police

Practical Recommendations

- Collaborative not competitive approach
- Focus on harm minimisation
- Consistent media messages
- Education, Education, Education
- Safer injecting information at needle exchanges
- Excited Delirium guidance for professionals
- Link to performance data