

Police end marijuana seizures

New effort to halt tide of hard drugs

Special report: drugs in Britain

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Britain is to abandon the hunt for cannabis smugglers and dealers in the most dramatic relaxation of policy on the drug so far.

Instead the Government has told law enforcement officers, including Customs officials and police, to target resources on 'hard drugs', such as heroin and cocaine.

Under the new strategy - part of the most radical shift in drugs policy for a generation - large-scale cannabis seizures and prosecutions will now take place only as a by-product of investigations into Class A drugs.

Last week with the blessing of Home Secretary David Blunkett, police in Brixton, south London, abandoned their policy of prosecuting people found with small amounts of the drug.....

The relaxation of policy on cannabis follows changing public attitudes to the drug. This weekend senior Tory MP Alan Duncan supported Peter Lilley, the former deputy leader of the Conservative Party, who called for the legalisation of sale of the drug in licensed outlets.

Ash director Clive Bates said: 'We would legalise cannabis in its non-smokable forms, such as in cakes, tea or droplets. There's irrationality and inconsistency in the policy on tobacco, soft and hard drugs. Even if you legalised cannabis in its smokeable forms you couldn't come close to the harm done by cigarettes, because no one smokes 20 joints a day.'

Can we learn from the Brits?

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