



**Isle of Man
Government**
Reiltys Ellan Vannin

Cannabis Consultation

Closes 20 Mar 2019

Opened 6 Feb 2019

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Changes to allow Industrial Hemp production

Overview

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is consulting on the framework for licensing Hemp for industrial use.

Industrial Hemp is grown for commercial use as a fibre or foodstuff. Hemp is one of a number of plant species that can be used for fibre production.

Why we are consulting

We are seeking the views of local residents on a regulatory framework for industrial hemp that could open up economic opportunities for its production on the Isle of Man.

Areas

All Areas

Audiences

Anyone from any background

Interests

Legislation

Health

Criminal Justice

Public Consultation Paper for Industrial Hemp

What is industrial hemp?

Hemp is a plant which belongs to the species *Cannabis sativa*. Industrial hemp is grown for commercial use as a fibre or as a foodstuff. Hemp is one of a number of plant species that can be used for fibre production. Other fibre-rich species that can be grown in the British Isles include flax, miscanthus and cereal straw (as a by-product of arable cropping). Fibre cropping is an opportunity for economic development that would support sustainable farming and have less impact on the environment than current alternative products based on petrochemicals. Uses of hemp fibre include production of textiles, clothing, paper, animal bedding, insulation materials, building materials and biodegradable plastics. Hemp seeds can be used in animal food and as a food supplement for humans. Hemp seeds can be cold-pressed to yield oil which can also be used as a food supplement.

Why are we consulting on the regulation of industrial hemp?

Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1976, it is illegal to cultivate any plant of the genus *Cannabis* – so at present growing hemp for industrial purposes is also illegal under the Act.

As noted above, hemp is a variety of *Cannabis sativa*. However, hemp varieties contain very low levels of the chemical THC^[1] and, therefore, do not have the psychoactive properties of cannabis used for recreational use.

The Misuse of Drugs Act 1976 makes provision for the Department of Health and Social Care to make regulations that would enable licences to be granted to grow *Cannabis* species. However, DHSC has never developed such regulations or received any requests to grant a licence to grow.

Creating a regulatory framework for industrial hemp could open up economic opportunities for its production in the Isle of Man. We are therefore seeking public views on the acceptability of industrial hemp as a commercial crop and on any particular issues relating to it that may be of concern.

How is industrial hemp regulated elsewhere?

Over 30 countries produce industrial hemp and many have a regulatory framework based on granting licences or permits. Details of the regulatory frameworks vary between countries although most aim to control production to ensure that the crop, or parts of it, cannot be diverted for illegal use (as recreational cannabis). Managing the risk of diversion is done by controlling the THC concentration of the crop and, often, by requiring the destruction of those parts of the plant (leaves and flowers) that are not required for industrial processing into fibres or foodstuff.

In the UK, the regulatory framework is based on granting licences to individual growers, allowing both cultivation and possession so long as certain criteria are met. The licensing and compliance is overseen by the Home Office, Crime and Policing Group. Over recent years, the Home Office has moved to a 'light touch approach' based on electronic applications without the need for routine site or compliance visits. Licensing is based on the following criteria:

- Applicants are expected to site their crops sensitively but there are no mandated requirements such as distance from schools, public rights of way or vehicular access.
- The hemp seed used must be an 'EU approved variety'. These seeds have a THC content of less than 0.2%. No testing during cultivation or processing is required to confirm THC content in the crop.

¹ Cannabis plants contain a number of naturally occurring compounds known as cannabinoids, and the level of them varies from variety to variety. The two best known, nearly always referred to by their initials, are tetrahydrocannabinol (THC, the main psychoactive compound) and cannabidiol (CBD).

- Those parts of the plant not covered by the licence for industrial production (i.e. the leaves and flowers) remain illegal under the Misuse of Drugs legislation and must be retted (destroyed) at the licenced location or otherwise lawfully disposed of.
- The local police should be made aware of the growing location.
- Licences are usually issued to cover three consecutive growing seasons – so have up to three years' validity, although single season licences can also be issued. Holders of a three year licence are required to complete and submit an 'Annual Licence Review Statement' at the start of the growing season. Completion and submission is mandatory and without submission a licence may be revoked.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service check is required for each applicant and the DBS application must have been lodged before the application for a licence is submitted.
- If a grower is growing at multiple sites on one farm, this would be covered by their licence. However, if they are growing on multiple sites outside their main property, e.g. on land rented from a neighbour or in an adjacent village, additional licences may be required subject to discussion with the Home Office.

Further information on the UK licensing scheme is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-hemp-licensing-guidance>

In Northern Ireland, the UK framework is followed with licensing by the Department of Health

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/industrial-hemp-licensing-information>

Give Us Your Views

Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name

2 What is your email address?

If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response.

Email

3 Are you responding as an individual or as part of an organisation?

(Required)

Please select only one item

Individual Organisation

If organisation, please specify:

Organisation

4 What is your age?

Please select only one item

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 18 years | <input type="radio"/> 30 – 39 years | <input type="radio"/> 60 - 69 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 18 – 24 years | <input type="radio"/> 40 – 49 years | <input type="radio"/> 70 – 79 years |
| <input type="radio"/> 25 - 29 years | <input type="radio"/> 50 – 59 years | <input type="radio"/> Over 80 years |

Your views (continued...)

5 Please provide the first 3 digits of your postcode, for example IM0

We ask for 3-digits of your postcode, this DOES NOT identify your house and no attempt will be made to link the information back to your household.

6 May we publish your response?

Please read our [Privacy Policy](#) for more details and your rights.

More information

- Publish in full – your first name and surname, organisation name, along with full answers **will** be published on the hub (your email will **not** be published)
- Publish anonymously – only your responses **will** be published on the hub (your name, organisation and email will **not** be published)
- Do not publish – **nothing will** be published publically on the hub (your response will only be part of a larger summary response document)

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Yes, you can publish my response in full
- Yes, you can publish my response anonymously
- No, please do not publish my response

Your views (continued...)

7 Do you support the introduction of a regulatory framework within which industrial hemp production could be permitted on the Isle of Man?

Please select only one item

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer in the box below

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8 Would you support a similar regulatory framework to that currently in place in the UK?

Please select only one item

Yes No Don't know

Please explain your answer in the box below

9 If the Isle of Man opts to follow the UK Framework would you wish to see any changes to that framework prior to application in the Isle of Man?

Please select only one item

Yes No

If you answered yes, what should the changes be?

Please return this completed Consultation Form in the pre-paid envelope provided or send to:

Cannabis Consultation, Department of Health and Social Care, c/o Chief Executives Office
Crookall House, Demesne Road, DOUGLAS, Isle of Man, IM1 3QA.