

REGULATION

Regulation for cannabis users is needed worldwide!

When you woke up today, it was probably on a bed that didn't collapse in the night because the manufacturers had made it from poor quality materials. When you went last week food shopping, none of the food you bought made you sick because the supermarket had thrown away all the out of date stock. If you've taken a public taxi, then you probably ended up where you wanted to go and didn't get ripped off because all licensed taxis have to have visible meters fitted. All of these measures designed to keep you safe, healthy, and able to make your own financial decisions, are the result of government regulations. There's a lot of talk about how "bureaucratic red tape" slows down business and gets in the way of the consumer, but do you really want to go back to the good old days of "mad cow disease", when farmers were feeding infected dead cows to live cows and managed to kill 166 people in the process? This is why regulation of cannabis is important. Not because the government should be able to use the system to stop people taking drugs, but because cannabis users, especially medicinal cannabis users, shouldn't be risking their health because unscrupulous dealers have a direct financial interest in compromising the quality of their product.

Some cannabis activists have vehemently objected to any suggestion that the law should have any say in that sells what to whom. Some people believe that cannabis should just be decriminalized, because cannabis doesn't kill anyone, and therefore no regulation is needed. But all drugs are psychoactive substances, it's not really about whether they kill people or not, they all alter your consciousness. And even if something is harmless, the circumstances in which it is produced can be terrible. Trousers aren't going to kill you, but the children making them

in sweatshops in Indonesia might be happier if they didn't have to work twelve hours a day to make them for us. So we should recognize that much of the time regulation is a good thing. When you get down to it, it seems the issue for many people is that the current laws regarding alcohol and tobacco are inconsistent and they object to the idea that cannabis will be subject to the same inconsistent regulation. In many places, you can smoke in the open air, but not drink, and you can drink indoors but not smoke! To argue that alcohol and tobacco should be regulated the same as cannabis really means that as reformers we should be supportive of a change in the alcohol and tobacco laws as well.

When it comes to the age of consent, it's important to remember that the age of consent is not related to any form of

scientific research into harms but the age at which you are deemed legally able to make your own decisions for yourself. So this public argument about when cannabis does and does not damage your developing brain seems to be irrelevant. It therefore seems fair to say that, within reason, certain drugs like cannabis should be commercially available to over 18 year olds without restriction but from licensed production facilities, which are subject to regular inspection in the same way that the sale of food is regulated and inspected, and that what you produce in your own home and give to your friends is your own business. I don't mind taking the risk of eating a cake that a friend has made me, but I don't want the kebab shop down the road to be doing whatever they want in their kitchen. In the same way, I'm sure that most cannabis users are

