

# Nitrous Oxide – No laughing matter



**Many residents have told us that antisocial behaviour linked to the taking of Nitrous Oxide, otherwise known as laughing gas, has become a significant concern.**

Both Tower Hamlets Council and Tower Hamlets Homes have received complaints that it can be intimidating seeing groups of people taking it. Nitrous Oxide causes a noise nuisance and the small metal canisters that contain it are often left on the floor as litter.

We want to help by talking about what it is, the law and what we can do together to tackle it.



## THE FACTS

Although the gas was previously a 'legal high', it is now illegal to supply or import Nitrous Oxide for personal use.

Nitrous Oxide is used as pain relief during medical procedures such as dental work. It can also be legally bought for use in whipped cream dispensers.

Nitrous Oxide can cause dizziness and affect the taker's judgement. This can put people at risk of hurting themselves. Further research is taking place into its long-term effects, with some health conditions and deaths linked to its use.

## WHAT WE CAN DO

### Enforcement

We realise antisocial behaviour like this is a concern for people. That's why Tower Hamlets Council is paying for 14 new police officers to patrol the housing estates operated by Tower Hamlets Homes.

### Illegal sale

The council's Trading Standards Team are working with the police to tackle retail outlets that sell gas to people who misuse it. You can report an outlet to our Trading Standard team by emailing [tradingstandards@towerhamlets.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@towerhamlets.gov.uk)

### Littering

You can report discarded canisters so we can clean them up. If they are on your estate, you should contact Tower Hamlets Homes on **020 7364 5015**.

If canisters are in streets or parks, away from estates, you can report them to the council's street cleaning team on **020 7364 5004**.

### Prevention

We hope the information in this leaflet will discourage people from using Nitrous Oxide and also give parents information to talk to their children. The council will also be talking to schoolchildren about the dangers and effects of Nitrous Oxide as part of the substance abuse schools programme.