

CBD Laws in the UK: The 2023 Guide

If you're British and interested in using CBD products at home, you **must** understand CBD laws UK. Likewise, it's essential to understand consumer regulation and import and export laws if you're importing CBD into the United Kingdom.

In 2018, the British government altered the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, changing the laws surrounding the sale of CBD products as food supplements in the United Kingdom.

The change impacted various cannabinoids, including CBD and CBDa. It was a significant breakthrough for the British CBD industry, making it more straightforward for Brits to purchase high-quality cannabidiol-infused products.

However, there is still some *confusion* over UK CBD laws despite the new legal status allowing the sale and consumption of cannabidiol.

In this article, we'll break down the current CBD law UK in 2023 for individuals and companies:

Is CBD Legal in the United Kingdom?

According to the United Kingdom government, CBD is legal in the United Kingdom if it meets specific criteria.¹ Nonetheless, cannabis remains illegal for recreational use in the United Kingdom due to its class-B drug classification.²

The British Home Office said: "CBD as an isolated substance, in its pure form, would not be controlled under the MDA 1971 / MDR 2001." In layman's terms, UK CBD law states the CBD compound is legal.³

But there are some strict legal CBD regulations everyone must follow:

- All CBD products must contain less than 0.2% THC in the United Kingdom. That's less than in the United States which says CBD must contain less than 0.3% THC to be legal.
- The company must market the product in compliance with current CBD advertising regulations.
- The producer has cultivated the CBD from industrial-approved hemp per the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- The manufacturer must use an EU-approved hemp strain in their CBD products.
- All CBD products must comply with food regulations, and the company must label them with appropriate information.
- All CBD products must be tested and safe for human consumption.

Three governing bodies regulate CBD in the United Kingdom:

- **The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA):** The MHRA is responsible for the regulation of consumables, such as CBD edibles, tinctures, and supplements.
- **The Cosmetic Toiletry and Perfumery Association (CTPA):** Although the legality of CBD in cosmetic products can be a grey area in the United Kingdom, the CTPA can offer insight into the regulations.
- **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA (EU)) and UK Food Standards Agency (FSA):** The EFSA and FSA regulate CBD as a food in the United Kingdom and Europe.

Compliance with UK law and the guidelines set by these governing bodies is essential for selling and importing CBD products into the United Kingdom.

Some CBD products on the British high street aren't always authorised. As an individual, you must always purchase from a reputable website, pharmacy, or store to ensure full legality and safety.

However, if the CBD products meet these criteria, you can enjoy the various health benefits of CBD—including stress relief, anxiety reduction and inflammation reduction—and sell CBD throughout the booming United Kingdom market.

What Is The Strongest CBD Oil Allowed By Law in the UK?

In the United Kingdom, there is **no specified legal limit** on the strength of CBD oil. However, there is one key law you must follow: CBD must not contain more than 0.2% THC. If your CBD oil contains less than this, you're legally allowed to consume or sell it in the United Kingdom.

People typically measure the strength of CBD oil in two ways: milligrams (mg) of CBD per millilitre (ml) of oil. The strength of your CBD oil will wildly vary depending on the brand and product type.

Remember, the strength of CBD oil **isn't** always an indicator of its quality and effectiveness. For instance, a lower-strength CBD oil can be as effective as a higher-strength CBD oil—but it depends on your needs and the condition you're treating.

Can I Import CBD Products Into The UK?

Yes, you can legally import CBD products in the United Kingdom from any country if the CBD meets specific legal criteria.

Here are the current rules for importing CBD into Britain:

- The CBD products, albeit oil, gummies, or tinctures, must contain less than 0.2% THC,
- The CBD products must come from an industrial hemp strain that the European Union has approved.
- If you're exporting products to the United Kingdom, you can't advertise them as medicinal products, despite the growing insight into their health benefits.

- The products can't contain other controlled substances, including specific cannabinoids.
- The CBD products must obtain licences and permits, including a customs declaration and an import licence.

You should always check the **latest** rules and regulations when importing CBD products into the United Kingdom. Depending on the value of the CBD products and the country of origin, you may need to pay import taxes and fees in Britain.

In addition, if you're importing CBD products for commercial purposes—i.e resale or distribution—you may need additional permits and licences. However, this depends on the type of CBD product, its intended use and where you sourced the hemp from.

Has Brexit Changed UK CBD Laws?

Brexit hasn't majorly changed CBD law UK because UK domestic law has mainly determined UK CBD regulations instead of EU law.

However, cannabis companies looking to sell CBD products in the United Kingdom may need to comply with UK regulations on CBD products after Brexit.

There has been a discussion in the last 12 months regarding new CBD regulations following Brexit.⁴

The UK government has said it may change CBD law UK to require monitoring of THC levels in CBD products, including a possible regulation on a maximum level of 50 micrograms of THC in any product.

Industry representatives have said the limit is far too low and would **damage the UK CBD market**.

Either way, it's important to keep up with the latest CBD regulations in the UK, which may change in post-Brexit Britain.

Why Is CBD Legal But THC Isn't?

In the United Kingdom—although CBD is legal if it meets specific criteria—the government still classes THC as a **controlled substance**.

Likewise, they still consider cannabis to be a class-B drug, and British Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, considered increasing the legal status of cannabis to a class-A drug (the highest classification) in 2022.⁵

The British government states that THC is psychoactive and can cause intoxication. However, CBD **isn't** psychoactive and doesn't cause the same effects. That's why CBD is legal under certain guidelines.

Remember though, CBD products are only legal for sale and consumption in the United Kingdom if the products contain less than **0.2% THC**.

In some cases, the British government allows doctors to prescribe medicinal cannabis to patients suffering from certain health conditions.

What CBD Products Are Legal in the UK?

Many CBD products are legal in the United Kingdom if they comply with specific laws and regulations.

Here are some popular CBD products that are legal in the United Kingdom:

- **CBD edibles:** If you prefer to eat cannabis through various edible options, including gummies and chocolates, British CBD laws allow you to do so. There are many excellent CBD foods and drinks in the UK.
- **CBD isolate:** One of the most popular CBD products in the United Kingdom is CBD isolate, a CBD product that's completely stripped of THC.
- **CBD vape liquids:** Vaping is becoming considerably more popular throughout the United Kingdom, and you can purchase CBD vape liquids for your vaping devices.
- **CBD-infused cosmetics:** CBD cosmetics are becoming popular throughout the world, such as creams, lotions and serums with CBD. You're legally allowed to purchase CBD cosmetics in the United Kingdom.
- **CBD capsules:** CBD oil or powder, commonly found in CBD capsules, is legal in the United Kingdom.
- **CBD oil:** if you're for convenience and strong potency, CBD oil is legal in the United Kingdom. You can use it sublingually or add it to your favourite food and drink.
- **CBD topicals:** if you're looking to reduce inflammation, CBD topicals—which are legal in the United Kingdom—are a popular option.

However, THC levels in all of these CBD products must be below 0.2% to be legal in the United Kingdom.

When Was CBD Made Legal UK?

The United Kingdom made CBD legal on October 17, 2016, when the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) identified it as a medicine for various health issues.⁶

During their research, they determined that CBD could offer fantastic therapeutic benefits and a low risk of abuse. As a result, this was the birth of the British CBD market, which has grown immensely since 2016.

However, although CBD has become legal in the United Kingdom since 2016, there are various strict laws companies and individuals must follow that we've outlined in this article.

Can I Grow Hemp to Make CBD Products in the UK?

Yes, you can grow your own hemp in the United Kingdom to make CBD products.

However, you need a licence from the United Kingdom Home Office because they class hemp as a variety of the cannabis plant. Under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, cannabis plant varieties are still **controlled substances**.

Therefore, you'll need to submit an application to the Home Office and provide details about your cultivation site, the hemp strain, and the cultivation purpose.

Once you've received your licence subject to approval, the Home Office will undergo continuous compliance checks, including ensuring your hemp plants contain less than 0.2% THC.

Can I Travel With CBD Products UK?

Yes, you can legally travel to and around the United Kingdom with CBD products.

Unlike the United States—where laws differ between states—there's no difference in CBD laws between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

However, ensure you follow legal guidelines when travelling to the United Kingdom with CBD products. All your CBD products must contain less than 0.2% THC in the United Kingdom, unlike the maximum THC levels of 0.3% in the United States.

Do CBD Products Require a Prescription in the UK?

No, you don't require a prescription for CBD products in the UK.

As long as CBD products contain less than 0.2% THC, you can legally use them in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, you will need a prescription from a GP if your products contain high levels of THC.

British medical professionals can prescribe medicinal cannabis for certain conditions, but only in certain instances.

Countries Where CBD Is Legal

As the CBD industry grows around the globe, many nations have legalised CBD for medicinal purposes. However, CBD is *largely illegal* outside of the Western world.

If you're uncertain whether CBD is legal in a country you're travelling to, it's a wise idea to travel without CBD products.

Some nations— due to the small traces of THC—treat CBD the same as THC. And, unfortunately, they will implement strict harsh punishments on anyone with CBD products (including long jail sentences).

Here are some nations that have legalised CBD for recreational use:

- **United States:** CBD derived from hemp, with less than 0.3% THC, is legal at the federal level.² However, some states have different laws regarding its legality, so always be wary when using CBD products in the United States.
- **Canada:** CBD is legal for both medical and recreational use in Canada after the nation fully legalised cannabis for recreational use in 2018.⁸
- **Switzerland:** CBD with less than 1% THC is legal, regardless of its THC content.² This makes Switzerland more tolerant of higher THC levels than other nations, including the United States and the United Kingdom.
- **Germany:** CBD is legal for medical purposes with a prescription in Germany. In addition, the nation is currently on a path towards decriminalising cannabis.¹⁰
- **Spain:** CBD is legal for personal use in Spain, and you can purchase it in many health food stores.¹¹
- **Italy:** CBD is legal for medical use with a prescription from a medical professional in Italy. You can purchase it from pharmacies and health food stores nationwide.¹²
- **France:** CBD is legal in France if it contains less than 0.2% THC. However, the French government has often implemented strict laws on CBD.¹³

Final Thoughts

CBD law UK is relatively straightforward for individuals and companies, despite uncertainty surrounding *potential* new regulations after Brexit. Either way, the British CBD market is growing rapidly, and research on the incredible CBD health benefits is getting deeper.

Without a doubt—now is the best time to use, buy and sell CBD in the United Kingdom.

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