Where's the Harm

Nitrous oxide is a colourless gas that is most commonly found in pressurised metal canisters. You may have seen these metal canisters lying around in streets particularly outside bars and nightclubs. It is becoming increasingly popular with young people in the UK, it is readily available to buy online.

Laughing gas is often categorised as a 'legal high' but is considerably less risky than others, such as synthetic cannabis and stimulant mixtures. However, if someone takes too much nitrous oxide, they risk falling unconscious and/or suffocating from the lack of oxygen.

What does laughing gas do to your body ?
When it is inhaled, usually through a balloon, it can make people feel happy, relaxed, dizzy and lead to hallucinations. Taking several doses can prolong the dream-like effects. It is not a hallucinogen but there is often a distortion of audio and visual perceptions.

Young people may be more likely to try it after a few drinks and the dizzy feeling can increase the risk of people falling over and injuring themselves. This is a major risk of taking the drug.

Nitrous Oxide (Laughing Gas)

Keeping your children safe

How should parents respond?
Although parents should not categorise this behaviour as high-risk drug taking, you may be concerned that your child has taken something intoxicating. Although you may be worried, it's important to remember that they have not broken the law by possessing it.
It's a good idea for parents to raise these issues with their children to ensure they understand the levels of risk, how best to stay safe – and how to look after their friends too. stay calm and open-minded when you talk to your child about drugs.

Remember to look at the FRANK A-Z of drugs to make sure your knowledge is up-to-date and accurate. www.talktofrank.com

The Law
- It is illegal to sell to under 18s
- It is illegal to supply for human consumption (penalty is 7 years in prison or unlimited fine)
- It is not illegal to possess