



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th April 2020

Dear Consultant,

RE: MEDICAL CANNABIS (REGULATING PRESCRIPTIONS)

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of medicinal cannabis; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

There is strong scientific evidence that cannabis can harm people's mental and physical health, and damage communities.

Whilst I am afraid I was unable to attend the event you kindly invited me to, like you, I agree that recent cases have shown the need to look more closely at the use of cannabis-based medicine in treating patients with very specific conditions in exceptional circumstances. This is why the Government decided it was appropriate to review the scheduling of cannabis.

The decision to reschedule these products means that senior clinicians will be able to prescribe the medicines to patients with an exceptional clinical need. Following short-term advice issued in September 2018, the ACMD are to review the current rescheduling and its appropriateness by November 2020 and provide further initial advice on synthetic cannabinoids by the summer of 2020.

Moreover, NHS England has published a review which is aimed at assessing the barriers to prescribing cannabis-based medicinal products where it is safe and clinically appropriate to do so.

The National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) has also developed updated clinical guidance on prescribing cannabis-based products for medicinal use, including for the management of chronic pain.

It is crucial that this country keeps in step with the latest scientific evidence, so that patients and their families have access to the most appropriate course of medical treatment.

My Ministerial colleagues have also been clear that given the nature of the medicine, it should only be prescribed by specialist doctors and on a case-by-case basis. I believe these controls are necessary to develop clinical expertise and an evidence base for this treatment's effectiveness.



Notwithstanding the above, however, I absolutely understand the concerns and anguish of patients and their families who suffer on a daily basis. I welcome the rapid progress that has been made and look forward to further rapid progress in this area so patients receive the best, most appropriate, treatment and medication, supported by robust evidence.

The decision whether to prescribe an individual with medicinal cannabis is therefore not a political or financial decision, but a decision by a medical expert, who will have considered whether it is the most effective treatment based on an individual's particular condition. As such, I will continue to closely monitor the roll-out of medicinal cannabis.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove'.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**