



Chris Heaton-Harris
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Tel: 020 7219 7048

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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about medicinal cannabis.

There is strong scientific evidence that cannabis can harm people's mental and physical health, and damage communities. However 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. Thus, 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 Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs are to review the current rescheduling and its appropriateness by November 2020.

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. Steps have been taken to help ensure people with prescriptions for cannabis-based products for medicinal use do not have their treatment delayed or interrupted, by altering import restrictions.

The National Institute for Health and 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. These controls are necessary to develop clinical expertise and an evidence base for this treatment's effectiveness.

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



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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.

I will continue to closely monitor the roll-out of medicinal cannabis and thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

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

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY