



Dr Owen Bowden-Jones  
Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

6 January 2020

Dear Dr Bowden-Jones,

**Urgent review of the classification of GHB (gamma-hydroxybutyric acid) and GBL (gamma-butyrolactone) and closely related compounds under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the scheduling of both drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.**

In the light of the criminal use of GHB and GBL or related substances in the Sinaga case and the use by the murderers Stephen Port and Gerald Motovu, I request that the council reconsider the classification and scheduling of GHB and GBL and closely related compounds under the 1971 Act and 2001 Regulations to ensure that the potential harms are fully reflected in the way that these drugs are controlled and scheduled.

I am aware that the ACMD last considered the status of GHB under both the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 in 2013. At this time the council concluded that GHB should be moved from Schedule 4 of the 2001 Regulations to Schedule 2 on the basis that the abuse liability of GHB is substantial whereas the therapeutic use is little to moderate in the UK. The then government brought this change into effect in 2015.

GBL (gamma-butyrolactone) is controlled under Class C of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 but as it has legitimate uses (for example the production of industrial processes) it is lawful to import, export, produce, supply, offer to supply or possess except for the purpose of human ingestion other than as a flavouring in food.

Given the extreme severity of these cases, and the potential for misuse, I request that the Council urgently expedites the consideration of these substances. I recognise that the Council has a range of other important work streams and my officials will discuss with you how best to prioritise this review alongside your other work.

**Rt Hon Priti Patel MP**