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Psychoactive Substances Act and the alkyl nitrites (“poppers”)

You will be aware that in our response to the Home Affairs Select Committee's report of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, the Government committed to consider whether there is evidence to support the claims that “poppers” have a beneficial health and relationship effect sufficient to justify their exemption under the Act. This review is underway.

The role of the ACMD as a statutory consultee under the 2016 Act is one that will be developed and agreed over the forthcoming months. I understand that this discussion is due to begin at the ACMD's Full Council meeting next month, following an initial exchange last year.

The review process is to be conducted through an independent assessment of the benefits of poppers (as described above) as well as taking into account their safety to users. I recognise that the ACMD is well placed to feed into this review and ask the ACMD to update on its assessment on harms of ‘poppers’. The assessment and recommendation to Government will take into account the ACMD's advice.

I have received representations from Stonewall and others asking whether “poppers” are psychoactive. As part of this process, I ask the ACMD to provide its expert assessment on the psychoactivity of the alkyl nitrites group in the context of the definition in the 2016 Act.

As statutory consultees to the 2016 Act, I also invite the Council to set out any other views in the context of the review that you wish to make. These will feed into the independent assessment.

The review will need to be completed by the end of April at the latest. I therefore ask the ACMD to provide its advice no later than the end of March.

Karen Bradley MP