

ACMD

Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs

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Home Secretary
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Dear Home Secretary,

RE: WORK PROGRAMME 2017- 2019

Thank you for your letter dated 26th July 2017 setting out the Government's priorities for the ACMD work programme 2017- 2019. We are pleased to provide our response to each of these work streams as follows.

- **Legitimate use of controlled drugs: research and healthcare**
The ACMD's advice on the 3rd generation of synthetic cannabinoids has brought to our attention some of the perceived barriers to legitimate research on Schedule 1 substances. The ACMD has held discussions with research community representatives to learn more about the issues and consider potential solutions. We provided our first piece of advice on the matter in December 2017 and look forward to receiving feedback from the Home Office on this before formulating further advice.
- **The Review of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (PSA)**
The ACMD's PSA Impact Working Group held its first post-implementation meeting in November 2017 and will provide further advice on the evaluation framework to the Home Office throughout 2018.
- **Temporary Class Drug Orders (TCDO)**
The ACMD's Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) Committee will consider the future use and purpose of TCDOs. We aim to provide advice to you on this in 2018.

- **Vulnerability and Drug Misuse**

The ACMD's Recovery Committee will approach this subject, initially in two parts: a short overarching report on risk and protective factors associated with greater vulnerability to drug misuse, and a second report on drug misuse and homelessness. ACMD expect to provide both reports in 2018.

- **Drug Misuse and Imprisonment**

The Custody-Community Transitions Working Group is looking into the harms and benefits associated with transitions between the two and will make recommendations for policy based on their findings. This advice is expected in 2018.

- **Consolidation of Misuse of Drugs Regulations (MDR) 2001 and Review of Safe Custody Regulations 1973**

We understand that the Home Office are no longer carrying out a full consolidation of the MDR but may require advice on incremental changes to the MDR on a case by case basis, such as when changes are proposed to independent prescribing authorities. We will be happy to provide advice to the Government on this as necessary. The ACMD's Technical Committee will provide advice to the Home Office for the Review of Safe Custody Regulations in 2018.

- **Licenses for the administration and supply of diamorphine, dipipanone and cocaine to treat addiction**

The ACMD will be happy to respond to specific proposals about this from Public Health England.

- **Fentanyl and its analogues**

The NPS Committee has been considering the risks associated with fentanyl and its analogues and will suggest appropriate responses to mitigate these risks. This advice is expected in 2018. The recommendations of our 2016 report on Reducing Opioid-Related Deaths in the UK are also relevant to this issue.

Other ongoing work

- **Social Harms**

The Social Harms and Decision Making Working Group is considering how the social harms of drug use should be categorised, evidenced, and evaluated in ACMD reports. We expect to publish two papers on social harms later in 2018.

- **Polysubstance**

In 2009, the ACMD was asked by government to advise on the growing issue of polysubstance use. The prevalence and drivers of polysubstance use have changed considerably in this time and we have therefore decided it would be best incorporated into our work on vulnerability and drug misuse.

- **Problems for Ageing Drug Users**

This Working Group has been exploring the challenges faced by older people with a history of problematic drug use. The report will provide insight into what recovery means for this cohort and include advice for practitioners and policy makers.

- **Image and Performance Enhancing Drugs**

The ACMD will update their 2010 report on steroids, following a perceived increase in their use. The working group will consider new user groups such as older people and amateur sporting participants-as well as the drivers for their use.

- **Mephedrone Review**

In 2015 the ACMD undertook a review into the impact of the control of Mephedrone. The Mephedrone review will consider how legislation to make Mephedrone a Class B controlled drug in 2010 has affected the prevalence of use and the associated harms.

- **Annual Reports**

The ACMD will be publishing our Annual Report 2017 which will contain further details of our new projects. We will also publish a Consolidated Annual Report covering the period 2013- 2016.

I look forward to updating you on the progress of the ACMD's work later this year.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Owen Bowden-Jones

Chair of the ACMD