



Home Office

The Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing
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Professor Owen Bowden-Jones
Chair, Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs
c/o 1st Floor, Peel Building
2 Marsham Street
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6 December 2021

Dear Owen,

DRUG MISUSE PREVENTION REVIEW

As you know, tackling drug misuse and the harms that it causes remains a priority for this Government. Today our ten-year Strategy for tackling drugs, was published. The Strategy will present our whole-of-government response to drive down drug supply and demand. This includes delivering a world-class treatment and recovery system, and an even tougher response to criminal supply chains and the demand that fuels these illegal markets. Our Strategy is both evidence-led and evidence-building. I want to express my gratitude for the ACMD's support as independent advisors to Government on drug misuse.

As part of the wider research programme supporting the Strategy, I would ask the Council to provide advice on preventing drug use among vulnerable groups of people, and how those groups can be prevented both from first using and from developing dependence on drugs. I would ask that initial findings be ready in time for the ACMD to present them at the planned Drugs Summit in spring 2022.

We would ask that the ACMD review builds on the 2015 ACMD report on prevention of drug and alcohol dependence, the Council's recent work on vulnerable populations, as well as other relevant evidence sources, to answer the following questions:

- I. Which approaches are best supported by the evidence in order to prevent initial drug use in vulnerable groups? What does the current evidence tell us about the prevalence of use among those groups, in comparison to their less vulnerable peers, and the drivers of that use?
- II. What does the evidence suggest are effective interventions to reduce escalation or progression on to dependence on drugs, and the associated harms?

Government will commission a distinct piece of research into the prevention practices of so-called recreational misuse in the general population, including the role of universal education and communications. This research will be commissioned separately and will inform the wider work of

the Strategy and its implementation, hence the ACMD is not requested to review these particular areas during this current time. Details on this will be set out in due course.

I understand there are many competing priorities for the ACMD, however this work should be given a priority, given it will inform the implementation of the Strategy.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kit Malthouse', with a period at the end.

Rt Hon Kit Malthouse MP