

Baroness Thornton
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Lords)

Regards,
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Dear Jim

Thank you for your further letter of 6 April to Gillian Merron on behalf of Mr John Perrot about involuntary tranquiliser addiction. During the pre-election period, I am replying on behalf of Department of Health Ministers.

I would like to reassure Mr Perrot that the Department is not prejudging the outcome of its review into addiction to medicines. The letter sent to Mr Perrot (our ref: TO00000491274) referred to the lack of robust evidence to support estimates of the scale of dependency. As you note in your own letter, there are no official statistics on this subject, and this needs to be a key element of the review. As the letter to Mr Perrot also mentioned, there needs to be solid evidence to be in place before Primary Care Trusts will commission specialist services. This is a statement of fact, not a pre-empting of the review.

The Department's review is looking to build the evidence base around addiction to medicines and, on its completion, it will give a greater insight into this problem with which future policy, and the provision of clinical and other services, can be shaped.

Professor Heather Ashton's work in this area is acknowledged and well-known. Her work is referenced in the NHS Clinical Knowledge Summaries which provide guidance to clinicians on the management of Benzodiazepine and Z- drug withdrawal. This can be found at:

[www.cks.nhs.uk/benzodiazepine and z drug withdrawal#-370012](http://www.cks.nhs.uk/benzodiazepine_and_z_drug_withdrawal#-370012).

Thank you for your continuing interest in our very important review.

yes
Glenys Thornton

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