

**Benzodiazepine Questions asked in Parliament by  
Secretary of State for Health Dawn Primarolo MP  
when in Opposition (80s and 90s)**

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

02.03.1993

**Question:**

What steps DH is taking to ensure that benzodiazepine prescribing does not increase following the ending of the Roche case; what assessment DH has made of effect of measures to reduce benzodiazepine addiction since 1988; & what further measures are proposed; & how many prescriptions were issued for benzodiazepines in each year since 1989. - Inc figures.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mawhinney, Brian

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

02.03.1993

**Question:**

What was (a) the total sum allocated for addiction problems and (b) the proportion of this allocated specifically to problems of benzodiazepine addiction (i) in 1988 and (ii) in 1992. - Inc figures.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mawhinney, Brian

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

02.03.1993

**Question:**

What estimate she has of the number of people addicted to benzodiazepines as a proportion of all addicts in (a) 1988 and (b) 1992. - This information not currently available centrally.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mawhinney, Brian

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

02.03.1993

**Question:**

What plans she has to ask the Committee on Safety of Medicines to change its advice to doctors as given in Bulletin 21 of January 1988 regarding the drugs Valium, Librium and Mogadon, following the ending of the Roche case.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mawhinney, Brian

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

08.11.1989

**Question:**

To assess findings by Association of Community Health Councils for England & Wales published in "Health News Briefing - Benzodiazepines: A Suitable Case for Treatment", on numbers of people taking benzodiazepines & reasons for prescriptions being made.

**Member Answering Question:**

Bottomley, Virginia

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

08.11.1989

**Question:**

To assess whether findings by Association of Community Health Councils for England & Wales suggest that inappropriate long-term prescribing of benzodiazepines comes to an end & as to whether benzodiazepine prescribing for women & elderly constitutes a disproportionate % of all benzodiazepine prescribing. - Includes ref to "British National Formulary" (in Library).

**Member Answering Question:**

Bottomley, Virginia

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

21.07.1989

**Question:**

What research has been conducted into advisability of prescribing hypnotic benzodiazepines & benzodiazepine tranquillisers to children & what conclusions have been drawn relative to each.

**Member Answering Question:**

Freeman, Roger

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

18.07.1989

**Question:**

What adverse reports have been received by the Committee on Safety of Medicines about the effect of benzodiazepines on patients. - Includes ref to bulletin "Current Problems" No. 3, No. 5 & No. 21 in Library.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

18.07.1989

**Question:**

What info DH has as to the most widely accepted medical assessment of the average withdrawal period from benzodiazepines. - Includes ref to "Guidelines of Good Clinical Practice in the Treatment of Drug Misuse" (copy in Library).

**Member Answering Question:**

Freeman, Roger

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

18.07.1989

**Question:**

To estimate how many children under age of 16 years are addicted to benzodiazepines. - Not available.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

18.07.1989

**Question:**

To discuss with the leaders of the pharmaceutical industry the setting up of a compensation scheme for those people whose lives have been ruined or damaged by benzodiazepine addiction. - No plans to do so.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

18.07.1989

**Question:**

If Dept of Health has sought to encourage the development of guidelines for the maximum recommended period for children under the age of 16 years to be prescribed benzodiazepines.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

18.07.1989

**Question:**

To take steps to reduce benzodiazepine prescriptions in the UK.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

12.04.1989

**Question:**

What steps Dept of Health intend to take following increase in no of prescriptions for benzodiazepines dispensed by community pharmacists in 1987. - (Holding answer 11 April 1989)

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

12.04.1989

**Question:**

What figures are available showing trend of benzodiazepine prescriptions in 1988. - Includes table. (Holding answer 11 April 1989)

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

12.04.1989

**Question:**

To introduce legislation to prevent prescription of benzodiazepines to children under age of 16 years. -(Holding answer 11 April 1989)

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

12.04.1989

**Question:**

To estimate no of people put on benzodiazepines during 1988 who have taken them for longer than period advised by Committee on Safety of Medicines. - Not available centrally. (Holding answer 30 Jan 1989)

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

12.04.1989

**Question:**

To commission Institute of Psychiatry to carry out research into no of children in UK addicted to benzodiazepines, no of adults in UK addicted to benzodiazepines, no of people placed in psychiatric hospitals in UK in order to withdraw from benzodiazepines & no of people on sick or invalidity benefit in UK following benzodiazepine withdrawal. - (Holding answer 11 April 1989)

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

12.04.1989

**Question:**

To request Committee on Safety of Medicines to issue further advice to doctors in light of increase in prescriptions for benzodiazepines in 1987; what advice Committee on Safety of Medicines is issuing to doctors about prescription of benzodiazepines to children; & to meet Committee on Safety of Medicines to discuss increase in benzodiazepine prescriptions in 1987. - Includes ref to Current Problems No 21, issued to all doctors in Jan 1988, copy in Library. (Holding answer 11 April 1989)

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

11.04.1989

**Question:**

If there are any plans to introduce a compensation system for people whose lives have been damaged by benzodiazepine addiction. - No plans to do so.

**Member Answering Question:**

Freeman, Roger

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

30.01.1989

**Question:**

How many working days were lost in 1987 as result of people withdrawing from benzodiazepines - Do not hold this information

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

30.01.1989

**Question:**

How many people are at present withdrawing from benzodiazepines in psychiatric hospitals within NHS - Do not have this information centrally

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

30.01.1989

**Question:**

How many people are at present receiving sick or invalidity benefit as a result of withdrawing from benzodiazepines. - This info is not held.

**Answering Department:**

Dept of Social Security

**Member Answering Question:**

Lloyd, Peter

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

30.01.1989

**Question:**

Which medical schools are currently providing lectures alerting medical students to dangers of benzodiazepines.

**Answering Department:**

Dept of Education and Science

**Member Answering Question:**

Jackson, Robert

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

30.01.1989

**Question:**

How many psychiatric hospitals within NHS have special units to enable people to withdraw from benzodiazepines - Do not hold this information centrally

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

30.01.1989

**Question:**

What % of all prescriptions given in 1987 by NHS doctors was for benzodiazepines - Includes figure for no of & % of dispensed prescriptions for benzodiazepines

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

30.01.1989

**Question:**

To give total no of children under age of 16 years currently being prescribed benzodiazepines - Do not collect this information centrally

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

20.12.1988

**Question:**

Table giving no. of prescriptions for benzodiazepines dispensed by community pharmacists in each of the years 1983 to 1986. - (Holding answer 19 Dec 1988).

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

19.12.1988

**Question:**

If chief medical officer has met representatives of medical profession to discuss benzodiazepine prescribing; what further action has been decided upon to reduce no of people taking benzodiazepines.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David

Primarolo, Dawn Written Parliamentary Question

**Date of Answer:**

19.12.1988

**Question:**

What funds will be allocated under central funding initiative to projects in catering specifically for benzodiazepine dependence in 1989-90.

**Member Answering Question:**

Mellor, David