

Our ref: TO00000499504

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Mr John Perrott  
20 Greenacre Court  
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15 April 2010

Dear Mr Perrott,

Thank you for your further letter of 7 April about the Department's review of addiction to medicine.

I hope it will help if I explain that the review is looking at the following areas:

- prevalence: to help to determine the extent and severity of the problem of dependence on prescribed and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs;
- prevention: to assess the effectiveness of clinical governance in this field, including the provision of guidance for prescribers of benzodiazepines and other drugs;
- provision of treatment services: to find out what services are available to support people needing treatment for dependence on these drugs;
- policy leadership: to establish how the Department might improve its communication between interested branches; and
- discrimination against people who may have become disabled as a result of their dependence on medicine.

The review will identify gaps in evidence, particularly with respect to clinical governance of GP prescribing of addictive medicines. Additionally, the review will consider how awareness of the risks of long-term use of addictive medicines can be raised with the public and sources of support for people facing problems through dependence. The review will look at a wide range of medicines.

I would like to assure you that no decisions have been made about the Department's policy on addiction to medicine or provision of NHS services, which, in any event, are based on assessment of local need.

As the review is currently still in progress, and we are in an election period, the Department is unable to provide any more details but officials do appreciate your interest in the work.

I can also assure you that your views, and those of other patients, will be given careful consideration.

Again, thank you for your letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a final downward stroke.

Dora East  
Customer Service Centre