



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

July 2018

Dear Constituent,

A Response to the Legalisation of Cannabis (Medicinal Purposes) Campaign

There is strong scientific evidence that cannabis is a drug which can harm people's mental and physical health, and damage communities. However recent cases have shown the need to look more closely at the use of cannabis-based medicine in the healthcare sector in the UK, which is why the Government has decided it is appropriate to review the scheduling of cannabis.

The review will take place in two parts. Professor Dame Sally Davies will take forward the first part of the review, considering the evidence available for the medicinal and therapeutic benefits of cannabis-based medicines. This will inform which cannabis-based medicines should be taken forward to part two of the review. The second part of the review will be led by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) which will provide an assessment based on the balance of harms and public health needs, of what, if anything, should be rescheduled. If the review identifies that there are significant medical benefits then the Government has said it intends to reschedule.

We have seen in recent months that there is a pressing need to allow those who might benefit from cannabis-based products to access them. This is why I welcome the action the Government has taken in the short term to establish an expert panel of clinicians to advise Ministers on any applications to prescribe cannabis-based medicines. This is intended to ensure that advice to Ministers on licensing in these cases is clinically led, based firmly upon medical evidence and is as swift as possible.

It is crucial that this country keeps in step with the latest scientific evidence, so that patients and their families have access to the most appropriate course of medical treatment.

The Government has been absolutely clear that this decision is in no way a first step to the legalisation of cannabis for recreational use. There are no plans to legalise cannabis and the penalties for unauthorised supply and possession will remain unchanged. We must not set a dangerous precedent or weaken our ability to keep dangerous drugs off our streets, however since becoming a Member of Parliament I have supported cannabis based medicines for both adults and children who are suffering and in pain, and I will continue to do so whilst tests are ongoing.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alister Jack'.

Alister Jack DL MP
Dumfries and Galloway constituency.