

## PE1651/JJJJJJJJ

Scottish Government submission of 5 December 2018

Thank you for your letter dated 2 November 2018 regarding the above petition. You asked for further information about the status of a Scotland-focussed review of the above, timescales and who would be involved in it. You also asked for clarification around the independence of any review and for an update on establishment of a 24-hour helpline.

In our previous letter of 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018, we discussed the scope of the Public Health England expert reference group and the Scottish observer status. There has been a delay in these meetings and the group is not due to meet again until January 2019. I can confirm that the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland wrote to experts in their representative fields on 11 September 2018, inviting nominations for their areas to participate in a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) on prescription medicine dependence and withdrawal in Scotland.

The following experts have been nominated by their respective organisations:

| <b>Group</b>                          | <b>Representative</b>   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| RCPsych                               | Dr Donna Mullen (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)                                 |
| RCGP                                  | Dr Morag Martindale (GP within NHS Tayside area)                                |
| Scottish Mental Health Pharmacy Group | Andrew Walker (NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde),<br>Jean Logan (NHS Forth Valley) |
| National Clinical Lead in pain        | Prof Blair Smith (Univ. Dundee)   |
| NHS24, Mental Health nurse lead       | Paula Shiels (NHS 24)   |
| Health and Social Care Alliance       | Irene Oldfather, Director of Engagement<br>Gregory Hill-O'Connor*               |
| Scottish Health Council               | Lisa McCartney* (SHC area manager for Grampian, Shetland, Tayside and Fife)     |

(\*: confirmed for first meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December, subsequent attendance to be discussed).

The Scottish Short Life Working Group will discuss their remit at the first meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December, but it is currently anticipated that the primary focus of the group will be to:

- define the relationship to the PHE review
- accept the commissioning of literature review that England has done and use the final product,
- review the same list of medicines as the PHE review
- consider Scottish prescribing data and any attempts to quantify drug withdrawal problems
- explicitly exclude review of antidepressant effectiveness and efficacy.
- make recommendations

With regard to timescales, it is currently envisaged that the SLWG will meet on 3-4 occasions and report recommendations in the second half of 2019.

At the first meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> December, a specific focus will be on the role of Experts by Experience (EBEs). We are also engaging with the Scottish Health Council and the Alliance about how best to ensure the voice of EBEs is represented during the review. A representative from each organisation will attend the first meeting to contribute to discussion about how best to achieve broad and independent representation of EBEs.

By inviting a wide cross-section of the Scottish clinical and patient support community, the SLWG will represent a broad cross-section of Scotland's people. The Scottish Government will also bring relevant primary care prescribing data to the group for informed discussion.

Independent recommendations are a key focus of the SLWG. These recommendations will also be incorporated into future iterations of relevant prescribing strategies and drug treatment strategies to help tackle the problem of increased addiction to prescription medicines.

I hope that you find this information useful.