



Home Office

Norman Baker MP
Minister for Crime Prevention

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Robin J. Balmain
H.M. Coroner
Smethwick Council House
High Street
Smethwick
West Midlands
B66 3NT

19 March 2014

Dear Mr Balmain,

INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF JASON NOCK – REGULATION 28 REPORT

Thank you for your letter of the 13 January to the Home Secretary about the death of Jason Nock from AH-7921 toxicity. I am replying as the Minister for Crime Prevention. Firstly can I say how sorry I was to hear of Mr Nock's tragic death after purchasing this substance online to use as a sleeping aid.

I note your request for further action to determine if AH-7921 should be made a controlled drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and your concerns about its availability over the internet.

The Government shares your concerns regarding the unregulated sale of AH-7921. On the 12 December 2013, I asked our independent experts, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to provide advice on AH-7921 and I am expecting to receive its recommendations in April. To ensure that the ACMD has the best available information, the Home Office is collecting evidence on AH-7921 and related substances from health organisations and law enforcement agencies and carrying out further work through our Forensic Early Warning System Project to gather intelligence regarding the availability of these substances online.

Although Mr Nock purchased AH-7921 on the internet as a sleeping aid, as it has been found to have effects which mimic those of heroin and morphine our concerns

regarding its online sale are aligned with those on new psychoactive substances or so called 'legal highs' and their recreational use.

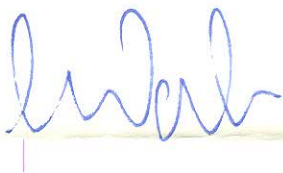
Action to restrict new psychoactive substance supply is a priority for UK law enforcement and other regulatory agencies. This activity includes the monitoring of controlled drugs, new psychoactive substances and medicines for sale on the internet and action with industry partners to close UK-based websites trading illegally in these substances. There is also ongoing work with the EU and other international regulatory authorities to ensure that, wherever possible, offending websites are amended to reflect the law.

We know that there is more to be done in this area, especially given that the market continues to evolve with the rapid development of new drugs. For this reason, I am currently leading a review, being undertaken by an expert panel, to look at how the UK's response to new psychoactive substances can be enhanced beyond existing measures. This will include considering the adequacy or otherwise of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to deal with these new substances, but also what other policy levers, for example in health or education policy, might be available to Government. When I launched this review on the 27th February I highlighted my concerns regarding the availability of AH-7921 to the expert panel and media. The panel will report their findings in spring 2014. The terms of reference for the review can be found on the Home Office website.

This work will continue to sit alongside other Government actions including our demand reduction activities, such as the FRANK online service which raises awareness of the risks of taking substances such as AH-7921.

I hope this response is helpful and addresses your concerns.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Norman Baker', written over a horizontal line.

Norman Baker MP
Minister for Crime Prevention