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## INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF CATHERINE MARY FINDLAY – REGULATION 28 REPORT

Thank you for your letter of 13 October 2015 to the Home Secretary about the tragic death of Catherine Mary Findlay from the combined effects of cocaine and methoxyphenidine (MXP) toxicity. I am replying as the Minister for Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice, with responsibility for drug policy.

I note your concern that MXP can be bought online and your recommendations that the Government should review its status and consider making it a controlled substance.

This is clearly a tragic case and I am grateful to you for raising this issue with me.

On 28 May, we introduced the Psychoactive Substances Bill to create a blanket ban on the supply of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). This landmark Bill will ban the sale, supply, production and distribution of psychoactive substances for human consumption, including MXP, and give police and local authorities greater powers to tackle this reckless trade.

We cannot, and should not, tolerate the open sale on our high streets and over the internet of these potentially harmful substances. This landmark legislation will fundamentally change the way we tackle NPS and put an end to the game of cat and mouse, in which new drugs appear on the market more quickly than we can identify and ban them.

We are also taking forward a comprehensive action plan on NPS to enhance further our response to prevention, treatment and information sharing. For example, we have launched a toolkit to help local areas prevent and respond to the use of NPS and published clinical guidelines to aid in the detection, assessment and management of NPS users.

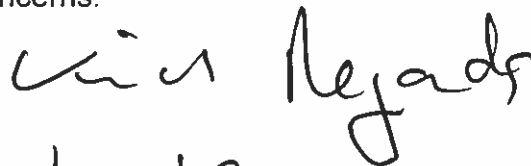
The Government and law enforcement agencies take the issue of unlawful advertising and sales of drugs on the internet very seriously, and we continue to work with internet providers to ensure that they comply with the law. This can

include closure of UK-based websites where they are found to be committing offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Online purchasing remains a small overall element of drug supply: the 2013/14 Crime Survey for England and Wales shows that just 1% of adults who used drugs in the last 12 months sourced them from the internet.

The National Crime Agency and the police routinely monitor controlled drugs being offered for sale on the internet and take action with industry partners to close websites trading illegally in these substances. The Psychoactive Substances Bill once enacted will also enable law enforcement partners to also target the psychoactive substance market, clearly criminalising their supply. Where it has been identified, or where there is reasonable suspicion to suggest, that controlled drugs are being sold on websites, law enforcement agencies have the relevant powers under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to act against suppliers of controlled drugs, whether on controlled drug charges or on suspicion of wider drug-related offences.

Considerable illegal activity takes place on the internet outside of UK jurisdiction. The UK continues to work with international partners to develop an effective response to the supply of controlled drugs and to react swiftly to emerging threats. In order to tackle illegally trading websites identified overseas, we are building strong partnerships with international partners. There is also ongoing work with the EU and other international regulatory agencies to ensure that, wherever possible, offending websites are amended to comply with the law.

I hope that this letter addresses your concerns.



**Rt Hon Mike Penning MP**