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- 2 MAR 2016

D. Prof Forrest

**INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF ARENIJUS NEDZELSKIS –
REGULATION 28 REPORT**

Thank you for your letter of 13 January to the Home Office about the tragic death of Arenijus Nedzelskis from self suspension of the neck whilst intoxicated from alcohol and synthetic cannabinoids. I am replying as the Minister for Preventing Abuse, Exploitation and Crime, with responsibility for drug policy.

I note your concerns that the Government should take action against synthetic cannabinoids to prevent such deaths occurring in the future.

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

The landmark Act to end the trade in harmful psychoactive substances and protect young people from the dangers of these drugs achieved Royal Assent on 28 January. The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 will restrict the production, supply and importation of these potentially dangerous drugs. The new legislation will give police and other law enforcement agencies greater powers to tackle the reckless trade in psychoactive substances, and will see offenders face up to seven years in prison.

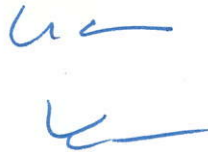
We cannot, and should not, tolerate the open sale on our high streets and over the internet of these potentially harmful substances. This landmark legislation will fundamentally change the way we tackle psychoactive substances and put an end to the game of cat and mouse, in which new drugs appear on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

In addition, we have already banned more than 500 new drugs, created the Forensic Early Warning System to identify psychoactive substances in the UK and support law enforcement action with the latest intelligence on new substances. We have introduced new powers under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which have already been successfully used by police forces and local authorities to take action against head shops.

We are also taking forward a comprehensive action plan on psychoactive substances 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 psychoactive substances and published clinical guidelines to aid in the detection, assessment and management of psychoactive substance users.

I note your concerns that Mr Nedzelskis did not inform the DVLA Medical Branch about his chronic misuse of synthetic cannabinoids. If a driver becomes aware of a condition that may affect safe driving they must report it to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. A driver could be fined up to £1,000 if they do not tell the DVLA about a condition that might affect their ability to drive. Additionally, a driver could also be prosecuted in the event of an accident.

I hope that this letter addresses your concerns.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'K' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

KAREN BRADLEY MP