



**Department  
of Health &  
Social Care**

*From Nadine Dorries MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health,  
Suicide Prevention and Patient Safety*

*39 Victoria Street  
London  
SW1H 0EU*

Your Ref: AAH/RE152021

*020 7210 4850*

Our Ref: PFD-1197497

Mrs Margaret J Jones  
HM Assistant Coroner, Staffordshire (South)  
1 Staffordshire Place  
Stafford  
ST16 2LP

*21<sup>st</sup> January 2020*

*Dear Mrs Jones,*

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 November 2019 to Matt Hancock about the death of Mrs Maureen Milton. I am replying as Minister with responsibility for patient safety.

Firstly, I would like to say how saddened I was to read of the tragic circumstances of Mrs Milton's death. I offer my sincere condolences to Mrs Milton's family and loved ones.

In preparing the response to your report, Departmental officials have taken advice from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA) which is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care and is responsible for ensuring that medicines and medical devices available in the UK meet applicable standards of safety, quality and efficacy.

The matters of concern in your report are that there is a lack of awareness among healthcare professionals, patients and their carers, of the fire risk associated with the use of paraffin-based emollient creams; and that paraffin is found in a number of prescribed creams as well as creams such as moisturisers that are readily available over the counter.

The MHRA advises that it most recently communicated information about the risk of severe and fatal burns with paraffin-containing and paraffin-free emollients in December 2018 through a press release and an article in Drug Safety Update<sup>1</sup>. These communications resulted from an in-depth review of this issue by the MHRA's independent expert advisory committee, the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM).

Following that review, the MHRA has convened a stakeholder group that includes representatives from the fire service, healthcare professionals and their representative

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/emollients-new-information-about-risk-of-severe-and-fatal-burns-with-paraffin-containing-and-paraffin-free-emollients>

bodies, organisations that provide guidance to health and social care workers, patient representatives and organisations that speak for relevant patient populations such as the National Eczema Society. The stakeholder group is designing and optimising sustainable training and educational resources for healthcare professionals and the public and their method of distribution and access, to ensure these are impactful and maintain long-term awareness of the risk of emollient creams.

I am advised that the group has met twice, most recently on 10 December 2019, and is working towards producing a toolkit of resources for patients, their carers', healthcare professionals, health organisations and healthcare professional educators. The Government welcomes plans by the MHRA to officially launch the toolkit in 2020. This will be accompanied by a MHRA press release and stakeholders will propagate the key messages through their networks at the same time.

I hope this reply is helpful. Thank you for bringing these concerns to my attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nadine Dorries'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N'.

**NADINE DORRIES**