



Home Office

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP  
Minister of State for Crime,  
Policing and Fire

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Caroline Topping, HM Coroner for Surrey  
HM Coroner's Court  
Station Approach  
Woking  
Surrey  
GU22 7AP

[Redacted]

13 February 2023

Dear Ms Topping,

**INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF GAVIN PETER PENDLEMAN: REGULATION 28 REPORT**

Thank you for your report of 30 December 2022, following the inquest into the tragic death of Gavin Peter Pedleham, which was forwarded to the Home Office on 6 January. Mr Pedleham inadvertently consumed liquid morphine (under the brand name "oramorph") prescribed to another after having consumed alcohol, and the report suggests that action should be taken to place regulatory duties on the storage, handling and use of oral morphine once prescribed. I am replying as the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire with responsibility for regulations under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, including the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 ("the 2001 Regulations"). In considering the report, the Home Office has sought views from the Department for Health and Social Care, which has responsibility for medicines policy.

I consider that appropriate measures to reduce the risk of accidents like this from happening are already in place. Prescribers and dispensing pharmacists are obligated to provide advice to patients or carers on what the medicines are and how they should be taken, including any risks and information on drug interactions. This advice is also a statutory requirement in the patient information leaflet provided with licensed medicines, which for oramorph includes that alcohol should be avoided whilst taking this medicine.

As the report mentions, the 2001 Regulations make controlled drugs available in healthcare, and impose administrative obligations and requirements to mitigate risks of harm, misuse and diversion of controlled drugs. Before making decisions on the appropriate safeguards under the 2001 Regulations, Ministers take expert advice from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD). Liquid morphine in this form is placed in Schedule 5 to the 2001 Regulations. Extending the legal requirements applicable in healthcare, for example, those requiring safe custody, to patients would risk criminalising patients lawfully prescribed a controlled drug, and potentially put in place barriers to legitimate and timely access to pain relief. Therefore, I have no plans at present to consider additional controls on oral morphine. However, drugs controls are kept under review, and should further evidence emerge indicating the need for additional controls I will consider whether it is appropriate to seek advice from the ACMD.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP