



Home Office

Rt Hon Chris Philp MP  
Minister of State for Crime,  
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Anna Loxton  
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By email c/o  
[REDACTED]

## INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF VICTORIA STOREY: REGULATION 28 REPORT

Dear Ms Loxton,

Thank you for your report under Regulation 28 of the Coroner (Investigations) Regulation 2013, dated 30 June and addressed to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Justice, about the death of Ms Victoria Storey. I am responding as the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire.

At present, [REDACTED] is subject to the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016. Those who supply [REDACTED] who know, or who are reckless as to whether, it will be used for its psychoactive effect may be subject to a maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment, an unlimited fine, or both under the Act.

As you note in your report, following a Government commission, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) provided advice in July 2022 on the harms of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] opioids. The ACMD recommended that they are controlled under Class A of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (the 1971 Act) and Schedule 1 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001. Class A drugs are considered the most harmful to individuals and society, and those placed in Schedule 1 have no known medicinal use in the UK.

The Government accepted these recommendations in February, committing to control 11 synthetic opioids, including [REDACTED], under the 1971 Act and associated Regulations. In light of ongoing drug-related deaths and non-fatal overdoses associated with synthetic opioids in the UK, we intend to bring forward this legislation by the end of the year to come into force in early 2024. This letter can be found on GOV.UK here: [Government response to the ACMD's advice on 2-benzyl benzimidazole and piperidine benzimidazolone opioids \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/consultations/government-response-to-the-acmds-advice-on-2-benzyl-benzimidazole-and-piperidine-benzimidazolone-opioids)

The presence of synthetic opioids in the UK's illicit drug market, as well as the health harms associated with this, is a live issue within Government. The Home Office has convened a Synthetic Opioid Taskforce to review latest evidence, assess the risk of synthetic opioids to the UK, and explore options for responding should the level of risk

escalate. Membership of the Taskforce includes the National Crime Agency (NCA), the National Police Chiefs' Councils, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Border Force, the Ministry of Justice and the Joint Intelligence Organisation.

The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) has issued a National Patient Safety Alert, which provides awareness and clear instructions for staff in health settings across the country to ensure they are prepared for anyone that may present with an overdose caused by synthetic opioids. This includes ensuring the opioid overdose-reversal drug, naloxone, is more widely available. To further support incident response planning, OHID has also updated guidance for local areas on preparing for potent synthetic opioid incidents, and this is available at: [Potent synthetic opioids: preparing for a future threat - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/potent-synthetic-opioids-preparing-for-a-future-threat). As you may be aware, alongside this the NCA wrote to the Chief Coroner to ask him to alert coroners of the potential presence of synthetic opioids in apparent heroin deaths.

The Government's long-term drug strategy, *From Harm to Hope: A ten-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives*, sets out our ambitious plans to improve treatment and recovery systems and reduce overall drug use towards a historic 30-year low. The drug strategy is underpinned by significant new investment totalling almost £900 million over 3 years, £532 million of which was allocated to the DHSC to improve local authority drug and alcohol treatment services. This includes creating 21,000 new places for opiate and crack users, who are most at risk from the presence of synthetic opioids in the UK's illicit drug market. More information can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives).

Our aim is that through the drug strategy, we will reduce drug related deaths and create a world-class treatment and recovery system, including being better able to respond to any future threat from synthetic opioids.

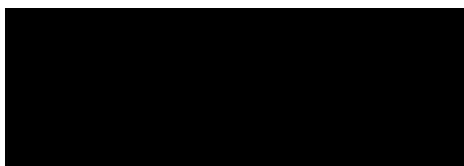
The Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the UK regulator for human medicines - responsible for enforcing the Human Medicines Regulations 2012 (HMR 2012). The illegal sale and supplying of medicines online is a global problem. Buying medicines this way is potentially dangerous as they may be unsuitable for the patient, and may contain too much or too little of the stated active pharmaceutical ingredient. Medicines sold illegally online may also be entirely fake, sometimes containing harmful non-medicinal substances not present in the genuine product.

The MHRA collaborates with partners to enforce the HMR 2012 by disrupting the illegal trade in medicines and preventing falsified, unlicensed and substandard medicines from reaching the public. Robust and proportionate enforcement action is taken on a case-by-case basis, including prosecution where appropriate.

The MHRA discourages the public from purchasing medicinal products from unregulated sources and to report any suspicious offers, or side effects from taking such medicines, to its Yellow Card scheme - the UK system for recording adverse drug reactions. The Agency also provides regular updates to the public via its #FAKEMEDS campaign, with advice on how to avoid fake and unlicensed medicinal products, particularly when shopping online.

Given we are already in the process of controlling [REDACTED], and the other measures which I have outlined above, I consider that appropriate measures to reduce the risk of deaths like this from happening are already coming into place. I hope that you agree with my assessment, and I would like to thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely,



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