

MAYOR OF LONDON

Caroline Russell AM
C/o Steven.Lehmann@london.gov.uk

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Date: 7 March 2024

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your letter about my attendance at the Mayor's Question Time session on 20 July and my answers to the questions raised about drug testing in London. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you.

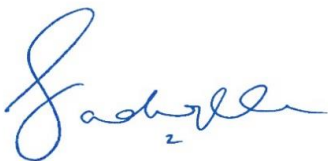
As I committed to at the session, the London Drugs Forum on 20 September included an item on drug checking services, and ahead of the meeting, the Forum's Secretariat reviewed the Health Committee's report on reducing drug deaths in London.

The Forum was attended by representatives from The Loop and Turning Point, and both organisations presented their experiences and the barriers to developing a checking service in London, as well as the need for a targeted alert system for when new substances were identified. The presentations were followed by discussions from standing members, including the Metropolitan Police Service, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, local authorities, health agencies and the Government's Joint Combating Drugs Unit.

I understand from the Co-Chairs, Sophie Linden and Dr Tom Coffey OBE, that several barriers remain in place but that the Home Office continues to consider licence applications on a case-by-case basis. Turning Point will be embarking on a drug analysis project pilot across Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Hammersmith & Fulham, which will include quarterly testing as well as responding to incidents through the Local Drug Information System. The Co-Chairs have asked to receive an update on this work this year. There will also be a future agenda item at the Forum on the rising issue of synthetic opioids in order to look at the roles the different partners can play in addressing the worrying matter.

At this time, as the Government is continuing to consider individual licences for drug checking services, I do not think my intervention in the issue would make any impact. However, the Forum has agreed to keep the topic under review, and I would be happy to update you should this position change.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London