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Dear Mr Tattersall

Thank you for your email of 18 March to the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Probation which included the report from the London Assembly Health Committee titled *Reducing Drug Deaths in London*. Your email was passed to the Drug Misuse and Firearms Unit for reply.

Any death related to drug misuse is a tragedy and we are committed to reducing the harms from drug misuse. We support the Department of Health and Social Care in understanding the complex factors involved in order to inform both national and local action to protect individuals from these harms.

To demonstrate and understand the impacts from drug misuse the Government commissioned Dame Carol Black to conduct two independent reviews of drugs. The Government responded to her recommendations and on 6 December 2021 published its long-term drug strategy, *From Harm to Hope*. The strategy is the formal, substantive response to Dame Carol Black's reviews and accepts all of her key recommendations.

The new drug strategy can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/from-harm-to-hope-a-10-year-drugs-plan-to-cut-crime-and-save-lives. As your report identifies it requires a range of different partnerships working if we are to address the impacts faced by drug misuse and drive down drug related deaths. The strategy commits the whole of Government and public services to work together if we are to tackle the harms associated with drugs and the Home Office are playing a key role in this work. The approach to combat drug misuse includes driving down drug supply and demand, as well as setting out our ambition to reduce overall drug use towards a historic 30-year low. It is supported by a record investment of nearly £900m of additional dedicated funding over the next three

years, taking the total investment on combating drugs over the next three years to £3 billion. This shows the critical importance this government places on tackling drug misuse.

The plan sets out three core priorities: breaking drug supply chains, delivering a world-class treatment and recovery system, and achieving a shift in the demand for recreational drugs. These will be achieved by:

- continuing to roll up exploitative and violent county lines and strengthen our response across the drug supply chain, making the UK a significantly harder place for organised crime groups to operate;
- investing a further £780 million to rebuild drug treatment and recovery services, including for young people and offenders, with new commissioning standards to drive transparency and consistency, this marks the largest ever increase in treatment and recovery funding, taking the total treatment and recovery spend to more than £2.8 billion over three years; and
- strengthening the evidence base for how best to deter use of recreational drugs, ensuring adults change their behaviour or face tough consequences, and with universal and targeted activity to prevent young people starting to take drugs.

As your report stated, almost 3,000 people lost their lives through drug misuse in England and Wales in 2020. Drugs destroy lives, they shatter families, and they damage communities, fuelling violence and acquisitive crime. The UK government supports a range of evidence-based approaches to reduce the health-related harms of drug misuse, such as maintaining the availability of needle and syringe programmes to prevent blood borne infections and widening the availability of naloxone to prevent overdose deaths.

We take the challenge of drug misuse seriously. Through the action committed to in the strategy it will reduce drug-related crimes, harms, overall drug use and most importantly drug-related deaths.

Yours sincerely,

The Drug Misuse and Firearms Unit

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