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Jim Dobbin MP  
House of Commons  
Westminster  
London SW1A 0AA

*Dear Jim,*

08 AUG 2011

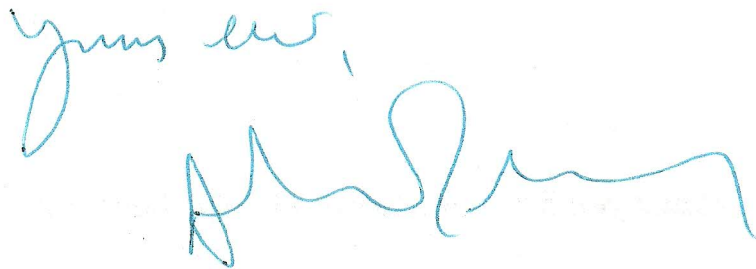
Thank you for your letter of 11 July about tranquiliser addiction.

The title page of the report commissioned from the National Addiction Centre (NAC) lists Dr Kylie Reed's name first among the authors indicating that she was the principal author. Dr Alyson Bond, Mr John Witton and Professor John Strang from NAC are listed as contributing authors along with Dr Rosie Cornish and Professor Matt Hickman from the School of Social and Community Medicine at the University of Bristol. When Anne Milton announced publication of the reports in her Written Ministerial Statement she highlighted that she had ensured that the reports were peer reviewed in order to provide assurance that they were rigorous, authoritative documents. NAC is part of the King's Health Partners, which is one of the Academic Health Sciences Centres set up on the advice of Lord Darzi to improve the delivery of healthcare through world class research. I have the highest regard for its work.

In column 1186W of Anne Milton's written answer to Eric Ollenshaw's Parliamentary Question on 5 July she reported that no declarations of interest had been stated in NAC's tender to undertake the literature review. This is entirely correct and she stands by that answer. It was however an oversight by NAC not to have listed declarations of interest. The online copy of the NAC report has since been updated to include John Strang's declaration of interests and declarations from the other authors will be added as soon as possible. Declarations of interests for all the authors are already available in other reports and articles that they have published elsewhere. While the omission of the declarations is unfortunate, the nature of the previous interests of the authors is not such as to invalidate the report.

Following the publication of the reports, Anne Milton and her officials have discussed the findings with interested parties. The Royal College of General Practitioners organised a training event on addiction to medicine on the day of publication and Anne Milton was pleased to be able to attend the joint meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Drug Misuse and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Involuntary Tranquiliser Addiction on 14 June. She was sorry not to see you at that meeting as it was a most useful event.

I have noted the comments on the reports that you enclosed with your letter. Anne Milton will be convening a round table meeting of experts to discuss the future action that needs to be taken in the light of the evidence collated in the reports.

Yours etc,  


**ANDREW LANSLEY**