



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Barry Haslam

Our Ref: KHM/HASL02003/02110332

23 September 2011

Dear Barry

Further to my letter of 23rd August, please find enclosed the reply I have received from Anne Milton MP, Minister for Public Health. Also enclosed is the written answer I have received on research into the social, economic and health costs of brain damage as a result excessive and long term use of legally prescribed benzodiazepines

I apologise for the delay in sending this onto you, but there were a number of issues I wanted to raise with the Minister from this correspondence.

I have therefore written to the Minister again regarding the scale of long term benzodiazepine prescribing for those who are not also on opiate substitution therapy; asking for further details on the peer reviewers and their reports; and asking for the Department to reconsider their position on further research.

With regard to your e-mail of 11th September, it is my office policy not to sign any e-petitions.

Your e-mail of 7th September requested a letter to the Public Health Minister on PCT prescribing; I would respectfully suggest that you approach the APPG ITA on this issue, as it would not be appropriate for me to encroach upon their remit. In discussions with Jim Dobbin MP on this important issue, I understand that Members are applying for an adjournment debate in Parliament and I will, of course, be attending and hope to speak.

As you are aware from my letter of 23rd August, I have contacted both John Healey MP and Diane Abbott MP to flag this issue up as a key one. I do not believe it is necessarily appropriate for me to invite the Minister to ADS. However, if ADS would like the Minister to visit then I am happy to support their request and attend the visit, subject to the parliamentary timetable.

I will be in touch again when I receive a reply from Anne Milton MP.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Abrahams

DEBBIE ABRAHAMS MP
Oldham East and Saddleworth