

May 19th - 25th

49.3% Supportive responses

36.7% Negative responses

12.6% Neutral responses

255 MPs Awaiting response (next week update - 1st June)

93.1% of the current negative responders ignored the original email and entirely copied and pasted their reply from start to finish.

SUPPORTIVE RESPONSES:

MPs that **handwrote** supportive responses:

Monica Lennon MP - Central Scotland
Toby Perkins MP - Chesterfield and Staveley
Kenny MacAskill MP - East Lothian
Caroline Lucas MP - Brighton Pavilion
Martin Wale MP - South Somerset
Alyn Smith MP - Stirling, Scotland
Graham Leadbitter MP - Elgin City South, Scotland
Sue Shanks MP - St Peters and North Laine ward
Thangam Debbonaire MP - Bristol West
Ben Bradley MP - Mansfield, Nottinghamshire
Alyn Smith MP - Stirling, Scotland
Jonathan Lord MP - Woking
Andrew Gwynne MP - Denton and Reddish
Andrea Powell MP - South Oxfordshire

MPs that used the same supportive **copy and paste response** to a number of senders (Response Z):

Luke Pollard MP - Plymouth Sutton and Devonport
Jack Dromey MP - Birmingham Erdington
Jonathan Reynolds MP - Stalybridge and Hyde
Marie Rimmer MP - St Helens South and Whiston
Pat McFadden MP - Wolverhampton South East
Darren Jones MP - Bristol North West
Kate Hollern MP - Blackburn

Jessica Morden MP - Newport East
Lucy Powell MP - Manchester Central
Matt Rodda MP - Reading East

MPs that used the same supportive copy and paste response to a number of senders, slightly ignoring the original email and focusing on other drugs.

John Penrose MP - Weston-super-Mare
Antony Browne MP - South Cambridgeshire

Handwritten responses (highlights):

Monica Lennon MP
Central Scotland

Thank you for your email. I am a strong supporter of drug reform and the decriminalisation of personal use of drugs.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the Misuse of Drugs Act, it is clear that the “war on drugs” has failed.

I will continue to campaign for reform and build on my work in the last parliamentary term, which you can read more about here.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/labour-backs-decriminalising-drugs-safe-15497346>

Best wishes,

Monica
Monica.Lennon.msp@parliament.scot

Toby Perkins MP
Chesterfield and Staveley

Thank you for contacting me regarding the Misuse of Drugs Act reform. I agree with you that the Misuse of Drugs Act needs to be looked at and reformed to ensure it is fit for purpose. This piece of legislation has disproportionately impacted deprived communities and people from the BAME community. This piece of legislation has led to the use of divisive

tactics by the police, such as stop and search, which has undermined trust in the BAME community and created tension between the police and these communities it is used in.

According to the Office for National Statistics, an estimated 1 in 11 adults aged 16 to 59 years had taken a drug between 2019-2020. Furthermore, approximately one in five 16–24-year-olds have also taken an illegal drug in the years 2019-2020. It is clear that the Government needs to approach the way the UK handles drug misuse in a new way so we can effectively reduce drug use without criminalising those who are victims of drug abuse.

At the 2019 general election, Labour promised to address drug misuse outside of prison. Our plan was to address drug misuse as a mental health issue rather than a criminal one which would have meant people who have addictions would have been referred for support, rather than prison. This would resolve some of the issues we are currently facing with drug abuse in the UK. But I recognise that there is more to be done on this issue to protect victims of drug addictions and effectively drug gangs.

Having also looked at the campaign you sent through to me, it also demonstrated to me that there is more that can be done by MPs in Parliament to deal with the issue of drug abuse. It is clear that this legislation needs to be reformed to take into account the new scientific understanding we have of drugs like cannabis. Whilst I am unable to sign and support open letters due to my role as Shadow Minister for Further Education and Skills, I can assure you that I want to see more done to support victims of drug abuse and see a change to the Misuse of Drugs Act.

Thank you for writing to me regarding this very important matter. If I can be of any further assistance to this, or any other parliamentary matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Toby Perkins MP
Member of Parliament for Chesterfield
Shadow Minister for Apprenticeships and Lifelong Learning

Graham Leadbitter

Elgin City South, Scotland

Thank you for your email to Richard Thomson MP regarding the need for reform of the Misuse of Drugs Act. This is a campaign that is wholeheartedly supported by the SNP and I can confirm that prior to your email Mr Thomson had already pledged support to the campaign and backs the statement that you set out.

It is clear that 50 years on, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 is not fit for purpose.

Whilst policy on the use of controlled drugs is reserved to Westminster under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, the SNP has consistently lobbied the UK Government to adopt a public health approach to drugs, to amend legislation away from criminalisation, and to devolve powers to the Scottish Parliament if it refuses to act.

On 16 December 2020, SNP MP David Linden raised this once again in the Commons, saying: “If the UK Government are unwilling to take action on the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, they should devolve those powers to the Scottish Parliament—that would be very helpful.”

The Scottish Government has taken a different approach to the UK Government, implementing a public health approach to drug use.

The number of drug-related deaths in Scotland is simply unacceptable. This is why the Scottish Government has declared a national mission to tackle what is a national disgrace. Scotland’s First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has also appointed a dedicated drugs Minister who will lead work with partners across Scotland, including grassroots and third sector, as well as ensuring work is embedded across all areas of Government.

The Scottish Government will continue to explore how it will overcome the legal barriers that currently restrict it from establishing overdose prevention facilities in Scotland.

I trust that this addresses your concerns and affirms the SNP’s commitment to tackling this vital issue that has such an impact on people in communities the length and breadth of Scotland and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Leadbitter

Senior Caseworker for Richard Thomson MP

Martin Wale MP

South Somerset

Thank you for your email in regard to support for the relaxation of laws regarding the use of cannabis in the UK.

I would state from the start that I am a retired Police Officer and, as you know, an elected District Councillor.

As such I have always had to comply and enforce current legislation, **on occasions when I personally did not either like or have disagreed with some of those lawful principles even if they have been properly enacted by Parliament.**

I cannot therefore give support to your statement **but wish you every success in your campaign**, particularly if it is in relation to medical uses, as opposed to social use.

Regards

Martin

Councillor Tatworth and Blackdown.

Caroline Lucas MP

Brighton Pavilion

Thank you for writing to me.

I am a long time campaigner for reform of our drugs laws and am working cross party and with Transform, Release and Anyone's Child, amongst others, to use the 50th anniversary of the Misuse of Drugs Act to increase pressure. You can see me listed on the campaign website here and I am pleased to have already backed the statement you have shared and to have contributed a video for the anniversary, making the case for a long overdue overhaul of the law and which will be released soon.

I previously secured [a debate in Parliament](#) off the back of a hugely successful nationwide petition that I initiated in response to learning what a difference evidence based policies were making to Brighton's drug related deaths rate – and how much more we could do if the national policy framework was subjected to a proper review and cost benefit analysis, with a view to bringing it in line with the evidence on reducing drug related harms.

The Government chose the day of the debate to release a much anticipated – and previously delayed – report comparing the effectiveness of different drugs policies in other countries. The study indicates that introducing an alternative to prohibition would

not, contrary to some claims, boost drug use, and it could save millions of pounds if users were treated for addiction rather than jailed.

I've following all this up as best I can and building on the momentum created by the subsequent public debate too. If you want to see formal questions that I have been asking on this, for example, see [here](#) and [here](#) is a recent parliamentary motion, of which I am a co-sponsor.

And here's some information about the Independent Drugs Commission set up in Brighton and Hove in 2012 response to my work:

<https://www.safeinthecity.info/independent-drugs-commission>

As you will know, regulation isn't about walking into a corner shop and getting access to other drugs in the same way we access tobacco or alcohol. Rather, it's about a strictly controlled framework that could include things like tamper proof packaging, showing ID, information about ingredients and side effects, cooling off periods to guard against people taking drugs spontaneously and access to help and advice for addiction.

These are arguments I take every opportunity to advance and my work since has included being an active member of Parliament's cross party group working on this, including as a co-chair for some years, and working with others focussed on securing change on the availability of medical cannabis as a stepping stone towards wider changes.

I hope that's all helpful and demonstrates what I have been doing on your behalf but do let me know if you have any further questions.

Best wishes, Caroline
Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion

Andrew Gwynne MP
Denton and Reddish

It is clear we are facing an addiction crisis and I am concerned that the Government's short-sightedness in this area is failing some of the most vulnerable people in society. Cuts to drug treatment services over recent years as a result of central government funding decisions have had a devastating impact across the country, particularly in the most deprived areas.

The Government recently announced £80 million in funding for drug treatment services across England. However, according to media reports the Government's independent reviewer of drugs, Professor Dame Carol Black, recommended funding of £900 million over three years.

It is deeply worrying that the Government's own lead adviser on drugs feels the Government's policy falls so far short of the mark. Drug treatment services are vital not just for those who are themselves struggling with substance misuse issues, but also the wider community. I believe the Government is failing to rise to the scale of the challenge and ultimately people's safety will be put at risk.

In July 2020, Professor Dame Carol Black launched a review of drugs focused on treatment, recovery and prevention, with an overarching aim of ensuring vulnerable people with substance misuse problems get the support they need to recover and turn their lives around. I look forward to reading this review when it is published.

I recognise the importance of an effective drugs policy that addresses all issues of public health. I agree policies should be continually informed by scientific fact and evidence, as well as by the work conducted by those on the frontline.

Thank you once again for contacting me and sharing your views.
Yours sincerely

ANDREW GWYNNE MP
Denton and Reddish

Andrea Powell
South Oxfordshire

Thank you for your email on the above subject. Personally I completely agree with you; in my view the Act is badly out-of-date and does not take into account a huge amount of recent research and evidence on the subject of the legalisation of cannabis. I would absolutely support a review of this law and a new approach to the treatment of drug addiction and the massive damage it causes to society.

I'm not sure how far SODC's remit stretches in this direction as we are not law-makers, but I certainly agree that the current approach is no longer fit for purpose.

Kind regards

Andrea

Andrea Powell

Response: (support sections, copy and pasted by many MPs)

I appreciate that the law around drug use is a sensitive issue and I recognise the importance of an effective, proactive and evidence-based drugs policy. Thank you for drawing my attention to additional reports on this issue.

(or)

More widely, I believe we need better legislation on drug use, with far greater intervention and education on drug abuse and addiction. We currently have the highest drug misuse mortality rates in England and Wales since records began. Meanwhile, people are being exploited by drug dealers and traffickers on an industrial scale. Evidently, the current approach to drugs is not working. The legality of drugs and the punitive measures in place are not effectively deterring people from using them, and a new approach needs to be taken.

(or)

As you know, cannabis and synthetic cannabinoids are currently classified as Class B controlled drugs under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. The Government has repeatedly said it has no plans to legalise cannabis for recreational use.

However, following independent advice and pressure from both inside and outside of Parliament, the Government rescheduled cannabis-based products for medicinal use (CBPMs) in November 2018 to allow their legal use. CBPMs can now be prescribed to patients by doctors. I was relieved to see this long-overdue reform in relation to medicinal cannabis, which I hope will allow those with debilitating or life-threatening illnesses to get the treatment they need.

(and always:)

It is important that drugs policy addresses all issues of public health. I agree policies should be continually informed by scientific fact and evidence, as well as by the work conducted by those on the frontline.