



Home Affairs Committee

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Jonathan Bowden
Programme Manager, South Tees Public Health and Middlesbrough Lead, Project ADDER

Gemma Swan
Service Manager, South Tees NHS Foundation Trust

By email only

27 October 2022

Dear Mr Bowden and Ms Swan,

Withdrawal of funding for diamorphine assisted treatment

The Home Affairs Committee visited Foundations Medical Practice in Middlesbrough on 8 September 2022 as part of its current Drugs inquiry, in order to observe its diamorphine-assisted treatment (DAT) programme, which has been operating since 2019.

During our visit, we spoke to clinical staff at Foundations, patients on the programme and local stakeholders. We learned first-hand how the lives of patients have been transformed as a result of DAT, and how the wider community has benefited from disruption in demand for drugs and, in turn, organised crime.

On 28 September 2022, we were informed that efforts to secure further funding for the programme had been unsuccessful and that the programme is being shut down.

Those of us who attended the visit are writing to you on behalf of the entire Committee to express our surprise at this outcome. As a cross-party group of MPs, we are united in our disappointment. The treatment given, albeit to a comparatively small group of people, is clearly effective in changing their lives and behaviours, and the lessons that might be learned for the wider UK from this near-unique facility will be lost.

The individual impact that this outcome may have on the patients being treated is also of particular concern, given the capacity this treatment has had in helping to support a number of patients overcome their addiction – particularly where other treatment options have failed.

We note that Project ADDER “seeks to ensure that more people get effective treatment, with enhanced treatment and recovery provision, including housing and employment support, and improved communication between treatment providers and courts, prisons, and hospitals”. We note that it does so through four over-arching aims:

- to reduce drug-related death,
- to reduce drug-related offending,
- to reduce the prevalence of drug use,
- sustained and major disruption of high-harm criminals and networks involved in middle market drug/firearms supply and importation.¹

¹ [About Project ADDER](#), 1 December 2021.

The DAT programme in Middlesbrough has undoubtedly helped to improve the mental and physical health of patients and to move them away from criminality. The programme also has the potential to reduce the prevalence of drug use and disrupt organised crime in Middlesbrough. Cutting off the funding for this programme would appear therefore to fly in the face of Project ADDER's purpose and aims.

May we seek an explanation of why Project ADDER has chosen not to continue funding the DAT programme?

The Committee strongly urges Project ADDER to reconsider its decision and to fund the DAT programme for the remainder of the 2022/23 funding cycle.

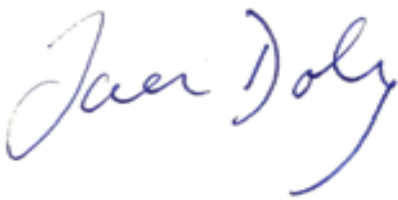
We would appreciate a response to this letter by 8 November.

This letter is copied to the Home Secretary and the Minister for Policing and Crime.

Yours sincerely



Dame Diana Johnson MP, Chair



James Daly MP



Tim Loughton MP



Stuart McDonald MP



Simon Fell MP