



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY  
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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health

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Prime Minister. 2  
For information.

The visit to the  
drug centre at Iver  
Heath on 28 May  
will fit in quite  
well with the  
timetable.

MEP 17/5

17.5.85

Dear Mark

PREVENTION OF DRUG MISUSE

I wrote to David Barclay on 18 February last to let him know of progress by Department of Health and Social Security on the prevention campaign on drugs initiated by the Ministerial Group on the Misuse of Drugs on which John Patten is our representative. That was just before the launch - on 27 February - of three leaflets for parents and two TV filler films publicising their availability. I am writing now to provide an update.

Leaflets for parents

The 27 February launch went very well and demand for the leaflets has been heavy. So far, about three million have been issued and we are about to undertake our second reprint. Comments on the leaflets, from the public and from professionals alike, have been generally very favourable.

Our efforts so far have been laying the ground for the main thrust of the campaign which comes with the launch on Tuesday 21 May of advertising materials aimed at discouraging young people from getting involved with drugs, and particularly with heroin. This follows intensive qualitative research and thorough pre-testing by independent companies which, we hope, will ensure its widest possible effective impact.

One of the recommendations made in research was that the campaign should not seem authoritarian. Accordingly the launch will be a low key affair at the BAFTA conference centre, presented by only two Ministers - Mr Patten, and Mr Mellor of Home Office who chairs the Ministerial Group - with representatives of Yellowhammer, the advertising agency responsible. The materials to be launched are:



E.R.

- i. TV commercials: ✓ two 40 second commercials which will be on the air from 22 May
- ii. Youth press advertising: adverts in selected sections of the youth press from 23 May
- iii. Poster advertising: billboard posters from 1 June.

Together they form a strong and coordinated campaign which will run at least until the end of 1985 after which its effectiveness will be reviewed on the basis of the results of periodic monitoring, which is being carried out as it progresses.

Related initiatives

*May we see it.*

In his letter of 22 February David Barclay mentioned that the Prime Minister felt that a film specifically for young people should be produced as a main factor in the campaign. You will no doubt wish to be aware that the campaign's approach to young people will be supported principally by an educational video package for use in schools and youth centres as a stimulus to discussion. Work is now underway on a script and we hope to have the package complete for the Autumn.

There will be a second video package, this one aimed at improving training in prevention and early intervention for the various professions concerned. It too should be ready by the Autumn.

In addition, Mr Patten has decided to publish the results of the Department's circular requesting details of health authorities plans to deal with drug problems locally. Responses have been very encouraging and it is clear that the priority the Department has given to tackling drug misuse has been taken seriously by authorities. Publication will be in June.

In summary then, our timetable looks like this:

- 21 May: press launch
- 22 May: TV adverts for young people
- 23 May: Youth press advertising
- 1 June: poster advertising
- June: publication of National Health Service returns on drug abuse
- Autumn: production of two video packages,
- i. for young people
  - ii. for professionals.

I hope you will find this information useful. If I can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

*Yours ever  
Jane*

JANE MCKESSACK  
Private Secretary



Home Affairs: Drug Abuse Dec 1982

17 MAY 1985

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

28 May 1985

PREVENTION OF DRUG MISUSE

Many thanks for your letter of 17 May. The Prime Minister welcomes the idea of an educational film for use in schools as part of the campaign, and has expressed the wish to see it when it has been produced.

Perhaps I could leave it to you to get in touch with me at the appropriate time to arrange this.

I am copying this letter to Christine Heald (Home Office).

(Mark Addison)

Ms. Jane McKessack,  
Department of Health and Social Security.

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

22 February 1985

**PREVENTION OF DRUG MISUSE**

Thank you for your letter of 18 February, which the Prime Minister saw on her return from Washington.

The Prime Minister has taken note of the arrangements you are making for a campaign of information and education about drug abuse. She is generally content with these, although she was surprised to see that a health education film for young people is described as only a "possibility". She would have thought that such a film would be one of the main ingredients of a preventive campaign.

(David Barclay)

Ms. Jane McKessack,  
Department of Health & Social Security.