# Medicinal Cannabis Industry Body Expresses ‘Dismay’ at Findings of Health and Social Care Committee Report “Drugs Policy: Medicinal Cannabis”

**Wednesday 3 July, 2019**

**LONDON -- Wednesday, 3 July 2019 --** Today the Centre for Medicinal Cannabis (CMC) has expressed dismay at the findings of the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee report “Drugs policy: medicinal cannabis”.

The report alarmingly calls for medicinal cannabis companies to be ‘named and shamed’ for not providing products for clinical trials. There is no substantive evidence to support this assertion. As the UK’s only industry membership body for companies operating in the cannabis based medicinal product (CBMP) sector, the CMC completely refute any inference that the inaction of suppliers of medicinal cannabis have had any bearing on the pitifully few NHS prescriptions that have been made since 1 November 2018.

If indeed this was a genuine concern for the Committee there has been ample opportunity for industry representatives to be called upon to give oral evidence, the CMC having supplied a long detailed submission at the written evidence stage. The decision to exclude the industry from formally presenting at the public hearings, only to then be criticised for inaction in the final report, is little short of bewildering.

The CMC is pleased that the Committee expresses cross-party concern at the failure to meet patients’ expectations. Successful implementation of this policy will require both investment from the industry and a show of willingness from Government agencies to engage constructively with this new sector. This report only highlights that there is some way to go before it will be possible to establish the foundation required for such progress.

The report considers the plight of the parents of children suffering from epilepsy in some detail and correctly identifies that urgently expediting RCTs is an appropriate course of action. The committee seems to have ignored the evidence that RCTs are not universally appropriate for all conditions in which medicinal cannabis could potentially help, and have simply extrapolated from childhood epilepsy in coming to their conclusions. In most other diseases there is significant prior exposure to cannabis that makes RCTs unfeasible and unethical.

Whilst supporting the report’s recommendations to open up alternative methods of gathering data, the CMC would advise the Committee to consider evidence already in place in Denmark and Australia, which relies on novel data gathering techniques, and does not require the licensing decision to be exclusively based on RCTs. Through these programmes the unnecessary patient extant risk is immediately mitigated.

The Government and many officials have frequently commended themselves on how quickly they responded to emotional campaigns last summer, but, so too has the industry. This report lacks the critical insights that only companies operating in the sector across the globe could bring. The CMC urges the Select Committee and all relevant Government departments to reinvigorate this policy by purposefully engaging with the CMC and the industry as a matter of extreme urgency.

The Centre for Medicinal Cannabis new report “Breaking the Embargo: A proposal to break UK public health medicinal cannabis impasse” is available

https://www.thecmcuk.org/resou...

## Quotes

**Steve Moore, Strategic Counsel, CMC**
*“A successful UK medicinal cannabis programme is going to require policymakers, regulators and businesses to engage constructively. Parliamentarians making unsubstantiated calls for companies to be 'named and shamed' is both irresponsible and hardly conducive to the purposeful public private collaborations now urgently required.”*

**Dr David Horn, Medical Lead, CMC**
*“Whilst it is entirely appropriate to take the view that the use of CBMPs in childhood epilepsy is optimally*

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*assessed through adoption of randomised controlled trials (RCT) methodology, for the Committee to take the view that this should extrapolate to all potential uses of CBMPs ignores important testimony, it is dogmatic, and it does not protect patients from the extant risks of street cannabis into which they are currently forced. Other jurisdictions from whom the Committee itself suggests that the UK might learn, take the alternative view that RCTs should not be an absolute prerequisite for future patient access to CBMPs."*

**Hari Guliani, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Grow Biotech PLC**
*"We welcome the recommendation to increase engagement with patients and the public on this and the focus on helping families of children with intractable epilepsy. However, the risk of 'naming and shaming' companies who do not support all forms of research is likely to dissuade companies from investing in the UK, compared with other jurisdictions. Instead, it would be helpful to encourage these companies to develop a greater understanding in the UK."*

**Dr Robert Pawinski, Chief Medical Officer, Althea UK**
*"The recommendations of the Select Committee are a step in the right direction to secure access for patients who may derive benefit from cannabis where alternative interventions have failed. It is important to appreciate that many users of cannabis in the UK use it to derive medical benefit and risk their health and life changing judicial involvement by sourcing their treatment illicitly. Given the large number of patients that are currently receiving medical cannabis globally, and the growing evidence base to support their efficacy and their safety, new novel strategies to accelerate access through prospective real world data registries may be in the best interest of public health."*

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## About Centre for Medicinal Cannabis

The Centre for Medicinal Cannabis (CMC) is the UK's first and only industry membership body for stakeholders operating in Cannabis Based Medicinal Products (CBMPs) and cannabidiol (CBD) wellness markets. We have a unique capability to engage intelligently and strategically with all influential political and public policy stakeholders, as well as relevant regulatory bodies, drawing on the experience from our global membership base. More information about The CMC can be found at www.thecmcuk.org.

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