



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Jo Churchill MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Prevention,
Public Health and Primary Care

39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

020 7210 4850

Your Ref: KLD/LD/FARMER/1895

Our Ref: PFD 1161031

Mrs Karen L Dilks
HM Senior Coroner, Newcastle upon Tyne
Civic Centre
Barras Bridge
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8QH

05 NOV 2019

Dear Mrs Dilks

In your letter of 12 December 2018, you asked that consideration be given to a national campaign addressing the risks of alcohol consumption within a short period, how to identify persons at risk, the importance of timely medical intervention, and the inherent risks of initiation events.

In the response to you dated 22 January 2019, the then Minister for Public Health, Steve Brine MP, explained that the Department of Health and Social Care would work with colleagues across Government and others to determine the action that could be taken to respond to the risks highlighted in the Prevention of Future Deaths report.

On 26 June 2019, a national roundtable event was held at Newcastle University to discuss the issues you raised. This meeting was attended by representatives from the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Education, Public Health England and other bodies representing higher education and sport.

As a result of this meeting, guidance was published on 23 September 2019 by Universities UK and Newcastle University to raise awareness of the dangers of initiations and excessive alcohol consumption among students. The guidance can be accessed on the Universities UK website at:

www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/news/Pages/New-advice-for-universities-and-students-on-dangers-of-initiations.aspx.

I am aware that Chris Skidmore, Minister of State at the Department for Education is writing to you with further detail about the guidance.

With regard to wider public health messages, Public Health England is engaged in a number of actions targeted at young people about the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption through the 'Rise Above' and 'Talk to Frank' campaigns.

The Rise Above social marketing programme aims to equip 11 to 16-year olds with the skills required to reject or manage risky behaviours, including drinking alcohol. It reaches young people through social media and provides lesson plans accredited by the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education Association for use in secondary schools. Further information is available on the Rise Above website.

FRANK is a drugs information website which is widely used by young people and provides guidance on the risks associated with alcohol consumption and how to manage them. The website provides a help service by phone, text, live chat and email for people who are concerned about their own, or others', alcohol consumption. Further information is available on the FRANK website.

Public Health England sits on an oversight group advising the National Union of Students (NUS) on its alcohol impact project. The NUS alcohol impact project is a voluntary scheme for higher education institutions. The project aims to provide a range of activities and services to students to promote alternatives to alcohol and help foster a healthy attitude and respect for alcohol. Summary reports, surveys and other associated research from the project is available at alcoholimpact.nus.org.uk/research.

In addition, the 'One You' social marketing campaign engages people to make and sustain changes to improve their physical and mental health. The campaign focuses on promotion of eating well, quitting smoking, physical activity and reducing alcohol consumption. One You provides information, advice and online tools, including the 'How Are You' health quiz, website, email programme, and a suite of mobile apps. The overarching communication objective of One You is to reduce unhealthy behaviours as well as prompt uptake of healthier behaviours.

I hope this response demonstrates the collective effort by stakeholders across the higher education sector and across Government to raise awareness and prevent a similar tragedy from happening again. Thank you again for bringing these concerns to my attention.

Kind regards


JO CHURCHILL