



Rt. Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

16th October 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you as leaders of all main UK political parties in Westminster to urge you to instruct the Department of Health to implement the findings of the Cumberlege Review “First do no harm” published in July 2020.

The review examined and researched three medical interventions. Firstly, ‘Primodos’ a hormone pregnancy test taken between the 1950s and 1970s and associated with congenital abnormalities, miscarriages and infant deaths. Terrible damage was suffered by many new born babies and these babies now need support as adults, while their mothers, now elderly, have lived a life wracked by guilt. Secondly, ‘Sodium Valproate’ an effective medication to control epilepsy. When taken in pregnancy, there is a 50% chance of a severely damaged child being born. Even today, this medication is given to women who are unaware of the consequences. Finally, ‘Pelvic mesh’ a plastic net which can migrate, disintegrate and wrap itself around vital organs, severing some and causing appalling suffering and pain.

The review concluded, that the healthcare system had failed these women causing a great deal of anguish, suffering and ruined lives. These failures were caused by both past and current regulatory practices. The recommendations have set out clear calls for action and guidance on how those who have suffered should receive better care and support. These have been widely welcomed by Parliamentarians across both Houses: as well as 15 patient groups, the Royal College of Surgeons, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of General Practitioners and the British Society of Urogynaecology: along with the BMJ who all want to see its recommendations implemented.

We note, that the Scottish government have taken steps to implement the recommendations by announcing the creation of a Patient Safety Commissioner. Yet in England as Baroness Cumberlege recently stated “rumours are absolutely rife of a ritual burial” with questions to Ministers being met with evasive responses. These responses refer in particular to Primodos and we are deeply concerned that Ministers have refused to give assurances to families who have campaigned for decades and now fear that justice could still be delayed or denied, in spite of the review confirming there was “avoidable harm” caused by the failure to remove Primodos from the market in 1967.



Your predecessor, the Rt. Hon Theresa May, demonstrated immense courage and commitment to investigate these historic and recent injustices. The conclusions and recommendations are clear and robust.

We urge you to ensure that an independent task force is appointed to implement the recommendations, in full and without further delay.

Yours sincerely,

Sir. Ed Davey MP
Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Ian Blackford MP
Westminster Leader of the SNP

Sir. Jeffrey Donaldson MP
Leader of the DUP Party in Westminster

Caroline Lucas MP
co-Leader of the Green Party



Liz Saville-Roberts MP
Plaid Cymru, Westminster Leader

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colum Eastwood', is shown on a white rectangular background.

Colum Eastwood MP
Leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party