

Sheppard wants the 'cannabis deadlock' broken

Tommy Sheppard MP calls on the Health Secretary to break medical cannabis deadlock.

Tommy Sheppard, MP for Edinburgh East, has again expressed his support for the on-going fight for access to medical cannabis by the families of severely epileptic children by meeting them when they lobbied parliament earlier this week.

Over 80 MPs met the delegation of sixteen families before they marched in silence up Whitehall to present a petition with over 570,000 signatures to 10 Downing Street. Access to medical cannabis was legalised after some high-profile cases of last summer, including that of 6-year-old Alfie Dingley. But despite the law change, it is believed that there have been no new NHS prescriptions for the type of medical cannabis now used by Alfie. This has left families devastated and in despair.

Tommy Sheppard said, 'The law was changed for good reason and the public are rightly outraged that the new policy has been introduced in a way that means these medicines are legal, but no-one can get them. The stories of the families are heart-breaking.'



Tommy Sheppard MP

“All have been refused access. Some have been told to go abroad! Some have even proved that medical cannabis works for their child but have still been blocked. I’ve offered them my unstinting support and will be pressing the Secretary of State Matt Hancock to intervene and break this deadlock. I was pleased to be one of over 100 co-signatories on the letter to Matt Hancock urging him to intervene.’

Peter Carroll, from the campaign group End Our Pain that fights for access to medical cannabis and who gave evidence on behalf of the families to the Health & Social Care Committee later in the day said, ‘The families really appreciated the support offered by Tommy Sheppard. Last year’s law change only came about because MPs felt moved to support the high profile campaigning families last summer.

“We have ended up in the bizarre and seemingly cruel situation in which the red tape surrounding access to medical cannabis is so tight that if the children at the centre of last year’s

campaigns were put through it even they wouldn't get a prescription. The NHS and the medical professional bodies have effectively blocked the entire policy. We accept that there should be a degree of caution in adopting new medicines, but the current situation is totally unacceptable'.