

Medical Cannabis Treatment as a Solution for Workforce Return

Labour's Plan to Boost Employment: Embracing Medical Cannabis to Address Economic Inactivity

On Tuesday, Work and Pensions Minister Liz Kendall unveiled Labour's ambitious plan to address economic inactivity, aiming to get 2.8 million people back into work. Central to this effort is improving British health, with a particular focus on embracing medical cannabis as a legitimate treatment option.

UK's Economic Inactivity and Health Challenges

The UK unemployment rate lags behind many European neighbours and most OECD nations. A major contributing factor is long-term illness, which keeps a significant portion of the population out of the workforce. Addressing these health issues is crucial for improving employment rates.

Potential of Medical Cannabis

Medical cannabis, legalised in the UK in 2018, has been proven to safely treat over fifty conditions, including chronic pain, anxiety, and depression. Despite its potential to help people return to work, NHS prescriptions for [medical cannabis](#) remain exceedingly rare. The last records indicated only five patients were being prescribed medical cannabis through the NHS, and only for limited conditions.

Rise in Private Prescriptions

This scarcity of NHS prescriptions has driven British patients to seek treatment privately. Prescriptions for Cannabis-Based Products for Medicinal Use (CBPM) more than doubled between 2022 and 2023, with 177,566 items dispensed. As awareness and acceptance of medical cannabis grow, these numbers are expected to rise further.

Impact on Employment

The positive impact of medical cannabis on employment is evident. Almost eight in ten (76%) of patients receiving medical cannabis are employed in sectors like nursing, teaching, hospitality, and technology. Many who were previously unemployed due to long-term illness have been able to return to work thanks to medical cannabis. Patients like Sarah, who suffers from Hyper Mobility Syndrome, and Steve, who struggled with the aftermath of a road traffic accident, have experienced life-changing improvements that enabled them to rejoin the workforce.

International Examples

For further reassurance on the benefits of medical cannabis, the Work and Pensions Minister can look to examples from other countries. Germany's adoption of medical cannabis since 2017 has significantly improved patients' quality of life. Similarly, Canada's legalisation of medical cannabis has led to a reduction in opioid prescriptions and related deaths, showcasing the broader health benefits of cannabis.

Benefits to the NHS and Society

Improving access to medical cannabis could also help alleviate NHS waiting lists, which currently stand at an unprecedented 7.57 million cases. By reducing the burden on the NHS and enhancing the overall health of the population, medical cannabis could play a crucial role in Labour's plan to combat economic inactivity. A healthier society is inherently more productive, and medical cannabis offers a promising solution to improve both individual health outcomes and national productivity.

Labour's plan to address economic inactivity by embracing medical cannabis highlights a forward-thinking approach to public health and employment. By improving access to medical cannabis, the UK can enhance the well-being of its citizens, reduce the strain on the NHS, and ultimately boost employment rates. This initiative represents a significant step towards a healthier and more productive society.

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