

The Right To Choose



Medicinal Cannabis
Reform Cymru

MEDICINE FROM MOTHER EARTH



THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

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Medicinal Cannabis Reform Cymru: Sunday January 6th 2019

A proposal for reform.

Despite the recent landmark legislation change on the 1st of November 2018, which made it lawful for GMC registered specialists to prescribe cannabis derived products to patients when qualifying to strict conditions, cannabis remains mostly unavailable to the overwhelming majority of patients who are still unable to access cannabis lawfully. The number of cannabis prescriptions so far have been minuscule and largely ineffective. Thereby condemning countless adults and children to unnecessary suffering, pain or death.

Every single person in Wales is unique and individual, especially when it comes to our health requirements. The Right to Choose Medicinal Cannabis Program Cymru, would ensure that we are all treated as such and allow us the right to self-determination, by playing a major role in deciding for ourselves, how we want our healthcare to proceed. Under the current regime, it is as though we are put onto a conveyor belt and treated with the same protocol as everyone else with the same named condition, in a "one size fits all" approach. This process usually involves following your clinician's instructions and taking the drugs you are prescribed, and then frequently, further drugs are poly-prescribed to cope with side effects of the initially drugs prescribed.

Countless citizens of Wales have turned from this often, side effect ridden, pharmaceutical approach and risk prosecution, persecution and up to 14 years in prison, for making an informed autonomous health decision, by returning to humanity's most ancient and traditional herbal health remedy, that is natural herbal cannabis. This often occurs after people have suffered from either intolerable, life-threatening treatments or side effects from ineffective pharmaceutical methods, and in some cases, to manage their alcoholism.

This risk of criminalisation for our health choices must stop!

This social discrimination for making this autonomous health choice must stop!

Patient autonomy, participation and choice must be implemented and respected.

Natural herbal cannabis should not be the last resort, but available as a first option.

Thanks to globally available anecdotal and medical research papers about the benefits, harms and risks of cannabis, people are far more educated about their own health issues than ever before and are realising there are ways other than the pharmaceutical protocol.

Some recent cases have already been shown that prescribed cannabis derived products have caused intolerable side effects for some patients that are generally not caused by natural herbal cannabis, so the patients' choice should be the patients' choice!

Therefore, MCRC propose WE should have THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE what WE put into OUR bodies. This decision should be no one else's decision and should remain the sole right of each individual person to autonomously decide for themselves how they manage their own health, well-being and happiness. In a free and democratic society, personal health choices should not be dictated upon pain of criminalisation, unemployment, eviction and discrimination.

Medicinal Cannabis THE PATIENT Reform Cymru

In order to qualify for the Medical Cannabis Reform Cymru Scheme, individuals would need to have a letter from a health professional, identifying the condition the individual is trying to manage and confirming the patients' decision to try traditional herbal cannabis health remedies to manage their health condition/s.

Many people have found the actual process of cultivating their own cannabis and preparing their own health remedies empowering and found it has facilitated the improvement of their health condition, making the right to grow to be considered an essential aspect of our right to choose.

A person managing their own health or that of their loved ones, should have the right to choose between either modern pharmaceutical drugs, medical grade cannabis derived products or traditional, herbal cannabis health remedies. The patient must then get to decide whether to obtain their medicine from either a pharmacist or be given the choice to grow their own cannabis for their own or their family member's needs.

All people choosing to grow their own cannabis for themselves or family member shall join the "Register My Grow" scheme (yet to be set-up) and will submit their individual grow details and receive certification that they are part of the Medicinal Cannabis Reform Cymru Scheme. This would then be updated to Police Wales when each patient joins the scheme.

Upon the basis that current government sentencing guidelines identify that 9 plants are considered a personal grow.

This programme would permit the following:

A maximum allowance of 9 flowering cannabis plants per person, at a time.

A maximum allowance of 9 vegetative cannabis plants per person, at a time.

A maximum allowance of 18 seedlings/cuttings per person, at a time, to allow for rooting failures. Points 1, 2 & 3 combine to allow and ensure a constant rotation of medicinal cannabis (known as a perpetual grow cycle) and ensure an adequate supply for the patient.

The freedom to make oils, edibles and concentrates to manage health, well-being and happiness, as the individual determines appropriate for themselves or their family.

No THC percentage restrictions (anecdotal and medical research shows high THC levels can be required for the management of many cancers, autism, epilepsy, chronic pain and more...)

No CBD level restrictions (anecdotal and medical research shows varying CBD levels can be required for the management of many hormonal cancers, inflammatory conditions, epilepsy, anxiety, ADHD and more...)

The Welsh Government to create employment by allowing and funding the setting up of herbal medicinal cannabis dispensaries to fulfil cannabis prescriptions, as well as allowing and assisting registered private, non-profit, compassion clubs, where patients can safely meet and benefit from other members' knowledge and experience.

Access to information from already experienced cannabis users on how to medicate with cannabis in said non-profit/compassion clubs that are already operating despite the risk of prosecution.

The Welsh Government should implement income related financial assistance for patients who choose to grow their own plants but lack the financial resources to start growing, to help cover the cost of the equipment and expense of this exercise, something that will eventually save NHS Wales millions every year.

There will be instances where individuals choose to grow their own medicinal cannabis but are unable to do so independently and may require physical assistance to do so. In these cases, their family or helpers should also be free from the risk of prosecution.

If a person is under 16 years of age, parents must be given the deciding role in selecting what treatment their child receives, whether it be modern pharmaceutical drugs or traditional herbal cannabis health remedies.

All adults who choose to grow their own cannabis must also have access to affordable testing labs if they wish, to ensure they are consuming clean, safe cannabis preparations.

Should the proposal be accepted, in the interim period patients will be left to suffer. The Welsh government should make provision under Part 1 section 6 of NHS Wales Act 2006, to allow patients with particularly urgent requirements, such as children with epilepsy, to access medicinal cannabis treatments abroad, until such time as they can be provided for in Wales.

HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

All healthcare professionals must all be fully and properly re-educated on the nutritional, therapeutic and medicinal benefits of cannabis to facilitate prescribing. They must be properly re-educated on the differences between synthetic, medical cannabinoids and natural, organic, herbal cannabis. This won't be a difficult to achieve as there has already been so much research done in other countries that are far more advanced in cannabis reforms than Wales. All this information is readily available online for anyone to read.

Wales now has an opportunity to become a leading light in medicinal cannabis reforms, which respect human rights and patient autonomy, so should start considering collaborating and information sharing projects between our Universities and research facilities, and the Universities and research facilities around the world that have already made great progress in cannabis reforms.

There is no point reinventing the wheel, while people in Wales are being prosecuted, evicted, sacked, or being condemned to unnecessary pain, suffering, indignity or death.

Consultants, doctors, nurses, herbalists and nutritionists must be given the autonomy to personally research, discuss, recommend or prescribe herbal cannabis for nutritional, medicinal or therapeutic purposes, for people who choose to manage their health, well-being and happiness with natural herbal cannabis and cannabis derived products.

POLICING

The Welsh Police force must be given full autonomy to apply police discretion and whether pursuing prosecution of any person found in compliance of the MCRC scheme is in the Public interest. The police must be given the necessary powers and support from all Government departments involved in relation to this.

A policy which allowed patients to grow up to 9 (flexible) plants, join social clubs where cannabis can be collectively grown and potentially consumed (as in Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium) would respect human rights, reduce crime rates, reduce potential harms and demands upon police time.

Although there will be an initial cost in the re-training of Police officers and senior members on how to deal with people in these special circumstances and what to do if they come

across a particularly vulnerable person, in the long term, overall policing costs in enforcing cannabis laws would be reduced, thereby freeing up vital policing hours.

In order to keep a record of who is growing their own medicinal cannabis under the MCRC Scheme, the Register My Grow scheme would share information with the Police, as and when new patients join the scheme, so the Police know who is growing for their own health needs and should not be subjected to prosecution.

This is not trying to increase the work load of our already over stretched and underfunded Police service but the opposite. A program like this will free up a lot of police time to concentrate on serious crime.

INDUSTRY

Wales must introduce cannabis/hemp to the market in a progressive manner by not allowing the monopoly for a multi-billion-pound industry to be handed over to pharmaceutical companies alone. This is an industry that is big enough for everyone to be involved in so there is enough to go around and Wales already has much of the infrastructure required to cultivate and process cannabis and left-over products, e.g. Biomass process plants.

Wales must create employment opportunities, by making it possible for smaller businesses to access this market financially. Wales must give Welsh farmers the right to grow Welsh medical cannabis to supply the proposed dispensaries for Welsh patients in Wales. The opportunity for small businesses to grow and trade in medicinal cannabis should be created, so they have the same opportunity as multibillion multinational companies, thereby preventing monopolisation.

Companies supplying natural herbal health supplements or organic plant products should not have to adhere to the same rules as the pharmaceutical industry, because the herbal products are all completely natural and contain no added chemicals, but a full testing and labelling process must be put in place for every product.

Conclusion

This proposed scheme has been developed in collaboration with current UK cannabis patients, who, despite the current laws, have been managing their health with medicinal cannabis by home growing and compassion clubs. The hope is that this scheme could bridge the difficult gap between medicinal cannabis patients, healthcare professionals, the Welsh Police and the Welsh Government.

For too long too many Welsh medicinal cannabis users have been prosecuted and persecuted by Westminster for making this fundamental health choice to recognise and utilise the therapeutic benefits of natural herbal cannabis.

Now is the perfect time for the Welsh government to step up in defence of its people!