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Thank you for the letter of 29 June to the Home Secretary about the Government's Psychoactive Substances Bill. I am replying as the Home Office Minister who has been piloting the Bill's passage through the House of Lords.

I am very happy to reassure you and your co-signatories that it is not the Government's intention to interfere in any way with *bona fide* research involving psychoactive substances through the Psychoactive Substances Bill. The Government attaches a high priority to scientific research and not putting in place unnecessary regulatory barriers that in any way impede this important work in the UK.

We continue to strengthen the Bill during its passage through both Houses of Parliament. As we made clear to the House of Lords at the Bill's second reading on 30 June, we intend to remove from the Bill any interaction between its provisions and *bona fide* research, and ensure that those working in this field can continue their valuable work confident that they will not encounter obstacles.

As the Bill only engages circumstances where the human consumption of these substances occur, the current exemption in Schedule 1 relating to clinical trials was a starting point. Your concerns, shared with the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, confirm that we need to improve and expand this definition on the face of the Bill to encapsulate wider research, both in neuroscience and other areas. Baroness Meacher's amendment at the Committee stage was of course a helpful contribution, which as you indicate goes some way in addressing the issue.

We have now had some further discussions with the Department of Health and the Medical Research Council. In going forward, we need to ensure that any amendment to the Bill satisfies the scientific community as represented by the Academy of Medical Sciences and your co-signatories, as well as our own policy and legislative requirements. For this reason, we intend to develop this work in the coming weeks with a view to introducing an amendment when the Bill is considered by the House of Commons. To help achieve this I would value engagement between your representatives and officials from both the Home Office and the Department of Health to reach a common understanding and satisfactory outcome in the next few weeks.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Lord Bates', written in a cursive style.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD BATES