



Sharon Hodgson MP

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Jennifer Murnane O'Connor TD
Minister of State at the Department of Health
Public Health, Well Being and the National Drugs Strategy
Department of Health
Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50 – 58 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin
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Re: concerns around potential return of the use of bladder mesh sling implants in Ireland.

11/07/25

Dear Jennifer,

CC: Colm Burke

I am getting in touch with you in my capacity as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary-Group (APPG) on 'First Do No Harm – Mesh, Primodos, Valproate' to outline my concerns regarding the drive there appears to be in Ireland to lift the suspension on bladder mesh sling implants.

As Minister for Public Health, I hope that you will be able to reassure me that this suspension will not be lifted and Ireland will not be turning back the clock on progress made to protect women from the harms of mesh.

This week marked five years since the publication of [The Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review](#), chaired by Baroness Cumberlege, which criticised the aggressive push of pelvic mesh, exposed the culture of defensiveness and denial in our healthcare system, and ultimately laid bare the consequences of a system that does not listen to women. As a result, the review included nine recommendations for the government in order to prevent future health scandals. Five years on, we should be learning from past mistakes, not repeating them.

Suspended in Ireland and the four nations of the UK in 2018, bladder mesh slings must remain a thing of the past. I know the harm it can cause too well, so do the 40,000 plus mesh-injured women and so does my own mam who is still feeling the consequences of mesh years on and even post-removal. Women in Ireland, and everywhere, must be protected from harm caused by bladder mesh slings.

As chair of the APPG set up in response to the Cumberlege review, to advocate for its recommendations, I want to see compensation delivered to mesh-injured women like my mam and lessons to be learnt so that history never repeats itself. I do not want to see pro-mesh lobbyists dictating the conversation on mesh. A key message in the Cumberlege review was the importance of the patient voice – it must be at the heart of all we do in order to have an effective system that works for patients everywhere.

When we listen, the evidence is harrowing – bladder mesh slings can cause severe, and often irreversible complications. Women report having mesh slice through their urethra, through vaginal walls, into bladders and bowels, etc. These women are often left without jobs, dealing with marriage breakdowns and mental health problems as a result. These women have experienced enough – on top of the physical symptoms they have had to navigate the gaslighting and misogyny directed at them by medical professionals.

My concern is that, should the suspension be lifted, the use of mesh will become further normalised and legitimised and therefore the experiences of future women coming forward will only be more difficult.

Moreover, there has been a huge lack of long term data capture on complications so it is difficult to track these women. Therefore, it is impossible to know the true scale of harm.

No future woman will be provided with fully informed consent when nobody knows how many women have been harmed, and to what extent. It is not enough to simply say the complications will be captured going forward; we can not allow women to suffer complications like data guinea pigs. We

have all the information we could possibly need, now we need action.

Ultimately, a lift on the suspension of bladder mesh sling implants would be hugely regressive and would set a dangerous precedent at a time when we should all be working together to at last deliver justice for the victims of this horrific health scandal.

The current suspension must be maintained and women's voices must be included and respected in conversations about the future of mesh.

Thank you for your time – I look forward to your response and reassurance. I would be more than happy to meet to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Hodgson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson MP

Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary-Group on '*First Do No Harm – Mesh, Primodos, Valproate.*'

Washington & Gateshead South Constituency

(Incorporating: Sunderland - Castle and Redhill wards; Washington - Central, East, North, South and West wards; and Gateshead South - Birtley and Lamesley wards.)

www.sharonhodgson.org

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