

Commons Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle to call in police over claims of drug abuse in the Houses of Parliament

The Speaker of the House of Commons is demanding a drugs crackdown amid growing evidence of cannabis and cocaine being used openly.

Commons Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle has told Sky News he is to call in police after claims that drug abuse is rife in the Houses of Parliament.

Sir Lindsay is demanding a drugs crackdown - including sniffer dogs prowling the corridors - amid growing evidence of cannabis and cocaine being used openly.

Allegations include a claim that a former MP put his drug dealer on the parliamentary payroll, claiming he was a member of staff, as a way of paying him for drugs.

And, according to a report in The Sunday Times, the same former MP is rumoured to have dealt drugs himself and at least one parliamentary aide has been sacked for taking cocaine.

Responding to the report, Sir Lindsay told Sky News: "The accounts of drug misuse in parliament given to The Sunday Times are deeply concerning, and I will be raising them as a priority with the Metropolitan Police next week.

"I expect to see full and effective enforcement of the law.

"While parliament provides extensive support services for any staff or members who may need help with drug misuse - and I would encourage anyone struggling with such issues to take up such help - for those who choose to flout the law and bring the institution into disrepute the sanctions are serious."

Sir Lindsay, who is 64 and is diabetic, has spoken out against drug abuse in parliament since he became Speaker in November 2019.

Speaking during his campaign to succeed John Bercow, he said: "It's not just drink we've got to catch out, there is a drug problem. I genuinely believe that counselling and real support should be available for all staff and members."

In another move to crack down on drug abuse at Westminster, the House of Commons Commission, responsible for the running of the Commons, is to discuss the issue next week.

"The House of Commons has a long history of sniffer dogs being used to detect explosives," Tory MP Charles Walker, who chairs the administration committee, told The Sunday Times.

"It may be that we now need to broaden the range of sniffer dogs to include those which can detect drugs."

The Sunday Times reported that Commons officials received reports last month that cannabis could be smelt in an open space between Portcullis House and 1 Parliament Street.

This came after it was revealed that two drug dealers were arrested, and 13 people were detained for drugs possession in or near parliament in the space of a year.

The Sunday Times also reported that drug detection wipes found evidence of cocaine in 11 out of 12 lavatories tested in the building, including some restricted to parliamentary pass holders.

The locations were said to include lavatories near the offices of Boris Johnson and Home Secretary Priti Patel and a disabled bathroom on the Shadow Cabinet corridor in the Norman Shaw North building.

Figures released by the Metropolitan Police under freedom of information laws show there were 17 drug crimes in or near parliament in the past year, and police investigated 38 offences between 2015 and 2018.

Source:

<https://news.sky.com/story/commons-speaker-sir-lindsay-hoyle-to-call-in-police-over-claims-of-drug-abuse-in-the-houses-of-parliament-12487771>

[Disclaimer]