



Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk

Response to Gluten-Free Food Prescriptions (EDM 1123) – April 2017

Thank you for contacting me about coeliac disease and gluten-free food prescriptions and EDM 1123.

I agree that it is important that individuals with coeliac disease are able to access the appropriate food to help control symptoms and prevent long-term consequences of the disease.

I know that gluten-free (GF) foods have been available on NHS prescription since the late 1960s, at a time when their availability was very limited. The situation, today, is very different and GF foods are widely available for consumers to purchase from supermarkets and other food outlets. As well as these being available in-store, GF products in the major supermarket chains are available on-line and consumers can have their shopping delivered to their home. In addition to this increased availability, patients can select a diet that this is naturally gluten-free and for example can safely eat meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, rice and most dairy products.

Given this choice and increased availability, a consultation has been launched looking at how changes to the availability of GF foods can be managed so that savings can be achieved and the funds used elsewhere in the NHS. The consultation is open until 22 June 2017 and I encourage you to submit your views. The consultation webpage includes details of how you can do this:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/availability-of-gluten-free-foods-on-nhs-prescription>

I am aware the NHS spent £25.7 million on the basic cost of GF foods in 2015. Many NHS organisations are already taking measures to manage this spend and much of their work has helped to inform the consultation and the impact of any changes. Therefore, I will not be signing EDM 1123.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker'.

Craig Whittaker MP