



Craig Whittaker MP

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Parkinson's Disease

Thank you for contacting me about Parkinson's disease. I agree that it is important to ensure that people with Parkinson's disease are able to access the necessary treatment to live a fulfilled and independent life.

There is already an extensive system of prescription charge exemptions in England. This includes provision for people on low incomes who can apply for free prescriptions through the NHS Low Income Scheme, or who get free prescriptions due to the receipt of certain benefits. The system of exemptions taken as a whole means that 90 per cent of prescription items are dispensed without charge. I know that the Government currently has no plans to make any amendments to the list of medical conditions which provide exemption from the prescription charge.

I know that the NHS is committed to improving care for people with long-term conditions such as Parkinson's disease. NHS England commissions the specialised elements of Parkinson's care that patients may receive from 25 specialised neurological treatment centres across England. I am aware that NHS England has published a service specification setting out what providers must have in place to deliver specialised neurological care. This supports equity of access to high quality services for patients wherever they live. Within these centres neurological multidisciplinary teams ensure patients can access a range of health professionals and that they can receive specialised treatment and support, according to their needs.

I understand that the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recently updated its guidance on the diagnosis, treatment and management of Parkinson's disease. NICE is also in the process of developing a new guideline recognising the particular challenges conditions like Parkinson's can present which is expected for publication in January 2018. This will help to ensure that people with Parkinson's are able to access the best possible care and treatment in order to manage their condition effectively.

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