



Craig Whittaker MP

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Price of Pharmaceutical Drugs

Thank you for contacting me about the cost of pharmaceutical drugs to the NHS.

I fully appreciate your concerns and I would like to assure you that the Government is committed to paying a fair price for medicines used in the NHS. Where companies exploit the NHS by charging higher prices, this money cannot be spent elsewhere on patient care.

You may be interested to know that the Government has recently legislated to ensure that high prices of generic medicines can be better controlled. This action reflects the Government's determination to ensure that no pharmaceutical company can charge unjustifiably high prices for medicines used in the NHS.

In 2016, the Secretary of State for Health asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to urgently look into whether pharmaceutical companies are exploiting the NHS by increasing their prices. The CMA have fined companies that have been found to be charging excessive prices and the Department of Health continues to work closely with the CMA on further investigations into the pharmaceutical sector.

The Government also works with the pharmaceutical industry on a range of issues, including the pricing of new medicines, through mechanisms such as the Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme. This scheme is a voluntary agreement between the Government and pharmaceutical industry which controls the costs of branded medicines sold to the NHS.

The Government also commissioned the Accelerated Access Review which has set out a range of ways we can improve and speed up access to the latest treatments but do so affordably for the NHS, so far £86 million has been committed to make this vision a reality. The NHS is required by law to ensure that all medicines approved for use by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence are funded within three months of approval. You may also be interested to know that the Government is running a public consultation into medicines which should not be routinely prescribed in primary care, in order to assess areas in which the NHS has been spending money on expensive, and clinically ineffective medicines.

You may like to know that the Government and the National Institute for Health Research are fully committed to the principles and practice of transparency in medical and pharmaceutical research. I am pleased to note that the Government runs an open-access policy regarding its research library, and is committed to the World Health Organisation's efforts on the disclosure of medical research

results, ensuring that the public can benefit as a whole from the ideas and knowledge generated by publicly funded medical research.

Through measures such as this, the Government is taking action to ensure drugs represent value for money to the NHS and the UK taxpayer.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker', with a small 'M' at the end.

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