



Chris Heaton-Harris
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Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about NHS prescription charges and the State Pension Age.

As you may know, the Government published a consultation on aligning the upper age for NHS prescription exemptions with State Pension age. Currently, people receive free prescriptions when they turn 60 in England. This has not changed since 1974 for women, and 1995 for men. The State Pension age in England is currently 66 and it is planned to increase this further for men and women to 68 between 2037 and 2039.

The consultation sought views on options for implementing a change in the age at which people in England become eligible for free prescriptions from the current age of 60, to 66 years of age. One option included introducing a grace period meaning people aged 60 to 65 at the point of any change can continue to receive free prescriptions. The consultation did not propose any other changes to existing exemptions from charges, which remain in place for a range of ages and vulnerable groups or those on low incomes.

Prescription charges make an important contribution to the NHS budget. Between 2015/16 and 2019/20, prescription charges generated over £2.8 billion for the NHS, which has gone towards essential running costs for frontline services. It is estimated that the proposed change could bring in up to £300 million more for the NHS by 2026/27.

I have noted the comments you have made about this proposal and will ensure that ministers are made aware of them. I look forward to seeing the results of this consultation in due course and will be following developments closely. Further information on this can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/aligning-the-upper-age-for-nhs-prescription-charge-exemptions-with-the-state-pension-age/aligning-the-upper-age-for-nhs-prescription-charge-exemptions-with-the-state-pension-age>

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY