



September 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access (VPAS).

I note your concerns about the accessibility and affordability of medicines through the NHS and the findings of the report prepared by Global Justice, STOPAIDS and Just Treatment. However, having reviewed the report, I understand the Department of Health and Social Care does not recognise the methodology used to form its conclusions.

As you recognise, the Voluntary Scheme plays an important role in supporting sustainable patient access to the most clinically and cost-effective medicines. The current Voluntary Scheme has enabled the NHS to deliver a record number of access deals for medicines. When VPAS expires at the end of 2023, it is expected to have generated around £7 billion of income for the NHS over nearly five years. At present, 90 per cent of companies supplying eligible health service medicines to the NHS are members of the Voluntary Scheme.

There are several other ways in which the Government improves the affordability of medicines for the taxpayer.

The Government has a statutory scheme for branded medicine pricing in place for companies that do not opt into VPAS. A consultation on the future of the statutory scheme was published on 19 July 2023.

My understanding is also that companies must also agree a public “list price” for branded medicines with the Department before they can market it in the UK.

Furthermore, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence also assesses the cost-effectiveness of medicines before they are delivered through the NHS.

Negotiations between the Government and the pharmaceutical industry over a replacement to the Voluntary Scheme are ongoing, and are likely to conclude this autumn, with a potential new scheme coming into force in 2024. I am confident that this deal will strike the right balance between supporting access to medicines, whilst controlling costs and ensuring value for money for spending on medicines.



Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY