



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From the Lord O'Shaughnessy
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health (Lords)*

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PMPO-1135612

03 JUL 2013

Ms Jackie Glatter, Ms Matina Loizou and Mr Matthew Bezzant
Prescription Charges Coalition
By email to: mloizou@parkinsons.org.uk

Dear Ms Glatter, Ms Loizou & Mr Bezzant

Thank you for your letter of 5 June to the Prime Minister about prescription charges for people with long-term medical conditions. As the matters you raise relate to healthcare, your letter has been passed to the Department of Health and Social Care for reply.

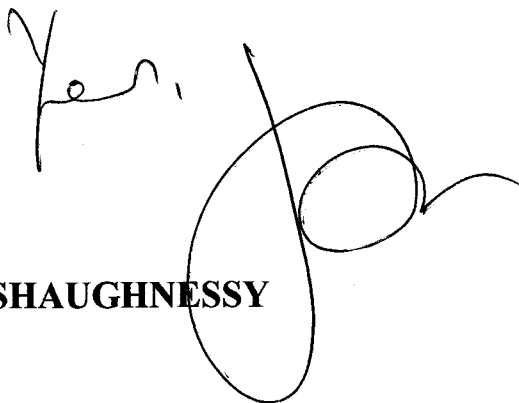
I appreciate your concerns and am grateful to you for taking the time to raise these.

The Government has no plans for a review of the prescription charging system in England. As you know, almost 90 per cent of prescription items are free on the NHS in England, and a broad range of prescription exemptions are in place. Prescription charges continue to generate an important source of revenue to support the delivery of high quality NHS services. They provide over £570 million annually from community dispensing in England. This funding is particularly important given the increasing demands on the NHS.

In my letter to you of 24 January (our ref: POC-1135612), I set out that the NHS Business Services Authority (NHS BSA) has developed an online tool to help patients find out what help with health costs they may be eligible for, and how to apply. The checker now has over 100,000 users, an increase of more than 25,000 since January. The NHS BSA has also worked with the Citizens Advice Bureau to encourage advisers to talk to their clients about help with health costs if appropriate.

As set out in my previous letter, the current financial situation prevents the Government from making any significant changes to the prescription charging system. We will, however, ensure that the NHS BSA's important work publicising the extensive arrangements that are already in place continues.

I hope this reply is helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James O'Shaughnessy', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

JAMES O'SHAUGHNESSY