

## Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West

14<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Dear Constituents,

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 drugs. That is why the Secretary of State for Health has asked the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to urgently look into whether pharmaceutical companies are exploiting the NHS by increasing their prices. I understand from ministerial colleagues that the CMA is currently carrying out five investigations related to suspected anti-competitive practices in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sector. The CMA can impose tough financial penalties on a company that is found to have charged excessive prices.

The Government has worked closely with the industry on a range of issues, including the pricings 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. Through measures such as this, the Government is taking action to ensure drugs represent value for money to the NHS and the UK taxpayer.

I am aware that the Government is currently in discussions with the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry about how best to ensure appropriate pricing throughout the system and I will follow any developments with interest.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

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