



Department
of Health &
Social Care

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

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Your Ref: Council-Exemption-20181107

PO-1157596

19 DEC 2018

Dr Carolyn Wilkins
Chief Executive, Oldham MBC
Level 3, Civic Centre
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Thank you for your correspondence of 12 November to Matt Hancock about free prescriptions for care leavers.

I appreciate your and the Council's concerns and am grateful to you for taking the time to raise these with me.

The Government has no current plans to change the range of exemptions or the way in which they are administered, but I realise that this issue raises some strong feelings.

It is possible that care leavers may be able to access other help that is available. People on a low income can seek help under the NHS Low Income Scheme, which provides help with health costs on an income-related basis. The level of help available is based on a comparison between a person's income and requirements at the time a claim is received, or at the time a charge was paid if a refund is claimed. Additionally, as you know, a number of Department for Work and Pensions benefits and certain tax credits also provide entitlement to free prescriptions.

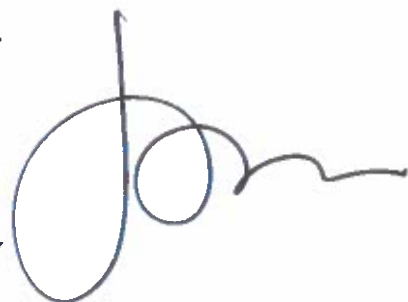
People who have to pay NHS prescription charges and need many prescription items could save money with a prescription prepayment certificate (PPC). A three-monthly PPC (costing £29.10) or an annual PPC (costing £104.00) will save people money if they need four or more items in three months or 13 or more items in 12 months. To help spread the cost, people can now pay for an annual PPC by ten monthly direct debits. PPCs can be obtained by calling 0300 330 1341 (local rates), online through

the NHS Business Services Authority's website at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk, or by asking a pharmacist for an application form (FP95).

More information about the extensive arrangements for providing help with NHS prescription charges and other health costs can be found on the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk/healthcosts.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'James O'Shaughnessy', written in a cursive style.

JAMES O'SHAUGHNESSY