

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health (Baroness Hayman): Since 1989, six criteria have been separately notified to the Commission. My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Health has advised the Commission of the full set which currently apply, which are:

First, under the Selected List Scheme, medicinal products in 17 therapeutic categories which are excluded from prescription on the grounds that, on expert advice, they had no clinical or therapeutic advantage over other, cheaper, drugs in the following categories:

- mild to moderate painkillers
- indigestion remedies
- laxatives
- cough and cold remedies
- vitamins
- tonics
- benzodiazepine sedatives and tranquilisers
- antidiarrhoeal drugs
- drugs for allergic disorders
- hypnotics and anxiolytics
- appetite suppressants
- drugs for vaginal and vulval conditions
- contraceptives
- drugs used in anaemia
- topical anti-rheumatics
- drugs acting on the ear and nose
- drugs acting on the skin

Second, products may be considered as "borderline substances" which are not truly medicinal products with clinical or therapeutic value and are excluded from National Health Service prescription on that ground.

Third, as well as being freely available on sale over the counter to the general public the cost to the NHS if the product(s) were to be supplied on prescription could not be justified at any price likely to be economic to the manufacturer and that the supply of the product is not considered a priority for the use of the limited resources available to the NHS.

Fourth, that products which nonetheless may meet a legitimate clinical or therapeutic need when properly prescribed are subject to misuse by drug misusers, and such misuse, or the manner in which the product is administered by drug misusers, gives rise to the risk of the physical or mental morbidity, and alternative products are available to meet all legitimate clinical or therapeutic needs.

Fifth, a medicinal product or a category of medicinal products may be excluded entirely from supply on NHS prescription. It may, alternatively, be excluded except in specified circumstances, or except in relation to specified conditions or categories of condition, or specified categories of patient. A medicinal product or a category of them may be so excluded where the forecast aggregate cost to the NHS of allowing the product (or category of products) to be supplied on NHS prescription, or to be supplied more widely than the permitted exceptions, could not be justified having

regard to all the relevant circumstances including in particular: the Secretary of State for Health's duties pursuant to the NHS Act 1977 and the priorities for the expenditure of NHS resources.

Sixth, products which comprise an injection device prefilled with a drug may be excluded from supply on NHS prescription if the same drug is available and can be used more economically in a container which may be used in conjunction with a refillable injection device.

Hepatitis C and Haemophiliacs

Lord Morris of Manchester asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the Written Answer by Baroness Hayman on 15 June (WA 18), what are their grounds for saying that infection with hepatitis C carries no social stigma nor any danger of cross infection of partners. [HL3140]

Baroness Hayman: These are difficult and complex issues of relativities. Our view is that HIV infection was a special case of heightened public concern and ignorance in the 1980s. Current information indicates that sexual transmission of hepatitis C does occur but that the virus is inefficiently spread in this way.

Lord Morris of Manchester asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the Written Answer by Baroness Hayman on 15 June (WA 18), whether there has been any change of policy between this Government and the previous government in relation to the relevance of social stigma to the giving of special treatment and financial help to patients with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C through National Health Service treatment and to the dependants of those who have died. [HL3141]

Baroness Hayman: When we made our careful assessment of the request for a special payment scheme for people with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C we took account of the very high level of stigma attaching to HIV in the 1980s when the HIV special payments were introduced.

Lord Morris of Manchester asked Her Majesty's Government:

Further to the Written Answer by Baroness Hayman on 15 June (WA 18), whether they will consult the Haemophilia Society about remedying the social stigma which can attach to infection with hepatitis C. [HL3142]

Baroness Hayman: We are already working with the Haemophilia Society on help for young people with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C and we are providing a grant for their hepatitis C Youth Information and Support project which offers support on issues such as discrimination and aims to reduce the risk of social exclusion. We will continue to discuss these issues, and the project, with the society.