

To NHS England,

I and my family have found homeopathic, herbal and anthroposophic medicines very helpful and I am very concerned that these forms of health care will only be available privately.

The removal of these medicines from NHS prescribing will reduce the freedom of choice for patients and particularly those who are financially disadvantaged, who can less easily afford to pay for them privately.

I understand that the grounds for this proposal are cost saving with the annual spend of around £100,000 for each of these two groups of medicines and a lack of evidence of effectiveness. The imagined saving of £200,000 for the whole country represents only a fraction of the drugs budget for a single NHS General Practice.

There is strong evidence that homeopathic and herbal prescribing by doctors appropriately reduces prescribing of psychiatric, pain killing and antibiotic drugs. Given the cost of these conventional drugs, there is no economic rationale for stopping the prescription of homeopathic or herbal medicines by NHS general practitioners.

Despite the strong drive to publicly discredit homeopathy there is in fact, a large body of scientific evidence for the usefulness of both homeopathic and herbal medicines. The main problem is that the demonstrated effectiveness of highly diluted homeopathic medicines does not fit conventional medical concepts. So, evidence is not easily accepted. There are groups and individuals who wish to condemn and suppress anything that falls outside medical orthodoxy such as "The Good Thinking Society".

This may be the real motivation for this proposal rather than any theoretical cost saving for the NHS.

Since the inception of the health service, successive Ministers of Health have given assurances - that "the NHS will fund homeopathic treatment, for as long as doctors wish to prescribe it and patients wish to receive it" I hope this principle will be maintained rather than sacrificed for a relatively insignificant saving, if indeed any real savings. I hope that the NHS will continue to offer this freedom of treatment choice to all irrespective of financial means.

Yours Truly,