Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access (VPAG) accelerated review - Charity Statement

The Charities Medicines Access Coalition (CMAC), a coalition of 26 health charities representing millions of patients across the UK, is calling for the Government and the pharmaceutical industry to be more transparent and share clear evidence that patient impact is at the heart of the ongoing VPAG discussions and negotiations.

The review of the Voluntary Scheme for Branded Medicines Pricing and Access (VPAG), expected in Autumn 2025, has been brought forward and is due to conclude at the end of June 2025.

During the last round of negotiations, CMAC was clear that there must be meaningful engagement with patients and the groups that represent them, transparency around the process, and a joined-up approach to consult with stakeholders on patient-focused topics, including access, uptake, and outcomes. These negotiations and subsequent decisions will have a tangible impact on outcomes for the patient communities we work with.

Neither CMAC nor any of the individual patient organisations we represent have been consulted during this review process. This exclusion of patient voices only deepens our concern that patient benefit and access to effective treatments are not being treated as priorities in the Government's negotiations with the pharmaceutical industry.

There is also a lack of transparency as to which elements of the VPAG scheme are being considered for amendment within this early review. This makes it challenging to understand or assess the impact that proposed revisions to the scheme may have on patients.

Whilst we would not expect to be involved in the confidential financial negotiations between the Government and the pharmaceutical industry, as patient representatives, we should be included in discussions around how VPAG funds are used to improve patient outcomes in the UK.

We are calling on the Government to ensure all options being discussed for reform within the VPAG scheme are formally assessed for their impact on NHS patients. We also call on the Government and the pharmaceutical industry to increase their communication and open meaningful discussions with patient organisations within this review.

Future work on the VPAG scheme, or any other proposal for reform of the UK's treatment access systems and processes, must be fully inclusive of the patient voice and ultimately lead to faster, equitable access to new, innovative medicines.