<date>

Dear <Your MP>,

**NHS England Consultation**

I am writing to express my concern about the inclusion of homeopathy and herbal medicine in the current NHS England Consultation: *'Items which should not be routinely prescribed in primary care: a Consultation on guidance for CCGs'*.

I fully appreciate the need to ensure that the NHS delivers treatments which are effective, safe and best value for public money.

However, the items under consultation are largely pharmaceutical products which are either unsafe, ineffective, or for which there are cheaper alternatives. They are specific products used for specific conditions and purposes. That is not the case, however, in regards to either homeopathy or herbal medicine. Both are systems of medicine developed over many years that offer patients an individualised, patient-centred approach for a variety of conditions.

In the NHS patients receive these treatments either directly from their GP or through a GP referral. These are well-trained professionals who use their best clinical judgement and knowledge of their patients to provide the most appropriate treatment option. Homeopathy and herbal medicine are often given when all pharmaceutical options have been tried unsuccessfully. Patients who are currently being given these treatments cannot simply be given something else instead, as other recommended treatment options have already been tried and failed.

It is my belief that homeopathy and herbal medicines have been targeted in this consultation not because they don't work, but because there has been an unpleasant and calculated campaign over many years to ban them. The House of Commons Science and Technology Report on Homeopathy in 2010, which is cited as the rationale for recommendation that homeopathy be included in this consultation, was widely criticised both in and outside of Parliament. It was endorsed by only three of the 14 committee members, and a subsequent Early Day Motion condemning the report’s conclusions was signed by 70 MPs.

In addition, the amount spent on homeopathy and herbal medicine by the NHS according to the consultation is £92,412 and £100,009 respectively. What audit has NHS England carried out to determine the savings gained from this expenditure, and what assessment has it done on the clinical outcomes of patients who have been prescribed them? There are many interventions routinely given on the NHS which have questionable clinical effect and cost far more than £90-£100k, but which are not being scrutinised and banned in this way.

A blanket ban of these medicines through this consultation will result in poorer patient care, prevent doctors from prescribing according to their knowledge and experience, and end up costing the NHS more.

I urge you to raise these issues with NHS England and stand up for the rights of patients and doctors in this process.

Yours sincerely,