



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Dr Zubir Ahmed
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Health Innovation and Safety*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

28 November 2025

Dear Henrietta,

Thank you for your letter dated 31 October 2025. I am writing this letter in response to your request for information under Schedule 1, paragraph 3 of the Medicines and Medical Devices Act 2012, which authorises you to access information, documents, or records that are considered necessary for the exercise of your functions as Patient Safety Commissioner. Please see below, information that details activity since 31 October 2023 and makes clear the work that has taken place since your report was first published.

I would like to first thank you for the work you have undertaken in your capacity as the Patient Safety Commissioner. As the new minister for patient safety, I want to reassure you of my personal commitment to get finally get redress right for patients and their families.

On your request for dates when advice has been given to Ministers by DHSC officials and more detail of the advice given;

In line with the convention on access to papers under a previous administration, officials have informed me that they provided advice to the previous Government. This advice ranged from formal submissions to briefing notes; officials have summarised this advice below:

- **16.11.2023:** Advice was given to ministers with early analysis of information the PSC shared with DHSC covering the likely themes of her upcoming report, ahead of publication the following February.
- **05.02.2024:** Having received an advance copy of the Hughes Report, advice was sent to ministers laying out the recommendations and advice on a short-term response.
- **14.02.2024:** Advice was given to ministers covering the PSC's recommendations and potential policy responses, including estimates of costs and decisions required.

Following this advice, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Women, Maria Caulfield, wrote to you laying out the need for primary legislation in this matter should Government decide to provide financial redress, and stating that she hoped a substantive update would be upcoming in the Summer of 2024.

Following the General Election on 4 July 2024, Baroness Merron took over this portfolio until my appointment on 6 September earlier this year. The pieces of advice relating to the Hughes Report within this timeframe are set out below:

- **July-August 2024:** Ministers received preliminary briefing on the Hughes Report (to make them aware the report was outstanding and that a response would be required in due course) as part of orientation following the General Election in July.
- **September-October 2024:** Ministers received briefings from officials in preparation for parliamentary engagement on the Cumberlege and Hughes Reports.
- **22.11.2024:** Senior officials met with members of DHSC's Executive Committee to ensure advice showed learning from previous similar incidences of patient harm, remained fair and presented ministers with all options.
- **06.12.2024:** Advice was sent to Baroness Merron summarising the Hughes Report, its recommendations, the case for Redress and options available to the Government, and the cross-government interests.
- **12.12.2024 and 17.12.2024:** Baroness Merron chaired roundtables with patient groups relating to sodium valproate and pelvic mesh, to better understand patient views in consideration of the report.
- **27.02.2025:** A briefing note was sent at the request of No.10, summarising the Hughes Report, its recommendations and advice sent to ministers thus far.
- **11.03.2025:** Advice was sent to both the Secretary of State and Baroness Merron, with further detail of financial redress options, as well as non-financial redress options following cross-government engagement between Officials.
- **29.04.2025:** A briefing note was sent to the Secretary of State in preparation for a meeting with the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, which included discussion on the Hughes Report. *Note: this meeting was cancelled.*
- **02.06.2025:** Advice was sent to the Secretary of State updating him on policy work thus far.
- **16.09.2025:** Follow-up advice was sent to the Secretary of State covering non-financial redress options and both short-term and long-term affordability.
- **21.10.2025:** Officials shared introductory advice with Minister Ahmed once he took on responsibility for this policy area.

On your request for dates and details of meetings held, and with whom, including contact with other government departments;

As you'll know, Government ministers hold a number of meetings where a variety of policy issues may arise.

Previous Government

- **11.12.2023:** Ministerial meeting with the Patient Safety Commissioner
- **02.02.2024:** Ministerial meeting with Baroness Cumberlege
- **October 2023-July 2024:** Multiple meetings took place between the Patient Safety Commissioner and Officials in this period. Officials also engaged with colleagues from a range of other Government Departments during this period.

Current Government

- **22.11.2024:** Meeting between Senior Offices and members of DHSC's Executive Committee
- **12.12.2024:** Ministerial roundtable with sodium valproate patient groups
- **17.12.2024:** Ministerial roundtable with pelvic mesh patient groups
- **03.06.2025:** Workshop between Officials across the Four Nations.
- **August 2024-November 2025:** Officials have met with the Patient Safety Commissioner on a number of occasions on various elements of her portfolio, in which the Hughes Report may have been discussed. Officials also engaged with colleagues from a range of other Government Departments, and regularly with Devolved Administration colleagues, during this period.
- **22.10.2025:** Officials held an introductory meeting with Minister Ahmed to discuss the background to the Hughes report and the work done to date to further a response

On your request for clarity on what information remains outstanding for Ministers to make a decision regarding redress and the timetable for a full response to my recommendations;

Additional information is still required on the practicalities of further action on this area. This includes approaches to cost and affordability, legislation and scope of any potential redress. No final timetable has been agreed at present.

As I said recently in my response to a recent parliamentary question from my colleague Cat Smith MP, it is simply not enough to say that this issue is complex without a willingness to step into that complexity for the sake of patients. I can assure you of my conviction to grip this issue and look at all forms of financial and non-financial redress such that victims get justice, high quality medical care of their complications and also have an assurance we are genuinely changing the system to mitigate the risk and harm to future generations.

On this note I would like to invite you to a face-to-face meeting so we are able to discuss this and other patient safety matters further in a spirit of partnership.

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Z. Ahmed', with a horizontal line underneath.

DR ZUBIR AHMED MP

**Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
for Health Innovation and Safety**