MEDIA RELEASE

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PAGB response to Watchdog's article on OTC hayfever medicines

In response to BBC Watchdog's article surrounding price and claims for hayfever medicines containing the same product license (PL), John Smith, PAGB Chief Executive, comments: "There are a wide range of branded and generic hayfever products available to buy over-the-counter from pharmacies and other retail outlets.

"Some OTC hayfever products are marketed to target specific allergy symptoms, such as nasal congestion, irritated eyes or itchy throats. This is because research shows that having specific symptoms displayed on the front of the pack helps people to navigate the shelf and choose a suitable product easily.

"Branded hayfever medicines may also come in a variety of different preparation methods, giving customers breadth of choice in terms of their preferred format, for example easy to swallow capsules for those who may struggle with standard tablets.

"The companies who produce OTC medicines suggest a recommended retail price (RRP) that reflects the investment and the overall quality of the product. However, the final selling price is decided by the retailer.

"Product manufacturers work with MHRA, the UK's medicines' regulator, to ensure that all over-the-counter medicines are safe, effective and have appropriate packaging. Products can only be put on the market once they have been approved by MHRA. As with all medicines, it's important that people always read and follow the instructions and are careful not to take more than one product containing the same active ingredient.

"A pharmacist can give advice on the most suitable hayfever treatment to take if people are unsure."

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Notes to editors:

PAGB (Proprietary Association of Great Britain) is the UK trade association representing manufacturers of branded over-the-counter medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements.

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