



The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA

16 January 2023

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with community pharmacists as part of the Primary Care NHS Recovery Forum on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

As the collective representatives of NHS community pharmacies and the largest pharmacy operators in England, we were very encouraged to hear that Government and our General Practice colleagues recognise the central role community pharmacy must play in tackling the challenges that the NHS faces. We write to reinforce this: building on the agility we demonstrated during the pandemic, we want to deliver better support for patients and to reduce pressure on NHS services.

Pharmacies can free up millions of GP appointments and provide easy access to urgent care and healthcare advice through a fully-funded 'Pharmacy First' service. We also see a wider role for pharmacy in supporting medicines optimisation, prevention, tackling health inequalities, managing long-term conditions, and more.

But we also share the views of the pharmacists who attended your Forum. This vision for the future is not achievable unless Government can help us to resolve the funding, workforce and capacity crises that are engulfing community pharmacy businesses of all sizes. The 30% funding cuts over the last 7 years have pushed us to our limit operationally. Many pharmacy owners believe their businesses will not survive 2023, and the constraints are already degrading patient services.

As we recently wrote to the Secretary of State, without urgent intervention we are moving towards large numbers of permanent pharmacy closures, putting the safe supply of prescription medicines at risk. We believe we have reached a fork in the road: Government can empower pharmacies to do more by providing a blueprint for the future of the community pharmacy network, backed by investment; or we can continue down the path of squeezing the sector's funding, in which case we face unprecedented and unplanned closures, with serious consequences for patients.

In his oral statement last Monday, the Secretary of State said pharmacies could provide additional services to help ease pressures in other parts of the system. We very much agree, and we look forward to seeing the upcoming Primary Care Recovery Plan. But we are clear that unless the plans for community pharmacy include steps to put us on a sustainable footing, we won't reach our full potential in helping with your goals for the health service.

As pharmacy operators we remain dedicated to our patients and will continue to do all that we can to serve them and to help alleviate pressures on the NHS. We are seeking your intervention to

ensure that we can play our full part in delivering your Primary Care Recovery Plan. Investment in community pharmacies would allow us to deliver cost-effective solutions for patients at pace.

We are ready to discuss this with you, or with DHSC ministers, at any time. We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Seb James  
**CEO, Boots UK**

Kevin Birch  
**CEO, Lloyds Pharmacy**

Seb Hobbs  
**CEO, Well**

Steve Anderson  
**MD, Phoenix UK**

Sue Killen, Chair  
Janet Morrison OBE, CEO  
**PSNC (Pharmaceutical  
Services Negotiating  
Committee)**

Dame Barbara Hakin,  
Chair  
Malcolm Harrison, CEO  
**CCA (Company Chemists  
Association)**

Peter Cattee, Chair  
Dr Leyla Hannbeck, CEO  
**AIM (Association of  
Independent Multiple  
Pharmacies)**

Andrew Lane, Chairman  
Mark Lyonette, CEO  
**NPA (National Pharmacy  
Association)**