



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Dame Andrea Leadsom MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

18 December 2023

Dear Minister,

As Members of Parliament, we would like to raise our concern over the unprecedented pressures facing community pharmacies in England.

Since 2015, core pharmacy funding has reduced by 30% in real terms, which has resulted in many pharmacies in our constituencies operating at a loss. These pressures have been compounded by inflationary pressures including on workforce and energy costs and medicine supply challenges. Unlike other sectors, community pharmacies cannot pass increasing costs onto their customers, as NHS funding accounts for 90% of their income.

Recent figures from the NHS estimate that since October 2016, approximately 1,400 pharmacies have closed permanently, with many more withdrawing services or reducing their opening hours. Evidence suggests that these closures have been occurring in areas with the highest levels of deprivation and need, and that other pharmacies are struggling to fill the gaps.

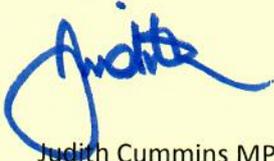
We are greatly encouraged that pharmacies will have a greater role to play in primary care through the Pharmacy First service. It will be beneficial to make greater use of pharmacists' professional skills to deliver more clinical services to patients closer to their home, and in doing so, relieve pressure elsewhere in the NHS.

To support the community pharmacy sector in the face of these pressures, we call for your urgent consideration of three measures:

1. **A commitment to working with the sector to create a fair and fit for purpose core funding model** that ensures sustainability and properly rewards pharmacies for what they do.
2. **Effectively implement and develop the Pharmacy First service** to allow patients to have walk-in consultations for minor conditions, providing accessible care and easing pressure on general practice.

3. **Build on other clinical service areas** such as vaccinations, women's health, and long-term conditions management. Pharmacy can do much more to contribute to key NHS priority areas and to help to deliver greater access for patients to health support.

Yours sincerely,



Judith Cummins MP

Virendra Sharma MP

Dame Diana Johnson MP

Sir George Howarth

Derek Twigg MP

Mohammad Yasin MP

Wera Hobhouse MP

Helen Morgan MP

Sally-Ann Hart MP

Peter Aldous MP

Dame Priti Patel MP

Derek Thomas MP

Sir Peter Bottomley MP

Greg Smith MP

Steve Double MP

Dame Andrea Jenkyns MP

Robin Walker MP

Sir Julian Lewis MP

Selaine Saxby MP

Lia Nici MP