Rt Hon Victoria Atkins MP

Secretary of State

Department of Health and Social Care

39 Victoria Street

London SW1H 0EU

March 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

We are pleased that the introduction of the Pharmacy First service in England has so far been a success. And we are encouraged by the way the community pharmacy sector has stepped up to implement the service, despite the severe pressures they face.

Nevertheless, despite the great work pharmacies are doing, we are acutely aware of, and concerned by, the funding crisis they still face and the pressure on services, businesses and staff that this compounds. This strain is in turn felt by patients and the public and will only limit their ability to receive the care they need, when they need it.

We are keen to see Pharmacy First being a success, and in time would like to see it extended to include other common conditions, so that we continue to maximise the ability of community pharmacies to support patients and relieve pressure elsewhere in the NHS.

Pharmacies cannot do this if the current, acute funding crisis is not addressed.

We call for your urgent consideration of:

**1. A commitment on behalf of the Government to working with the pharmacy sector to create an economically sustainable core funding model that protects community pharmacies and gives the sector confidence for the future.**

**2. Develop the Pharmacy First service** to enable patients to have walk-in consultations for more common minor conditions, providing accessible care and easing pressure on general practice.

**3. Extend other clinical services that pharmacies can provide** such as vaccinations, women’s health services, support for healthy lifestyles and long-term conditions management.

Community pharmacy can do much more to contribute to key NHS priority areas and to help to get the health service back on a sustainable footing, but only if they have the investment and support that they need.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Aldous MP Neil Coyle MP Marco Longhi MP

Peter Dowd MP Derek Thomas MP Greg Smith MP

Sarah Dyke MP Rachael Maskell MP Steve Double MP

Theresa Villiers MP Edward Timpson KC MP Martin Vickers MP

Kevin Foster MP