

# MP Briefing: Realising Pharmacy's Potential

## Overview

Community pharmacies are a vital part of our health service: **they are visited by approximately 1.6 million people every day, and they dispense over 1.1 billion prescriptions every year.**

With the right investment and commissioning, **pharmacies could play an even greater role – delivering preventative and clinical care closer to home, easing NHS pressures, and working at the heart of neighbourhood health teams** in a modern, integrated system.

However, community pharmacies are currently under enormous financial pressure, with an estimated **£2 billion annual funding gap** continuing to threaten their sustainability. **Pharmacies need a long-term sustainable funding and operational model.**

Following the recent Spending Review, which promised welcome further investment into the NHS, and the publication of the **Ten-Year Health Plan**, we would like to work with the Government to protect and expand the role of pharmacies so we can deliver a healthier nation and a more efficient NHS.

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“The Government’s plan aligns well with the value that pharmacies can bring and will begin to harness the sector’s potential for the benefit of patients, communities and the wider NHS. Research shows that the public already supports community pharmacies playing a bigger role in healthcare services, and the sector has a unique ability to break down barriers to care coupled with an astonishingly strong record on efficiency. But before this plan can become a reality, first the Government must deliver on its commitment to build the sustainable funding model that community pharmacy so desperately needs. The millions of people relying on them every day don’t want to lose their local pharmacies to financial collapse, which is something the Government should carefully consider as it seeks to implement its plan.

**This plan is not the end of the road; it’s just the beginning.” – Janet Morrison, CEO, Community Pharmacy England**

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## The 10-Year Health Plan: A moment to back community pharmacies

The Government's new 10-Year Health Plan sets out an ambitious vision for transforming the NHS, shifting care from hospitals into communities, from sickness to prevention, and from analogue to digital.

Community pharmacies are central to delivering this transformation. The plan commits to expanding pharmacy's role in:

- **Delivering more preventative services**, such as free HPV and emergency contraception.
- **Managing long-term conditions** like obesity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, including through independent prescribing.
- **Supporting digital integration**, including secure access to the Single Patient Record
- **Minor ailment support and chronic disease management**, inspired by international best practice

## Our 4-point plan to unlock pharmacies' future

We are asking the Government to:

### 1. Support an economically sustainable community pharmacy sector

- Close the **£2 billion annual funding gap** to protect access to medicines and services.
- **Improve medicines supply chain resilience** to ensure all community pharmacies and their patients can access the medicines they need, when they need them.
- A fully funded pharmacy network could deliver **£34 billion in value annually – a £13 return for every £1 invested**.
- Since 2015, pharmacies have delivered **64% in efficiencies** despite a **45% rise in workload**.
- **Yet, due to a combination of financial pressures, over 1,000 pharmacies have closed.**

### 2. Reform preventative healthcare by integrating community pharmacies into Neighbourhood Health Services

- **Commission more public health and clinical services**, especially in deprived areas.
- Expand NHS vaccination and healthy lifestyle services such as **weight management** and **smoking and vaping cessation**.
- **Wider vaccination services** could yield **£84 million in benefits** for £16 million cost and a **national smoking cessation service** could return **£375 million annually** for under £10 million.

### 3. Deliver care closer to home by building on the potential of existing services

- **Expand Pharmacy First** into a **Community Pharmacist Prescribing Service**, as proposed in the Labour Manifesto. **This would build on the 38 million GP appointments that pharmacies already save every year.**
- Enhance community pharmacy clinical services such as the **Blood Pressure Check Service** to include prescribing for and managing hypertension and identifying other cardiovascular conditions.
- **The Pharmacy Contraception Service should be developed into a more comprehensive women's health service**, for instance widening access to long-acting reversible contraception (e.g. injectable contraceptives) and to menopause advice, with prescribing of HRT.

#### 4. Use community pharmacies to maximise the value and impact of NHS medicines

- **Maximise the potential of the pharmacy New Medicine Service and the Discharge Medicines Service** to improve reduce hospital admissions. **The New Medicine Service could deliver £23 billion in value annually at a cost of just £307 million – a 75:1 return on investment.**
- **Commission structured medication reviews, a deprescribing service and adherence support services from pharmacies**, to improve outcomes and NHS medicines spend.
- Empower community pharmacists to manage medicines shortages and optimise use, including **making strength and formulation substitutions where clinically appropriate.**

## Next steps

We are asking all MPs to:

- Work with us to give pharmacies a **long-term sustainable future.**
- Champion the role of pharmacies in **NHS transformation.**
- Advocate for **expanded commissioning** of pharmacy-led services.

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## Further information

Community Pharmacy England represents all 10,400 community pharmacies in England. We champion community pharmacies and represent them in negotiations with the Government and the NHS. For more information or support, please contact: [comms.team@cpe.org.uk](mailto:comms.team@cpe.org.uk)