

Briefing 024/25: What pharmacy owners told us in September 2025

As part of Community Pharmacy England's commitment to working more closely with pharmacy owners – listening to them better, as well as engaging more regularly via events and other channels – we sought input from the sector ahead of the [September 2025 Committee Meeting](#).

Between 8th August and 11th September, the latest sector opinion poll gathered views from pharmacy owners across the sector to help inform Committee discussions on 2026/27 negotiation preparations. A series of questions were asked on outlook, funding and service priorities, and reaction to the 10-Year Health Plan. As usual, pharmacy owners were also asked about the intensity of the various financial and operating pressures facing the sector.

Thanks to all those who took the time to complete the survey. This briefing summarises what you said.

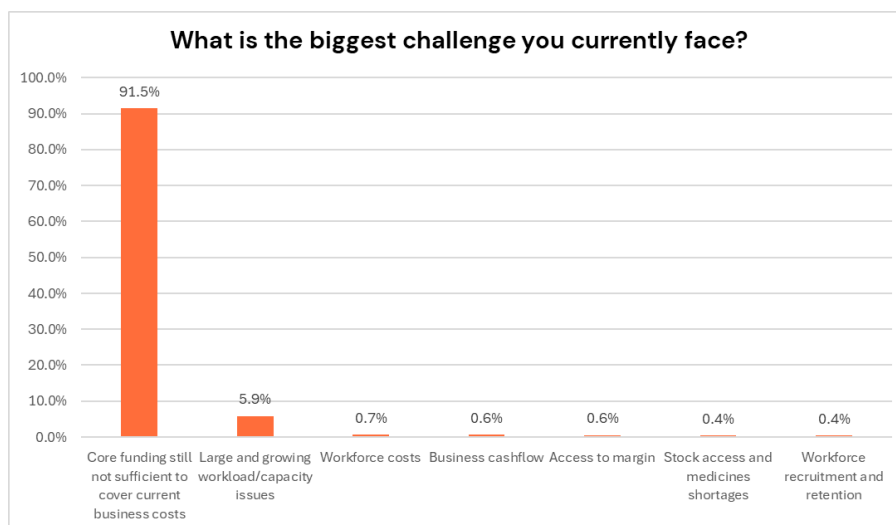
Opinion Poll Results

Participants representing 4,152 pharmacy premises in England (just over 40% of the sector) engaged with the September Opinion Poll, giving a snapshot of thoughts from across a range of different pharmacy businesses across the country.

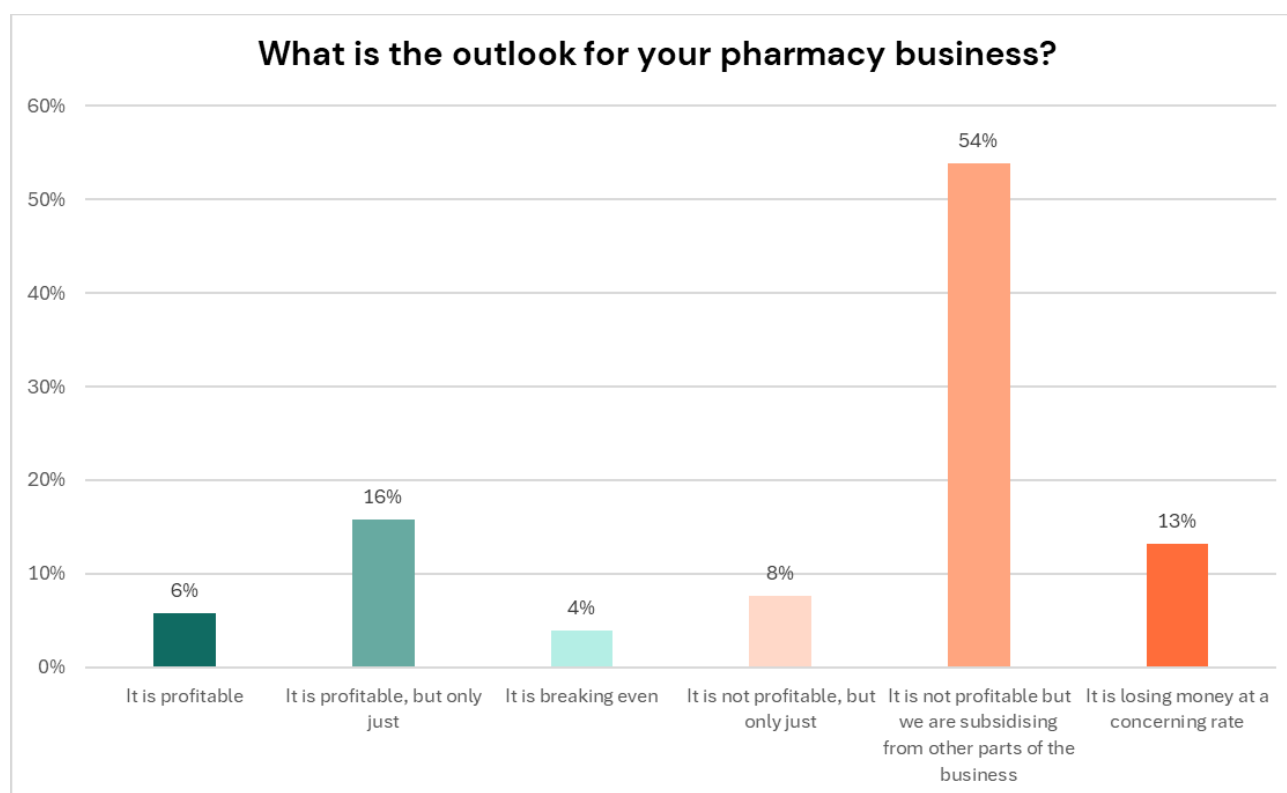
Outlook

Levels of optimism vary between pharmacy owners. When asked about the extent to which they are optimistic about the future of pharmacy, the **average score of optimism was 5.9**.

A **clear majority (90%)** of pharmacy owners say that **core funding still not sufficient to cover current business cost** is the biggest challenge they face, followed by workload issues.



75% express negative sentiment on the outlook for their pharmacy business. **54%** of respondents say that the pharmacy is being **subsidised from other parts of the business**, whilst **13%** say their pharmacy is **losing money at a concerning rate**. One in five reported running a profitable business.



Pharmacy owners were also asked to provide a single message to Government via a free text field. Responses can be summarised into the following key themes: **uplift core funding** to keep the network going; **reform reimbursement**; **expand services**; and create a **fair playing field**.

Funding and Service Priorities



What pharmacy owners told us about their funding and service priorities for the 2026/27 CPCF negotiations was very informative and has been fed back in full to, and reviewed by, the Committee.

Responses aligned well with the Committee's core objectives, such as the primary importance of securing economic stabilisation and sustainability for the future of the sector, as well as providing some useful steers on ways forward and other ideas to consider.

The 10-Year Health Plan

Pharmacy owners expressed **confidence to deliver** on almost all pharmacy service elements of the Government's 10 Year Health Plan, with the highest levels of confidence expressed for offering more minor ailment support, playing a bigger role in vaccination delivery, providing weight management services, and screening for cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

To aid their confidence in delivering on the services from the plan, pharmacy owners **most frequently (87%) say specific funding to support implementation** would help. 'Other' suggestions included providing service fees that align with complexity, protected learning time, interoperable record access, and GP buy-in.

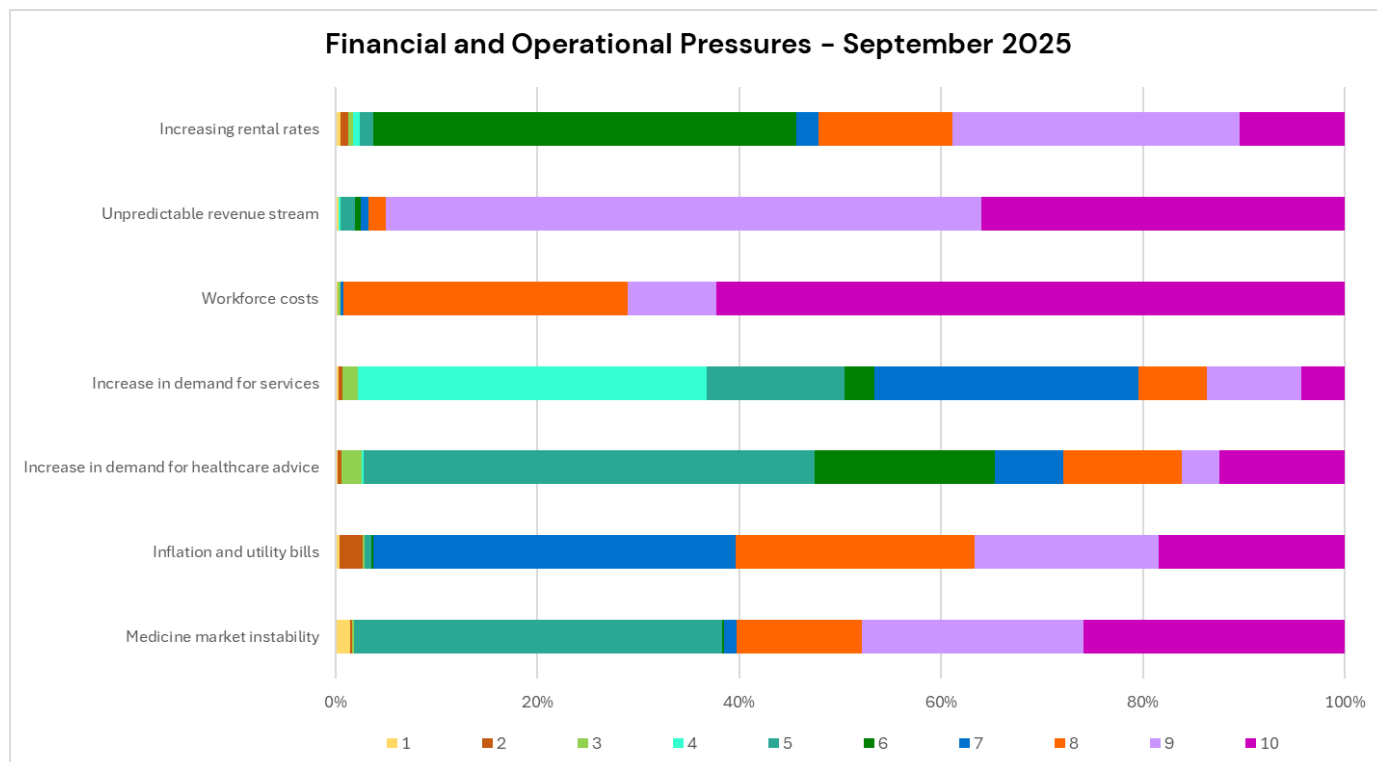


Pressures Tracker

For tracking purposes, we repeated the question on pharmacy pressures from previous surveys. Participants were again asked to rank pressures from 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest pressure.

Workforce costs and **unpredictable revenue stream** are reported as the highest pressures.

The table below shows the pressures tracked, with 10 being the highest pressure and one the lowest.



Using the Data

The full polling results were considered by all Community Pharmacy England Committee Members at the September Committee Meeting, feeding into plenary discussions around CPCF negotiations strategy and tactics, to supplement our own work on financial analysis and policy development plus input from the national sector bodies. Members considered the results whilst reviewing Community Pharmacy England's negotiating priorities, as well as drawing on this valuable information, augmented with feedback from the Regional Representatives, throughout the meeting.

The findings will inform ongoing work, including to press for funding uplifts and other improvements for the sector through our influencing programme. We are continuing to reference poll findings in media and political lobbying work, and poll results along with regular feedback from LPCs and Regional Representatives are used on an ongoing basis to inform work and strategy.



Regular engagement with pharmacy owners via polling will continue to serve as an important tool for temperature-checking and consultation on key issues going forwards. We will continue to keep polling short so as not to burden pharmacy owners further, while still providing an opportunity to feed directly into the Committee discussions for those that want to do so.

If you have any queries or require more information, please contact: comms.team@cpe.org.uk