

## Briefing for Parliamentarians - Spring 2023

**Community pharmacies are at breaking point and need your help if they are to continue to provide frontline care to patients and members of the public. Your local pharmacies urgently need your help to:**

### 1. Secure fair funding

- ❗ Funding for pharmacies has been cut by 30% in real-terms since 2015 despite rising costs and ever-increasing patient demand.
- ❗ There has been a net loss of 720 pharmacies in England since 2015. Pharmacies desperately need an urgent increase in funding to prevent further permanent closures. Without this support, patient access to vital healthcare services will be severely diminished.
- ❗ There is currently an annual funding shortfall of more than £67,000 per pharmacy in England (£750m+ per annum)– money which could be invested in staff to provide vital NHS services ([CCA 2023](#)).
- ❗ A study by Ernst and Young (EY) for the NPA predicted that 72 percent of family-owned pharmacies could be loss-making by the end of 2024 if the current funding arrangements remain unchanged ([NPA 2020](#)).

### 2. Support a 'pharmacy first' service for minor illnesses as a way to secure some much-needed funding as well as reduce pressure on other parts of the NHS

- ❗ A Pharmacy First service will create greater capacity and resilience in primary care. Pharmacies will be able to treat patients with minor illnesses, thus freeing up capacity for GPs to care for patients who need it most.
- ❗ A Pharmacy First service in England would mirror the successful approaches taken in Scotland and Wales.
- ❗ A Pharmacy First service would provide accessible care, help to put pharmacies on a sustainable financial footing and ease pressure on general practice.

### 3. Support with a growing workforce crisis

- ❗ Workforce issues have led to locum pharmacist costs rising by 80% in the past year alone, and staffing costs overall have grown by close to 70% since 2015/16, with this expected to rise beyond 100% by 2024/25 ([PSNC 2022](#)). Cost increases on this scale are impossible for any business to absorb.

### 4. Support with other issues beyond our control

- ❗ Pharmacies need protection from external shocks to the medicines supply market.
- ❗ There have been a record number of medicine price concessions which suggest a dysfunctional medicine market. This needs to be urgently reformed.



## How you can help your local pharmacies

- ✚ Write to the Health Secretary (we can draft if helpful)
- ✚ Secure a parliamentary debate
- ✚ Ask questions of the Government at PMQs/ Health Orals/ Treasury orals
- ✚ Visit a local pharmacy to learn about the pressures on pharmacy teams
- ✚ Use the hashtag #SaveOurPharmacies on social media to show your support

## Why do we need to save our pharmacies?

- ✚ Community pharmacies are the lifeblood of local communities and are always here for your constituents, with 1.6m visits daily. They are open for extended hours and ready to support patients and the public with a whole range of health conditions, often on a walk-in basis. They are willing to do more, so long as they are fairly funded to do so.
- ✚ Their central locations and convenient opening times mean that almost 90% of the population can access a community pharmacy within a 20-minute walk. Crucially, access is greater (99.8%) in areas of highest deprivation ([BMJ Open](#)).
- ✚ Pharmacies are the front door to the NHS for millions of people, particularly the most marginalised in society. Local pharmacies are often people's first and sometimes only contact with a healthcare professional ([Public Health England](#)).
- ✚ Pharmacies dispense over 1 billion prescription items per year ([NHSBSA](#)) and provide healthcare advice alongside a range of NHS services.

For further information & resources or to get in touch, visit:

[www.SaveOurPharmacies.co.uk](http://www.SaveOurPharmacies.co.uk)

The community pharmacy sector is uniting to:

