



Community  
Pharmacy  
North  
Yorkshire

# Media Release

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## For Immediate Release

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### **Local Pharmacies Call For A Lifeline As Government Declines To Change Course On Funding Cut**

Community pharmacies in North Yorkshire said today that a new NHS minor ailments service could help give them the resources they need to stay open and keep providing the best possible health services to local communities.

Across the country, pharmacies are calling on the Government to allow patients with a list of common health complaints, ranging from headaches to headlice, to be able to visit pharmacies to receive advice and, where appropriate, medicines at no cost. This follows a decision by the Government last month to impose significant funding cuts on pharmacies, putting some patient services at risk.

The proposal for the national minor ailments service was endorsed in Parliament On Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016, as MPs of all parties endorsed the value of community pharmacies in an Opposition Day Debate organised by Labour to resist a funding cut imposed by the Department of Health last month. In the debate **Julian Sturdy MP for Outer York said**

“If we are truly seeking to integrate services better, however, and to reduce reliance on funding to pharmacies for simply existing and to promote high-quality care, we must further expand the role of pharmacies and the treatments that they can administer. That would help shrug off the lingering perception that pharmacies are simply drug dispensers. For example, could things such as the winter flu jab be overseen exclusively by pharmacies?”

I also support the growing calls for a truly national minor ailments scheme that directs patients to pharmacies and away from GP practices where appropriate. I welcome the Minister’s announcement that NHS England hopes to have such a scheme in place by April 2018. I hope that it will be a transformative moment for community pharmacies and primary care more widely, and I look forward to scrutinising it.”

The funding cut will go ahead from December, but the new proposal could help provide a lifeline for local pharmacies.

**Tracey Chambers a Pharmacist at Copmanthorpe Pharmacy York said**

“A national minor ailments advice service is exactly what our patients want and need - help and treatment from an accessible venue in the heart of their local communities. It could also help other local healthcare professionals, because it would mean that all patients could use pharmacies when they have these minor health conditions rather than having to make GP appointments or even visit A&E. The Government funding cuts are a real worry for us, but a service like this would be a helpful step as try to manage.”

**City of York Council Councillor Tina Funnell said**

“The Government’s funding cuts for community pharmacies are very worrying; patients and vulnerable people in York rely on these services every day. But the Government now has an opportunity and the means to commission a cost-effective, proven, capacity-releasing service that will help patients get the help they need without having to visit GP surgeries or hospitals.”

In October, the Government announced cuts to community pharmacy budgets that could see services restricted or removed. Today, pharmacies are calling for the Department of Health to use the money saved by the budget cuts to commission pharmacies to provide the new service, which already works well in some parts of the country. Providing the new service could help pharmacies to continue offering the services patients currently rely on.

**The Government Imposition**

The Government has imposed a two-year funding package on community pharmacy, with a £113 million reduction in funding in 2016/17. You can find out more about the Government announcement at:

<http://psnc.org.uk/our-news/government-imposes-community-pharmacy-funding-reduction/>

This follows on from on from PSNC (the negotiator for community pharmacy) rejecting the Government’s funding package. You can read the rejection letter at:

<http://psnc.org.uk/our-news/contractor-announcement-psnc-rejects-dh-proposed-funding-package/>

**About your local pharmacies**

Your local pharmacy is more than just a place to get medicines. It provides a range of NHS services and ensures people can get face-to-face, healthcare professional advice without an appointment.

There are around 14,000 community pharmacies across the UK, so for most of us, there’s one very close by. In fact, 96% of people can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes by walking or using public transport. Community pharmacists provide rapid access, without appointment, to a healthcare professional and offer a range of clinical and public health services. Most pharmacies now have consultation rooms, where you can talk with your pharmacist without being overheard.

You might be surprised at what pharmacies now offer: personalised medicines advice, help to quit smoking and to maintain good sexual health, treatment for common ailments, advice on preventing disease. And more. It’s a package of care...not just packets of pills!

What’s more, pharmacies are part of the fabric of local communities. They provide local employment and are a health and social care asset close to where people live, work and shop.

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