

Helen Morgan MP
North Shropshire



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria St.
London
SW1H 0EU

By email only

17th March 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

Re: The future of pharmacies

I am writing to you to express serious concern regarding the future of Britain's pharmacies, many of which are facing imminent closure due to a deadly combination of a litany of financial pressures and an ongoing lack of support and clarity from the government.

As you are no doubt aware, pharmacies play an essential role in the community. They dispense prescriptions, provide over-the-counter medicines, offer health advice, and most critically, deliver vital services like Pharmacy First, which aims to shift care from hospitals to local pharmacies.

This cornerstone of primary care, however, is increasingly under threat. Recent analysis by the National Pharmacy Association has predicted that up to 1,000 pharmacies could close over the next few years, with 900 closures expected by the end of 2027, if the current trend continues. The worst affected places could lose 30 per cent of their pharmacies, leading to an explosion of pharmacy deserts. This is a direct consequence of a 40 per cent real terms cut in funding to community pharmacies since 2015, which has left many struggling to keep doors open.

The situation is only set to worsen in the coming months, with pharmacies facing further financial strain due to the planned rise in National Insurance Contributions and the increase in business rates, which affect high street retailers including pharmacies. Moreover, many pharmacies are already operating at a loss on many prescription drugs, essentially subsidising the NHS at a time when their own financial sustainability is in jeopardy.

As we approach the start of the new financial year in April, I am particularly concerned that the funding for Pharmacy First, a crucial initiative to move more healthcare services into the community, remains uncertain. The National Pharmacy Association has confirmed that the funding for this service will expire at the end of the first week of April, and there is currently no confirmed funding beyond that. This is deeply worrying, given the important role that Pharmacy First plays in supporting local healthcare delivery and alleviating pressure on our overburdened NHS.

Constituency Office
1st Floor, Maypole Court, 2 High Street, Wem, Shropshire, SY4 5AA

In addition, I would like to draw your attention to the concerning lack of confirmation of pharmacies' funding rates for the current financial year, which ends in just a few weeks. This severity of a delay in contracting is unacceptable and adds further strain to an already struggling sector.

I welcome the government's admirable aim to shift more care into the community to ease the pressure on our NHS, but if they are serious about succeeding, it is vital that they support community pharmacies. We cannot afford to lose more pharmacies from our high streets, particularly at a time when access to healthcare is becoming increasingly difficult for many people across the country. If current trends continue, many small towns and villages could face the possibility of a future without any community pharmacy at all.

I urge you to clarify the future of Pharmacy First and confirm that funding for the service will continue beyond April. I also urge you to confirm funding for pharmacies for this financial year with haste and agree a contract moving forwards that puts community pharmacies back on a path to survival and, ultimately, success.

I look forward to your response and to hearing how the government plans to address these challenges and secure the future of community pharmacies.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Morgan MP, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Health and Social Care

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