



Health and Social Care Committee

Stephen Kinnock
Minister of State,
Department of Health and Social Care

Thursday, 9 January 2025

Subject: Government response to the Committee's Pharmacy Report

Dear Stephen

Thank you for your response to the predecessor Committee's pharmacy report. We welcome the Government's positive response and the fact that you are actively considering the role of pharmacies in the development of the 10 Year Health Plan. We also appreciate that your ongoing work to refresh the Long Term Workforce Plan and on community pharmacy contract negotiations mean that policy is still being developed in some areas.

We agree with our predecessor Committee that pharmacies have fantastic potential to improve access to healthcare and alleviate pressures on the wider health service. We would urge the Government to be bold and ambitious when setting out its vision for the role that community pharmacies could play and believe that they should play a prominent role in the delivery of the Government's ambition to shift care from hospitals into the community.

Having considered your extremely helpful response, we wanted to follow-up on the following issues.

- In your response to recommendation 2, you highlight an assessment of Serious Shortage Protocols (SSPs) in May 2021 as a reason for not conducting a further review of the SSPs. Given that the evidence the predecessor Committee heard, which raised concerns about the SSPs, was taken in 2023/2024, significantly after May 2021, we do not believe this is a valid reason for not conducting a further review. **Can you provide any further information to support your decision not to conduct a further review of SSPs?**
- In your response to recommendation 3, you say that you are "examining options with stakeholders to assess where and how [dose and formulation substitutions] could be appropriate". **What is the timeframe for this work and can you confirm whether you are currently minded to**



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implement this change, subject to the outcome of the consultation?

We strongly agree with our predecessor Committee that requiring patients to return to their GP to get a new prescription is unacceptable and are seriously concerned about the impact on GP capacity and public confidence.

- In your response to recommendation 4, you say that DHSC has “previously consulted on introducing generic substitution” but this wasn’t progressed due to concerns about potential impacts on patient safety. **We would be grateful for more information about the consultation. In particular what specific concerns were raised about patient safety and who were they raised by?**
- **What is the Government’s response to recommendation 8, that NHS England should commission community pharmacies to provide all routine and seasonal immunisations for adults and children?** Your response to recommendation 8 only refers to the provision of PrEP and does not address seasonal immunisations.

We are extremely grateful for your positive engagement with the Committee’s work in this area and hope we can continue to work together to find ways to strengthen the role community pharmacies can play in delivering healthcare services.

We would be grateful for a response to these questions by 7 February.

Yours

Layla Moran MP
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee