



Will Quince MP  
Minister of State  
Department of Health and Social Care

*By email*

21 December 2022

Dear Minister,

### **Workforce plan and pharmacy stakeholder engagement**

We welcomed the Government's commitment to publish a long-term workforce strategy, however we are concerned by a lack of engagement with pharmacy stakeholders about its development.

Pharmacy teams played a vital role during the COVID-19 pandemic and as their skills continue to evolve they will be central to improving patient access to healthcare. With more than 52,000 pharmacists, 21,000 pharmacy technicians and a range of support staff, the plan needs to be something which the whole of the health and care workforce can recognise.<sup>1</sup>

While you noted in a recent Written Answer that the pharmacy workforce will be "considered in the development of the plan", we would welcome your reassurance that the plan will cover the entirety of the pharmacy workforce across the health service, including in community pharmacy.<sup>2</sup>

The Health and Social Care Committee's workforce report recognised there is an opportunity to better utilise the pharmacy workforce, and in doing so, to optimise workloads across primary care, reduce pressure on general practice and hospitals, and support integrated care systems.<sup>3</sup>

The Committee noted that this optimisation will not be possible without an integrated and funded workforce plan for pharmacy. It called for this plan to ensure adequate access to education supervision, training, and protected learning time, along with clear structures for professional development. It also noted that changes to pharmacy education mean that from 2026, all newly-qualified pharmacists will join the register as independent prescribers. This could herald a step-change in how we enhance patient access to care and the transition

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/about-us/research/gphc-registers-data> (November 2022)

<sup>2</sup> <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2022-11-30/99999>

<sup>3</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmhealth/115/report.html> (paragraph 111)

must be supported in the workforce plan. The pharmacy workforce plan should also outline how the existing workforce will be supported to become independent prescribers, and the Government's roadmap for utilising these skills through the commissioning of appropriate services.

With continued pressures on services, it is more important than ever to support the pharmacy workforce so that the staff needed to deliver patient care now and into the future can be recruited, trained and retained

We would welcome the opportunity to help shape and inform the workforce plan and would be pleased to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Leyla Hanbeck, Chief Executive, Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies

Claire Steele, President, Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK

Joseph Williams, Chair, British Oncology Pharmacy Association

Priyanka Patel, President, British Pharmaceutical Students' Association

Roz Gittins, President, College of Mental Health Pharmacy

Malcolm Harrison, Chief Executive, Company Chemists' Association

Nathan Burley, President, Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists

Mark Lyonette, Chief Executive, National Pharmacy Association

Mark Koziol, Chairman, Pharmacists' Defence Association

Janet Morrison, Chief Executive, Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee

Prof Katie Maddock, Chair, Pharmacy Schools Council

Dr Graham Stretch, President, Primary Care Pharmacy Association

Thorrún Govind, English Pharmacy Board Chair, Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Mohamed Rahman, Chair, UK Clinical Pharmacy Association

Cc: Amanda Pritchard, Chief Executive Officer, NHS England  
David Webb, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for England, NHS England  
Dr Navina Evans, Chief Executive, Health Education England  
Steve Brine MP, Chair, Health and Social Care Committee