

range of actions to address the root causes of supply issues and improve supply chains to help provide a reliable and efficient supply for medicines in the UK. This includes implementing actions that are in line with the recommendations outlined in the report. We are examining those recommendations, and we will determine where additional Government action may be necessary.

To make progress, the actions we have identified rely on collaborative action from organisations in the supply chain, and on the interactions between the Government, health system partners and the pharmaceutical industry. We welcome your offer to work with the Department to find solutions and support the changes required to improve patient care and the healthcare system. We also plan to make the public aware of our initiatives later this year, as part of our efforts to improve patients' understanding of the work being done every day to protect them. We believe that a more transparent approach to communicating on these issues is an important step forward.

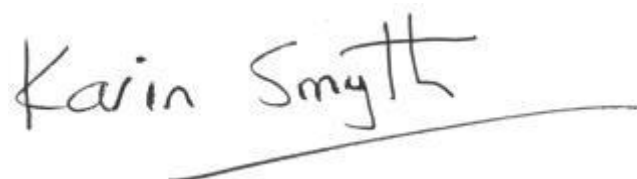
We have committed to developing a ten-year plan to deliver an NHS fit for the future. To develop the ten-year plan, on 21 October we started a conversation with the public and the people who work in the NHS. I would encourage those concerned about access to medicines to engage with that, to allow us to fully understand what is not working as well as it should, and what the potential solutions are. Further information can be found at change.nhs.uk. We have also published a 'Workshop in a Box' to help organisations to conduct their own local engagement activities, with insights being collected in a consistent format. This is also available on the portal.

The Government recognises that pharmacies are an integral part of our communities and healthcare system, as an easily accessible 'front door' to the NHS, staffed by highly trained and skilled healthcare professionals. We are committed to embedding and building Pharmacy First, expanding the role of pharmacies and making better use of the skills of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Pharmacy First is a complex service that links to multiple parts of the healthcare system. It offers eligible patients a complete consultation in the pharmacy setting and treatment for seven common health conditions without the need to visit a GP.

We are also committed to making prescribing part of the services delivered by community pharmacists. From 2026, all newly qualified pharmacists will be prescribers, and we are upskilling the current workforce. NHS England is piloting different service models to evaluate how this will work in future clinical services in community pharmacies. This has the potential to unlock more services in community pharmacy, taking further pressure off GPs.

I hope this reply is helpful. I would be grateful if you could share it with your health care colleagues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karin Smyth". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. Below the signature is a solid black horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

KARIN SMYTH