

Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee
6 June 2016, 10.00 am

Shropshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee Update

Since the December 2015 announcement on changes to community pharmacy, we have seen:

- Progress on more than ten years of development of national clinical services in community pharmacy coming to a halt.
- A future in which funding for trusted community pharmacies is cut to such a degree that patients across the country will face pharmacy closures or reduced service levels.

This will mean:

- Pharmacies will close. The Government has not said how it will introduce its cuts to pharmacy funding, but it has repeatedly admitted that one in four pharmacies could face closure. A chaotic, market driven approach could see vital services disappearing.
- Patients will lose out on free, accessible health services. Under the Government's plans, services concerned with making the most of medicines, preventing ill health and dealing with minor ailments are at risk, as well as free deliveries and urgent supply of medications.
- Patients will have to go to GP practices or A&E. Closing pharmacies and reducing services will put more pressure on critically overloaded services. Evidence shows that pharmacy services keep people out of hospital and A&E, and that if pharmacies were to close many more people would visit their GP practice.

The Shropshire Pharmaceutical Committee has responded to the consultation and the Pharmaceutical Service Negotiation Committee has been in discussions with the Department of Health and NHS England about the plans for community pharmacy and has made constructive proposals about how community pharmacy could make savings for the NHS. As at 23 May 2016 the NHS had shown little interest in the proposals or in making better use of community pharmacies.

We believe that the Government must ensure that everyone in England has easy to access to pharmaceutical services and healthcare advice in a community pharmacy.

To do this, the Government should:

- Halt cuts to community pharmacy funding
- Ensure the community pharmacy integration fund supports pharmacies to work more closely with GPs and other primary care professionals

- Review the opportunities that exist for more, not fewer, clinical services in community pharmacies, for example:

- o A national community pharmacy minor ailments service could save the NHS £1bn per year through reduced GP appointments.

- o An Emergency Supply service would reduce expenditure on out of hours services by allowing pharmacists to make emergency supplies of medicines to patients without the need for an urgent prescription.

- o Pharmacy services supporting frail elderly people after hospital discharge have reduced re-admittance by 63%.

Support has been received from:

- 1.7 million members of the public who have signed the petition

- A cross-party group of MPs, some of whom will deliver the petition to Downing Street on 24 May

- The Local Government Association, National Voices, Carers UK, Healthwatch and the NHS Alliance and many, many more

The Government UK on line petition is open to 29th June 2016.