

Please ask for: Councillor Rory Palmer
Tel: 0116 4540002
Our ref: 2016/OCT/JH/RP/MH
Date: 19th October 2016



Rt. Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Dear *Secretary of State,*

I am writing to you regarding your proposals to reduce the Community Pharmacy budget within this financial year and beyond. I am extremely concerned about the impact these proposals will have locally and nationally and would urge you to review the government's approach before proceeding further.

Leicester City's Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (2015) shows that there are 86 Community Pharmacies in Leicester. These pharmacies are highly regarded for their service and are enthusiastic and committed in their engagement to support efforts to address Leicester's health and wellbeing challenges and priorities.

The proposed cuts to the Community Pharmacy Budget will have very serious consequences and will threaten the viability of community pharmacies in Leicester. This proposed budget reduction is absurd given the broader context and the need to be enhancing the role of pharmacists in health care and wider public health work. I have written to you previously about the very specific and considerable challenges facing primary care and General Practice in Leicester.

I recently held a summit bringing together over 100 doctors, pharmacists, NHS commissioners, our local STP lead officer, acute trust representatives and patients to discuss the challenges facing primary care and to consider how we can build more resilience in our primary care system

Unfortunately you did not acknowledge my invitation to attend this summit or to send a representative. Had you done so you would have heard an insightful and compelling contribution from Luvjit Kandula, Chief Officer of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Local Pharmaceutical Committee on the vital role that community pharmacists currently play in the primary care system but crucially the additional capacity they could bring to primary care with an enhanced role. Primary care systems across the country are under immense pressure and community pharmacy should be seen as a full and integral part of the solution to alleviating this pressure and building local primary care systems that are resilient, responsive to patient need and dynamic in addressing local health needs and supporting public health agendas.

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Your proposed cuts will make this impossible. Furthermore, it is likely that many community pharmacies which will be impacted by these cuts are in areas of high health need. These are the areas where investment should be prioritised to help secure long term health improvements. I would ask specifically that you publish details of what health impact assessment your department has carried out on these proposals and what consideration has been given to public health, health inequalities and social and economic deprivation data in developing these proposals.

I am also aware that the proposed timeframe for these cuts is causing significant alarm and simply does not give pharmacists adequate time to respond and plan. This adds to the significant levels of concern about these proposals.

Like many others, I have significant concerns about these proposals and the impact they will have. They will weaken primary care at a time when primary care needs to be strengthened. The risk is that if these cuts proceed in ten years' time the country will face a pharmacy crisis in the same way the country now faces a GP crisis.

I would urge to revisit these proposals and not to proceed.

Yours sincerely



Rory Palmer

Deputy City Mayor & Chair of Leicester Health and Wellbeing Board

cc: Jon Ashworth MP, Leicester South and Shadow Secretary of State for Health
Liz Kendall MP
Rt. Hon Keith Vaz MP
Rt. Hon Sir Kevin Barron MP, Chair All-Party Parliamentary Group on Pharmacy
Luvjit Kandula, Chief Officer of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Local
Pharmaceutical Committee

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