



Tees Valley Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) statement on the current environment in Community Pharmacy in your area.

The state of our community pharmacies in Tees Valley is an essential component of the primary healthcare system and is facing significant issues that **need urgent attention**.

Firstly, the financial viability of community pharmacies remains a pressing concern. Funding cuts, particularly in the form of reduced government reimbursements for dispensing medications, have left many pharmacies struggling to maintain their services. This has led to consolidations and permanent closure of some vital community pharmacies, limiting access to healthcare in certain areas.

Secondly, the role of community pharmacists is evolving, with a growing emphasis on providing clinical services beyond traditional dispensing. This transition, although promising, has been slow and inconsistent. There is a need for clearer guidelines, incentives, and support to help pharmacists play a more substantial role in patient care, such as managing chronic conditions and offering preventive services. Recently a Common Conditions Service has been announced with community pharmacies pivotal to the primary care access recovery fund. However, little information about this service has been available for community pharmacies to prepare fully for the launch of this service.

Thirdly, issues related to workforce challenges and working conditions are prominent. Community pharmacists often find themselves under significant workload pressures, impacting the quality of care they can provide. However, the pressures are not isolated to pharmacists and many community pharmacies are finding it difficult to recruit and retain team members who are essential to delivering services and providing patient care in community pharmacies. Addressing staffing issues and promoting a more supportive work environment is essential for the profession's sustainability.

Lastly, access to healthcare services through community pharmacies remains unequal, with some communities experiencing barriers to essential care. It is crucial for the local government and Integrated Care Boards to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their geographic location, have equitable access to community pharmacy services.

In conclusion, the state of community pharmacy in the UK is at a critical juncture, requiring immediate attention to financial stability, the role of pharmacists, workforce challenges and equitable access. Addressing these issues is vital to ensure that community pharmacies can continue to play a pivotal role in the nation's healthcare system.

We kindly request our patients to be patient with our community pharmacies as they strive to provide you with the best possible care. The demands on their services can sometimes lead to longer wait times, but rest assured, they are working diligently to meet your healthcare needs. Your understanding and cooperation are greatly appreciated as we continue to serve your health and well-being.

Regards.

Jay Badenhost

Chair