



## **A STRONG VOICE FOR INDEPENDENT PHARMACIES**

**The Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies or AIMp today announces a change of name to the Independent Pharmacies Association or IPA.**

The switch will provide a clearer identity and afford a strong voice to the thousands of independent pharmacies in England and Wales. Membership of the new Independent Pharmacies Association will not be confined to those with multiple branches, as AIMp required, but be open to all independents.

This is in response to demand from independent community pharmacists for an association that properly represents their interests. The IPA will not primarily be an insurance organisation with membership attached. It will be fighting for and representing its members across all fronts.

Independent community pharmacies do not operate the same business models as the large chains (Boots, supermarkets, Superdrug etc). They are not health and beauty, sandwiches and snacks-on-the-go retailers first, supplying medicines and prescriptions second. They are not corporates. Over 90 per cent of the independent's business derives directly from the NHS.

Independent pharmacies account for approximately 68% of the sector in England and the large chains, 29%. Yet the latter are over-represented on the board of Community Pharmacy England, the body that negotiates contracts with the Government and NHS.

The country's independent pharmacies struggle to make themselves heard and their needs are often overlooked. This, despite the vital role they play in offering frontline healthcare. Many independent pharmacies are family owned and they offer their communities continuity and trusted healthcare expertise. The IPA's strategy is to ensure our members can thrive and are fully supported and represented.

David Vanns, Chaiman of AIMp, now Chairman of IPA, said: "Our businesses are set up very differently to others in the sector. For independent brick and mortar contractors, supplying NHS prescriptions, and services and treatments via the new NHS Pharmacy First scheme, is their priority.

"IPA is truly run by pharmacy contractors for pharmacy contractors. We understand community pharmacy. Our growing membership is a testament to our organisation's dedication to speak up with courage and conviction on behalf of independent community pharmacies and offer them the support they need. We will press the cause of all independents and ensure they are properly represented on CPE and to the external stakeholders and decision-makers. We are here for our customers, our patients, and we're always happy to work closely with the NHS to relieve pressure in other areas, but it is only right that we are treated with respect and that we are paid accordingly. From now on, the IPA will be making certain that is the case."