

PSNC funding announcement on 31 March: <https://psnc.org.uk/our-news/covid-19-funding-update-ministers-agree-300-million-cash-injection/>

AIM statement below:

“Whilst it is good to see some cash injection into this severely cash-starved sector, the delayed English pharmacy funding announcement does not allow for sufficient funding and will have a catastrophic effect on many pharmacies, not just financially, but by also having a deeply negative effect on the morale of all pharmacy staff.

We all know the partial closure of GPs and hospital services has put pharmacy in the front line of primary care in England and we have done everything asked of us, and more, by being there to deal with worried patients and members of the public and relieve pressure on GP’s and hospitals. This is despite staff shortages of self-isolation running at up to 15% and massively increased locum costs. Many staff have worked many extra hours before and after normal opening hours to keep community pharmacies functioning.

Unfortunately, this huge shock of not only continued under-funding, but also the increased operating costs that are directly due to our front-line role in supporting the Governments efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic, is a harsh message to hard working community pharmacies in England. Many businesses that were already losing money will now have to re-consider closure. With some branches currently temporarily closed due to staff shortages possibly not re-opening, that will put vulnerable communities at risk of not getting the pharmaceutical care they need.

In addition, pharmacy teams are putting their own health at risk looking after patients in communities without appropriate PPE. Despite the sector asking for this, it has not been forthcoming.

In a letter to Primary Care Executives on 17 March, Simon Steven highlighted that there will be funding “to cover your extra costs of responding to the coronavirus emergency” and that “financial constraints must not and will not stand in the way of taking immediate and necessary action.” We, therefore, appeal for fairness, understanding and support from those in the position of power to allow this sector to continue caring for patients by urgently addressing these issues.”