

The NHS 10-Year Plan marks a positive step forward by recognising the vital role pharmacists play in supporting patients and helping to reduce pressure on other parts of the NHS.

Every day, 1.6 million people walk through the doors of community pharmacies.

For many, we are a lifeline on their doorstep, offering prompt, face-to-face care, vital medications, and the most trusted health advice on the high streets and in our communities.

Placing community pharmacies at the centre of neighbourhood healthcare should be a no brainer, it can only help the ambitions outlined in the Plan.

However, if pharmacies are to take on more responsibilities - such as greater prescribing, delivering more vaccinations and further managing long-term conditions - then proper funding must be in place beforehand so we can plan, train and invest to give our patients the level of service and support they deserve. There must be minimal “red-tape” and no tired old excuses for the IT not being ready and fit for purpose from day 1.

Let’s also be clear that automation cannot provide the cost efficiencies to fund any of this, that is but a pipe dream and the Government impact assessment for it of 2022 is out of date and wildly inaccurate financially.

At the Independent Pharmacies Association, we have been consistent in our message of invest in pharmacy to save – we look forward to continuing to work with the Government and decision makers to fulfil the potentials of our community pharmacies at the heart of primary care and to ensure the 10 Year Plan delivers real benefits for patients, while continuing to press for fair funding for our communities pharmacies that the nation relies on.