



Independent Pharmacies – *the heartbeat of local community healthcare*

Community pharmacies are a lifeline to many, with over 1.6 million people walking through pharmacies' doors every day. They provide convenient access to vital medications and services, face-to-face support, and help in managing long-term conditions. **Community pharmacies absorb over 24 million GP appointments annually,** saving the NHS both time and money. Community pharmacies are increasingly recognised as **an underutilised resource that can help relieve pressure on general practice and generate cost savings for the NHS.** There is a desire among pharmacists to offer more services, and with the right support and funding in place, they can play a much larger role in the prevention agenda, including contributing further to vaccination services and the management of long-term conditions such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD) saving the taxpayer billions of pounds each year. **But the sector currently has £1.7 billion gap in its funding, as demonstrated by the Independent Economic Review by Frontier Economics, and it is vital for the survival of the pharmacy network that this gap is addressed.**

Cost Savings of Pharmacy to the NHS

The cost savings to the NHS of pharmacy-led healthcare are already substantial. Pharmacies provide a range of services that assist patient health and reduce the burden on the NHS, resulting in considerable savings. For example, through **contraceptive service, morning-after pill availability, mental health support, blood pressure checks and minor illness consultations.** Additional services that pharmacies could produce cost savings include:

- **Greater provision of flu vaccinations and all other seasonal, and preventative vaccinations** - Typically the cost of vaccination by a GP is £12.50 per dose, whereas this falls to around £10 per dose if delivered by a pharmacist. The cost savings to the NHS of progressing pharmacy seasonal vaccination rates could therefore be more than £20million a year. The accessibility that pharmacies provide can help boost vaccination uptake.
- **Detection of and support for diabetes and CVD, healthcare MOTs** - Investing in better diabetes care and early diagnosis could significantly reduce costs by preventing complications. This would save the NHS at least £6.2 billion annually. There has been 15% increase in GP appointments in the past five years due to CVD. An adequately commissioned service led by community pharmacies could save the NHS over £2 billion/year.
- **Expansion of Pharmacy First and Minor Ailment Schemes** – Already saving the NHS millions each year, there is scope for further roll-out and expansion of existing schemes to treat minor ailments, such as Pharmacy First, further reducing the need for GP consultations. Aiming to make the service less dependent on GP referrals and making it into a pull service will further boost the uptake.
- **Medication reviews and medicine adherence** – Pharmacists' medicines optimisation and use services (e.g. medication reviews, adherence support) tend to prevent costly problems like adverse drug events and hospital admissions.

About IPA

The Independent Pharmacies Association (IPA) is the **voice of independent family-owned community pharmacies,** representing around 5,000 pharmacies across England and Wales. The IPA advocates for the interests of its members, ensuring they have the support and resources needed to provide essential healthcare services to their communities. The association works closely with policymakers, healthcare providers, and key stakeholders to promote the vital role of community pharmacies in the healthcare system.

Contact

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