**Pharmacy Name/Address**

14 March 2023

**(add MP details)**:

**Community Pharmacy Pressures and Request for Urgent Support**

Dear (add MP name here),

I am writing to you today as a local pharmacy contractor in your constituency to urge you to lend support to your local pharmacies who are at breaking point due to facing a range of significant operational, financial and wellbeing challenges. We need your help securing fair funding in order for community pharmacies to continue to provide frontline care to patients and members of the public.

Funding for pharmacies has been cut by 30% in real terms since 2015 despite rising costs and ever-increasing patient demand. There has been a net loss of 720 pharmacies in England since 2015, including within Somerset, with further closures inevitable without an urgent increase in funding. Many of us are dispensing at a loss and facing a serious cashflow crisis due to lack of funding along with a dysfunctional medicine market which needs urgent reform. This is all deeply concerning and will put medicine supply at risk with serious consequences for the millions of people who rely on dispensed prescriptions every year.

The workload for our teams has increased exponentially. There is a growing workforce crisis leading to staff shortages and locum costs rising by 80% in the past year alone as well as increasing staff costs overall. All of these challenges are impossible for any business to absorb and the pressures are leading to an increase in waiting times, a serious degradation of the service to patients and a significant rise in the level of abuse faced by staff in our pharmacies.

Pharmacies are a vital front line service that supports the public with a whole range of health conditions as well as dispensing over 1 billion prescription items every year, with 1.6 million visits daily and often open for extended hours meaning they are easily accessible to the population. We are willing and want to offer this support but are currently not being fairly funded to do so.

For more information on the current challenges, please read the PSNC’s December 2022 Briefing relating the [critical pressures now faced by Community pharmacy](https://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/PSNC-Briefing-Community-Pharmacy-Patient-Services-Under-Critical-Pressure-December-2022.pdf) and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) manifesto published this month detailing the [future of pharmacy and need for urgent action](https://www.pharmacyappg.co.uk/news/all-party-pharmacy-group-publishes-new-the-future-of-pharmacy-manifesto-report-23-january-2023).

**The most crucial factor exacerbating all other issues is the lack of funding for the sector. This needs to be urgently addressed.** As the MP in my constituency, I urge you to advocate on behalf of me and other pharmacy teams in your constituency and write to Secretary of State for Health, Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP to raise these concerns as a matter of great urgency.

Your support will ensure the future sustainability of our pharmacy network, enable us to continue to play a vital role in helping our community and ease pressure on other areas of the NHS.

Yours sincerely,

**(add Pharmacy Name)**