

Letter to Local MPs

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Dear

Proposed 6% cuts to pharmacy services in England

As you may be aware the Department of Health is currently consulting on proposed net cuts to Pharmacy Services of 6% from October 2016. The consultation on these proposals will close on 25th May 2016.

The Buckinghamshire Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee at its meeting on 10th May 2016 considered local impacts proposed cuts to pharmacy services could have, particularly to residents in our rural communities.

To inform Committee discussions we considered evidence from the Chief Officer of the Buckinghamshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee and local pharmacists.

We heard that:

- cuts in government support funding could have severe effects on the services offered by community pharmacies in Buckinghamshire, including the possibility of up to 20 pharmacies (out of 97) around the county closing completely.
- community pharmacies are key to strategic planning for health and adult social care in Buckinghamshire, as they offer an accessible local alternative to visiting a GP or using the 111 service, with trained health expertise on hand, often until late in the evening. 2 in 3 people visit a pharmacy every month and 2 in 5 would go to a GP in no pharmacy was available for minor ailments.
- pharmacies provide easy local access to flu vaccination, emergency contraception, chlamydia testing and smoking cessation services. Many pharmacies also deliver medicines free of charge for patients who can't get to the Pharmacy.
- for the county's more vulnerable residents and those in rural areas, pharmacies provide a vital service that reduces demands on already stretched and costly A&E and Urgent Care provision.
- it will disproportionately effect small pharmacies relying on NHS funding for the majority of their income, this could mean that their business can no longer survive. Others may have to shed jobs and offer less services. This type of provision tends to be in our rural areas where there are no alternatives.



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The Committee concluded that it is a hugely short-sighted cut, being an essential preventative service that is seen by many – nationally as well as locally - as part of the solution to the increasing cost of health and adult social care.

If this proposed cut goes ahead, it is likely to have an impact on our more vulnerable and rural residents, add to the workload of GPs, adult social care services and cause unnecessary visits to acute services.

As MPs representing rural communities many of whom are likely to be disadvantaged by these cuts I would encourage you to participate in the consultation process.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Angela', with a large loop and a trailing flourish.

Angela Macpherson, County Councillor
Chairman, Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee



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