



Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies  
Company Chemists' Association  
National Pharmacy Association  
Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee  
Royal Pharmaceutical Society

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Ben Dyson  
Executive Director of Strategy  
NHS Improvement

Emily Lawson  
National Director: Transformation & Corporate Operations  
NHS England

Copied to: Steve Brine, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care  
Jeanette Howe, Head of Pharmacy, Department of Health  
Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, NHS England  
Ed Waller, Director of New Business Models, NHS England

### **The NHS Assembly and Pharmaceutical Care**

We are the Chief Executives of the Association of Independent Multiple Pharmacies (AIM), Company Chemists' Association (CCA), National Pharmacy Association (NPA), Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) and Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS).

Our organisations collectively represent the more than 11,600 community pharmacies in England, as well as, for the RPS, the majority of pharmacists working in a variety of healthcare settings across the country.

We write regarding the proposed NHS Assembly, which was referenced in the papers of the 24 May 2018 meeting in common of the boards of NHS England and NHS Improvement. We very much support the proposal to create a forum to oversee progress on the vital work being done to ensure the sustainability of the NHS. We also particularly welcome the intention to draw Assembly members from a broad spectrum of stakeholders working across the healthcare sector, and we would like to express our interest in representing pharmacy within that.

For many people, particularly those managed in primary care, medicines will be the most important intervention that they receive from the health service. Medicines dispensed in the community cost the NHS some £9 billion each year, and around one billion prescription items are dispensed by community pharmacies annually. The pharmaceutical care that our members provide alongside

those medicines – both to ensure that patients receive the right medicines, when they need them, and that they can use those medicines safely and effectively – is at the very heart of primary care, and it ensures both good health outcomes for patients, as well as value for the NHS.

Pharmacies also represent a vital resource for local communities, offering an easy point of contact with the NHS which many people rely on, and providing significant net benefits to the NHS, public sector, patients and wider society. Our goal is to ensure that best use is made of this valuable resource, to support your objectives to develop a sustainable NHS. As well as improving the health and wellbeing of local communities, pharmacists and their teams can help to free up valuable GP appointment time and reduce pressure on hospitals, bring care closer to home, and contribute to the Empowering People and Communities agenda, which the Assembly will also build on.

As the representatives of this important part of the NHS, alongside the RPS with its whole profession leadership role, we would therefore like to offer our services to work as part of the NHS Assembly, alongside our medical primary care colleagues and all the wider stakeholders who the forum will bring together. We hope you will agree that our sector and the wider profession of pharmacy has much to offer and that this network of core healthcare locations and workers, embedded within local communities and working at the heart of local healthcare services, can help to meet your shared objectives to streamline the quality of care and efficient use of public money.

We very much hope to hear from you and look forward to working with you on this important initiative. If we or our teams can support your ongoing work in any other ways, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Colin Baldwin  
Chief Executive  
Association of Independent  
Multiple Pharmacies

Malcolm Harrison  
Chief Executive  
Company Chemists'  
Association

Mark Lyonette  
Chief Executive  
National Pharmacy Association

Paul Bennett  
Chief Executive  
Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Simon Dukes  
Chief Executive  
Pharmaceutical Services  
Negotiating Committee