**Minister for Community Health and Care David Mowat MP address to RPS Conference 2016**

“I was very honoured to have been appointed as [Minister for Community Health and Care](https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/parliamentary-under-secretary-of-state--67) by the incoming Prime Minister. I’m coming to terms with the portfolio which I was pleased to see included pharmacy and learning about the contribution that your 12,000 pharmacies make to primary care and the function that you have.

“One of the things you’ll be interested to hear from me about are the Government proposals regarding cost savings. We’ve seen the petition, and that’s frankly an accolade to the way you are regarded amongst communities. There’s been a long consultation on the proposals and we’ve been considering the results of that consultation for some while. It was our intention that these plans go ahead from October, we are not now going to be in a position to do that, but I think it is right that we spend the time, particularly me as an incoming Minister, taking time to make sure we are making the correct decision, and that what we do is going to be right for you, right for the NHS and right for the public more generally. The message is that’s all I can say at the moment, but clearly we want not to be implementing a change from October, which was our initial target.

“I had a meeting, amongst others, with PSNC last week and one of the things they made me aware of was the [Community Pharmacy Forward View](http://psnc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CPFV-Aug-2016.pdf), that’s been produced by them, Pharmacy Voice and the RPS English Board. I thought that was an extremely good document. Your profession I think rightly recognises that it needs to go further away from just doing dispensing into the services area and there’s a big contribution that you can make, particularly in areas such as long term conditions. I thought the four principles that were set out in that document, each of them, were spot on and I think the quality of that document does testimony to the contribution your profession can make as well.

“I wanted to talk a little bit about the rebalancing work that is also going on. I think you are aware there has been an issue regarding criminal sanctions around inadvertent, erroneous dispensing. We are aware of that issue and the importance it has for you. We are going to make progress with that and hopefully there will be more coming out on that in the short term.

“In summary, I am very keen to continue to work closely with the pharmacy profession. There needs to be an ongoing dialogue. There is absolutely no question that whatever decisions are made in the weeks and months ahead that you have a major contribution to make to the health service and to primary care in particular. Frankly, primary care is the future of the health service and I very much look forward to working with you on that.”

ENDS