

Investigation: Community Pharmacy Reforms Terms of Reference

Introduction

The All-Party Pharmacy Group will investigate the Government's community pharmacy reforms, to assess what impact these measures will have on patients and NHS services, in community pharmacies and elsewhere in primary care.

This investigation follows our inquiry into primary and community care, which concluded that further investment was needed to improve patient care and integration with NHS primary care services. In light of the Government's announcement on the future of community pharmacy, the Group will hold evidence sessions to better understand the detail and impact of what is being proposed. The Group is keen to hear from the minister responsible for implementing these measures, Department of Health officials, NHS England, representatives of the pharmacy sector and other healthcare professions, and service users

Background

On 20th October 2016, David Mowat MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Community Health & Care, announced to the House of Commons that the Government would implement its proposed funding package for community pharmacy. Funding for community pharmacy will be reduced by 12 percent on current levels from December 2016 to March 2017 and by 7.4 percent in 2017-18. The Department of Health will introduce a Pharmacy Integration Fund and will encourage the commissioning of Minor Ailments Scheme by local NHS commissioners. Funding will be available for GP practices to recruit pharmacists to resolve day-to-day medicine issues. A Pharmacy Access Scheme will aim to ensure that access to a community pharmacy is not reduced in rural and deprived areas. NHS England has commissioned Richard Murray of the King's Fund to conduct a review of community pharmacy clinical services and to make recommendations. Mr Murray's report is expected before the end of 2016.

Terms of Reference

The purpose of our investigation will be to scrutinise aspects of the package announced on the 20th October. The investigation will take the form of evidence sessions, with each session followed by a statement from the Group alongside a summary of written and oral evidence for that session.

The Group will seek answers to questions, including:

- How will pharmacies respond to the funding changes? Will they make further efficiencies, reduce staffing or services, or close?
- What role will pharmacists play in GP surgeries?
- How can the Integration Fund foster a modern, clinical community pharmacy service?
- How will Minor Ailments Services be rolled out across England?

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- Will the Pharmacy Access Scheme be sufficient to ensure good access to community pharmacies?
- What changes will take place following the King's Fund report?

The Group will begin its investigation in November 2016. The primary source of information and input is expected to be the evidence sessions that the Group holds. Interested parties are, however welcome, to submit written evidence. Such evidence should not exceed 3,000 words and should be accompanied by an executive summary.

Updates will be posted on the Group's website www.appg.org.uk. Anyone wishing to attend the Group's evidence sessions as an observer should contact the secretariat appg-team@luther.co.uk once dates for the sessions have been posted on the website. Formal invitations will be sent only to those giving evidence.