MINI BULLETIN – 02 August 2023

**PHARMACY -** Evidence shows that demand for community pharmacy services has increased significantly with community pharmacies struggling to deliver services within the existing funding model, or even to remain open.

Community pharmacy was one of five policy areas examined by the Panel along with integrated care, hospital pharmacy, workforce education and training, and extended services. Experts found that available funding was not sufficient to keep pharmacies open, struggling financially with increased demand for dispensing, workforce pressures and rising costs due to inflation. One of the other commitments requiring improvement covered a scheme intended to protect access to local physical NHS pharmaceutical services in areas where there were fewer pharmacies.

A commitment by Government to eliminate paper prescribing in hospitals and introduce digital or e-prescribing across the entire NHS by 2024 was rated ‘inadequate’ overall. Experts found that poor ‘digital maturity’ was partly responsible and reported that even prioritised funding for IT systems was insufficient.

On workforce education and training, the report ranks a government commitment to roll out a three-year education and training programme for primary care and community pharmacy professionals as requiring improvement, with providers unable to afford to pay to backfill staff sent on courses. A commitment to make legislative changes to improve the skill mix in pharmacies and enable the clinical integration of pharmacists has not been delivered and was rated ‘inadequate’ overall.  
Out of nine commitments separately evaluated over five areas, two were rated as ‘good’, five as ‘requires improvement’ and two were ‘inadequate’.

[https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/81/health-and-social-care-committee/news/196671/government-progress-on-pharmacy-requires-improvement-warns-expert-panel/](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcommittees.parliament.uk%2Fcommittee%2F81%2Fhealth-and-social-care-committee%2Fnews%2F196671%2Fgovernment-progress-on-pharmacy-requires-improvement-warns-expert-panel%2F&data=05%7C01%7C%7C995f242ea5cb476aeab008db932dc27c%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638265596966859930%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=TigZ9KziogmFAoqsUB%2FPQPSdHDJdMTuW4yrEpursreQ%3D&reserved=0)

**The Future of General Practice** - Ministers accepted outright: the need to ensure that trainee GPs are distributed across the country to support areas facing the greatest challenges in ensuring access to a GP; the need to simplify how patients interact with the NHS with improved access; increased organisational support for GPs with a focus on back-office functions.

However, the Government rejected a number of measures set out by MPs that were intended to restore the doctor-patient relationship. A call to acknowledge a decline in continuity of care and make reversing it a priority was partially accepted however a recommendation for a national measure of continuity of care was rejected.

A further call for NHS England to champion the personal list model was also rejected. In its Response, the Government says it is for practices to decide the best way to meet the needs of patients.

In their report MPs had warned that care based on a doctor-patient relationship was essential for patient safety and patient experience, while access to a GP should not be like phoning a call-centre or booking a cab driver never to be seen again.

[https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/81/health-and-social-care-committee/news/196676/government-supports-committee-recommendations-on-future-of-general-practice/](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fcommittees.parliament.uk%2Fcommittee%2F81%2Fhealth-and-social-care-committee%2Fnews%2F196676%2Fgovernment-supports-committee-recommendations-on-future-of-general-practice%2F&data=05%7C01%7C%7C995f242ea5cb476aeab008db932dc27c%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638265596966859930%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=YjEdmh62g7PW4JuKGLSe2vjd5SRw97gZaipkjynYuPc%3D&reserved=0)