

Council: 1 November 2016

Agenda item 15.1 – Amendment in the name of Phil Cohen

Funding of Community Pharmacies

Delete all and replace with:

Council is disappointed to learn that the Government is ploughing ahead with imposing major funding cuts over two years on community pharmacies, despite an earlier statement that they wished to have further negotiations with the profession, and in the face of a huge national petition of over two million signatures opposed to the cuts.

There will be a four per cent cut in 2016/17 and a further 3.4 per cent cut the following year. Establishment payments which are made to all pharmacies are to be gradually phased out, and changes to the funding package are being introduced, including quality payments and an access scheme to help pharmacies in sparsely populated areas.

The pharmacy profession said it could not accept a cut which was damaging to the sector and adversely affect the ability of pharmacies to provide patient care. It said there had been no genuine consultation on funding. It believes many pharmacy owners will be forced to take steps to reduce costs, such as reducing opening hours and staffing, and stopping the provision of some specialist services, which will inevitably impact on patient care.

Council notes that the Member's Item on this subject discussed at the Health Overview & Scrutiny committee (HOSC) in May did not achieve a consensus: the Labour members of the committee voted to respond to the Government's consultation by opposing the cuts, and the Conservative members of the committee voted against this.

Council notes the Labour Group's subsequent submission to the consultation, a copy of which was circulated to all members of HOSC.

Council believes that this Government decision to U-turn and continue with drastic cuts will undermine the vital health role that pharmacies have in the community. Pharmacies offer advice and support and take the load off GPs and the hospital sector.

Council asks the Chair of HOSC to write to the Health Minister urging him not to proceed with these cuts, and to enter into constructive discussions with the pharmacy profession and support the sustainable funding of community pharmacies.