



The Consumer Healthcare Association

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PAGB responds to Health and Social Care Select Committee report

The House of Commons Health and Social Care Select Committee has today published its report, [Delivering core NHS and care services during the pandemic and beyond](#).

Michelle Riddalls, chief executive of PAGB, the consumer healthcare association, said: “Today’s report from the Health and Social Care Select Committee highlights the ways in which the coronavirus pandemic has stretched and disrupted NHS services, with potentially devastating consequences for patients and staff.

“The report focuses quite rightly on the steps that are now necessary to ensure those who need access to NHS resources – whether for screening, treatment or care – are not left in limbo in the way described so powerfully by some of those who gave evidence to the committee.

“In our [written evidence](#) to the Committee, PAGB pointed to the positive impact of the pandemic on individuals’ willingness to embrace self care for minor ailments, rather than seeking a GP appointment or turning to A&E as they might have done previously.

“We also welcomed the shift towards a ‘digital first’ approach.

“Both of these developments are key to improving the long-term sustainability of the NHS, for the obvious benefit of everyone who needs it now or might need it in the future, as well as for the staff who work so tirelessly to keep it running.

“We are therefore pleased that the Committee’s report recommends that NHS England/Improvement should prepare an update for MPs by the end of this year on the positive innovations or changes that have taken place in the NHS during the pandemic, and the ways in which it will seek to implement those changes across the NHS.

“The report also sets out welcome recommendations aimed at reducing pressure on A&E departments, where attendances are beginning to increase again following a dramatic dip as the pandemic unfolded initially.

“We are disappointed that the report does not include self care or community pharmacy as vitally-important means of reducing demand on either A&E services or GP surgeries in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

“We will continue to press for a national self care strategy – including better education and easily-accessible, reliable online information about self-treatable conditions – and for an enhanced role for community pharmacies, whose teams can offer so much expert advice as well as recommending when an individual might need to seek further medical help.

“We believe these measures would have a significant impact in ensuring NHS resources are available for those with serious or long-term health conditions, both now and in the future.”

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Notes to editors:

PAGB, the consumer healthcare association, represents the manufacturers of branded OTC medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements in the UK.

For further information please contact Polly Newton, Media and Communications Manager, polly.newton@pagb.co.uk or call 07706 001500.