

## **Statement on Medicine Shortages from Dr Leyla Hannbeck (Chief Executive of the Independent Pharmacies Association)**

The Independent Pharmacies Association (IPA), as the voice of independently owned pharmacies, has since several years post pandemic raised concerns about the medicines supply issues. It was the IPA that indeed brought this issue to the attention of the national media since 2021 and called for this topic to be on the radar. We have regularly and consistently discussed the medicines shortages challenges with the officials at the DHSC and with politicians asking for a more transparent approach and urging the decision makers to act before we get a serious patient safety incident.

Medicines supply issues take on average 2-3hrs per day of community pharmacy teams' time and on many occasions have led to abuse and violence against pharmacy teams. We also regularly see distressed patients who cannot get hold of their medicines who need to travel from one pharmacy to another in the hope of getting hold of their regular medicine.

There are various reasons causing medicines shortages, these include global shortages of raw material, costs to produce medicines and a lengthening of the average time that it takes to produce medicines – Brexit, time taken to process regulatory applications and the VPAS system have all had a role to play. We are also concerned that there is no transparency regarding the supply of medicines and we have repeatedly called for the DHSC to bring healthcare professionals on the frontline and wholesalers and suppliers and patient groups together to discuss these challenges with the view to find solutions. Unfortunately this has not yet happened.