Community Pharmacy Leicestershire & Rutland

5 November 2026

Community Pharmacy England
14 Hosier Lane
London, EC1A 9LQ

Dear Community Pharmacy England team,

Contractor concerns about October 2026 concessions and cash flow

I am writing on behalf of Community Pharmacy contractors in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to set out their concerns about price concessions and ask CPE to take them up with the Department of Health and Social Care. We recognise that DHSC sets concession prices, and that CPE already uses anonymised invoices to support re-determination requests.

Contractors' concerns

- **Some concessions are still below obtainable prices.** Against CPE's final October prices, 41 of 192 matched lines in our sample cost more to buy on 3 November than the concession. Twelve were short by more than £3 a pack, and the worst by £18.21.
- **The gaps cluster in medicines patients depend on.** Flucloxacillin (four lines, including children's liquids), levetiracetam (five lines), phenoxymethylpenicillin liquids (three lines) and rivastigmine.
- **Decisions come too late.** October's 245 concessions were announced across six updates, the last on 3 November. Contractors bought and dispensed throughout the month without knowing what they would be paid.
- **Cash flow is under serious strain.** In an informal poll, 61 of 74 pharmacy contractor respondents (82%) reported serious cash-flow problems and the remaining 13 reported squeezed margins and cash flow.
- **Contractors cannot see what happens to their reports.** Those who report above-Tariff purchases rarely learn whether their evidence made a difference.

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The worst examples:

Medicine and pack	NHS pays (Oct concession)	Cheapest in-stock price	Shortfall per pack
Flucloxacillin 125mg/5ml oral solution, 100ml (children's antibiotic)	£2.57	£20.78	£18.21
Levetiracetam 100mg/ml oral solution, 300ml (epilepsy)	£6.95	£19.94	£12.99
Rivastigmine 6mg capsules, 28 (dementia)	£7.45	£17.62	£10.17
Flucloxacillin 250mg/5ml oral solution sugar free, 100ml	£12.50	£22.29	£9.79
Levetiracetam 1g tablets, 60 (epilepsy)	£4.30	£11.33	£7.03

What we are asking CPE to do

1. Review the 41 lines (we will send the full list with this letter) and press DHSC for re-determination where the evidence supports it.
2. Tell us exactly what evidence you need, for example dated invoices and availability records for the relevant month. We will collect anonymised invoices from contractors across LLR.
3. Push DHSC for earlier concession decisions, and for interim pricing when costs rise sharply mid-month.
4. Seek a cash-flow protection measure for contractors while reimbursement remains uncertain.
5. Give contractors feedback on how above-Tariff reports are used, so they keep reporting.

Please let us have a written response setting out next steps, how contractors can contribute, and when we can expect an update.

Yours sincerely,

Community Pharmacy LLR

About the figures: prices are the cheapest exact-pack quote shown as in stock on the Drug Comparison wholesaler platform on 3 November 2026, compared with CPE's final October 2026 concession prices. They are gross price differences per pack and exclude fees, VAT adjustments and rebates. One pharmacy's quotes on one day; only exact packs showing green In Stock were used. 149 matched lines were below the concession and 2 equal, so the concern is about specific severe gaps and late decisions, not every concession. 14 sampled lines had no eligible quote and 39 of the 245 October concessions were not compared. These are not confirmed invoiced losses.

Sources

CPE, October 2026 price concessions (final update): https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/october-2026-price-concessions-6th-update/
CPE, price concessions process: https://cpe.org.uk/priceconcessions

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Headline figures

Measure	Figure
October 2026 concessions (CPE final update, 3 Nov)	245
Concessions in our sample	206
Sample lines with an eligible in-stock quote	192
Cost more to buy than the concession	41 (21%)
Short by more than £1 / more than £3 a pack	23 / 12
Median shortfall where there was one	£1.40 a pack
Cost less than the concession / equal	149 / 2
Sample lines with no eligible quote	14
October concessions not compared	39
Poll: serious cash-flow problems / squeezed	61 (82%) / 13 (18%) of 74

The 12 lines more than £3 short per pack

Medicine	Pack	Oct concession	Cheapest in stock	Shortfall
Flucloxacillin 125mg/5ml oral solution	100ml	£2.57	£20.78	£18.21
Levetiracetam 100mg/ml oral solution SF	300ml	£6.95	£19.94	£12.99

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Medicine	Pack	Oct concession	Cheapest in stock	Shortfall
Promethazine hydrochloride 10mg tablets	56	£3.45	£15.00	£11.55
Rivastigmine 6mg capsules	28	£7.45	£17.62	£10.17
Flucloxacillin 250mg/5ml oral solution SF	100ml	£12.50	£22.29	£9.79
Levetiracetam 1g tablets	60	£4.30	£11.33	£7.03
Levetiracetam 500mg tablets	60	£4.23	£9.98	£5.75
Levetiracetam 750mg tablets	60	£5.74	£10.50	£4.76
Fluoxetine 40mg capsules	30	£1.92	£6.52	£4.60
Flucloxacillin 250mg/5ml oral solution	100ml	£16.05	£20.21	£4.16
Dipyridamole 200mg MR capsules	60	£38.06	£41.99	£3.93
Lansoprazole 15mg orodispersible tablets	28	£4.50	£7.79	£3.29

How the figures were checked

- Purchase prices: cheapest exact-pack quote showing green In Stock on drugcomparison.co.uk, captured 3 November 2026. Stock indicators can change and are not guaranteed.
- Benchmarks: CPE October 2026 concession prices including the sixth update of 3 November. Eight sample prices changed in that update (aciclovir 200mg, co-amoxiclav 500/125, duloxetine 30mg, gliclazide 80mg, metformin 500mg MR, phenoxymethylpenicillin 125mg/5ml solution and 250mg tablets, ramipril 5mg).

Aciclovir and co-amoxiclav moved from shortfall to gain, taking the count from 43 to 41.

- October concessions do not apply to November prescriptions. November reimbursement is not confirmed.
- Gross per-pack differences only: no fees, VAT adjustments, rebates or operating costs. Actual losses depend on dispensing volumes; invoices are needed to confirm them.
- The poll is informal and self-selected, with voter names hidden. It shows how respondents feel, not national prevalence.

Sources

CPE, October 2026 sixth update: https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/october-2026-price-concessions-6th-update/
CPE, price concessions process: https://cpe.org.uk/priceconcessions
DHSC, CPCF 2026 to 2027: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-pharmacy-contractual-framework-financial-year-2026-to-2027