

Dear Councillor Manning,

Thank you for contacting LloydsPharmacy. We are sorry to read about levels of service your constituents have been experiencing at our Wharf Road branch.

We have undertaken an investigation into the issues raised and can confirm that the pharmacy has been through a difficult period lately. Earlier this year, key full-time members of staff working at the branch left the organisation, and whilst we have been recruiting the new team, we have been relying on locums to cover the shortfall.

In instances where we are unable to secure sufficient locum support, LloydsPharmacy is faced with the difficult decision to temporarily close the pharmacy. This step is always taken as a last resort. Unfortunately, it would be unlawful for us to provide pharmaceutical services at one of our branches without a qualified pharmacist being present.

Unfortunately, one of the newest challenges facing community pharmacy and driving a rising number of temporary and partial closures, is a shortage of pharmacists and qualified support staff. The latter issue is not unique to Surrey, but rather, is a UK wide issue. As of last year, the role of pharmacist was added to the Home Office's Shortage Occupation List.

However, I can reassure you that our Regional Manager is working to improve operations at the Wharf Road branch. We have launched a recruitment campaign for the vacancies and have introduced a referral bonus for colleagues and generous relocation packages. We're also planning to temporarily reduce our trading hours to 9am – 5pm on weekdays, so staff can have extra time organising the shop and the dispensary. This should improve levels of service in the store during opening hours.

We understand that the current situation is inconvenient for our customers, and we apologise for difficulties this has caused. LloydsPharmacy colleagues are working hard to support your constituents, and we ask for your support in ensuring that our frontline staff are treated appropriately during this challenging time. Unfortunately, there have already been more than a few incidents where verbal abuse was directed towards one of our colleagues. As you are aware, we temporarily hired a security guard to look after our colleagues.

Please do contact me if you have any questions or require additional information about the LloydsPharmacy services available in your constituency.

Best wishes,

Emma Turnbull

Government Affairs Manager

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