

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 May 2024

Pharmacy services and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment in County Durham

Ordinary Decision



Amanda Healy, Director of Public Health, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) with an update on pharmacy services in County Durham.

Executive summary

- 2 The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) is responsible for the production of a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) every 3 years. This considers the provision of NHS pharmaceutical services across County Durham. The HWB is also then responsible for monitoring ongoing changes to NHS pharmaceutical services to determine whether any of these changes could leave significant gaps in service delivery. This process is outlined in the report.
- 3 Community Pharmacy North-East Central (CPNEC) represents community pharmacy owners in County Durham and Sunderland. Alongside many other businesses on the high street, community pharmacies across England face a number of economic challenges. This report signposts to recent national communications describing these challenges.
- 4 Community pharmacies in County Durham deliver a range of NHS-commissioned services to their patients in addition to their core role of dispensing medicines. This report provides an overview of these NHS pharmacy services.

Recommendation(s)

5 OSC is recommended to:

- (a) receive this report on 9 May 2024, and provide comment as necessary.

Background

- 6 Under the Health and Social Care Act (2012), the HWB is responsible for the production of a PNA every 3 years (available at www.durhaminsight.info/pna/). A PNA considers the views and health of our residents, the provision of NHS pharmaceutical services that can support these health needs, new housing and regeneration projects, and whether there are any potential significant gaps in service delivery over a 3-year period. Pharmaceutical services are services commissioned by the NHS that are provided by community pharmacies, dispensing appliance contractors, and dispensaries in GP practices.
- 7 The HWB is also then responsible for monitoring ongoing changes to NHS pharmaceutical services in County Durham to determine whether any of these changes could leave significant gaps in service delivery. This work is undertaken by the PNA Steering Group as a sub-group of the HWB. See Appendix 2 for the current membership of this Group.
- 8 Alongside many other businesses on the high street, community pharmacies across England face a number of economic challenges, which has led to some pharmacy closures. See Appendix 3 for examples of recent national communications.
- 9 In County Durham, the number of pharmacies has fallen by 5 between October 2023 and October 2024 (Appendix 4). However, the view of the PNA Steering Group is that there are still currently sufficient NHS pharmaceutical services across County Durham.
- 10 Community pharmacies deliver an increasing range of services to their patients in addition to their core role of dispensing medicines. See Appendix 5 for a description of the key NHS pharmacy services.
- 11 Community pharmacies have a choice as to whether they provide additional services in line with the standards required in the accompanying service specifications.¹ Pharmacies will only provide additional services if they have the infrastructure and capacity to do so (e.g. all pharmacies are required to have a consultation room). The majority of pharmacies in County Durham do choose to provide additional services to residents, e.g. 99% of County Durham pharmacies have signed up to provide the Pharmacy First service (Appendix 5).
- 12 Pharmacies continue to work with GP practices on the implementation of new services. For example, there are electronic tools to make

¹ For example, the Pharmacy First service specification at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/community-pharmacy-advanced-service-specification-nhs-pharmacy-first-service/>.

referrals to community pharmacies from a number of health settings, such as GP practices and urgent treatment centres; new service specifications are enabling pharmacists to inform GP practice records of patient consultation outcomes; and there are lead community pharmacists linked to each Primary Care Network to discuss joint working.

- 13 In addition, although pharmacies are generally facing very challenging times, there are a number of important changes coming along which will enable pharmacies to make much better use of their workforce. For example, increased roles for registered pharmacy technicians² and the opportunity for all community pharmacists to become prescribers over the next few years.³
- 14 It is important that OSC members are aware of the services that pharmacies can offer to encourage the appropriate use of community pharmacies; and can appreciate the challenges that pharmacies may face.

Conclusion

- 15 OSC members will receive an update on pharmacy services and will have an opportunity to discuss pharmacy service provision in County Durham.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

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² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-powers-for-dental-and-pharmacy-staff-to-free-up-appointments>

³ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-integration-fund/independent-prescribing/>

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The HWB has a statutory duty to publish a PNA every 3 years. Pharmacies operate under The Terms of the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations.

Finance

Potential financial implications if new pharmacy services are implemented.

Consultation and Engagement

The PNA process includes a statutory 60-day public consultation.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Pharmacies routinely make reasonable adjustments for disabled patients.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

Potential staff implications if new pharmacy services are introduced, or existing services are discontinued.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

Pharmacy closures / consolidations could affect the overall adequate provision of pharmaceutical services in an area.

Procurement

National pharmacy services are procured by the NHS.

Appendix 2: PNA Steering Group

Current membership of the PNA Steering Group:

- Chair of the PNA Steering Group: Consultant in Public Health, Durham County Council
- PNA lead: Public Health Pharmacy Adviser, Durham County Council
- Housing and Regeneration: Member of the Regeneration, Economy and Growth team, Durham County Council
- County Durham Partnership: Partnerships Team Manager, Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, Durham County Council
- Healthwatch: Chair of Healthwatch County Durham
- Local Pharmaceutical Committee: Chair of Community Pharmacy North-East Central
- Integrated Care Board: Advanced Medicines Optimisation Pharmacist, North-East and North Cumbria ICB: County Durham
- Service mapping: Research and Consultant Officer, Research and Public Health Intelligence, Durham County Council

Note: Local members are also asked to comment on changes to pharmaceutical services via the County Durham Partnership team.

Appendix 3: Examples of national pharmacy communications

Supermarket pharmacy closures: a watershed moment? The Pharmaceutical Journal. <https://pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/feature/supermarket-pharmacy-closures-a-watershed-moment>.

ITV programme at <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-01-11/pharmacies-the-new-nhs-frontline> and Community Pharmacy England reply at <https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/our-response-to-the-itv1-documentary-tonight-pharmacies-the-new-nhs-frontline/>.

MP letter at <https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/mps-unite-in-joint-letter-calling-for-urgent-change-in-community-pharmacy/>.

Details of Health and Social Care Select Committee review at <https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/medicines-supply-will-fail-if-pharmacies-cannot-keep-lights-on-warns-community-pharmacy-england/>.

Community Pharmacy England press release on medicines shortages at <https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/nhs-medicines-shortages-putting-lives-at-risk/>.

Appendix 4: Pharmacies in County Durham

Locality	Number of pharmacies in October 2022	Number of pharmacies in October 2023
Dales	22	21 (Closure of Lloyds Pharmacy in Sainsbury's, Bishop Auckland)
Sedgefield	21	21
Easington	29	27 (Consolidation of two Boots Pharmacies in Easington Colliery. Closure of Asda Pharmacy, Seaham. <u>Note</u> : Closure of Boots Pharmacy, Horden in Feb 2024 will reduce locality pharmacy number to 26)
Derwentside	20	19 (Closure of Boots Pharmacy, Tanfield)
Durham	20	19 (Closure of Lloyds Pharmacy in Sainsbury's, Arnison Centre)
Chester-le-Street	12	12
Total number	124	119 (118 in Feb 2024)

Complete pharmacy listing available at <https://www.durhaminsight.info/pna/pna-listing-and-maps-2022-2025/>.

Appendix 5: Examples of NHS pharmacy services

When the PNA 2022-25 was published in October 2022:

- Established NHS services were the: New Medicine Service, Flu Vaccination Service, Community Pharmacist Consultation Service.
- Newly introduced NHS services were the: Hypertension Case Finding Service, Smoking Cessation Service.

Since the publication of the PNA 2022-25, the following NHS pharmacy services have been launched:

- Pharmacy Contraception Service.
- Pharmacy First Service which has incorporated the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service.

A description of these NHS services and examples of promotional materials available to the public are:⁴

In February 2024, there are 9 advanced services within the national NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework:

1. New Medicine Service (NMS)
2. Flu Vaccination Service
3. Hypertension Case Finding Service
4. Smoking Cessation Service (SCS)
5. Pharmacy Contraceptive Service (PCS)
6. Pharmacy First Service (PFS) (incorporates the previous Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS))
7. Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Service

In addition, there are two appliance services that pharmacies and dispensing appliance contractors may choose to provide:

8. Appliance Use Review (AUR)
9. Stoma Appliance Customisation (SAC)

New Medicine Service

The NMS was launched in 2011 to help tackle the harm caused by non-adherence to medication. 25-50% of medicines are not taken as intended or directed, and 15% of people receiving new medicines take few, if any, doses. This 'non-adherence' may lead to further prescriptions, tests and

⁴ <https://cpe.org.uk/national-pharmacy-services/advanced-services/>

investigations, poor clinical outcomes, increased admissions to hospital, and premature mortality. Non-adherence to appropriately prescribed medicines is therefore a considerable issue for the NHS.

The NMS provides support for people with long terms conditions who are newly prescribed a medicine, in order to help improve medicines adherence. Pharmacy teams support patients taking specific drugs for the following conditions:

- Asthma and COPD
- Diabetes (Type 2)
- Hypertension
- Hypercholesterolaemia
- Osteoporosis
- Gout
- Glaucoma
- Epilepsy
- Parkinson's disease
- Urinary incontinence/retention
- Heart failure
- Acute coronary syndrome
- Stroke/transient ischaemic attack
- Coronary heart disease
- Atrial fibrillation
- Long term risks of venous thromboembolism/embolism

In 2024, subject to positive evaluation of an ongoing NHS pilot, the NMS may expand to include antidepressants to enable patients who are newly prescribed an antidepressant to receive extra support from their community pharmacist.

Flu Vaccination Service

This annual service runs from September to March with the aim of vaccinating eligible patients by the end of January. The administration of a flu vaccine is legally authorised by a national Patient Group Direction (PGD), and covers patients aged 18 years and older in the NHS at-risk groups that are published each year at www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme.

Pharmacies must ensure that a notification of the vaccination is sent to the patient's GP practice on the same day the vaccine is administered or on the following working day.

Nationally the provision of this service continues to increase every year since the service began in 2015-16. In 2022-23 there were 5.01 million vaccines

administered by 9,650 community pharmacies at an average of 519 vaccines per pharmacy. This was an increase of 3.24% on the 4.85 million vaccines administered in 2021-22.

A search function at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/> allows a search for a pharmacy that provides NHS flu vaccinations.

Hypertension Case Finding Service

Early detection of hypertension is vital, and community pharmacy can provide a key role in detection and subsequent treatment of hypertension. This service began in October 2021 to:

- Identify people aged 40 years or older with high blood pressure, who have previously not had a confirmed diagnosis of hypertension, and refer them to general practice for appropriate management (this can include people under 40 years, at the discretion of a pharmacist).
- Undertake clinic and ambulatory blood pressure checks when necessary, at the request of a general practice (Note: A blood pressure measurement is a 'clinic check' and ambulatory monitoring is 24-hour blood pressure monitoring).

At the end of a patient consultation, where readings indicate:

- Normal blood pressure - the pharmacist will promote healthy behaviours.
- High blood pressure - the pharmacist will offer Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring from the pharmacy and will also promote healthy behaviours.
- Very high blood pressure - the pharmacist will refer the patient to see their GP within 24 hours.

GP practices can refer patients to community pharmacies for either clinic readings or ambulatory measurements. For example:

- The community pharmacy can be asked to measure the blood pressure of patients diagnosed with hypertension where the GP practice has no recent blood pressure measurement recorded.
- The community pharmacy can be asked to measure the ambulatory blood pressure of patients who have had a high clinic reading but have not yet been followed up with home or ambulatory monitoring.

A search function at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/> allows a search for a pharmacy that provides free blood pressure checks.

Smoking Cessation Service

This service began in March 2022 and enables NHS trusts to refer patients discharged from hospital to a community pharmacy of their choice to continue their smoking cessation care pathway, including providing free NRT and behavioural support as required. In line with the NHS Long Term Plan, everyone admitted to hospital should be offered NHS funded tobacco treatment services by March 2024.

Pharmacy Contraception Service

The PCS:

- Offers women a greater choice of where they can access contraception services from.
- Creates extra capacity in primary care and sexual health clinics to support meeting the demand for more complex assessments.

In December 2023 the PCS provides:

- Ongoing monitoring and repeat supply of oral contraception initiated in primary care (including general practice and pharmacies) or sexual health clinics. This service element began in April 2023.
- Initiation of oral contraception. This service element began in December 2023.

Both initiation and ongoing supply are undertaken using PGD to support the review and supply process in community pharmacy.

A search function at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/> allows a search for a pharmacy that provides the contraceptive pill without a prescription.

Lateral Flow Device Service

The LFD Service began in November 2023 and offers at-risk patients access to free LFD tests from pharmacies.

Pharmacy First Service

This service provides the opportunity for community pharmacy to play an even bigger role within the urgent care system.

The PFS began in February 2024 and incorporates the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS).⁵ The full service consists of three elements:

- Pharmacy First (clinical pathways) – this enables pharmacists to supply NHS medicines where clinically appropriate (including some POM medicines under PGD), to treat 7 common health conditions of:
 1. sinusitis: 12 years and over
 2. sore throat: 5 years and over
 3. acute otitis media (earache): 1 – 17 years
 4. infected insect bites: 1 year and over
 5. impetigo: 1 year and over
 6. shingles: 18 years and over
 7. uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women: 16 to 64 years

Consultations for these 7 clinical pathways can be provided to patients presenting to the pharmacy as well as those referred by NHS 111, general practices and others.

- Pharmacy First (urgent repeat medicine supply) – previously commissioned as the CPCS.
 - Pharmacy First (NHS referrals for minor illness) – previously commissioned as the CPCS.
- For the CPCS elements of the service, i.e. minor illness referral or the supply of urgent repeat medicines, both must follow a referral from NHS 111, general practices (urgent repeat medicine supply referrals are not allowed from general practices) and other authorised healthcare providers (i.e. patients are not able to present to the pharmacy without a referral).

A search function at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/> will allow a search for a pharmacy that provides the PFS.

In addition, and to compliment the national Pharmacy First Service, an ICB-commissioned 'common conditions service' allows pharmacies across the region to offer advice and provide treatment on a number of minor illnesses (<https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-winter/common-conditions/>).

Summary of public information available on these services:

General resources

⁵ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/launch-of-nhs-pharmacy-first-advanced-service/>

- Information at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/> provides an overview of pharmacy services and a search function for a pharmacy that provides the contraceptive pill without a prescription, free blood pressure checks and the NHS flu vaccination service.
- National videos on the following services are available at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/promotional-materials-for-community-pharmacy-services/>: New medicines service, free blood pressure check service, providing the contraceptive pill without a prescription, smoking cessation service.
- Regional information and videos on the following services are available at <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help/common-conditions/> and <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help/pharmacy/>: free blood pressure check service, providing the contraceptive pill without a prescription, Pharmacy First Service.

Pharmacy First Service

National

- Campaign resource materials at <https://campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk/campaigns/help-us-help-you-primary-care/think-pharmacy-first/>

Regional

- Press release at <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/news/posts/pharmacy-healthcare-revolution-offers-quick-and-convenient-care-for-common-conditions/>
- Common conditions toolkit and information at <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help/common-conditions/>
- ICB-commissioned minor ailment service at <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-winter/common-conditions/>.