

## What can pharmacy do for your local community?

Community pharmacies straddle the ground where local government and the NHS meet. They are 'an integral part of the NHS'<sup>1</sup>, a 'vital local service' and a 'community facility'<sup>2</sup>.

The integration of health and social care commissioning mean that ties between councillors, council officers and healthcare professionals such as community pharmacists need to grow.



### Pharmacy basics

- There are over 11,700 community pharmacies<sup>3</sup> in England, situated in high-street locations, in supermarkets and in residential neighbourhoods.
- 90% of the population – even those in the most deprived areas – can walk to a community pharmacy in 20 minutes.<sup>4</sup>
- 84% of adults visit a pharmacy every year.<sup>5</sup>
- Excluding those who report never visiting a pharmacy, on average an adult visits a pharmacy 16 times a year, of which 13 visits are for health-related reasons.<sup>5</sup>
- An estimated 1.6 million visits to community pharmacies take place daily of which 1.2 million are for health-related reasons.<sup>5</sup>
- Pharmacies provide a convenient and less formal environment for those who cannot easily access or do not choose to access other kinds of health service.
- Most pharmacies (over 90%) have private consultation areas.<sup>6</sup>
- Of all health professionals, pharmacists have the most comprehensive education and training in the use of medicines for the prevention and treatment of disease.

### Three strands of the shared local government – community pharmacy agenda

#### Public health

Central government has recognised pharmacy as 'a valuable and trusted public health resource'<sup>1</sup>. Community pharmacies have a track record in delivering public health services – helping people to stop smoking, manage their weight, practise safe sex and reduce/stop their use of illegal drugs.

#### Support for independent living

Pharmacies provide services that help people remain independent for longer, by helping them understand and manage their medicines.

#### Social capital

A community pharmacy is one of the core businesses which can make a difference between a viable high street and one that fails commercially – thereby sustaining communities and building social capital<sup>7</sup>.

Visit [psnc.org.uk/councillors](https://psnc.org.uk/councillors) for more information on community pharmacy services

## Public Health

Community pharmacies can provide a growing range of public health services (see below) that are producing positive outcomes, notably for people in deprived or vulnerable circumstances.

As community pharmacies are uniquely well positioned to reach out to the population – including ‘apparently well’ people – on a large scale, there is considerable public health benefit to be gained by extending the range and reach of these services.

A concept that’s building momentum is the ‘Healthy Living Pharmacy’, which brings together a number of these public health services in one location. More than 9,400 pharmacies (c. 80%) are now accredited as a Healthy Living Pharmacy.<sup>8</sup>

## Social capital

Community pharmacies fulfil a social function by providing a space for individuals to develop networks of trust and mutual support. For example, for many older people who live alone, a visit to a pharmacy constitutes valued social interaction.

Secure health infrastructure is important to maintain resilient communities, notably in remote, rural locations. Community pharmacists have made a commitment to their local community by virtue of their financial investment, and present a sustainable asset.

Pharmacies provide employment for local people and contribute to the economic prosperity of their local community by preserving local shopping access<sup>7</sup>.

For these reasons, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of some local authorities have taken a keen interest in the viability of their local community pharmacy network.

Health and Wellbeing Boards have the responsibility to develop, update and publish local Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments (PNAs), which identify plans for improving health, and which aid NHS England’s decision making on the granting of new NHS contracts to community pharmacies.

### References

1. Department of Health, *A Vision for Pharmacy for Pharmacy in the New NHS* (2003)
2. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Draft Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6): Planning for Town Centres* (2003)
3. According to PSNC records.
4. BMJ Open, *The positive pharmacy care law: an area-level analysis of the relationship between community pharmacy distribution, urbanity and social deprivation in England* (2014)
5. Department of Health, *Pharmacy in England Building on strengths- delivering the future* (2008)
6. Local Government Association, *The community pharmacy offer for improving the public’s health: a briefing for local government and health and wellbeing boards* (2016)
7. Department of Health, *Improving shopping access for people living in deprived neighbourhoods: a paper for discussion* (1999)
8. NHS England, *2016/17 Pharmacy Quality Scheme infographic* (2018)

## Support for independent living

Community pharmacies provide a range of services to support people to live independently in their own homes, including:

- support with re-ordering repeat medicines / the NHS Repeat Dispensing service;
- home delivery of medicines to the housebound;
- appropriate provision of multi-compartment compliance aids and other interventions such as reminder charts to help people remember to take their medicines;
- reablement services following discharge from hospital;
- falls assessment / reduction services; and
- signposting patients or their carers to additional support and resources related to their condition or situation.

## Public Health examples of community pharmacy services

**Substance misuse services:** needle and syringe services; supervised consumption of medicines to treat addiction, e.g. methadone; Hepatitis testing and Hepatitis B and C vaccination; HIV testing; provision of naloxone to drug users for use in emergency overdose situations.

**Sexual health services:** emergency hormonal contraception services; condom distribution; pregnancy testing and advice; Chlamydia screening and treatment; other sexual health screening, including syphilis, HIV and gonorrhoea; contraception advice and supply (including oral and long acting reversible contraception).

**Stop smoking services:** proactive promotion of smoking cessation through to provision of full NHS stop smoking programmes.

**NHS Health Checks for people aged 40-74 years:** carrying out a full vascular risk assessment and providing advice and support to help reduce the risk of heart disease, strokes, diabetes and obesity.

**Weight management services:** promoting healthy eating and physical activity through to provision of weight management services for adults who are overweight or obese.

**Alcohol misuse services:** providing proactive brief interventions and advice on alcohol with referral to specialist services for problem drinkers.

Specific examples of commissioned local community pharmacy services can be found at: [psnc.org.uk/database](https://psnc.org.uk/database)