

Briefing

Community Pharmacies: A Vision

“Community pharmacies are critical to our local neighbourhoods, but there is still more that they could do for patients, the public and the wider NHS. To empower pharmacies to reach this potential, offering the full range of clinical services within their expanding skillset, we must ease ongoing pressures, fund them sustainably and properly embed them within local and national healthcare systems.

Janet Morrison, Community Pharmacy England

At a glance

Community Pharmacy England asked Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund what the pharmacies of tomorrow could look like, and they have set out a **vision to transform community pharmacies over the next decade**. This briefing has been produced by Community Pharmacy England to summarise this vision.

If the vision becomes a reality, patients and the public of the future will have access **to more advice and help from their local pharmacies than ever before**. All pharmacies will offer all the below and more:

- Access to, and support getting the most out of, **medicines**;
- **Help with common illnesses**, such as urinary tract infections and hayfever;
- **Prescriptions** for certain conditions, making use of pharmacists' independent prescribing skills;
- Advice and support on **smoking cessation and weight management**;
- **Targeted health checks**, such as blood pressure and cholesterol tests;
- Support in **managing some long-term conditions**, such as asthma and diabetes;
- Support to **optimise medicines regimens** and improve patients' adherence and access; and
- A wider range of **vaccinations** and other public health services.

Patients will be at the heart of their care, whilst pharmacy teams will make best use of their professional skills, working ever more closely with colleagues across local healthcare networks.

To improve health outcomes, increase safety, and deliver better value for the public and NHS, **community pharmacies must be empowered to take on this expanded role**. They need a sustainable funding package, to be fully included in NHS workforce planning, and they must embrace a culture of ongoing improvement. **Together we must achieve this.**

In 'A vision for community pharmacy' Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund describe how community pharmacy will transform over the next decade, **focusing on how pharmacies can help to address key policy goals around population health, prevention and the increasing demand in primary care.** They also explore the barriers to achieving the vision, and the enablers which will help make progress towards it.

The healthcare challenge

Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund say that we are in a time of unprecedented challenge for the health and care system in England, with the needs of the population changing, and people living with multiple, complex, long-term conditions needing support from a range of professionals. **In the face of these growing NHS pressures, community pharmacies are here to help** and ready to adapt to do even more.



Community pharmacies already provide essential support to their patients, but they have not yet achieved their full potential. *A Vision for Community Pharmacy* outlines **a ten-year transformation for the sector** where people will be able to access more help than ever before from a pharmacy team who are making the most of their professional skills.

Right now, there is variation across the community pharmacy sector in terms of capacity and capability, but Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund have sought to design **a national package of services that can be offered by all.** However, the framework also allows for those pharmacies with greater capacity to move further, faster.



“Over the course of the next decade, community pharmacy will undergo significant transformation, becoming central to the delivery of joined-up, responsive and person-centred community-based health and care services, with increased investment from commissioners reflecting the increased significance of community pharmacy in the health care ecosystem.

A Vision for Community Pharmacy

The pharmacies of 2033

If the vision is achieved, Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund say that the pharmacies of the future will be thriving businesses, continuing with their **core role as a key part of the medicines supply chain**, while **broadening the range of contracted and funded activities** they undertake.

There will be **a comprehensive community pharmacy workforce plan at national and local levels** to better support pharmacy teams. And community pharmacists and their teams will have rewarding careers, with ongoing professional development and access to external skills, support and data as needed to continuously develop and improve the way they work.

There will be **four dimensions to the future community pharmacy**, all underpinned by this culture of **ongoing improvement and empowerment.**

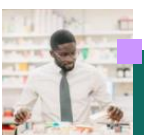
- 1 Preventing ill health and supporting wellbeing**
Community pharmacies will play a key role in supporting people and communities to stay healthy and well, with a particular focus on reducing health inequalities. This will build on initiatives such as Healthy Living Pharmacies, with pharmacies acting as **local health and wellbeing hubs**.
- 2 Providing clinical care for patients**
Community pharmacies will have a much more clinically focused role, offering a **first port of call for a variety of common illnesses**, as well as **managing some long-term conditions**, such as asthma. They will offer holistic, person-centred care, empowering patients to make decisions about their own health.
- 3 Living well with medicines**
Supporting people to access and get the most out of their medicines will **remain a core role of community pharmacies, but it will evolve** to make best use of their expertise, including new and advanced therapies whenever they emerge. Building on existing best practice guidance, this will improve outcomes, increase safety, and deliver better value for all.
- 4 Part of an integrated primary care offer for neighbourhoods**
Pharmacies will be **an integral part of the local healthcare network** giving people access to care closer to home and supporting people with ongoing care needs in addition to preventive and acute care. With financial incentives to support collaboration, data and communications systems will also enable shared patient care between all healthcare professionals.

How can we achieve this vision?

Pharmacies can become true innovators in healthcare, but to do so they **need a sustainable funding package and to be better supported** by both local and national NHS bodies. As their representatives, **Community Pharmacy England and Local Pharmaceutical Committees** will also have a role to play in helping to drive forward and disseminate innovation, and in helping to facilitate wider commissioning of services.

Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund say that achieving pharmacies' full potential will require cooperation across the health service, with Integrated Care Boards (ICB) and Local Government actively engaging with community pharmacies. And pharmacies themselves will need to adopt a culture of **continuous improvement**, seeking to continuously upskill and expand their service offering.

The NHS contract for community pharmacy services will need to be revisited. Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund say that to help bring greater consistency for patients, **several services**





currently offered by most community pharmacies should become essential offers that all must provide. This would include the services providing support for patients starting a new medicine and advising on minor illnesses, and later those that check blood pressure and provide NHS flu vaccinations.

Community pharmacies must build on their previous successes in the prevention agenda by undertaking more health promotion interventions and in some cases social prescribing, in collaboration with Primary Care Networks (PCNs). This, along with a new scheme to provide prescription medication for many common illnesses, will help **cement pharmacies as local health and wellbeing hubs.**

This role can be further embedded by expanding the vaccinations provided beyond the well-established flu and COVID-19 programmes, increasing the types of contraception products offered and widening the scope of smoking cessation advice to cover all smokers and users of vapes. Plus, a **raft of new services** would mean adding Atrial Fibrillation detection, cancer referrals, menopause advice, and health checks to the list of public health and prevention services offered in pharmacies.



Upskilling pharmacists to become independent prescribers – enabling them to make changes to prescription medicines to improve adherence and address supply chain shortages – would also be at the core of the community pharmacy offer. In time these new skills could see community pharmacists become much more involved in medicines optimisation, from initiating electronic repeat dispensing and undertaking medicine reviews through to creating pharmaceutical care plans and therapeutic drug monitoring.

A number of additional clinical services would also be piloted with the ambition of adding these to the list of complementary services provided by some pharmacies under local agreements. These would include annual asthma reviews, a medicines optimisation service for people with diabetes and a pain management service.



Our Action Plan

Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund have identified a range of actions needed to achieve their vision. Community Pharmacy England and Local Pharmaceutical Committees hope to come together with national and local healthcare systems to take these forward.

We believe some of the most critical actions and enablers will be:

- 1 Improved cooperation across the health service, with ICBs and Local Government actively engaging with community pharmacies and the NHS nationally setting out how pharmacy fits into broader NHS strategies.
- 2 A key role for ICB leaders from the local commissioning and contracting of pharmacy services, to supporting workforce and training needs, working with pharmacies to make sure they are appropriately funded and supported to deliver this vision.
- 3 Community Pharmacy England working with NHS England and Government to ensure pharmacies are sustainably funded, and to set out a menu of service options from which local leaders can choose.
- 4 A focus on building capacity and capability in community pharmacies to expand their service offering, plus support for collaboration and investment in IT to facilitate integration and monitoring.
- 5 Consideration of patient outcomes in performance measures for pharmacies and ensuring that savings in the sector are recycled back into community pharmacy. Use of the GP model for funding of pharmacy premises should also be considered.
- 6 Implementation of legislative changes to allow dispensing without a pharmacist on site and a more coherent approach to the pharmacy regulatory framework.
- 7 Market management of the pharmacy sector based on an appropriate understanding of the economics of community pharmacy.
- 8 Including community pharmacy within ICB workforce strategies and primary care visions, with ICBs ensuring that commissioned services support pharmacies' ambitions around workforce and that protected learning time is provided for.
- 9 Streamlined representation of community pharmacy within ICSs and coordination across primary care pathways.



Community Pharmacy England would like to thank Nuffield Trust and The King's Fund for their work on this vision. We look forward to further developing the role and sustainability of community pharmacies to allow them to not only tackle the current challenges, but to become the thriving sector that the nation and its health service so desperately need.

“**In community pharmacies our health service has a possible lifeline – their teams have the skills to do so much more to help, becoming true neighbourhood health and wellbeing hubs. But to do so they will need a rescue of their own in the form of a commitment to sustainable investment, more ambitious and joined-up commissioning, help with workforce and other pressures, and a place at the heart of developing local systems. Failure in delivering this vision to safeguard community pharmacies is simply not an option.**

Janet Morrison, Community Pharmacy England

For more information, visit cpe.org.uk/vision

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