



Briefing on community pharmacy temporary and permanent closures

The community pharmacy sector has experienced a 30% funding decrease in real terms since 2015. This had led to severe degradation in the range of services that pharmacies offer, to many pharmacies reducing their opening hours and to pharmacy closures, both permanent and temporary, of a level unseen.

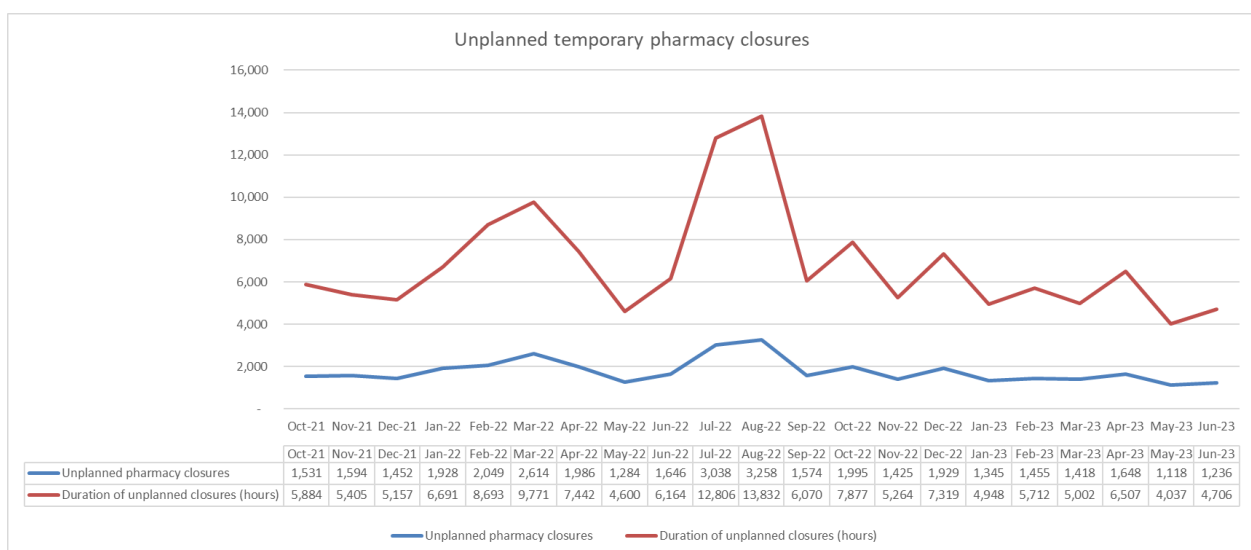
Temporary closures

Regulations mean that pharmacies can only dispense medicines legally if there is a pharmacist on site. As such, even if a prescription has been dispensed and packaged, this cannot be handed over to the patient without the oversight of a pharmacist.

If a pharmacist cannot be present due to unforeseen circumstances, then the pharmacy will be forced to temporarily close. As set out in the [Terms of service](#), pharmacies have a legal duty to notify the NHS if they cannot open.

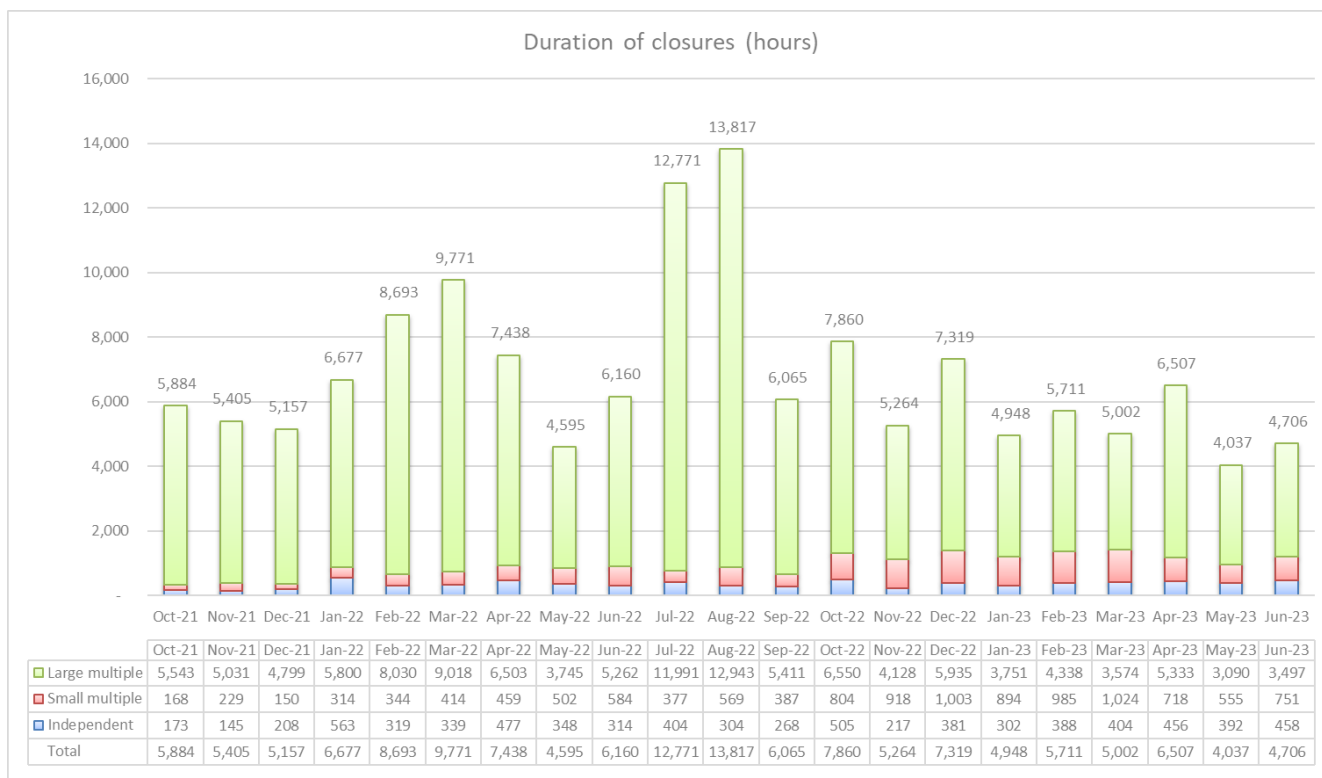
Number of temporary closures

There were **37,523 recorded temporary closures** in the period from October 2021 to June 2023.



The length of each temporary closure of a pharmacy will vary depending on the specific circumstances. The average length of a temporary closure in this period was approximately 4 hours.

The below graph shows the total time pharmacies were temporarily closed in each month. As is also evident from this graphic, the large pharmacy chains appear to experience the most temporary closures and more than you would expect considering their market share.



Reasons for temporary closures

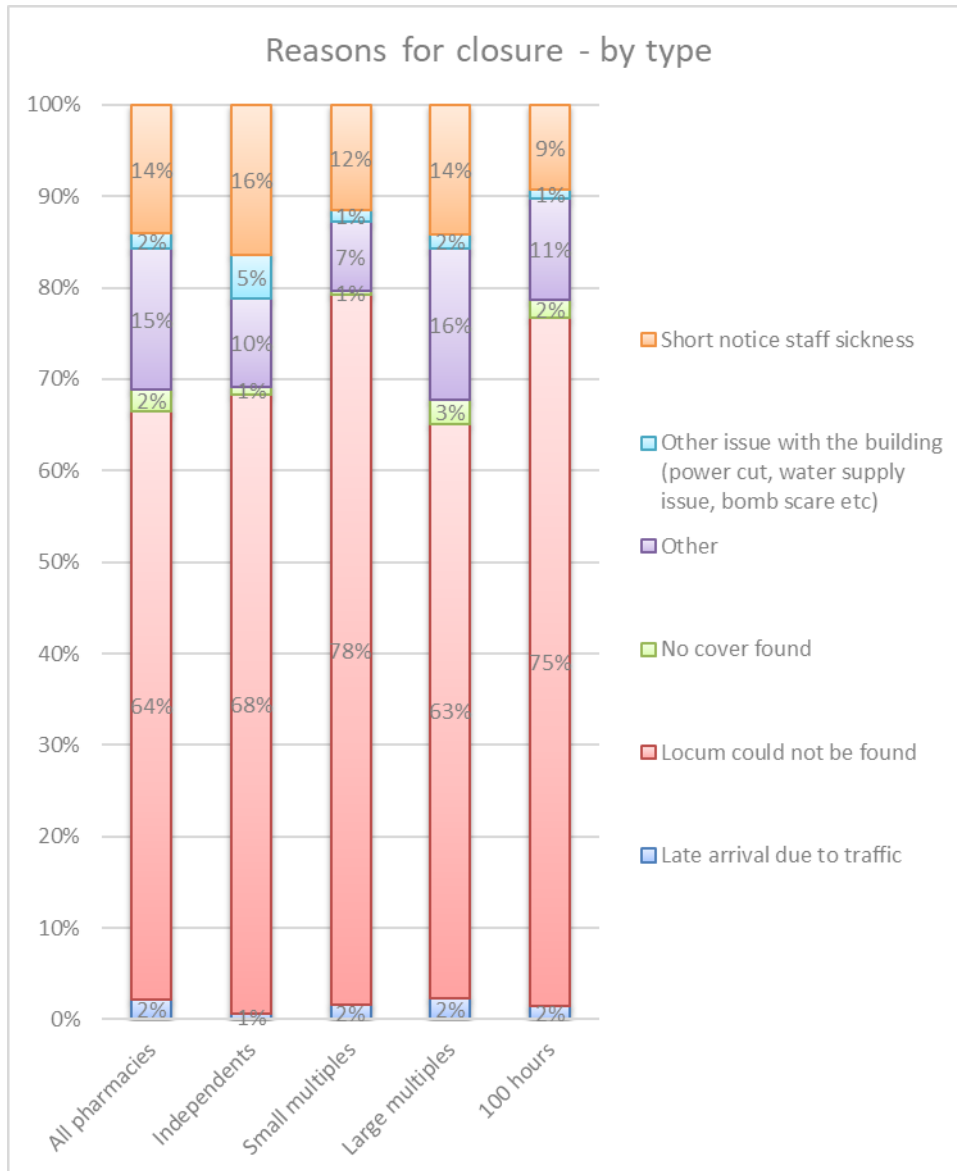
There are several circumstances that can lead a pharmacy to temporarily shut its doors, however, the most common reason is the inability to secure a locum pharmacist as cover – ‘locum could not be found’ was cited as the reason for 64% for all pharmacies closing.

Other common reasons for temporary pharmacy closures include:

- Lack of availability of permanent staff;
- Short notice staff sickness; and

- Other reasons including late arrival of locum and issues with the pharmacy premises (e.g. power cut).

The graph below shows the most common reasons for temporary closures.



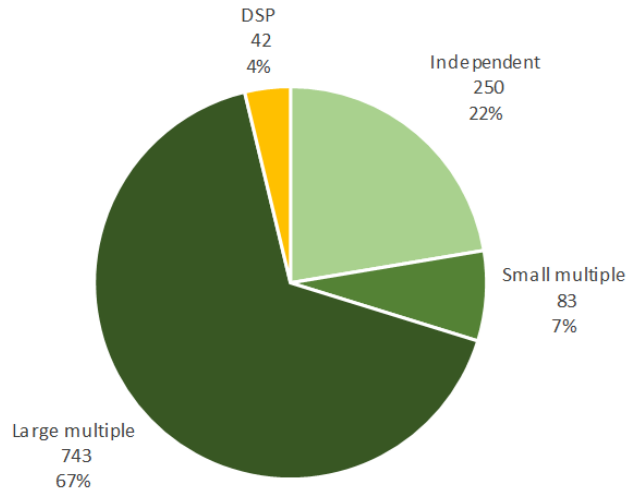


Permanent pharmacy closures

It is estimated that between October 2016 and May 2023, there were a total of 1,118 permanent pharmacy closures (including distance selling pharmacies). 67% of these closures were large multiple pharmacies.

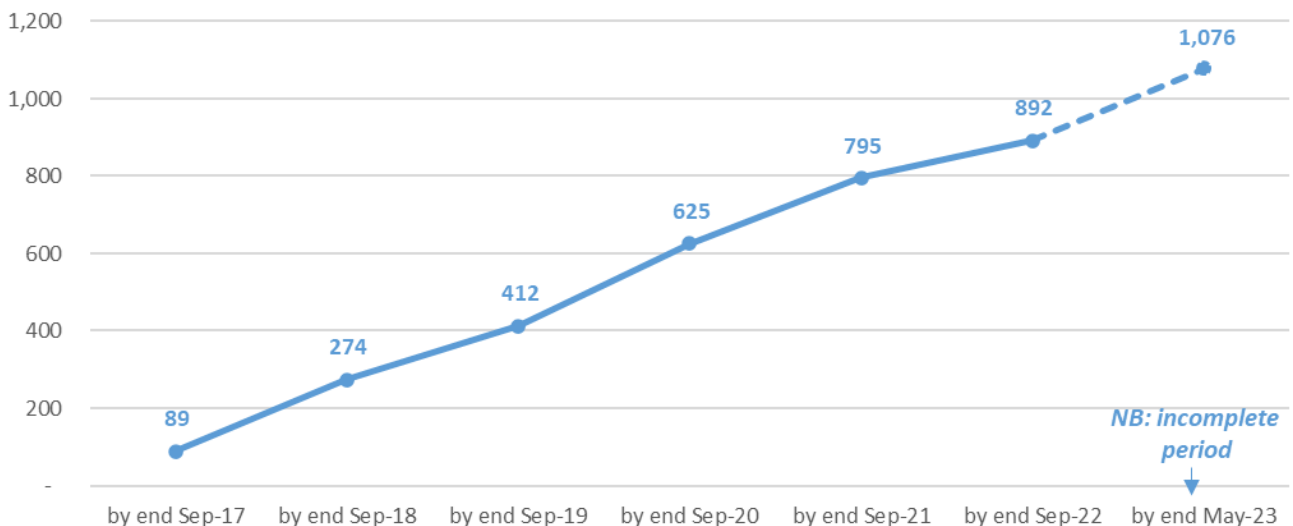
Pharmacy closures Oct-16 to May-23

Total closures: 1,118



Pharmacy types defined by chain size: Independent <6, Small Multiple <101, Large Multiple 100+. True closure counted when a pharmacy ceases operating, and no other pharmacy opens at that address. Pharmacy closures and type based on analysis of NHS Digital pharmacy list at <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/assets/ods/current/edispendary.zip>

Cumulative true pharmacy closures Oct-16 to May-23 (excl DSPs)



True closure counted when a pharmacy ceases operating, and no other pharmacy opens at that address. Excludes DSPs. Pharmacy closures based on analysis of NHS Digital pharmacy list at <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/assets/ods/current/edispendary.zip>



Most pharmacy closures are in deprived areas

It is extremely worrying that the data shows that most pharmacy closures are taking place within the most deprived areas. 52% of the pharmacy closures recorded were in the lowest three deciles for deprivation.

The graph below maps the number of pharmacy closures by local authority.

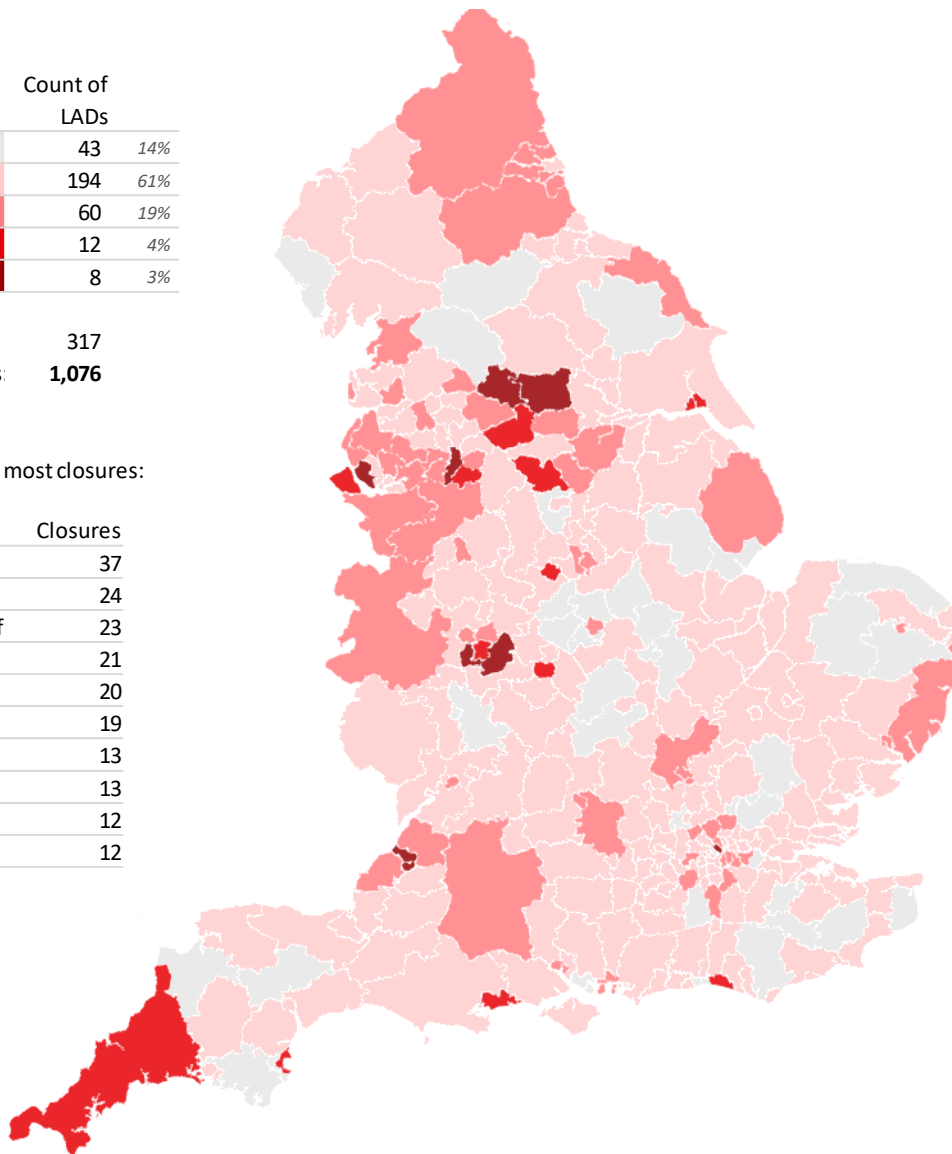
England pharmacy closures from Oct-16 to May-23

No. closures:	Count of LADs	
0	43	14%
1 to 4	194	61%
5 to 8	60	19%
9 to 12	12	4%
over 12	8	3%

Total LADs: 317
Total closures: **1,076**

Ten LADs with most closures:

LAD Name	Closures
Birmingham	37
Manchester	24
Bristol, City of	23
Bradford	21
Liverpool	20
Leeds	19
Westminster	13
Dudley	13
Sandwell	12
Sheffield	12



2019 Local Authority District boundaries. True closure counted when a pharmacy ceases operating, and no other pharmacy opens at that address. Excludes closures of DSPs. Number of pharmacy closures based on analysis of NHS Digital pharmacy list at <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/assets/ods/current/edispendary.zip>

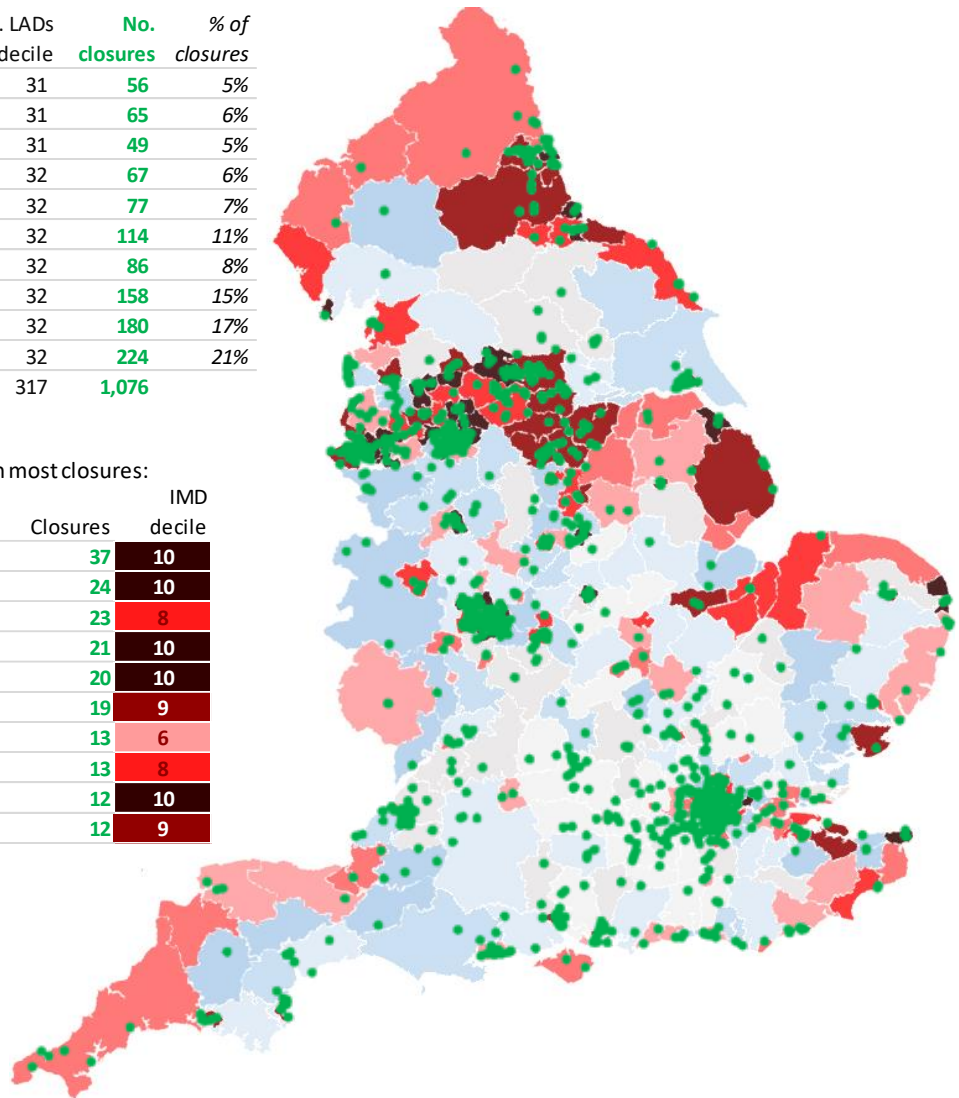
The graph below maps the total number of pharmacy closures against a gradient deprivation map of England.

England pharmacy closures from Oct-16 to May-23 vs. deprivation by Local Authority District (LAD)

	IMD rank decile	No. LADs in decile	No. closures	% of closures
Least deprived areas	1	31	56	5%
	2	31	65	6%
	3	31	49	5%
	4	32	67	6%
	5	32	77	7%
Most deprived areas	6	32	114	11%
	7	32	86	8%
	8	32	158	15%
	9	32	180	17%
	10	32	224	21%
England total		317	1,076	

Ten LADs with most closures:

LAD Name	Closures	IMD decile
Birmingham	37	10
Manchester	24	10
Bristol, City of	23	8
Bradford	21	10
Liverpool	20	10
Leeds	19	9
Westminster	13	6
Dudley	13	8
Sandwell	12	10
Sheffield	12	9



2019 Local Authority District boundaries. Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles based on 2019 average IMD score for Local Authority Districts (LADs). True closure counted when a pharmacy ceases operating, and no other pharmacy opens at that address. Excludes closures of DSPs. Number of pharmacy closures based on analysis of NHS Digital pharmacy list at <https://files.digital.nhs.uk/assets/ods/current/edispensary.zip>

References

Data provided by NHS England, analysed by Community Pharmacy England.

If you require any further information, please contact: comms.team@cpe.org.uk