

To: Community Pharmacy Professionals

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Medical Directorate
Office of the Chief Professional Officers
(Pharmacy)

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Dear Colleagues,

The importance of professional practice in pharmacy clinical services

Thank you for making a vital contribution to the NHS and healthcare for patients and local communities this year.

The news about the Pharmacy First, Contraception and Blood Pressure Check services is a pivotal moment and provides an opportunity for community pharmacy to step more fully into its clinical future as part of the integrated NHS primary care team.

These important developments recognise and build on the commitment already shown by community pharmacy professionals in the development of clinical services over recent years. They signal an exciting future in which we can further build on the strong progress the professions have made in helping to manage wider primary care demand and integrating into local health systems. This progress will be reinforced over time by the growing number of pharmacists qualified in independent prescribing, enabling a wider group of patients to be seen and treated.

This collaboration and commitment has helped to secure the investment under the Primary Care Access Recovery Plan and we need to continue to work together to deliver the new services successfully and achieve the uptake that the NHS is expecting. There's a potential to divert around 10 million people from general practice into community pharmacy, enabling people to receive the care and treatment they need from pharmacy teams and freeing up GP appointments for people with more complex needs.



It is a team endeavour and responsibility, with support needed from general practice and primary care network teams, and from colleagues in integrated care boards (ICBs). I've spoken with the ICB pharmacy leadership group about supporting and facilitating implementation as part of their wider delivery plans, and we're engaging similarly with national and regional GP organisations and networks.

A key element in our success in realising the full benefits for patients and the NHS will be building effective and sustainable relationships between general practice and community pharmacy teams at a local level. In particular, we're asking local pharmacy leaders to work closely with GPs to help reassure and reinforce the messages about clinical capability, and to proactively manage antimicrobial resistance concerns in relation to Pharmacy First. We've used the best evidence and expertise to create the seven Pharmacy First clinical pathways and surveillance of the antibiotic data by ICBs and NHS England will be robust.

It's crucial to ensure the NHS's confidence in community pharmacy is recognised in terms of the quality of service and professionalism. These new services are high profile – they're being observed by the wider NHS and Department of Health and Social Care and our professional reputation is important to us all as practising clinicians.

I know we all want to achieve excellence, and to provide the best possible care for all communities, including those which are underserved. I encourage you to sign up for the services so that we deliver maximum benefit for the population of England, which would be a great contribution to NHS patient care.

Please visit the NHS England website for the following information:

- Updated service specification and patient group direction for NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service: [NHS England » NHS Pharmacy Contraception Service](#)
- Updated service specification for NHS Community Pharmacy Hypertension Case-finding Service: [NHS England » NHS community pharmacy hypertension case-finding advanced service](#)
- Pharmacy First service specifications and clinical pathways: [NHS England » Community Pharmacy advanced service specification: NHS Pharmacy First Service](#)
- NHS Business Services Authority Pharmacy First page: [NHS Pharmacy First Service \(PFS\) | NHSBSA](#).

The NHS England national and regional teams are supporting community pharmacy teams with resources for implementation and there is likely to be a national marketing campaign for Pharmacy First in 2024. We're also offering funded [clinical examination skills training](#) with



online and face-to-face sessions including specialist modules in cardiology; ear, nose and throat; paediatrics; and dermatology. The offer also includes training in the use of medical devices such as otoscopes. We're supporting the [Community Pharmacy England webinars](#) so please sign up for these or view the recordings.

Thank you again for your ongoing contribution to the NHS and I wish you and your families a peaceful festive season and happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,



David Webb
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
NHS England

