



Pressures Survey 2025: Medicines Supply: summary of report

Background

Community Pharmacy England conducts an annual Pressures Survey of pharmacy owners and pharmacy team members. This is the fourth annual survey, and it highlights the persistent challenges faced by pharmacies in England, with medicine supply issues continuing to place significant strain on pharmacy teams, pharmacy owners, and their patients. These issues can compromise the care patients receive, leading to widespread frustration and potential risks to health. Since the Pressures Survey began in 2022, it has consistently revealed the scale of the problem, and three years on, the data shows that the situation is not improving.

This year's report is based on the views of more than 800 pharmacy owners (or head office representatives), representing over 4,300 pharmacy premises in England, as well as more than 1,600 pharmacy team members, including pharmacists, technicians, and support staff.

Medicine supply issues continue to compromise patient care

Medicine supply problems remain a daily reality across the country. This has become a distressing new normal for community pharmacies and their patients alike.

- **95% of pharmacy team members report that patients are being inconvenienced by medicine shortages.**
- **73% of staff say that supply issues are putting patient health at risk, a sharp increase from 51% in 2022.**
- **96% of pharmacy team members report patient frustration, and 79% have experienced patient aggression related to medicine delays or unavailability.**
- **Over 90% of pharmacy staff reported increased workload and stress as a result of supply problems.**

Global Pressures Are Undermining Medicine Supply

A combination of international and domestic factors continues to destabilise the medicines supply chain. Ongoing impacts from Brexit, the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and economic volatility have combined, leading to over 1,500 reported shortages between May 2024 and April 2025, with pharmacies struggling to source around 60 medicines each month. Serious Shortage Protocols were issued for widely used treatments including Creon, Estradot and Quetiapine.

More than one million instances of pharmacies paying above the reimbursement price were also recorded. The UK's low medicine prices are further weakening the system by discouraging manufacturers and reducing supply chain resilience.

A long-term sustainable funding model for pharmacies is yet to be guaranteed

Despite a welcome funding uplift this year, community pharmacies continue to suffer from a funding gap which makes it impossible to meet the full cost of NHS services. Crucially, the Government has acknowledged the funding gap and is committed to working towards a sustainable model for community pharmacy.



Bridging this gap will be essential to stabilising the sector and enabling pharmacies to continue supporting patients effectively. Without a sustainable funding model, pharmacies will remain under pressure, limiting their ability to absorb shocks such as supply chain disruption, rising operational costs, and increasing demand for primary care.

Key Findings:

1. Medicine supply issues are compromising patient care

- 95% of pharmacy team members report that patients are being inconvenienced by medicine shortages.
- 96% of pharmacy team members report patient frustration, and 79% have experienced patient aggression related to medicine delays or unavailability.

2. Medicine supply issues are intensifying across the supply chain

- More than 80% of pharmacy owners report worsening issues with the supply chain and wholesalers compared to the previous year.
- 81% of pharmacy teams face daily out-of-stock issues from wholesalers.
- 74% of pharmacy owners are spending longer than ever sourcing medicines.

3. Operational and emotional strain on pharmacy teams continues to rise

- Over 90% of pharmacy staff report increased workload and stress due to supply issues.
- 94% of pharmacy owners say the inability to supply medicines is a root cause of pressures on their business.
- Nearly half report a negative impact on patient services as a result.

4. Systemic supply problems show no sign of improving

- Daily supply issues have risen from 67% in 2022 to 87% in 2025.
- Patient health risks due to delays have increased from 51% in 2022 to 73% in 2025.
- Supply problems remain a top concern for 81% of pharmacy owners, with similar levels to 2022.

What needs to happen to alleviate these pressures?

Community Pharmacy England is calling for the following actions:

- **Short-term alleviation of supply pressures:** We must implement measures allowing pharmacists greater flexibility to make minor adjustments to prescriptions (e.g., strength, quantity, formulation).
- **Supply chain reform:** There must be continued progress to investigate and improve the medicines supply chain from manufacturing through to community pharmacy, ensuring greater resilience and reliability for patients and pharmacy teams.
- **Review of pharmacy margin arrangements:** Work must continue to ensure that pharmacies have fair access to retained margin, including consideration of branded generics, to support sustainable business models and protect access to medicines.

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