

Community Pharmacy: A Valuable Asset and NHS Productivity Driver

Community pharmacies are critical to the NHS, sitting at the heart of local neighbourhoods and playing a vital role in supporting the nation's health. Pharmacies support their local economies, providing employment opportunities and drawing people to high streets. And through dispensing of medicines, supporting self-care, and providing public health services they deliver enormous value to the country and form a trusted, accessible part of the wider healthcare system.

Pharmacy's Contribution

Community pharmacies are visited by **approximately 1.6 million people every day¹**, saving some **38 million GP appointments a year²**. Consumers rank them as the **most essential local service**, with **89%**

Community pharmacies:



Advise over **500,000** patients each month who are starting new medicines.



Support over **20,000** patients each month following discharge from hospital.



Provide **3.1 million** clinic blood pressure checks and **347,000** ambulatory blood pressure checks per year.



Deliver **4.6 million** flu vaccinations in winter.



Delivered over **413,000** MenB vaccinations since the service launched in July 2026.



Keep the UK's per capita medicine spend **16% lower** than the OECD average.

Source: NHSBSA and NHS England

of patients saying they had a good experience using pharmacy services³ – this is the highest satisfaction level for any primary care service.

Community pharmacies are highly efficient. Over the past decade, **pharmacies' workload has increased by 45%** as prescription volumes rose and clinical services expanded, while their funding has fallen in real terms, and costs have risen.

We estimate that pharmacies have delivered an unparalleled 64% in efficiencies during this time.

The Social Value of Community Pharmacy

Economic research to analyse a subset of community pharmacy activities was commissioned by Community Pharmacy England, seeking to update a previous **study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) in 2016**. The activities studied were dispensing-related (such

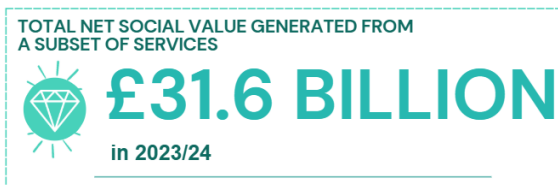
¹ [Pharmacy in England Building on strengths – delivering the future \(April 2008\)](#)

² [Pharmacy Advice Audit 2024](#)

³ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/patient-surveys/gp-patient-survey/>

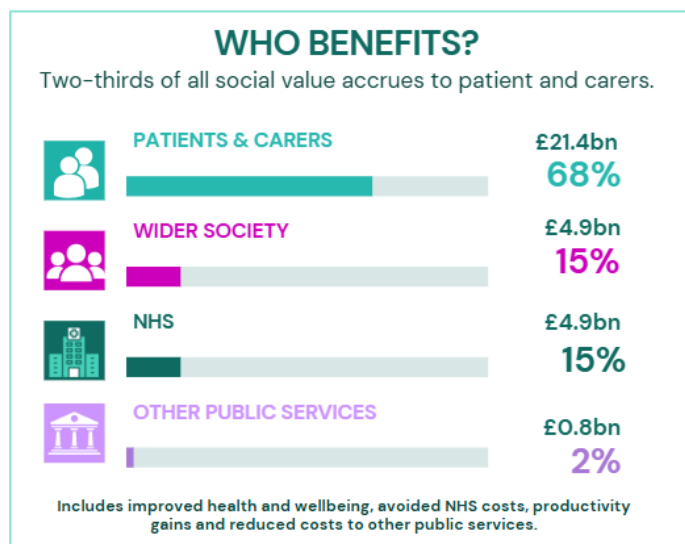
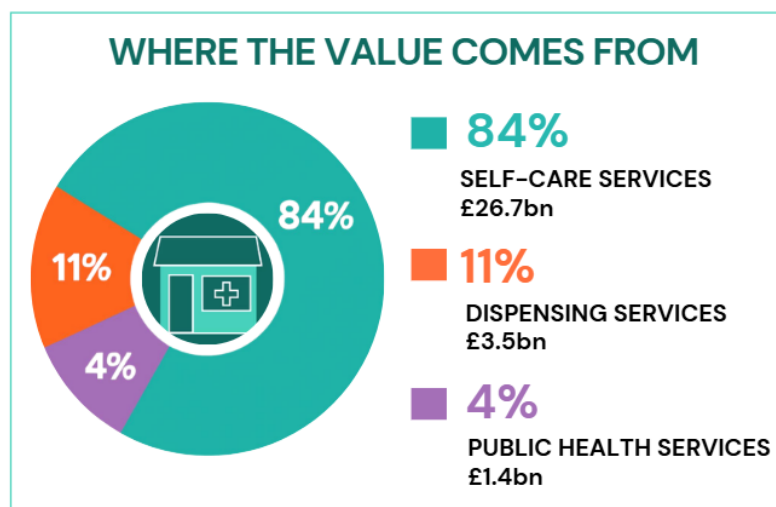
as managing prescribing errors and medicines shortages), provision of self-care and medicines optimisation advice, and provision of some public health services.

The total net social value generated by pharmacies in 2023/24, through this subset of activities, was **£31.6 billion**, from just **£359 million in funding**.



That is £88 in social value from every £1 spent on the sector – with higher return on investment rates for some services. And it means the **average social value per community pharmacy for every year is £3 million**.

Social value is a measure that captures the full breadth of societal benefits – extending beyond financial savings to include impact on patients, productivity, and reduced burden on public services. It includes the value generated from things like improved health and wellbeing, reduced spend on other NHS appointments and improved productivity and reduced time off work.



This is all on top of patients receiving almost **1.2 billion prescriptions** safely and efficiently during the year from pharmacies.

Much of the social value delivered by community pharmacies is received by patients and carers, through health improvements – leading to economic benefits – and factors such as reduced travel time and sick leave. Plus billions of pounds worth of value is delivered to the NHS, through avoided treatment and healthcare delivery costs.

“Community pharmacies deliver outstanding value for money for the Government and taxpayers, as well as high quality services for patients, the public and the wider NHS. On average the net social value added by each individual pharmacy from just a subset of the services they offer was **nearly £3 million**. Investing further in community pharmacy could help Government to build an NHS fit for the future and deliver even more value.”

Janet Morrison, Chief Executive of Community Pharmacy England

Impact on Public Finances

An important component of the net social value is the impact on public finances. The impact of the analysed subset of community pharmacy services here was **a net saving of £5.3 billion**. These savings far exceed NHS community pharmacy funding, even on the wider pharmacy services) meaning that pharmacies deliver a significant net benefit to the Exchequer.

NHS & PUBLIC FINANCE IMPACT

	NHS SAVINGS / AVOIDED COSTS	£4.88bn
	OTHER PUBLIC-SECTOR SAVINGS / AVOIDED COSTS	£0.80bn
TOTAL PUBLIC-SERVICE SAVINGS		£5.68bn
	LESS: FUNDING PROVIDED (assessed services)	(£0.36bn)
	NET BENEFIT TO PUBLIC FINANCES	£5.32bn

Conclusion

Despite being under significant pressure, community pharmacies deliver enormous value to the public, health service and wider economy. **A sustainable community pharmacy network should be viewed as part of the infrastructure required to improve NHS productivity rather than simply as a cost pressure in the health budget.** Community Pharmacy England would like to see sustainable investment into core pharmacy services, expanding

TOP 5 VALUE-CREATING SERVICES

1		New Medicine Service (NMS) Improved adherence, better outcomes and long-term savings	£17.8bn
2		Minor illness advice Avoided GP visits, faster advice and reduced time off work	£7.6bn
3		Hypertension Case Finding Earlier detection prevents strokes, heart attacks and other costs	£1.3bn
4		Covid-19 Vaccination Service Higher uptake, health gains and productivity benefits	£1.18bn
5		Prescribing Error Management Identifying and resolving errors before they reach patients	£810m

on the high value services that already exist and building on the benefits already being realized.

How MPs can help

- Write to the Health Secretary or Ministers about community pharmacy;
- Raise the issue in Parliament — ask a question or support a debate;
- Meet with local pharmacy leaders or a visit a pharmacy in your constituency; or
- Champion pharmacy integration within local health structures and systems.

For any further information or support, please contact comms.team@cpe.org.uk