

Debate Pack

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Future of community pharmacies

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Overview

1.1

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework

Since April 2013 NHS England has held responsibility for commissioning NHS primary care services, including community pharmacy services. Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and local authorities are also free to commission further services from community pharmacies over and above those commissioned by NHS England.

Community pharmacies in England provide services under the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF), and can include a range of services categorised as 'Essential', 'Advanced', 'Enhanced' and 'Locally Commissioned':

- Essential services include dispensing medicines and appliances, providing advice on self-care and promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Advanced services could include the provision of Medicine Use Reviews, or offering NHS flu vaccinations.
- Enhanced services could include services such as anticoagulation monitoring.
- Locally commissioned services might include public health services commissioned by local authorities, such as smoking cessation services.

While pharmacy contractors must provide Essential services, they can choose whether they wish to provide Advanced and Enhanced services.

The [CPCF for 2019/20 to 2023/24](#) came into force from 1 October 2019. This commits £2.592 billion each year to community pharmacy. Additional funding has been available to community pharmacies for flu vaccination and the medicines delivery service, and during the pandemic for Covid-19 vaccination and test collection services.

The National Pharmacy Association report '[Impacts of current funding, policy and economic environment on independent pharmacy in England](#)' published in September 2020 provides the following summary of funding arrangements:

NHS England accounts for c. 87% of revenues received by pharmacy services in the UK, with other income coming from

additional services commissioned by local authorities and OTC [over the counter] sales.¹

1.2

Developments since the NHS Long Term Plan

Paragraph 4.21 of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) (January 2019) noted that pharmacists will have a key role in delivering the objectives of the NHS in England over the next 10 years, and provided the following on community pharmacy:

In community pharmacy, we will work with government to make greater use of community pharmacists' skills and opportunities to engage patients, while also exploring further efficiencies through reform of reimbursement and wider supply arrangements.²

The Government note that the CCPF set out the ambitions for community pharmacy to be further integrated in the NHS by providing more clinical services, treatment for minor illnesses and relieving pressure on other parts of the NHS, including primary care. A PQ response in April 2022 noted that new clinical services have been introduced, including the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service where staff in general practices and NHS 111 can refer patients to community pharmacies for advice and treatment of minor illnesses.³

The [Discharge Medicines Service](#) became a new Essential service within the CCPF on 15 February 2021. From this date NHS Trusts have been able to refer patients who would benefit from extra guidance around new prescribed medicines to community pharmacies, with the aim of reducing avoidable harm from medicines and hospital readmissions.⁴

In recent PQ responses the Government has said it is currently negotiating with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on the expanded and additional services to be introduced in the fourth year of the CCPF. These responses note that NHS England is investing a further £15.9 million over the next four years to support the expansion of frontline pharmacy staff in primary and community care, to provide increased access to educational, prescribing and clinical training and development opportunities for post registration pharmacy professionals to meet the needs of patients and local communities.⁵

¹ National Pharmacy Association, [Impacts of current funding, policy and economic environment on independent pharmacy in England](#), September 2020, page 7

² NHS, [NHS Long Term Plan](#), page 82, last updated 21 August 2019

³ PQ 150162, [Pharmacy](#), 19 April 2022

⁴ PSNC, [Discharge Medicines Service](#)

⁵ PQ149298, [Pharmacy](#), 19 April 2022

On 15 June 2022 NHS chief executive Amanda Pritchard announced that community pharmacies will be funded to spot early signs of cancer.⁶ This pilot will enable pharmacy staff who spot signs of cancer to directly refer people for scans and checks without needing to see a GP.

Under the Health and Care Act 2022, which received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022, every part of England will be covered by a statutory Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), in each of the 42 existing Integrated Care Systems (ICS) in England, bringing together NHS, local government and wider system partners to organise health and care services. ICBs will take on responsibility for most NHS services from July 2022, with a greater focus on closer working between NHS bodies. ICPs aim to promote integration between the NHS, local government, and other providers by producing an integrated care strategy for their area.

In June 2021 NHS England and NHS Improvement published an [ICS Design Framework](#). This noted that ICS NHS bodies might also take on community pharmacy services commissioning.⁷

Information on the impact of Covid-19 on community pharmacies can be found in the House of Commons Library debate pack briefing, [Pharmacy and the impact of Covid-19](#) (March 2021). This was prepared ahead of a [Westminster Hall debate on 11 March 2021](#). The briefing provides information on financial support provided to pharmacies during the pandemic, and the role of pharmacy in the vaccine roll-out.

In January 2022, the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), which represents NHS pharmacy contractors, produced a briefing on [community pharmacy funding and capacity](#) (PDF).⁸ The briefing stated that PSNC is calling for an uplift in funding, with “urgent attention... needed to maintain the system in its current form.”

⁶ NHSE/I, [High street pharmacies spot cancers in new NHS early diagnosis drive](#), 15 June 2022

⁷ NHSE/I, [ICS Design Framework](#), June 2021

⁸ PSNC, [Community pharmacy funding and capacity](#) (PDF), January 2022

2

How many community pharmacies are there in England?

There are currently around 11,100 community pharmacies in England⁹.

Numbers have fallen slightly over the past 5 years with a total of 209 recorded closures across England since 2017.

The table below gives details of the number of pharmacies currently open and closures since 2017 by NHS region.

Community pharmacies by NHS region England: May 2022			
	Currently Open	Closed since 2017	% closed since 2017
North West	1,646	38	2.3%
Midlands	2,120	43	2.0%
North East and Yorkshire	1,851	37	2.0%
South East	1,521	29	1.9%
London	1,815	33	1.8%
East of England	1,173	18	1.5%
South West	992	11	1.1%
England	11,118	209	1.8%

Source: [NHS Digital NHS organisations data downloads, edispensary](#)

⁹ NHS Digital, [NHS organisations data downloads edispensary](#), 2 May 2022

3 Parliamentary Material

3.1 Debates

[Covid-19: Community Pharmacies](#)

Motion, That this House has considered **community pharmacies** and the effect of the covid-19 outbreak

11 Mar 2021 | Backbench debates | House of Commons | 690 c227WH

[Community Pharmacies](#)

Motion that this House has considered the role of community pharmacies. Agreed to on question.

02 Oct 2019 | Debates | House of Commons | 664 cc303-326WH

[Community Pharmacies](#)

02 Nov 2016 | Opposition days | House of Commons | 616 cc897-951

3.2 Parliamentary Questions

[Pharmacy: Closures](#)

09 Jun 2022 | 13158

Asked by: **Peter Dowd**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to ensure that there are no further community pharmacy closures.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

Community pharmacies are private businesses which receive funding to provide NHS services. The closure or consolidation of a pharmacy is a commercial decision of the owner. However, the Department monitors the market and the effect of any such closures on patient access. The Pharmacy Access Scheme seeks to protect access for patients where pharmacies are more than a mile away from the next nearest pharmacy or 0.8 of a mile in areas of high deprivation.

[Pharmacy: Staff](#)

09 Jun 2022 | 13157

Asked by: **Peter Dowd**

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the mental health and wellbeing of the community pharmacy workforce.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: DHSC

No assessment has been made. However, employers in the National Health Service and the community pharmacy sector have a legal duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have extended the NHS Mental Health Support Helpline and NHS Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs to all community pharmacy teams. This provides access to free and confidential clinical assessments by trained mental health professionals plus access to talking therapies and other secondary care mental health services.

Primary Health Care

19 May 2022 | 1382

Asked by: Feryal Clark

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, with reference to the Answer of 25 April 2022 to Question 154467 on Primary Health Care, how much money has been allocated to (a) a national campaign to increase awareness of access routes to general practice services and (b) developing a campaign to promote the services of community pharmacy in 2022-23; and which companies were successful in those tenders.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: DHSC

The proposed budgets for national campaigns to raise awareness of access routes to general practitioner services and to encourage use of community pharmacy services for minor ailments have not yet been approved, so at present no funding has been allocated.

A competitive procurement process is currently underway to appoint the external agencies to work on all National Health Service campaigns in England.

Primary Health Care

25 Apr 2022 | 154467

Asked by: Feryal Clark

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department has plans to undertake a public campaign to communicate to patients how they can access primary care services.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: DHSC

NHS England and NHS Improvement are developing a communications strategy to inform the public on changes made to the delivery of general practice services. This includes proposals for a national campaign in 2022/23 to increase awareness of access routes to general practice services. NHS England and NHS Improvement are also developing a campaign to promote the services of community pharmacy in 2022/23.

Pharmacy

19 Apr 2022 | 150162

Asked by: Jim Shannon

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will make an assessment of increasing the role that pharmacies have in treating patients with minor ailments to reduce pressure on GPs.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: DHSC

We are currently negotiating with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on the expanded and additional services to be introduced in year four of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. The Framework set out the ambitions for community pharmacy to be further integrated in the National Health Service by providing more clinical services, treatment for minor illnesses and relieving pressure on other parts of the NHS, including primary care.

New clinical services have been introduced, including the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service where staff in general practices and NHS 111 can refer patients to community pharmacies for advice and treatment of minor illnesses.

Pharmacy

19 Apr 2022 | 149298

Asked by: Peter Dowd

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether he plans to tackle pressures faced by community pharmacies by increasing the size of the community pharmacy workforce.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: DHSC

We are currently negotiating with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on the expanded and additional services to be introduced in the fourth year of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. The Framework sets out the ambition for community pharmacy to be further integrated to provide more clinical services, such as treatment for minor illnesses, to relieve pressures elsewhere in the National Health Service.

New clinical services already introduced include the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, where staff in general practices and NHS 111 can refer patients to community pharmacies for advice and treatment of minor

illnesses, blood pressure checks and the Discharge Medicines Service, providing patients recently discharged from hospital with support with their medication. All pharmacies are now also healthy living pharmacies requiring teams to be aware of local health issues and proactively promoting healthy lifestyles.

NHS England is investing a further £15.9 million over the next four years to support the expansion of frontline pharmacy staff in primary and community care, to provide increased access to educational, prescribing and clinical training and development opportunities for post registration pharmacy professionals to meet the needs of patients and local communities.

Pharmacy: General Practitioners

25 Mar 2022 | 143688

Asked by: Sarah Champion

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent discussions he has had with community pharmacists on how that profession can (a) support GPs and (b) help relieve the pressures on GP waiting lists.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: DHSC

We are currently negotiating with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on the expanded and additional services to be introduced in the fourth year of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. The Framework sets out the ambition for community pharmacy to be better integrated and provide more clinical services, such as treatment for minor illnesses, to relieve pressures elsewhere in the NHS.

A number of new clinical services have been introduced including the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, where staff in general practices and NHS111 can refer patients to community pharmacies for advice and treatment of minor illnesses.

Pharmacy

22 Mar 2022 | 141134

Asked by: Mr Barry Sheerman

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to support local pharmacies.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: DHSC

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework for 2019 to 2024 commits £2.592 billion each year to community pharmacy. Additional funding has been available to community pharmacies for flu vaccination and the medicines delivery service, COVID-19 vaccination and Pharmacy Collect. Negotiations with the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee on what the sector will deliver in 2022/23 are ongoing.

Pharmacy

21 Mar 2022 | 141215

Asked by: Justin Madders

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, if he will take steps to recognise the role of Community Pharmacists as clinically trained professionals.

Answering member: Maria Caulfield | Department: DHSC

Community pharmacy employers, as private businesses, are responsible for the recruitment and retention of their staff. The Government fully recognises community pharmacists as clinically trained professionals. The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework sets out an increasing role for pharmacists in delivering more clinical services and utilising their skills to support the National Health Service.

NHS England is investing a further £15.9 million over the next four years to support the expansion of frontline pharmacy staff in primary and community care. This will provide increased access to educational, prescribing and clinical training and development opportunities for post registration pharmacy professionals.

4 Press material

The following is a selection of news and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

[Sajid Javid pledges to 'start with pharmacy' in primary care overhaul](#)

C+D

15 June 2022

[Community pharmacies will be unable to issue NHS fit notes under new legislation, government confirms](#)

The Pharmaceutical Journal

10 June 2022

[Redditch-based pharmacy chain gets counselling for staff over abuse](#)

BBC

9 June 2022

[England's new Chief Pharmaceutical Officer praises the work of community pharmacy](#)

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee

25 May 2022

[DH 'monitoring' impact of PCN pharmacist recruitment on community pharmacy](#)

C+D

23 May 2022

[Community pharmacy in Britain: rise of the independents](#)

The Pharmaceutical Journal

19 May 2022

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