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Community Pharmacy: A vital partner in Neighbourhood Health - Supporting Integrated Neighbourhood Teams to deliver local health priorities

Introduction: A readily available health resource in every community

Community pharmacies are an underutilised but essential partner in tackling local health challenges. Embedded in every neighbourhood, they offer walk-in access to clinical and preventative care services and are staffed by regulated healthcare professionals. They bring care closer to home and are critical to delivering the 'left shift' ambitions outlined in the 10 Year Health Plan by reducing reliance on hospital and GP services and improving care in the community.

This document will help **local NHS systems** – including **ICBs, Place partnerships, and Neighbourhood Teams** – understand the full potential of community pharmacy as a **proactive partner in integrated care**, especially in relation to **prevention, early intervention, medicines optimisation, and reducing health inequalities**.

The value of community pharmacy in meeting local health needs

Pharmacy strength	How it supports local NHS priorities
Walk-in access, no appointment needed, often evening and weekend opening.	Reduces pressure on GPs and A&E; enables same-day care and early intervention.

Pharmacy strength	How it supports local NHS priorities
Located in the heart of communities supported by staff from within the community.	Ideal for tackling health inequalities and engaging underserved populations.
Skilled, regulated healthcare teams comprising pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.	Enhance clinical capacity and support multi-disciplinary team working.
Trusted by the public.	Support behaviour change, adherence, and self-care through long-standing relationships.
Strong in prevention and early detection.	Vital partner for cardiovascular, respiratory and sexual health priorities.
Expert in medicines safety and optimisation.	Reduces admissions and supports safer prescribing and use of medicines.

There are 202 pharmacies across Derby City and Derbyshire County. 4 of these pharmacies were selected as IP Pathfinder sites.

Pharmacies in action: core services that support your priorities

1. Prevention and Early Detection

Community pharmacies already deliver high-impact NHS services that contribute to **population health goals**, such as:

- **Hypertension Care-Finding Service** – Identifies undiagnosed high blood pressure and refers for GP follow-up.
- **Smoking Cessation Service** – Seamless transfer of care from secondary to community settings.
- **Vaccinations** – **Adult flu, COVID-19, children’s flu, RSV and pertussis vaccination**, with HPV catch-up to be commissioned soon.
- **Pharmacy Contraception Service**– Expands access to oral emergency and regular contraception and supports women’s health.
- **Locally Commissioned Services** – typically commissioned by the ICB or local authority, tailored to local population health needs, including Supervised Consumption, provision of Naloxone and Needle Exchange Services.

All pharmacies meet **Healthy Living Pharmacy (HLP)** standards, ensuring patient interventions support behaviour change and health promotion.

2. Access to Medicines and Same-Day Care

Pharmacies help streamline access and reduce system burden through:

- **Dispensing and electronic Repeat Dispensing** – Ensures safe and efficient supply of medicines, freeing up general practice time.
- **Pharmacy First service** – Over 95% of pharmacies now offer consultations and NHS supply for seven common conditions (e.g. sore throat, sinusitis, UTIs), as well as minor illnesses referred via NHS 111, UEC or GP practices.

- **Independent Prescribing:** Currently a pathfinder programme is testing pharmacist-led prescribing for acute and long-term conditions. Responsibility is being transferred from NHS England to ICB management from January 2026.
- **Palliative and End-of-Life Support** – Ensures readily available access to essential medicines and support to patients and carers in community settings, helping patients remain at home.
- **Self-Care and OTC Support** – Enables people to manage minor illnesses, often as first contact or via NHS 111 referrals.

3. Living Well with Medicines

Pharmacies help people make the most of their medicines – essential for long-term condition management and medicines safety:

- **Discharge Medicines Service (DMS)** – Reduces readmissions and improves transitions of care.
- **New Medicine Service (NMS)** – Supports patients starting treatments for long-term conditions.

Population Health Link: Medicines optimisation and adherence support contribute to reducing avoidable admissions and improving outcomes for people with long-term conditions such as CVD, asthma and diabetes.

Enabling population health through community pharmacy

Community pharmacies are ideally positioned to **support neighbourhood-level population health goals**, particularly in:

- Reducing health inequalities
- Improving prevention and early diagnosis
- Managing long-term conditions
- Avoiding unnecessary admissions
- Enhancing medicines safety

Strengthening collaboration with community pharmacies – next steps

To unlock the full potential of community pharmacy in your [system / place / neighbourhood], we recommend three immediate actions:

1. Engage with your Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC)

The LPC is your expert local partner for pharmacy integration. Work with the LPC to:

- Map existing pharmacy service provision.
- Identify quick wins to relieve GP or urgent care pressures, for example optimising Pharmacy First referrals from GP practices.
- Explore opportunities to co-design and commission innovative local services that align with your population health priorities

2. Include pharmacy data in population health analytics

- Integrate pharmacy activity data into your BI tools and dashboards.
- Use this data to target prevention, early intervention, addressing unwarranted variation and service redesign.
- Understand uptake and variation in service delivery across neighbourhoods.

- Consider how pharmacy data can support your strategic goals.

3. Involve community pharmacy in pathway redesign

- Include LPC and other pharmacy leaders in Place and neighbourhood planning and transformation discussions.
- Embed community pharmacy in multidisciplinary neighbourhood teams and encourage multidisciplinary working that routinely includes community pharmacy.
- Invite the LPC to participate in local care pathway redesign activity; particularly in areas such as cardiovascular disease, long-term conditions, prevention and other medicine-related pathways.

Let's Work Together

No matter your neighbourhood's current development stage, community pharmacies are ready to support your ambitions. Their ability to deliver high-quality, high-volume services at the point of need within their local community makes them an invaluable asset in any integrated care model.

To explore how community pharmacy can support your neighbourhood priorities, contact your LPC:

Community Pharmacy Derbyshire – info@cpderbyshire.org.uk