



PHARMACY COMMISSIONING PLAN 2022 - 2025



THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY PHARMACY

The pharmacy commissioning plan is a roadmap of how community pharmacy services will be developed, delivered and funded over the next three years from 2022 - 2025.

Community pharmacies are one of the front doors to the health and social care service and with over 500 outlets, pharmacies are located across Northern Ireland, providing services to both urban and rural communities and often in areas of high deprivation.

An estimated 123,000 people across Northern Ireland use community pharmacies daily.

Community pharmacies play an important role in the safe supply of medicines and also provide advice and support to help people better understand their medicines.

Community pharmacists will also provide additional support to some patients who need extra help to take their medicines as intended by their doctor.

This plan ensures that essential services such as prescriptions and expert medicines advice from qualified pharmacists are maintained and where possible, enhanced and expanded.

WHAT OTHER SERVICES DO COMMUNITY PHARMACIES OFFER?

In recent years, in addition to dispensing prescriptions community pharmacies provide a number of patient-centered services and take part in a range of public health promotion campaigns.

This includes services to help people stop smoking, to promote cancer awareness and to provide support for people with addiction or chronic health care needs for example, needle exchange programmes, oxygen supply and palliative care.





Pharmacy First is a service that encourages the public to speak to their pharmacist first for a number of conditions. Patients can have a consultation virtually or in a private area with their local community pharmacist.

Pharmacists can offer advice and treatment for common conditions like sore throat and common colds, and minor ailments such as ear ache, athlete's foot or upset stomach. They recommend treatment and refer patients to other healthcare professionals as appropriate.

A new Pharmacy First service will enable women and young people to access the morning after pill, advice and support from their community pharmacist in a confidential and discreet manner.

Some pharmacies are also managing patients with urinary tract infections which means patients can be given the appropriate advice and treatment without the need to contact their GP.

This service also helps to alleviate pressures on other parts of the health and social care service such as GPs or Out of Hours.

Pharmacies today and going forward continue to play an important role in delivering both flu and COVID19 vaccinations.

WHAT NEW SERVICES WILL COMMUNITY PHARMACIES BE OFFERING?

As part of this commissioning plan, some new services are being considered.

Discharge Medicines Service

Under this service, hospitals will refer recently discharged patients to their community pharmacists. The pharmacist ensures they understand their new medicines or any changes to their medicine routine. This is an additional layer of safety for patients and ensures that medicine is taken correctly at the right dose and the right times.



Adherence Service

A service to help patients manage their medicines at home.



Care Home Service

This service will ensure that community pharmacies play a bigger role in supporting residents in care homes by ensuring that their medicines are managed correctly. Community pharmacists will support care home staff by helping to review how medicines are managed in care homes and offering training and advice to staff, where appropriate

Hypertension Service

This service will enable people, who may be at risk of having high blood pressure to go to community pharmacies to get their blood pressure checked. This service will help people better manage their health and also reduce pressure on GP practices for appointments..





LOOKING AHEAD

This commissioning plan builds on services already provided by community pharmacies and looks at ways to complement and integrate pharmacy services with the wider health and social care system.

One of the key ways is ensuring that community pharmacies have access to patient records so they can see the medicines already prescribed and ensure patients are getting the right medicines every time.

This requires an investment in the right IT infrastructure.