

The benefits of Community Pharmacy and GP collaboration

Why collaborate?

People move between different health settings, so it is important that everyone in different professions work together to help patients have joined up care. This is especially important with the increase of people living longer with more long-term conditions.



Working together can:

- Increase capacity in practices.
- Improve access to care for the public.
- Increase the utilisation of clinical skills of Community Pharmacists.
- Increase accessibility of health care services as often no appointment is required at a Community Pharmacy and many are open evenings and weekends.
- Support both GP business for example QoF registers and Community Pharmacy business to help ensure sustainability of these services.
- Increased safety for example the Community Pharmacist performing a clinical check before dispensing or letting the GP practice know if a person is having any issues with repeat prescriptions or frequent requests for an over the counter medicine.
- Increase knowledge of the patient's circumstances to help better meet their needs.
- Manage the repeat prescription process more efficiently with less patient queries.



Top tips for working together:

- Be proactive in building a relationship rather than just communicating when there is a problem.
- Arrange for a member of staff to spend time in each setting to increase understanding of each other's work pressures for example trainee GPs or foundation pharmacists. However, this could equally be admin or counter staff too.
- Relationships with the whole team are important – not just Pharmacist and GP/Practice Manager.
- Try and find an opportunity to meet together – is it possible to join a practice meeting?
- Agree communication methods, taking into account busy phone lines and the fact that the responsible community pharmacist is unable to leave the pharmacy for a significant period of time.
- Be curious about funding and contract differences and look to see how you can help each other. Community Pharmacy and GP practices are funded completely differently with all funding for Community Pharmacy being transactional and no payments for a registered number of patients.
- Update each other about any change in staffing.
- Encourage conversations about the time needed for each party to fulfil regular non urgent repeat requests to prevent patients having to come back and putting pressure on GP and Community Pharmacy staff. The NHS App suggests that patients order repeats with 3-5 working day notice.
- Look to see how you can work together to deliver flu vaccinations effectively.
- Update each other about any changes in policies for example prescribing policies which could affect each other.
- Update local practices regarding new services or any stock shortages.
- Be kind and considerate to each other – working in healthcare is a very demanding busy environment whatever the setting.



Community Pharmacy Services

The Pharmacy First service: This service includes the NHS Community Pharmacy Consultation service and, if needed, NHS medicines to treat seven common health conditions.

- Urinary tract infection (water infection) in women aged 16-64 years
- Sinusitis in those aged 12 years and over
- Sore throat in those aged 5 years and over
- Impetigo (a type of skin infection) in those aged over 1 year.
- Shingles in those 18 years and over
- Infected Insect bite in those aged over 1 year
- Ear ache in children 1 -17 years (note: this cannot be provided by distance selling pharmacies)

Referral into the Pharmacy First service rather than just signposting has advantages to GP surgeries and Community Pharmacy. These include moving the clinical responsibility from GP practice to the Community Pharmacy and payment to the pharmacy for any advice they give even if the patient does not meet the gateway criteria in the pathways.

“Pharmacy First has been a huge success. We have conducted over 200 consultations in two months, freeing up valuable GP appointments for the high acuity conditions. That’s over 200 patients who are being seen quicker, and at a location convenient to them. Before starting the service, myself and the Practice Manager at Orchard Medical Practice sat down and devised a plan as to how the referrals were going to work. This collaborative approach works really well for us. We have had lots of positive feedback from patients as they can have same day access and can be seen by a pharmacist straight away. It’s great to help our patients get the help they need sooner.” Orchard Pharmacy, Mansfield

Blood pressure service: opportunistic case finding for those aged over 40 years without a hypertension diagnosis and who have not had a blood pressure check in the last five years. Pharmacies offering the service can be found using the [service finder](#).

- Increased hypertension case finding for patients. Hypertension is the biggest risk factor for Cardiovascular Disease and is one of the top five risk factors for all premature death and disability in England. An estimated 5.5 million people have undiagnosed hypertension across the country.
- Referral for Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM) to the Community Pharmacy blood pressure service can reduce waits for ABPM.

Nottingham West Primary Care Network: “Within the first 6 months of the Nottingham West PCN service being fully running across all 12 GP practices, an additional 312 patients were diagnosed.”



Community Pharmacy Services

Oral contraception service: Pharmacies offering the service can be found using the [service finder](#).

- Increased access to oral contraception
- Free up nursing to time to be able to provide other services such as long-acting reversible contraception.
- A discussion about other types of contraception helping to increase knowledge and patient choice
- GP practice staff including receptions can refer into this service freeing up GP practice appointments.
- Pharmacies also offer emergency hormonal contraception. [Find a pharmacy offering emergency contraception](#)

Evans Pharmacy, East Leake: “The next-door surgery ask patients to contact the Community Pharmacy in the first instance for a pill check. This frees up practice nurses to undertake other long-term condition reviews. Women at busy points in their careers and family life value the range of appointment times on offer and the availability of remote consultations.”

Discharge Medicine Service: The service ensures better communication of changes to a patient’s medication when they leave hospital.

- Collaborating in this way reduces the potential risk of harm to the patient and risk of readmission to hospital
- Community Pharmacist reviews the medication the patient has been discharged with and works to resolve discrepancies this may involve in collaboration with the general practice/PCN pharmacy team.
- Community Pharmacist contacts the patient to check their understanding of their post-discharge medication and answer any questions, queries or concerns they have.

More information about the Discharge Medicines Service can be viewed at [NHS England » NHS Discharge Medicines Service](#)

New Medicine Service: follow up to check how someone is getting on with specific new medicines.

- Increased confidence that someone is taking their medicine as expected.

Medicines involved in the New Medicine Service can be viewed at [NHS England » NHS New Medicine Service](#)

Further information

Community Pharmacy Services information regarding blood pressure, oral contraception and Pharmacy First for GP practices in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB can be viewed on Teamnet [NHS Pharmacy First Service \(clarity.co.uk\)](#)