


4 December 2024

Subject:	Sandwell Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025
Presenting Officer and Organisation	Dr Lina Martino Consultant in Public Health and Director of NIHR HDRC Sandwell, Sandwell MBC Dr Ellen Blakey Specialty Registrar in Public Health, Sandwell MBC
	
Purpose of Report	Information and decision

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To consider and comment upon plans for completion of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA), due for publication in October 2025.
- 1.2 To approved the definition of ‘necessary services’ as set out for the purpose of assessing current service provision.

2. Links to Workstreams Set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Healthy Communities	Community pharmacies have an important role in supporting people to stay well, to get early help with health problems, and to manage long term health conditions.
Primary Care	Primary care includes community pharmacies, which are often the first point of contact for people with minor health problems or concerns about their health. Pharmacies also support people with managing ongoing health issues that require medication.
Integrated Town Teams	As a key part of their communities and the primary care system, community pharmacies can support improved access to appropriate, evidence-based care; continuity of care, including following discharge from secondary care; and a person-centred approach to meeting healthcare needs. Supporting people to manage long-term conditions can help to improve health outcomes and prevent

	unplanned, emergency admissions. PNA data provided at a town level will contribute towards developing a towns focused, needs-based approach.
Intermediate Care	As previous, supporting the management of long-term health conditions through community pharmacies can help to ensure continuity of care and reduce the need for urgent care.
Care Navigation	In addition to providing pharmaceutical services, community pharmacists provide advice and signposting to help people to access the services and care that they need.

3. Context and Key Issues

Background

- 3.1 The PNA is a report that assesses the pharmaceutical needs of the local population as well as the location and provision of pharmaceutical services. The report identifies whether there are any unmet needs or gaps in service provision, and produces recommendations to strengthen service provision.
- 3.2 Local Authority Health and Wellbeing Boards have a statutory duty to produce a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) for their area and to update this every 3 years. The last PNA for Sandwell was published in 2022.
- 3.3 The 2022 PNA concluded that there were sufficient pharmacies serving the Sandwell population, with good accessibility via walking or public transport. There were pharmacies in each locality open on weekends, with good availability of advanced services across the borough (see section 3.6 below).
- 3.4 Recommendations to strengthen pharmaceutical provision in Sandwell included greater access to pharmacies at the weekends; better promotion of the wider services offered by pharmacies (e.g. lifestyle advice); and further targeted engagement of underrepresented groups to ensure their needs are being met.

Scope and key definitions

- 3.5 The scope of the PNA will be broadly the same as for the previous (2022) PNA and will cover local pharmaceutical services. Distance selling pharmacies and dispensing appliance contractors will be included in surveys to understand the extent to which they are used, but are not considered relevant to assessing local provision.

- 3.6 Three different levels of pharmaceutical services are provided by pharmacies:
Essential services and clinical governance: provided by all pharmacy contractors and are commissioned by NHSE;

Advanced services: which can be provided by all contractors once accreditation requirements have been met and are commissioned by NHSE;

Locally commissioned (enhanced) services: commissioned by Local Authorities, ICB, and NHSE in response to the needs of the local population.
- 3.7 The 2013 regulations require the Health & Wellbeing Board to include a statement of those services that it has defined as being 'necessary' to meet the need for the pharmaceutical services within the pharmaceutical needs assessment. There is no definition of 'necessary' services within the regulations, and the Health and Wellbeing Board therefore has complete freedom in this matter.
- 3.8 Consensus from the PNA Steering Group is that all essential services should be considered as 'necessary' as they are required to be provided by all pharmacies. Advanced services should also be considered as 'necessary', with the exclusion of services that can be obtained elsewhere. The excluded advanced services include Appliance Use Review, Stoma Appliance Customisation, Lateral Flow Device Service +/- the Smoking Cessation advanced service. Enhanced services are not to be considered 'necessary' due to being optional services targeted to meet local needs.

Timeline for completion

The approximate timeline for completing the PNA is as follows:

- W/C 25 November – W/C 16 December 2024 – contractor and resident surveys online; gather and assess relevant information on health needs and priorities
- Dec 2024- Jan 2025 – complete analysis of survey responses/additional consultation data
- Jan 2025- additional public consultation activities
- Feb 2025 – share draft report with PNA Steering Group
- 12 Mar 2025 – take consultation draft report to Health & Wellbeing Board
- W/C 17 Mar – W/C 12 May 2025 – statutory 60- day consultation period

- May – Jun 2025 – work with Steering Group to respond to consultation and refine draft
- Jun 2025 – take final draft report and recommendations to Health & Wellbeing Board
- Final PNA published by Oct 2025

4. Engagement

- 4.1 A PNA Steering Group has been convened, which includes members from Sandwell Public Health, Sandwell Local Pharmaceutical Committee, the Black Country Integrated Care Board, and Healthwatch Sandwell. The role of the Steering Group is to ensure that all relevant information is included in the PNA, and that local contractors and residents are appropriately consulted in developing the report.
- 4.2 Stakeholder engagement to inform the content of the PNA will be carried out in two stages:
- 1) Engaging with contractors (pharmacists) and local residents to understand current provision and population needs; and
 - 2) Public consultation on the draft PNA (60-day statutory period).
- 4.3 The contractor survey will be carried out online only in the first instance, using Snap software. Postal copies will only be sent if necessary and on request.
- 4.4 Questions relating to COVID-19 have been removed from the contractor and resident surveys, as they are no longer relevant to assessing service provision. Questions where the information can be obtained elsewhere have also been removed.
- 4.5 In addition to the online and paper surveys for local residents, which will include translated versions, additional methods of engagement will ensure that underrepresented groups are included, in line with the recommendations from the previous PNA. We are proposing to provide small grants to voluntary and community organisations to support volunteers to complete surveys with their service users, or to carry out focus groups to explore their experiences in more depth.

5. Implications

Resources:	The Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) will be completed in-house by the Research & Intelligence team based within the Public Health directorate. The costs
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	associated with surveys and community consultation will be met through the team's budget.
Legal and Governance:	Local Authority Health & Wellbeing Boards have a statutory duty to develop and update a PNA for their area. This requirement is set out in the NHS Act 2006 (the "2006 Act"), amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The PNA must be updated and published every 3 years.
Risk:	No direct implications arising from this report.
Equality:	Community pharmacies are often the first point of contact for local residents with health concerns. Having high quality pharmacy services can help to reduce inequalities in health by supporting people to stay well and manage health conditions in their communities. As this is not a new policy, service or function but an assessment of current provision, an Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out at this stage. However, the enhanced approach to consultation and engagement will help to ensure that there is appropriate representation across our diverse communities and protected groups.
Health and Wellbeing:	Community pharmacies have an important role in supporting people to stay well, to get early help with health problems, and to manage long term health conditions.
Social Value:	No direct implications arising from this report.
Climate Change:	We are proposing to carry out the survey for contractors (pharmacies) online only so that we reduce unnecessary printing and waste. This is in line with ambitions to become a carbon-neutral council by 2030.
Corporate Parenting:	No direct implications arising from this report.

6. Appendices

Appendix One – Sandwell Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022
Appendix Two – Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Information

7. Background Papers

[Sandwell Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022](#)

[Pharmaceutical needs assessments: information pack - GOV.UK](#)