


29 July 2025

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

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To review and approve the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) for consultation, following successful completion of contractor and resident surveys.
- 1.2 To approve the definition of ‘necessary services’ in section 3.5 for the purpose of assessing current service provision (already discussed at previous inquorate HWBB).
- 1.3 To approve an extension in the timeline of approval of the final PNA to HWBB December 2025. The timeline was last discussed at Board in Dec 2024, with the aim of going to consultation from March 25. However, a revision to this timetable is needed in order to increase the response rate from contractors; accommodate good translation of the materials into our key languages; and extend community engagement activity.

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.^{1,2} 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 & 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 2022.⁷

Key definitions

- 3.3 Three different levels of pharmaceutical services are provided by pharmacies:
- **Essential services:** mandatory services, provided by all pharmacy contractors, and are commissioned by NHS England.
 - **Advanced services:** can be provided by pharmacy contractors, only if accreditations requirements have been met, and are commissioned by NHS England.

- **Enhanced or locally commissioned services:** optional services, developed to meet the needs of the local population, and are commissioned by NHS England or ICB Black Country respectively.
- 3.4 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 & Wellbeing Board therefore has complete freedom in this matter.⁸
- 3.5 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 that support the delivery plan for recovering access to primary care should be included in the definition of ‘necessary services.’ The excluded services are Appliance Use Review, Stoma Appliance Customisation, Smoking Cessation Service, and Lateral Flow Device Service. The definition excludes Appliance Use Review and Stoma Appliance Customisation services as these are often accessed at Dispensing Appliance Contractors, rather than community pharmacies. The Smoking Cessation Service is excluded from the definition as the current referral pathway from inpatient Smoking Cessation Services is to a specialist external provider commissioned by Sandwell MBC, not currently delivered by community pharmacies.

Timeline for completion

- 3.7 The approximate timeline for completing the PNA is as follows:
- Contractor and resident surveys online; gather and assess relevant information on health needs and priorities- completed
 - Complete analysis of survey responses/additional consultation data- completed
 - Consider widening contractor and resident engagement to improve response rates and reach into communities with a low on-line response rate
 - Share draft report with PNA Steering Group- completed
 - Take consultation draft report to Health & Wellbeing Board (July 25 Board)
 - August- October 2025– statutory 60-day consultation period, including additional engagement activities to increase public representation
 - December 2025- take final report to Health & Wellbeing Board, amended in the light of consultation

- Final PNA published following December Board approval December 2025

Conclusions^{1,3}

3.8

- Most people can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes on public transport or 15 minutes walking, so there are enough pharmacies in the right locations in Sandwell.
- Every town in Sandwell has a pharmacy open early, late, and on weekends. Despite this, there is still a demand for more pharmacies to be open on weekends.
- Pharmacies can offer a range of different services, but many people do not know which services their local pharmacy provides.
- There are enough pharmacies across Sandwell offering the following services: Flu Vaccination, Hypertension Case-Finding Service, New Medicines Service, Lateral Flow Device Service, and Pharmacy First Service.
- There are no pharmacies that can give Emergency Hormonal Contraception free of charge without a prescription in Tipton and Rowley Regis.
- Not many people use Stop Smoking Services, Stoma Appliance Customisation Service, and Appliance Use Review Service from community pharmacies in Sandwell. There are other places to access these services, separately from pharmacies.
- Many pharmacies have wheelchair access (86.8%), but not many have hearing loops (30%) to support people with people with impaired hearing or are deaf. Many people responding to the survey were not sure about what support is available in pharmacies to help people with disabilities.

Recommendations^{1,3}

3.9

- Services provided by pharmacies should be widely promoted by pharmacies and other healthcare services. This could be through use of posters, leaflets, and video advertisements and must be easily accessible to residents.
- More pharmacies should offer the “morning after pill” free of charge, especially in Tipton and Rowley Regis.
- Pharmacies should be easily accessible to all:
 - Wheelchair access: all pharmacies should have wheelchair access.

- Language and communication: all pharmacies should be able to provide spoken and written information in various accessible formats to ensure that people with hearing or visual impairment, or do not have English as their first language, have equal access. These might include large print written information and use of 'Language Line' for example.
- The support available to ensure everyone has fair and equal access to pharmacies should be widely promoted by pharmacies.

In preparing future Sandwell PNAs officers should be mindful of the need to:

- a) Include local residents in the group working on the PNA.
- b) Consider alternative methods of engagement at the initial consultation stage to ensure that we capture diverse views at an earlier stage of the process and avoid revision to the production timetable.
- c) Use datasets to obtain information on service sign-up and service activity, and contractors' survey for information on willingness to sign-up. This would help to avoid discrepancies between contractor surveys and datasets and shorten the contractor survey.

4. Engagement

- 4.1 The PNA Steering Group includes members from Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council Public Health, Community Pharmacy Black Country (formerly 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 has two stages:
 - 1) Engaging with contractors (pharmacists) and local residents to understand current provision and population needs; and
 - 2) Public and professional consultation on the draft PNA (60-day statutory consultation period).^{4,5}
- 4.3 The residents' survey was mainly online, with paper versions available if required. Translated versions of the survey were also produced (Bengali, Panjabi, Polish, and Urdu) although it was found that these were not accessed. The survey was promoted through various channels such as Healthy Sandwell social media, corporate communications, and in person engagement activities e.g. through Jubilee Park Community centre (Tipton), Agewell Forum (Rowley Regis), and SHAPE forum.

- 4.4 The contractor survey, following an extension to its completion period, yielded responses from 70/79 pharmacies and the residents survey received 255 responses.⁶ Young people, males, ethnic minority groups, LGBTQ+ groups, full time parents and carers were underrepresented in the respondents' demographics.
- 4.5 The groups underrepresented in respondents' demographics often face health inequalities, unmet pharmaceutical needs, and are less likely to engage with traditional survey methods. Their limited representation means that targeted engagement is crucial to ensure an accurate and equitable assessment. As part of the amended timeline, we therefore plan to undertake targeted engagement with these groups, with the support of voluntary organisations. The format of this depends on what the organisation deems most effective with their target group. This includes, but is not limited to, facilitating assisted completion of surveys, focus groups, and interactive sessions using tools such as Mentimeter.

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 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. An Equality Impact Assessment ⁷ has been carried out and is in draft form. 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 encouraged online returns of surveys for contractors (pharmacies) to 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

1. Sandwell PNA 2025: Draft for consultation



APPENDIX 1 -
Sandwell PNA 2025 d

2. Sandwell PNA 2025: Appendices for consultation



APPENDIX 2 -
Sandwell PNA 2025 A

3. Sandwell PNA 2025: Summary artwork



APPENDIX 3 -
Sandwell PNA 2025 S

4. Sandwell PNA 2025 Consultation Public Survey



APPENDIX 4 - PNA
2025 Consultation Pu

5. Sandwell PNA 2025 Consultation Professionals Survey



APPENDIX 5 - PNA
2025 Consultation Prc

6. Equality Impact Assessment for Sandwell PNA 2025 (draft)



APPENDIX 6 -
Equality Impact Asses:

7. Background Papers

7. [Sandwell Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022](#)

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