

***Pharmacy Update***  
***Worcestershire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee***

**National Commissioner of Community Pharmacy Services**

NHS England is the national commissioner of community pharmacy services and our role is to ensure the NHS provides safe, effective, high quality patient care and services within community pharmacy and to ensure that the NHS lives within its means.

We understand the announcement from the Department of Health is difficult news for community pharmacy. It effectively means that there will be a 4% reduction in funding during 2016/17 and a further 3.4% reduction in 2017/18. Alongside this, however, there will be funding to support innovation and integration of community pharmacy; helping to drive up quality of services and advice in areas such as dementia, long term conditions like diabetes and self-care for example.

NHS England wishes to reassure the public that the efficiencies which are being asked of community pharmacy will be manageable and that community pharmacy is not under threat.

We are not asking community pharmacy to do more, but to work with NHS England over the next five years to develop how we can do things differently.

**What pharmacists can offer**

Community pharmacists are skilled, registered health professionals whose initial training is just one year less than their medical colleagues. They can be trusted to ensure the patient's best interests are at the heart of the care they deliver. Pharmacists are now undergoing training in many areas to become prescribers in their own right and work closely with their general practice colleagues to improve access to clinical services. This is central to helping patients get optimal outcomes from their medicines. Too many people have problems with their medicines, leading to poor outcomes, such as unnecessary admissions to hospitals.

It's useful to remember that the overall budget for community pharmacy is still significant and we would now expect the circa 100 community pharmacies in Worcestershire to make the efficiencies they have been planning and adopt new working practices rather than immediately threatening closures.

**How our pharmacists work**

It is acknowledged that community pharmacy is being held back by outdated working practices and the old-fashioned view of the pharmacist as someone who simply dispenses medicines at the back of the shop rather than as a trained clinical professional who provides specialist advice to patients and doctors from a professionally orientated clinical environment. Working within the funding provided and with the pharmacy profession, NHS England is determined to change this.

To help make this happen, NHSE has secured £42 million of extra funding for 2016 - 2018 and has announced the [Pharmacy Integration Fund](#) which will support community pharmacy as it develops new clinical pharmacy services. Whilst this is work in progress, residents in Worcestershire, will in time begin to see some of the benefits of this funding in the form of clinical pharmacists in general practice and direct referrals to community

pharmacy via NHS 111 for urgently needed medication and for common ailments or minor injuries.

### Patient Online

Patient uptake of digital services has been low and this needs to change. Only 14% of respondents in Department of Health research said they had ordered repeat prescriptions online and 8% received a text message reminder about repeat prescriptions. NHS England is planning to encourage greater uptake of digital technology and electronic repeat prescriptions by encouraging take up of Patient Online services including making appointments online and patients accessing their medical records on line as appropriate. Rather than increasing the burden on GPs the aim is to enable community pharmacists to take a greater role within the local NHS – helping patients where it is safe and appropriate.

### New Ways of Working

As a result of new ways of working in general practice, nearly 500 pharmacists are already working in GP surgeries and care homes, enabling more people to benefit from the clinical expertise of pharmacists and relieve the pressure on general practice waiting times and on hospital admissions. In Worcestershire, for example, several GP practices were successful in bidding for a share of national monies to pilot these roles. There is also a local pilot underway in Worcestershire aimed at improving medication reviews for patients discharged from hospital which helps the patients get the best from their medicines, stay healthy at home and reduce the number of hospital readmissions whilst also facilitating a more joined up approach between primary and secondary care.

NHS England has a duty to ensure there is a high quality NHS pharmacy service that is accessible, safe and welcoming for patients. Pharmacies that are considered essential – for instance, in rural and more isolated areas – are being protected by the new Pharmacy Access Scheme. Across Worcestershire, 14 pharmacies will have access to this Scheme (see below) which will essentially mitigate against the reduction in funding. There will still be more than enough funding to provide accessible NHS pharmacy services in every community in England. In addition, the new digital platforms will increase rather than decrease convenience.

TESCO IN-STORE PHARMACY	IN-STORE PHARMACY
ARELEY KINGS PHARMACY	38 ARELEY COMMON
LLOYDSPHARMACY	UNIT 3-4 TESCO'S COMPLEX
MORRISONS PHARMACY	BUNTSFORD PARK ROAD
STOCK & LINDSAY LTD	3 MATCHBOROUGH CENTRE
WOODROW PHARMACY	9 WOODROW CENTRE
ROWLANDS PHARMACY	CHURCH HILL N/HOOD CENTRE
KNIGHTS PHARMACY	1196B EVERS HAM ROAD
NIGHTINGALE PHARMACY	UNIT 2, HERONSWOOD ROAD
J & J PHARMACY LTD	177 BATH ROAD
LLOYDSPHARMACY	FISH HILL
KNIGHTS CHEMIST	155-157 GOLDEN CROSS LANE
ST MARY PHARMACY	FARMERS WAY
MORRISONS PHARMACY	THE LINK

It is worth remembering that the current Worcestershire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA), published by Worcestershire Health and Well Being Board, highlights 84% of patients that took part in the consultation stated that they have easy access to pharmacy services with no problems.

There are some much needed reforms in this new contractual framework which will help to improve services for patients. For the first time, a scheme that rewards quality is being introduced as a recognition that the NHS expects to work with high quality, clinically focused pharmacies. As an example, the PNA flagged that patients in Worcestershire expressed a lack of awareness of the range of services available from pharmacies and a need for contractors to promote their individual service profiles via the NHS Choices website. The Quality Scheme will require participating pharmacies to ensure their NHS Choices profiles are kept up-to-date and encourage patient satisfaction surveys to be published on NHS Choices. Further details at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-pharmacy-reforms>