

Help Us, Help You Pharmacy Advice

Campaign Q&A

February 2019

This document is designed to provide responses on questions that may arise as a result of the Help Us, Help You - Pharmacy Advice campaign.

Please note that the document itself should not be used for wider distribution or cascaded, but to provide answers to specific questions as they arise.

This document is strictly embargoed until 00.01 Monday 4 February 2019

1. About the Help Us, Help You - Pharmacy Advice campaign

What is the Help Us, Help You - Pharmacy Advice campaign?

Help Us, Help You - Pharmacy Advice is a national campaign to raise awareness of and promote the use of community pharmacy for clinical advice for minor health concerns.

The campaign aims to raise awareness that the local pharmacy is the first place to go for clinical advice or over the counter medicines to treat minor health concerns such as coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy troubles, aches and pains and many more.

The campaign will highlight how community pharmacists and pharmacy technicians – who are qualified healthcare professionals - can offer clinical assessment and advice, reassurance, and over the counter medicines for a range of symptoms and use of a private consultation room should it be required.

Help Us, Help You - Pharmacy Advice has been commissioned by NHS England and will run from the 4th February 2019 until the end of March 2019. It will be supported by advertising (TV, out of home posters, social media and search); partnerships with community pharmacies, local authorities, GP surgeries, charities and community hubs; and PR.

Help Us, Help You - Pharmacy Advice is part of NHS England's 'Help Us Help You' campaign which aims to help people understand what they can do to manage their own health and use the most appropriate NHS services to get the best out of the NHS this winter, and beyond.

What are the objectives of the campaign?

The objectives of Help Us, Help You - Pharmacy Advice are to increase people's use of community pharmacy services by encouraging them to access clinical advice and support; ensure the best use of medicines; improve patient outcomes and ensure we make the best use of clinical expertise of the pharmacy team.

The campaign should also help to free up GPs' time for more urgent 'same day' appointments, which will help to reduce attendances at A&E departments and support the NHS during periods of pressure.

Who is the target audience?

The primary audience for this campaign is all adults who are suffering minor health concerns that do not require a GP appointment, with a secondary focus on parents and carers of children.

What partners will the campaign work with?

Partners play a vital point of engagement with our target audience and can help communicate the key campaign messages in relevant settings. We are working with a wide range of partners including those from the third sector, national stakeholder organisations, community pharmacies, GP practices and dental surgeries.

What is available to partners?

There is a range of brand resources that will be made available for partners to use, including: TV adverts, a PR film, communication materials, social media toolkits, leaflets and posters. Help Us, Help You resources can be ordered and downloaded free of charge from the Public Health England [Public Health England Campaign Resource Centre](#).

What is the budget for this year's campaign?

The total media spend for the campaign this year is approximately £1.3m.

2. About pharmacy advice**What can community pharmacists and pharmacy technicians help with?**

Community pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are qualified healthcare professionals who can offer advice and over the counter medicines to effectively and safely manage a range of minor health concerns.

Help Us, Help You – Pharmacy Advice will remind people that local pharmacy teams offer a convenient clinical service for minor health concerns with no appointment needed, and that, if symptoms suggest it's something more serious, they have the right clinical training to ensure people get the help they need immediately and can refer patients to a GP or A&E where necessary.

Specifically, what can pharmacy teams help with?

Pharmacy teams consist of trained and regulated health professionals and can help with many aspects of health care.

The role of the pharmacist includes:

- Clinically advising people on the treatment of minor health concerns such as coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy troubles, teething and aches and pains
- Clinically checking prescriptions for safety, appropriateness, and cost effectiveness and supervising dispensing
 - Answering questions and providing support to patients with their medicines
 - Ensuring people take their medicines safely
- Explaining to patients how to take new medicines
- Providing public health interventions, such as flu vaccinations

The role of the pharmacy technician involves:

- Preparation, assembly, sale and supply of medicines under the supervision of a registered pharmacist
- Clinical activities such as assisting patients with the most beneficial inhaler technique
- Issuing medicines to patients, explaining how to use them, answering questions
- Accuracy checking of dispensing by specially trained dispensing technicians/assistants
- Providing some public health services to patients, i.e. supervising methadone consumption, providing smoking cessation services and support for weight loss

How accessible are pharmacists?

Most people live within easy reach of a pharmacy, there are around 11,700¹ locations in England and many offer extended opening hours in the evenings and at the weekends

What qualifications do pharmacy teams hold?

Every pharmacist is an expert in medicines and trained in managing minor illnesses and providing health and wellbeing advice, so they are the right person to see for minor health concerns. They train for five years in the use of medicines before they qualify and register with the professional regulator, and some also have an additional prescribing qualification.

Pharmacy technicians are also registered health professionals, subject to the same fitness to practice framework as pharmacists. They can help assist patients with the most beneficial inhaler

technique, or helping patients understand the correct dose and frequency of a new medicine. They are there to help the NHS treat more people safely, conveniently and well.

What if a patient visits a pharmacist but needs opinion or advice from additional healthcare professionals?

Pharmacists are trained for five years to assess symptoms, if symptoms suggest it's something more serious, pharmacists have the right clinical training to ensure people get the help they need immediately and can refer patients to a GP or A&E where necessary.

Where can I find my nearest pharmacy service?

Search [nhs.uk/pharmacyadvice](https://www.nhs.uk/pharmacyadvice) for more information and to help you find your nearest pharmacy services and their opening hours.

How many NHS pharmacists are there in England?

There are around 11,700ⁱ community pharmacies in England providing a service to around 1.2 million people visiting for health queries every day.ⁱⁱ

There are 46,890 registered pharmacists and 19,401 registered pharmacy technicians in England.ⁱⁱⁱ

Search [nhs.uk/pharmacyadvice](https://www.nhs.uk/pharmacyadvice) for more information and to help you find your nearest pharmacy services.

Why should people go to a pharmacist instead of a doctor?

Community pharmacists are qualified healthcare professionals who can provide clinical advice and over the counter medicines to effectively and safely manage a range of minor health concerns. Importantly, they can do this quickly with no appointment needed. If symptoms suggest it's something more serious, pharmacists have the right clinical training to ensure people get the help they need immediately and can refer patients to a GP or A&E where necessary.

Is this campaign not just a way to stop people from going to their GP?

The main aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of and promote the use of community pharmacy for clinical advice for minor health concerns.

Pharmacists are trained for five years to assess symptoms, if symptoms suggest it's something more serious, pharmacists have the right clinical training to ensure people get the help they need immediately and can refer patients to a GP or A&E where necessary.

By promoting the use of community pharmacy services, the NHS can help ensure we all make the best use of the clinical expertise of the pharmacy team, help people understand what they can do to manage their own health and use the most appropriate NHS services to get the best out of the NHS this winter, and beyond.

Is it responsible to direct people to pharmacy instead of GPs?

Community pharmacists are highly trained health professionals and part of the NHS - they have been treating minor health concerns safely and effectively for many years. Importantly, they can do this quickly with no appointment needed. If symptoms suggest it's something more serious, pharmacists have the right clinical training to ensure people get the help they need immediately and can refer patients to a GP or A&E where necessary.

What is NHS England doing to support pharmacy and pharmacy professionals to be the first point of contact for winter illnesses?

As part of the Help Us, Help You – Pharmacy Advice Campaign, we are reminding the public to visit their local pharmacy for clinical advice for minor health concerns including coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy troubles, aches and pains and many more. Further to this we have developed a range of resources for pharmacies to use to encourage the use of community pharmacy for minor health concerns.

What is the role of community pharmacy in delivering the Long-Term Plan?

The NHS Long Term Plan sets out that NHS England will work with government to make greater use of community pharmacists' skills and opportunities to engage patients.

Community pharmacists will also play a role in providing opportunities for the public to check their health, for instance through tests for high blood pressure.

The NHS is already making better use of the clinical skills of community pharmacy professionals to advise and treat patients and this will continue. The NHS needs the clinical skills of community pharmacy professionals to achieve its vision for better safety, outcomes and value from medicines. As set out in the NHS Long Term Plan, and subject to contractual negotiation,

NHS111 could start referring patients with minor illnesses on to all community pharmacies to support urgent care.

How does the role of clinical pharmacist fit with the role of the community pharmacist?

Clinical pharmacists do an 18-month clinical training programme, in addition to their original five-year qualification.

Their role includes:

- Structured medication reviews for:
 - people with dementia, cardiovascular disease and other major conditions
 - care home residents
 - people with learning disabilities and autism
- Improving safety, outcomes and value from medicines through a person-centred approach
- Reducing inappropriate antibiotic use

It is still early days in the development of Primary Care Networks (PCNs), but for those who may be questioning how this works, think of PCNs as collaborations across the various professionals and organisations involved in a patient's care, working to improve population health, with GPs as lead clinicians supported by physiotherapists, nurses, therapists, clinical pharmacists and pharmacy technicians.

PCNs present a great opportunity to integrate for all pharmacy professionals in primary care. As community pharmacy focuses more on the minor illness aspects of urgent care, and supporting patients to prevent ill health, it will need to have strong links with PCN clinical pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. It is also likely that some community pharmacists could be recruited to work in clinical pharmacist roles, for which they would undertake the additional 18-month training requirement.

Where does the Long-Term Plan and new GP contract fit in?

Now, NHS England is adopting the same approach in primary and community care, outlined in the new NHS Long Term Plan for 2019-24 which sets out to boost 'out-of-hospital' care and dissolve the divide between primary and community health services to create an integrated service for patients.

For pharmacy this means expanding the numbers of clinical pharmacists far beyond the current goal of 2,000. By 2023/24, a typical Primary Care Network (PCN) of 50,000 patients could choose to have its own team of approximately six whole-time-equivalent clinical pharmacists: enough to give effect to that ambition. Alternatively, the network could decide on a higher, or lower, number, depending on the local context.

A dedicated team will make it possible to create varied and tailored roles: undertaking structured medication reviews, improving medicine optimisation and safety, supporting care homes, as well as running practice clinics. Teams of clinical pharmacists will be supervised by a senior clinical pharmacist, and through this model it will be easier to support pharmacist professional and career development at a network rather than practice level.

Crucially clinical pharmacists will be working in a consistent way across the country (see Page 97 of the GP contract for more detail); and all will complete the 18-month additional training requirement. The role will operate at the level of a PCN, as part of a multidisciplinary team, and so pharmacists will see patients wherever it makes sense. It might be in a patient's own home, in a care home, in a GP surgery, or at another community venue; it will involve working as part of a multi-professional team.

Clinical pharmacists currently funded under the existing general practice and care homes schemes, subject to meeting the criteria set out in the GP contract document, will be able to transfer onto the new network contract arrangements.

This year NHS England will explore the practicality of allowing the reimbursement of pharmacy technicians as a part of the PCN team.

Will there be enough pharmacists to do all this?

Under the NHS Long Term Plan a new workforce implementation plan is being created to ensure we have the right people in place to fulfil these roles. We will be working with partners from across the NHS and national pharmacy organisations.

ⁱ NHS England Data, September 2018

ⁱⁱ Public Health England, Royal Society of Public Health (2016) Building Capacity: Realising the potential of community pharmacy assets for improving the public's health. <https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-work/policy/pharmacies-in-the-community.html> Accessed via https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643520/Pharmacy_a_way_forward_for_public_health.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ General Pharmaceutical Council data (2019)