
Pan-Lancashire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2025

Foreword

Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire's health and wellbeing boards (HWBs) have responsibility for the ongoing review, development and publication of the pan-Lancashire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).

This is a statutory document, by virtue of the National Health Services (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013. The content of the PNA must be considered by those responsible for the approval of pharmacy contract applications at NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (LSCICB) as well as those commissioning other related health services for our local population. From a primary care perspective, this includes both the successors of clinical commissioning groups as well as local authorities, looking to commission and develop local services from pharmacy contractors, general practice, dental, and optometry.

This is our fourth formal PNA, across pan-Lancashire, which outlines the pharmaceutical services available to our population and makes several key recommendations covering the period 2025 through to 2028.

This document will assist all commissioning partners when reviewing our commissioning arrangements for community pharmacy, recognising the pivotal role that our community pharmacy colleagues have in helping us all to develop and deliver the best possible pharmaceutical services for our local communities across Lancashire.

We commend this report to you, and we look forward to your continuing involvement.



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Chair of Blackburn with Darwen Health and Wellbeing Board



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Acknowledgements

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The three health and wellbeing boards across pan-Lancashire would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the stakeholders and members of the public and thank them for their participation in the consultation and development of the pharmaceutical needs assessment.

Executive summary

The three health and wellbeing boards (HWBs) across pan-Lancashire (Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire County Council) have a statutory responsibility to publish and keep up to date a statement of the needs for pharmaceutical services of the population in its area. This is referred to as a pharmaceutical needs assessment (PNA) and needs to be published before 1 October 2025.

This PNA describes the needs of the citizens of the pan-Lancashire area for pharmacy services.

This PNA includes information on

- pharmacies across pan-Lancashire and the services they currently provide
- maps of providers of pharmaceutical services across the pan-Lancashire area
- pharmaceutical contractors in neighbouring HWB areas
- potential gaps in provision and likely future needs for the population of pan-Lancashire
- opportunities for existing pharmacies to provide local public health services

Decisions on whether to open new pharmacies are made by NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (LSCICB). When making the decision, the LSCICB is required to refer to the local PNA. As these decisions may be appealed or challenged via the courts, it is important that PNAs, both in their content and in the process of their construction, comply with regulations and that mechanisms are established to keep the PNA up to date. In accordance with these regulations, the PNA will be updated every three years.

1. Context

The PNA for the pan-Lancashire area is undertaken in the context of the needs of the local population. The health and wellbeing needs of the local population are described in the Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire joint strategic needs assessments (JSNAs). The PNA does not duplicate these detailed descriptions of health needs and should be read in conjunction with the three JSNAs across pan-Lancashire.

Deprivation in Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and many parts of Lancashire County Council is higher than the national average and approximately 33%, 24% and 20% of children live in poverty, respectively. In all three local authorities, life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average.

To ensure that pharmaceutical services are commissioned in line with population need, the health and wellbeing boards and their partners will monitor the development of major housing sites, and will provide supplementary statements, if necessary, in accordance with regulations.

2. Process

This PNA was undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out in regulations 3-9 Schedule 1 of the NHS (Pharmaceutical Services and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013.

Undertaking the PNA, the pan-Lancashire steering group sought the views of stakeholders to identify issues that affect the commissioning of pharmaceutical services and to meet local health needs and priorities. A survey was administered as part of this PNA, targeting pharmacies, to collect information on the services they provide. In addition, a consultation with pharmacy users was

undertaken by Healthwatch Blackburn with Darwen, Healthwatch Blackpool and Healthwatch Lancashire.

A 60-day public consultation was undertaken to seek the views of members of the public and other stakeholders, on whether they agree with the contents of this PNA and whether it addresses issues that they consider relevant to the provision of pharmaceutical services. The feedback was gathered and logged, and all necessary changes made to the PNA document.

The PNA steering group has agreed that pharmacy provision will be considered across 14 localities; these will be made up of 12 districts of Lancashire County Council and the two unitary local authorities of Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool.

3. Findings

3.1 Overarching role in improving health and well being

Providers of pharmaceutical services have an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire County Council citizens, and in particular

- are a vital first point of contact for key health care and public health services and can either provide the relevant service directly or signpost citizens to the most appropriate provider
- support population-level behaviour change through a range of approaches, such as providing information and brief advice, motivational interviewing, providing ongoing support for behaviour change and signposting to other services where appropriate
- play a key role for those who might otherwise not access health services
- have a crucial role in supporting urgent and emergency care services such that patients receive care in an appropriate setting, eg minor ailments scheme and support to self-care

3.2 Overall pharmacy provision over the last four years

There are currently 327 community pharmacies (and four dispensing appliance contractors) overall across pan-Lancashire (January 2025), representing an 7.1% reduction in the number of providers, down from 352 since the last publication of the PNA in 2022. The corresponding figures across each local authority are

- Lancashire County Council (249 pharmacies in 2025, a reduction of 7% from 267 in 2022)
- Blackburn with Darwen (40 pharmacies in 2025, a reduction of 13% from 46 in 2022)
- Blackpool (38 pharmacies in 2025, a reduction of 3% from 39 in 2022)

The number of pharmaceutical service providers per head of population has also declined during the same period. The previous PNA showed that there were 23 pharmacies per 100,000 registered population, whereas the corresponding national figure for England was 21 per 100,000 and the average for the North West was 24 per 100,000. In the pan-Lancashire area there are now 21 pharmaceutical service providers per 100,000 registered population, and the corresponding figures for both England (18 per 100,000) and North West of England (21 per 100,000) have also declined.

3.3 Provision of pharmacy relative to both driving and walking time

The assessment of provision included drive/walk/public transport time analysis, analysis of pharmacies per head of population and examination of population density and demographic profiling. Across the three local authorities there is a good coverage of pharmacies. In Blackburn with Darwen over 98% of the population has access to a pharmacy within a 10-minute drive. In

Blackpool 98% of the residents are within 15 minutes' walk to a pharmacy. 100% of Lancashire County Council's residents, in both rural and urban areas, can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes' drive by car. In Lancashire County Council's urban areas nearly 100% of residents can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes on public transport and 94% of residents in urban areas are within 20-minutes' walk to a pharmacy.

3.4 Extended hours provision

Many pharmacies are open long hours, with 38 (29 in Lancashire County Council) pharmacies under the 100hrs rule (6 months' notice). However, due to amendments to their hours following requests to NHS LSCICB, there are only six (all in Lancashire County Council) that open for 100hrs a week. The others range between 72-100hrs.

3.5 Range of local authority and LSCICB commissioned services

There is a wide range of both local authority and LSCICB commissioned services available across pan-Lancashire, as listed below (correct as of January 2025), although there is some degree of variation between both local authorities.

Pharmacy services commissioned by the three local authorities, as of January 2025, are listed below

Blackburn with Darwen

- needle and syringe exchange service (via provider SPARK)
- supervised consumption (via provider SPARK)
- stop smoking service/nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)
- emergency hormonal contraception

Blackpool

- needle and syringe exchange service (via provider)
- supervised consumption (via provider)

Lancashire County Council

- emergency hormonal contraception (which also includes chlamydia testing)
- nicotine replacement therapy, deliver brief advice and signpost to local stop smoking services
- needle exchange and supervised consumption via Change Grow Live (CGL) from the pharmacy

Pharmacy services commissioned by LSCICB, as of February 2025, are listed below

- minor ailments scheme linked to Home Office hotels
- paediatric minor ailments scheme
- minor ailments supply service
- Just In Case drug supply service
- Palliative Care Service
- antiviral supply in designated pharmacies for the influenza outbreaks in care homes

There is also an additional layer of complexity that not all pharmacies necessarily are able to take up the offer to provide additional commissioned services and this is demonstrated, by way of an illustrative example, for the percentage of pharmacies that have signed up to locally commissioned

services. For example, Local Improvement Service (LIS) provision of emergency hormonal contraception (EHC) without prescription ranges from 43% of pharmacies in Blackburn with Darwen and 77% of pharmacies in Lancashire; whilst in Blackpool access to EHC is provided through the Connect service and at Whitegate Pharmacy. Across pan-Lancashire, EHC can be prescribed by general practitioners. It is however important to acknowledge that underlying demographic need will go a significant way to explaining these variations, but nevertheless it still does underly the importance of continuing to monitor the provision of these services and this is reflected in the recommendations later in chapter four. Commissioners may determine that some services are not always required across all pharmacies to provide sufficient coverage.

3.6 Home delivery services

In pan-Lancashire, 87% of pharmacies deliver dispensed medicines free of charge on request (Blackburn with Darwen 80%, Blackpool 92% and Lancashire County Council 87%) (April 2025). These are provided free of charge by the pharmacy. There is no NHS commissioned delivery service.

3.7 Wheelchair access

Across pan-Lancashire almost 90% of pharmacies and dispensing surgeries have wheelchair access to their consultation area (Blackburn with Darwen 87%, Blackpool 79% and Lancashire County Council 91%) (April 2025).

3.8 User experience

According to the findings of the research report '*Views on Community Pharmacy Services, 2025*' produced by the three Healthwatch teams, out of the 254 respondents, the vast majority of people consulted rated their overall experience of accessing pharmacy services as excellent or good. The majority used the pharmacy to collect prescriptions and many also used the service for health care advice and over-the-counter medication.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 In a number of Lancashire County Council localities, the 2025 rate of pharmacies per head of population is below the England rate and the decline (between 2015 and 2025) in the rate per head of population is greater than the decline for England. Despite the decline in overall provision of pharmaceutical services across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire County Council, the level of current provision is nevertheless deemed, at a system level, to remain sufficient. However, this is a trend that needs to continue to be carefully monitored. Additional pharmacy provision is not required to secure improvements or better access to such services, at this time.
- 4.2 At present there is no need for additional pharmaceutical contracts, but should current provision significantly change in advance of the next PNA, particularly because of any new housing developments or any further future closure of existing pharmacy provision, then that position should be reconsidered. We acknowledge that there are some areas increasing in population across pan-Lancashire. However, it is anticipated that current pharmaceutical service providers will be sufficient to meet local needs over the lifetime of this PNA.
- 4.3 The PNA steering group plans to meet twice a year to assess the need for supplementary statements, these will be published on the PNA webpages. This will include the ongoing assessment of sufficient provision including drive/walk time analysis, analysis of pharmacies per head of population and examination of population density and demographic profiling.

- 4.4 Although there is a wide range of both local authority and LSCICB commissioned services across Lancashire, it is recommended that all procurement rules and requirements are adhered to, and that all suitable options and models of delivery are considered when commissioning community-based services.
- 4.5 It is recommended that the LSCICB continues to work with Community Pharmacy Lancashire and South Cumbria to explore how widening the role of community pharmacies further would benefit our residents. As part of this, it is recommended that any development in commissioned services for community pharmacies utilise the best possible evidence and to also evaluate any new services, ideally using an evaluation framework that is planned before implementation.
- 4.6 The full range of services pharmacies provide may not always be fully known to citizens. There is an opportunity for all pharmacies, and social and healthcare agencies, to further publicise and promote pharmacy services.
- 4.7 From the feedback collected, it appears that, overall, patients are satisfied with the service that their pharmacy provides. All pharmacies and healthcare agencies should be encouraged to publicise and promote pharmacy services and specifically to make more readily available and accessible information about out-of-hours provision that might be required for urgent/emergency care needs.
- 4.8 This PNA 2025 should form a pivotal role for any future development of pharmacy provision and in particular to help identify any need for additional pharmacies should current provision significantly change between now and the next planned PNA in three years' time.