

Initial results from the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment

The Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) is drawn up to assess if there are sufficient community pharmaceutical services to meet the needs of the Harrow population. The initial results of the PNA must therefore be shared with the residents of Harrow for comment.

Responses to the initial results of the PNA should only be made once the full PNA has been reviewed. This short brief is to assist the reader in understanding the scope and initial recommendations of the assessment.

The population of Harrow is an ageing and growing population, characterised by ethnic diversity and a high degree of residents moving in and out of the borough. In common with many London boroughs, there is a need to address the levels of obesity, smoking, substance misuse, poor emotional wellbeing, maternal outcomes and the care of the elderly. Migration presents some unique challenges including the control of infectious disease including TB, COVID-19 and influenza, and improving the health literacy of those more likely to suffer from inequitable health and care outcomes. The positioning of community pharmacies at the centre of many communities gives it a unique opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Pharmacies in Harrow

Harrow Council has 62 pharmacies (57 community and five distance-selling pharmacies) as of December 2021 for a population of approximately 250,000.

Community pharmacies operate under a contractual framework, agreed in 2019, which sets three levels of service:

Essential Services	Negotiated nationally, provided by all pharmacy contractors as part of the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework.
Advanced Services	Negotiated nationally, community pharmacies can choose to provide any of these services as long as they meet the requirements set out in the Secretary of State Directions.
Enhanced Services	Negotiated locally to address local health needs. These services are only commissioned by NHS regional teams, and provided from selected pharmacies.

Provision of current pharmaceutical services and locally commissioned services is well distributed, serving all the main population centres. There is excellent access to a range of services commissioned and privately provided from pharmaceutical service providers.

Using current population estimates, the number of community pharmacies per 100,000 population for Harrow is currently 24.6, which has increased slightly from 24.2 in 2018.

A majority of (69%) of community pharmacies in Harrow are open weekday evenings (after 6 pm) and a high majority on Saturdays (90%). A number are open on Sundays

(20%), mainly in shopping areas. There is a much higher than national ratio of independent providers to multiples, providing a good choice of providers to local residents (national average is 40% independent providers versus 68% in Harrow based on 2020-21 figures).

Feedback on pharmaceutical services

A public survey of community pharmacy received 219 responses. 93% of respondents reported having a regular or preferred pharmacy, and 91% of respondents describe the service as good or excellent. 58% of respondents have visited a pharmacy once a month or more in the past six months.

People mostly walk to the pharmacy (61% of respondents) whilst 29% go by car.

Respondents indicated that there was no preferred day or time of day to visit a pharmacy with 95% of respondents suggesting that the pharmacy is open on the most convenient day and 91% stating it is open at the most convenient time.

Conclusions

The full detail of the assessment is given in the PNA, readers are advised to read this before commenting on the conclusions summarised here.

The provision of Essential Services, Advanced Services and Enhanced Services through Community Pharmacy in Harrow is sufficient. There are no existing gaps in provision and there are no anticipated gaps in the future. The geographical access and opening times of Community Pharmacy are sufficient.