
Changes to Pharmaceutical Services

Report being considered by:	Health and Wellbeing Board
On:	7 December 2023
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Report Sponsor:	John Ashton
Item for:	Decision



1. Purpose of the Report

This report provides details of recent and planned changes to pharmaceutical services in West Berkshire and advises the Health and Wellbeing Board on the implications for the West Berkshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.

2. Recommendation(s)

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

- (a) note the changes to pharmaceutical services in West Berkshire;
- (b) note that the changes have been assessed as not creating a significant gap in the provision of pharmaceutical services in West Berkshire; and
- (c) agree that there is no requirement to update the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment or publish a supplementary statement.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board has a duty to keep its Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) under review in the light of any notifications of changes in provision of pharmaceutical services within the district.
- 3.2 A notification was received on 5 October 2023 advising retrospectively of changes to pharmaceutical services across the South-East Region. These included reductions to the opening hours for pharmacies at 72 Victoria Road, Mortimer, RG7 3SQ and at Tesco Extra, Pinchington Lane, Newbury, RG14 7HB.
- 3.3 A notification was received on 22 October 2023 advising of a change of ownership for the community pharmacy at Unit 2 Burdwood Centre, Thatcham, RG19 4YA.
- 3.4 A notification was received on 24 October 2023 advising of the permanent closure of the Boots Pharmacy at Thatcham Health Centre, Bath Road, Thatcham, RG18 3HD. This is the fifth closure of a pharmacy listed within the West Berkshire PNA.
- 3.5 A notification was received on 21 November 2023 advising of an application offering unforeseen benefits for a new pharmacy in Newbury town centre by CA-Health Ltd.
- 3.6 The implications of the above changes have been assessed in accordance with national guidance and legislative requirements.

4. Supporting Information

Background

- 4.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 established health and wellbeing boards and made them responsible for developing and updating PNAs from 1 April 2013. The NHS Act 2006, amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, sets out the requirement for health and wellbeing boards to develop and update PNAs. The NHS (Pharmaceutical Services and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013, as amended, set out the minimum information that must be contained within a PNA and outline the process that must be followed in its development.
- 4.2 PNAs are used and referred to by those wishing to open a new pharmacy or dispensing appliance contractor premises. They are used by NHS England and NHS Improvement to determine applications, and NHS Resolution refers to them when applications go to appeal.
- 4.3 Following publication of a PNA, health and wellbeing boards must assess the impacts of any changes in provision of pharmaceutical services in their area and determine whether the changes warrant refreshing the PNA or publishing a supplementary statement to the existing PNA in accordance with national guidance and legislation, or if no action is required because the changes do not create a gap in provision.

Changes to Opening Hours

- 4.4 On 5 October 2023, the South East Pharmacy, Optometry and Dentistry Commissioning Hub sent notification of changes to pharmaceutical services that had occurred across the region in Quarter 2 of 2023/24. These included reductions to the opening hours for pharmacies at **72 Victoria Road, Mortimer, RG7 3SQ (FLP66)** and at **Tesco Extra, Pinchington Lane, Newbury, RG14 7HB (FK567)**. Both pharmacies previously operated 100 hour contracts, but from 3 July 2023, the Mortimer Pharmacy operates for 80 hours per week, and from 29 August 2023, the Tesco Pharmacy in Newbury operates for 78 hours per week. The revised opening hours are summarised below:

Mortimer Pharmacy	Core opening hours	Total opening hours
Monday	10:00 – 21:00	10:00 – 21:00
Tuesday	10:00 – 21:00	10:00 – 21:00
Wednesday	10:00 – 21:00	10:00 – 21:00
Thursday	10:00 – 21:00	10:00 – 21:00
Friday	10:00 – 21:00	10:00 – 21:00
Saturday	10:00 – 21:00	10:00 – 21:00
Sunday	08:00 – 22:00	08:00 – 22:00
Tesco Pharmacy, Newbury	Core opening hours	Total opening hours
Monday	09:00 – 21:00	09:00 – 21:00
Tuesday	09:00 – 21:00	09:00 – 21:00
Wednesday	09:00 – 21:00	09:00 – 21:00
Thursday	09:00 – 21:00	09:00 – 21:00
Friday	09:00 – 21:00	09:00 – 21:00
Saturday	09:00 – 21:00	09:00 – 21:00
Sunday	10:00 – 16:00	10:00 – 16:00

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- 4.5 For the purposes of the PNA, 8am to 6pm is considered to be normal working hours. Any pharmacy open before 8am is deemed to have early morning opening and those open after 6pm are deemed to have late evening opening.
- 4.6 When the PNA was undertaken, there were no pharmacies in the district or within 1 mile of its boundary with early morning opening, and there were 10 pharmacies within the district that had late evening opening. The closures of the pharmacies at the Sainsbury's superstores at Calcot and Newbury reduced this figure to eight.
- 4.7 Although both the Mortimer and Tesco Extra pharmacies have reduced their opening hours, both are still judged to have late evening opening. Both pharmacies are still providing the same services, so no gap in provision is judged to have occurred as a result of the reduced opening hours.

Change of Ownership

- 4.8 A notification was received from Primary Care Support England on 22 October 2023 advising that the pharmacy previously operated by **Lloyds Pharmacy at Unit 2 Burdwood Centre, Thatcham, RG19 4YA (FP715)** would be operated by **LP SD One Hundred Seven Limited** with effect from 21 October 2023.
- 4.9 There has been no change to the services provided or the opening hours. As such, no gap in provision is judged to have occurred as a result of the change. Opening hours are as follows:

	Core opening hours	Total opening hours
Monday	08:45-13:00 15:00-18:15	08:45-18:15
Tuesday	08:45-13:00 15:00-18:15	08:45-18:15
Wednesday	08:45-13:00 15:00-18:15	08:45-18:15
Thursday	08:45-13:00 15:00-18:15	08:45-18:15
Friday	08:45-13:00 15:00-18:15	08:45-18:15
Saturday	09:00-10:30 12:00-13:00	09:00-13:00
Sunday	Closed	Closed

Pharmacy Closure

- 4.10 A notification was received on 24 October 2023 from the South East Pharmacy, Optometry and Dentistry Commissioning Hub advising of the permanent closure of the **Boots Pharmacy at Bath Road, Thatcham, RG18 3HD (FE788)** from 17 February 2024.
- 4.11 The impacts of the closure have been assessed in terms of services offered, access and opening hours. The impact of the closure on other pharmacies has also been assessed. A summary of the supporting analysis is provided in Appendix A.

Essential Pharmaceutical Services

- 4.12 Essential services are offered by all pharmacy contractors as part of the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework. These are:
- Dispensing Medicines
 - Dispensing Appliances

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- Repeat Dispensing
- Clinical governance
- Discharge Medicines Service
- Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles
- Signposting
- Support for self-care
- Disposal of Unwanted Medicines

4.13 The closure of Boots will result in a reduction in the overall availability of essential pharmaceutical services provision in the district, reducing the number of pharmacies from 17 to 16. However, there will still be good coverage in the District following the closure.

Advanced Pharmaceutical Services

4.14 Advanced services are NHS England commissioned services that community pharmacy and contractors and dispensing appliance contractors can provide subject to accreditation as necessary. These include:

- New medicines service
- Seasonal influenza vaccination
- Pharmacy consultation service
- Hypertension case-finding service
- Pharmacy contraception service
- Smoking cessation (for patients who started their stop-smoking journey in hospital)

4.15 In addition, there are two appliance advanced services that pharmacies and dispensing appliance contractors may choose to provide:

- Appliance use reviews; and
- Stoma appliance customisation.

4.16 A Hepatitis C service was previously part of the advanced services options at the time the PNA was prepared, but this was decommissioned from April 2023.

4.17 The current PNA findings indicated that there was strong coverage of these services within West Berkshire and in pharmacies just beyond the local authority boundary. Boots Pharmacy (FE788) currently offers the following services:

- New medicines service (1 of 16 in West Berkshire)

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- Seasonal influenza vaccination (1 of 16 in West Berkshire)
- Pharmacy consultation service (1 of 17 in West Berkshire)
- Hypertension case-finding service (this was a relatively new service and no pharmacies were offering this service when the PNA was written)
- Smoking cessation (for patients who started their stop-smoking journey in hospital) (no data in the PNA)

4.18 There will still be a good level of provision within West Berkshire and within Thatcham following the closure.

Other Pharmaceutical Services

4.19 These are services commissioned by the West Berkshire Council and Frimley Health and Care to fulfil a local population health and wellbeing need. They are listed below:

- Substance misuse service:
 - needle exchange
 - supervised consumption
- Emergency hormonal contraception service
- Access to palliative care medicine
- Provision of antiviral medication

4.20 The current PNA showed that there was good coverage of these services within West Berkshire. Boots (FE788) offers the following services:

- Needle exchange (1 of 15 in West Berkshire)
- Supervised consumption (1 of 15 in West Berkshire)
- Emergency hormonal contraception service (1 of 16 in West Berkshire)
- Access to palliative care medicine

4.21 There will still be a good level of provision of the above services within West Berkshire and within Thatcham following the closure.

Access

4.22 Within the current PNA, accessibility of services was determined by whether residents lived within a 1-mile radius of a pharmacy for urban areas, or within 20 minutes' drive to a pharmacy for rural areas.

4.23 Boots (FE788) is located immediately to the west of Thatcham town centre. Halo Pharmacy is located approximately 100m away in Crown Mead on the other side of the A4. The only other pharmacy in Thatcham is at the Burdwood Centre, less than

one mile to the southeast. The analysis indicates that no additional residents will be excluded from being within a one mile radius or 20 minutes travel time of a pharmacy.

- 4.24 There were 21 pharmacies in West Berkshire and 10 within 1 mile of the boundary when the PNA was prepared in 2022, but four pharmacies have closed within the district and one within 1 mile of the district boundary since the PNA was published, including the Lloyds pharmacy in the Kingsland Centre. Following the closure of Boots (FE788), there will be just 16 pharmacies in the district. This equates to just under 1 pharmacy per 10,000 residents in West Berkshire (based on ONS mid-year population estimates¹). The PNA indicated that the national average for England was around 1.9 per 10,000 residents in 2022.
- 4.25 Pharmacy opening hours for Boots (FE788) are 8.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 8.30am to 12pm on Saturdays, totalling 51 hours per week. There are two other pharmacies within 1 mile / 20 minutes' walk of the site – both are open on Saturdays, but neither are open on Sundays or late evening. The closest pharmacies that are open on Sundays or late evening are in Newbury, less than 20 minutes' drive away.

Capacity

- 4.26 The latest dispensing contractor data² shows that Boots (FE788) processed around 6,700 prescriptions and dispensed around 13,700 items per month over the most recent 12 months period, and is considered to be a busy pharmacy.
- 4.27 The PNA found that existing contractors had spare capacity, but a number of pharmacies have closed since the assessment was undertaken, so Community Pharmacy Thames Valley (the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC)) has been contacted to seek their views. They have analysed the data for pharmacies in Thatcham (see Appendix B) and have spoken at length to the new owners of the two former Lloyds pharmacies in Thatcham at Crown Mead and the Burdwood Centre. The LPC is very pleased with their progress and their plans for both pharmacies to be able to cope with the increase in prescriptions that will be arriving in the next few months. The LPC has also highlighted that three years ago, the volume of items being dispensed by these two pharmacies was considerably greater than it is currently. They have also highlighted that patients have the choice of having their prescription dealt with by an online pharmacy, although it is recognised that some patients would be unable / unwilling to make use of this option. The LPC has recommended that no supplementary statement is added to the current PNA, as they consider that there is enough capacity for patients in Thatcham.

Unforeseen Benefits Application for a New Pharmacy

- 4.28 A notification was received on 21 November 2023 from the Primary Care Support England advising of an unforeseen benefits application for a new pharmacy in Newbury town centre by C-A-Health Ltd. The area being considered for the new pharmacy includes: 1-154 Bartholomew Street (Including Kennet Shopping Centre), 5-19 Market Street, 1-29 Market Place, and 1-41 Cheap Street. A copy of the notification and the associated application is provided in Appendix C.

¹ [Estimates of the population for the UK, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)

² [Dispensing contractors' data \(NHSBSA\)](#)

4.29 Proposed opening hours are set out below:

	Core opening hours	Total opening hours
Monday	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00
Tuesday	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00
Wednesday	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00
Thursday	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00
Friday	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00	09:00-13:00 & 14:00-18:00
Saturday		09:00-13:00
Sunday		
Total	40 hours	44 hours

4.30 In addition to the Essential Services, the application indicates that the new pharmacy intends to provide the following Advanced and Enhanced Services:

- Appliance user reviews
- Flu vaccination service
- New medicine service
- Supervised consumption and needle exchange service
- Pharmacy contraception service
- Community pharmacy consultation service
- Smoking cessation service
- Hypertension case-finding service
- Weight management service
- Gluten free food supply
- Independent prescribing by pharmacists
- Pharmacist supervised consumption of prescribed opiate substitution therapy
- Guaranteed provision of palliative care drugs in the community
- Treatment of uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women by community pharmacists

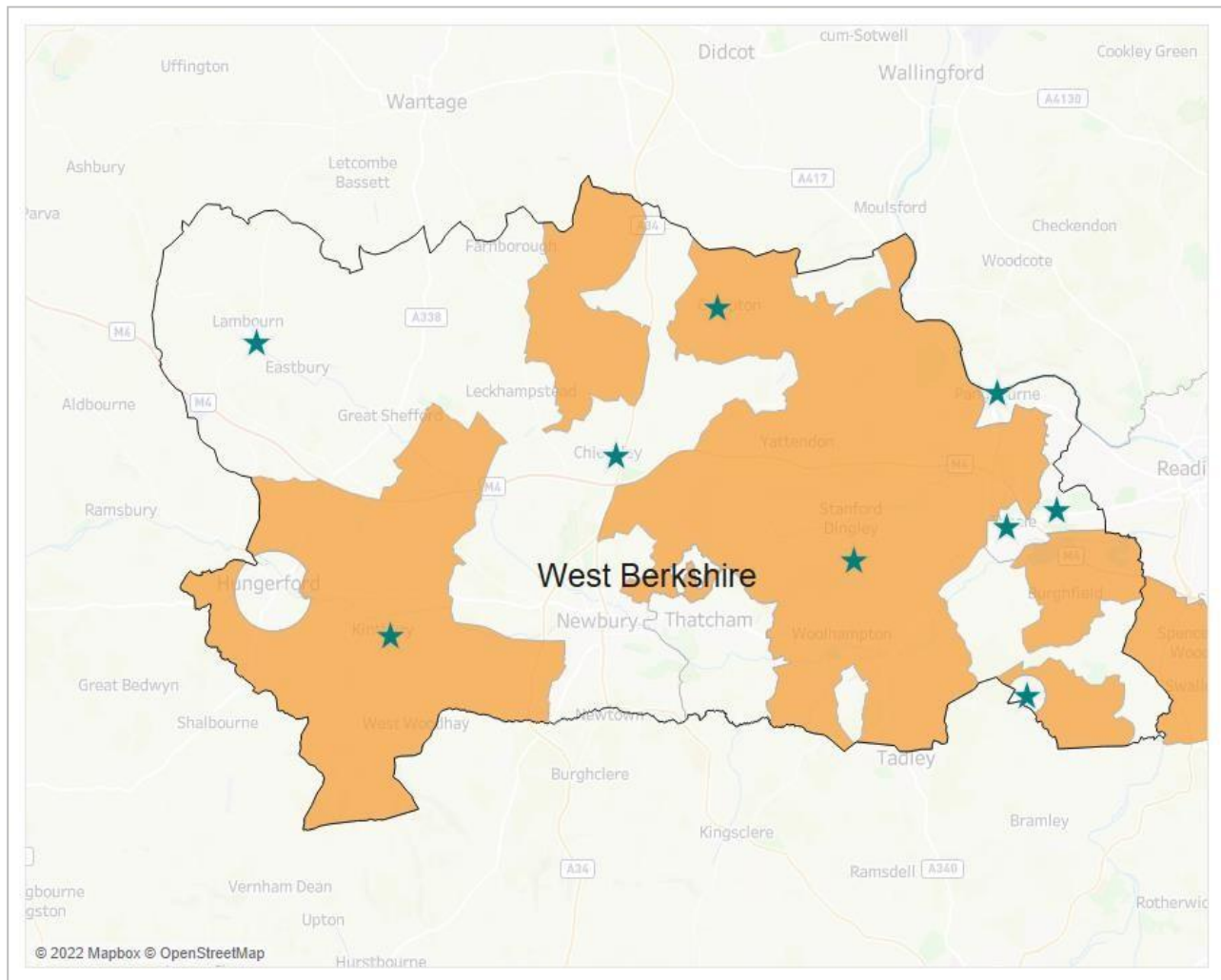
4.31 As a statutory consultee, the Health and Wellbeing Board is invited to make comments on the application within 45 days of the notification date, which would be 5 January 2024. However, there is no requirement to do so.

4.32 To be given permission the applicant needs to prove that a new pharmacy would provide “significant benefits”. Factors that are considered whether to grant the application include:

- whether or not there is already a reasonable choice of pharmacy
- how easy it is for people who live or work near the applicant's proposed pharmacy to travel to existing pharmacies
- walking routes, bus services and access by car (including parking)
- whether people who are disabled, elderly, have young children or have other particular needs currently have problems using local pharmacies, and would benefit from the proposed pharmacy
- whether opening another pharmacy would have any significant negative effects.

- 4.33 Although there have been two recent pharmacy closures in Newbury within the last year (Lloyds in the Sainsbury's Superstore, Hectors Way and Superdrug, Northbrook Street), the Health and Wellbeing Board did not consider that the closures had created a gap in the provision of pharmaceutical services that was sufficient to justify a review of the PNA or publication of a Supplementary Statement, since there were no additional households placed outside a 1 mile / 20 minute travel time to their nearest pharmacy as a result of the closures and there was sufficient capacity at the remaining pharmacies to be able to process the displaced activity. The lack of a gap in provision is the reason why this is an 'unforeseen benefits' application.
- 4.34 While there is not a significant gap in provision of pharmaceutical services within Newbury, a new pharmacy in Newbury town centre would help to improve capacity and choice for patients, and would help to improve the overall resilience of the pharmacy sector within West Berkshire. Also, the proposed location would be in a central location that is accessible by all travel modes and close to car parks and on-street parking, so accessibility for patients would be enhanced.
- 4.35 As the location for the proposed pharmacy is within 1.6km of a controlled locality (an area determined by NHS England to be "rural in character), if it is granted and the pharmacy opens, dispensing doctors will normally lose the right to dispense to patients living within 1.6 km of the pharmacy when it opens. However, under regulation 50(2), NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICB may postpone for such period as it sees fit, the discontinuation of dispensing rights if it considers that the dispensing practice will be adversely affected. The locations of the controlled localities and dispensing pharmacies are shown in Figure 4.1 overleaf.
- 4.36 Officers have not identified any issues of concern in relation to the application for an additional pharmacy in Newbury Town Centre. However, a number of inaccuracies have been provided in relation to the supporting data that accompanies the application.

Figure 4.1 Location of controlled localities and dispensing GPs



5. Options Considered

5.1 In relation to the changes to pharmaceutical services set out in paragraphs 4.4 – 4.27 above, the options available to the Health and Wellbeing Board are:

- (a) to refresh the PNA;
- (b) to issue a supplementary statement;
- (c) to do nothing

5.2 In relation to the unforeseen benefits application for a new pharmacy in Newbury Town Centre as set out in paragraphs 4.28 to 4.36 above, the options available to the Health and Wellbeing Board are:

- (a) to make written representations in support of the application;
- (b) to make written representations in opposition to the application;
- (c) to do nothing.

6. Proposal(s)

- 6.1 Having undertaken appropriate analysis and consultation, it is considered that the changes to pharmaceutical services described in 4.4 – 4.28 above will not create a significant gap in provision of pharmaceutical services, so there is no need to redo the PNA or publish a supplementary statement at this stage.
- 6.2 However, in recognition of local concerns about the cumulative impact of closures in West Berkshire, the ICB has committed to do some further investigation regarding the resilience of pharmacies across West Berkshire. Healthwatch has also been asked to see if they could perform a survey of waiting times at local pharmacies.
- 6.3 In relation to the unforeseen benefits application for a new pharmacy in Newbury town centre as set out in 4.27 – 4.36 above, the Board may wish to write to Primary Care Support England in support of the application but highlighting the errors in the supporting data. A draft response is set out in Appendix D.

7. Conclusion(s)

The changes in pharmaceutical services have been assessed in accordance with national guidance and relevant legislation.

8. Consultation and Engagement

- 8.1 The LPC has been consulted on the implications of the closure of Boots, Bath Road, Thatcham (FE788).
- 8.2 Local ward councillors have been informed of the changes to pharmaceutical services outlined in this report.

9. Appendices

Appendix A – Supporting Analysis

Appendix B – LPC Data

Appendix C – Application offering unforeseen benefits

Appendix D – Proposed response to Primary Care Support England

Background Papers:

[West Berkshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022-2025](#)

[Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments: Information pack for local authority health and wellbeing boards, DHSC, October 2021](#)

Health and Wellbeing Priorities Supported:

The proposals will support the following Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- Reduce the differences in health between different groups of people
- Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives
- Help families and young children in early years
- Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people
- Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all adults

Changes to Pharmaceutical Services

The proposals contained in this report will support the above Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities by ensuring that there are sufficient pharmaceutical services in the District to meet the needs of the local population.
