
Application offering Unforeseen Benefits – Newbury Town Centre

Report being considered by: Health and Wellbeing Board –
Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Sub-Committee

On: 23 January 2024

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Report Sponsor: John Ashton

Item for: Decision



1. Purpose of the Report

This report provides details of representations made in relation to an application offering unforeseen benefits for a new pharmacy in Newbury Town Centre by C-A-Health Ltd and invites Members of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Sub-Committee to consider whether they wish to submit any further comments in response to the matters raised in the other parties' representations.

2. Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Sub-Committee agrees that the Chairman should write to Primary Care Support England to make comments on points raised in the other parties' representations made in response to the unforeseen benefits application by C-A-Health Ltd, as set out in paragraph 4.7 of this report.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 At the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board, on 7 December 2023, it was resolved that the Chairman write to Primary Care Support England on behalf of the Board in support of the unforeseen benefits application for a new pharmacy in Newbury town centre by C-A-Health Ltd.

3.2 On 10 January 2024, Primary Care Support England wrote to advise the Health and Wellbeing Board of the responses received and invited comments on these representations by 24 January 2024.

4. Supporting Information

Background

4.1 A notification was received on 21 November 2023 from Primary Care Support England (which administers applications on behalf of NHS 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 A.

- 4.2 At the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 7 December 2023, it was resolved that the Chairman write to Primary Care Support England on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Board in support of the application. A copy of the response is included within Appendix B.
- 4.3 On 10 January 2024, Primary Care Support England wrote to advise the Board of representations made in relation to the application and invited comments on these representations by 24 January 2024. The representations are provided in Appendix B. In total, four responses were received from:
- Day Lewis Pharmacy;
 - Boots Pharmacy;
 - Community Pharmacy Thames Valley (the Local Pharmaceutical Committee);
 - West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 4.4 With the exception of the Health and Wellbeing Board, all of the representations expressed opposition to the application. The following points were highlighted in the other responses:
- missing evidence in support of the application;
 - new residential developments highlighted in the application are not within the town centre where the applicant proposes to open its pharmacy, and there are several pharmacies spread evenly throughout Newbury, so residents would have a choice of pharmacies close to home;
 - failure to mention the Day Lewis pharmacy at Strawberry Hill and other pharmacies that serve Newbury, apart the Boots pharmacies in the town centre and retail park;
 - selective use of demographic information by the applicant, which ignores the fact that Newbury is an affluent town with high levels of car ownership and a mobile, healthy population;
 - a lack of evidence to support allegations of service shortfalls at other pharmacies;
 - unsubstantiated claims about innovative services to be offered by the new pharmacy;
 - the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) does not identify a gap in provision;
 - no evidence is provided within the application of specific patient groups who experience difficulty in accessing pharmaceutical provision;
 - the applicant has not applied to offer any core hours at the weekend and only supplementary hours on Saturday morning, which can be withdrawn with five weeks' notice;

- the applicant has not offered any pharmaceutical services that are not already provided by other pharmacies in the area.
- 4.5 PCSE has indicated that any comments on representations will carry little or no weight unless it can be demonstrated that the comments are being presented in response to representations submitted by another party that are believed to be untrue or incorrect.
- 4.6 Some of the above points were reflected in the Board's own response, including:
- failure to identify the Day Lewis Pharmacy at Strawberry Hill, which is located just to the north of the town centre;
 - failure to mention that there are five pharmacies that currently serve Newbury;
 - failure to mention that no gap in provision has been identified in the current PNA and no supplementary statement has been published.
- 4.7 Of the remaining points raised in the other representations, most are considered to be valid, but it is proposed that the Board may wish to comment on some of the issues raised in the Day Lewis Pharmacy representation as follows:
- While there was no active hyperlink to the to the Meridian Broadcast within the application, the supplied web address was correct:
<https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2023-08-18/cancer-patient-left-in-excruciating-pain-as-chemists-run-out-of-medication>
 - The representation indicates that new developments referred to in the application are not in the town centre, where the applicant proposes to open its pharmacy. While the new developments listed are mostly dispersed around the fringes of the town, they will be served by public transport, walking and cycling networks that will link to the town centre (this has been confirmed by Planning Officers). There are other developments within the town centre, such as the Market Street development that are not mentioned in the application, but which would be in close proximity to the proposed site.
 - Existing pharmacies are not 'spread evenly throughout the town' – three of the pharmacies (Boots, Tesco and Wash Common Pharmacy) are on the town's southern fringe, at the top of a large hill, and are not within easy walking distance for much of the town's population.
 - While Newbury may be 'an affluent town with high levels of car ownership and a mobile and healthy population', there remain pockets of deprivation and households that do not have access to a car, including those on low incomes, and elderly / disabled residents. Services should be designed to meet the needs of all users not just those who have access to a car and should be designed to help address inequalities.

5. Options Considered

The options available to the Health and Wellbeing Board are:

- (a) to make comments in relation to issues raised in the other representations;
- (b) to make no further comment.

6. Proposal(s)

it is proposed that the Health and Wellbeing Board PNA Sub-Committee should make comments on points raised in the other representations made in response to the unforeseen benefits application by C-A-Health Ltd, as per paragraph 4.7 of this report.

7. Conclusion(s)

The proposed comments will serve to highlight to PCSE any points made in the other representations that are considered by the Sub-Committee to be incorrect or untrue.

8. Consultation and Engagement

- 8.1 Local ward councillors have been informed of the application for a new pharmacy and several have expressed their support for the scheme.
- 8.2 Healthwatch West Berkshire has been consulted to understand what feedback has been received from residents in relation to pharmacies in Newbury. While they have been contacted by a number of residents who are concerned about recent pharmacy closures, there have not been any recent, formal complaints.
- 8.3 It should be noted that the Integrated Care Board has committed to undertake investigations regarding the resilience of pharmacies across West Berkshire and this report is due to come to the next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 22 February 2024. Also, Healthwatch is looking to perform a survey of waiting times at local pharmacies.

9. Appendices

Appendix A – Application

Appendix B – Representations Received

Background Papers:

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

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

[Changes to Pharmaceutical Services, West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board \(7 December 2023\)](#)

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

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.
