
Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment

Report being considered by: Health and Wellbeing Board

On: 5 December 2024

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Item for: Decision



1. Purpose of the Report

This report outlines the methodology for developing the West Berkshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) and seeks approval for the proposed oversight and sign-off arrangements.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the proposed process for developing the West Berkshire PNA.
- (2) Agree that the Director of Public Health will take responsibility for ensuring the document meets the regulatory requirements and is published in a timely manner.
- (3) Agree that the decision to approve the consultation draft version of the PNA be delegated to the Steering Group.

3. Executive Summary

3.1 Section 128A of the National Health Service Act 2006 (NHS Act 2006) requires each health and wellbeing board to assess the need for pharmaceutical services in its area and to publish a statement of its assessment. The NHS (Pharmaceutical Services and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013, as amended (the 2013 regulations), set out the minimum information that must be contained within a PNA and outline the process that must be followed in its development.

3.2 The current version of the West Berkshire PNA was adopted in September 2022 and expires at the end of September 2025. This report describes how the PNA will be updated.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 There are eight key stages to developing a PNA. These are set out below with details of how it is proposed these will be progressed in West Berkshire, reflecting government guidance provided in the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment Information Pack for Local Authority Health and Wellbeing Boards.

Stage 1 - Governance

- 4.2 The Board has a statutory duty to produce and publish its next PNA by the end of September 2025, so it is important that sufficient resources are identified and that there is Board level support for the development of the document, with a named Board member taking overall responsibility for ensuring the document meets the regulatory requirements and is published in a timely manner.
- 4.3 Due to the serious consequences of not following due process in developing the PNA, the guidance recommends that this is captured in the Council's risk register. (This has been flagged with the Council's Performance Research & Consultation Manager.)
- 4.4 The guidance strongly recommends that a steering group is established to support the process. Officers are exploring whether a steering group can be convened at the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) level. This would include representation from:
- Each of the local authority public health teams
 - Each of the local authority comms and engagement teams
 - The Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC)
 - The Local Medical Committee (LMC) (for those local authorities with dispensing practices)
 - Each of the Healthwatch services
 - The Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- 4.5 The benefits of this include:
- Opportunities to share learning and best practice between the local authorities
 - Achieving a consistency of approach across the BOB ICB area.
 - Minimising the number of meetings for key partners, such as the LPC, LMC and ICB representatives.
- 4.6 The Steering Group is responsible for agreeing the following:
- The project timeline
 - How areas will be split up into localities
 - The content of questionnaires for contractors/dispensing doctors
 - The content of the public engagement questionnaire, how it will be made available, and any other ways of engaging with the public
 - The structure of the document

- 4.7 Although it is proposed to have a common Steering Group across BOB, each local authority must develop its own LPA. Reading and West Berkshire have undertaken a joint procurement exercise and have appointed Healthy Dialogues to progress their LPAs. A separate Task Group is being set up to oversee this work. This will have regular meetings in between Steering Group meetings. A draft project timeline is included in Appendix A. If it is not feasible to have a BOB Steering Group, then membership of the Task Group will be expanded, and it will act as the Steering Group.

Stage 2 - Gathering of Health and Demographic Data

- 4.8 Data can mostly be supplied by the Public Health Team, but input will also be sought from other Council departments, including Highways and Planning for information on known housing developments, regeneration projects or transport developments that are current or will occur within the lifetime of the PNA.

Stage 3 - Pharmaceutical Services Information

- 4.9 Much of the information on the provision of local pharmaceutical services can be sourced from the NHS Business Services Authority website, with supplementary information obtained from NHS England. However, some information can only be gathered directly from contractors via questionnaires (see below).

Stage 4 - Public and Contractor Engagement

- 4.10 Whilst not required by the regulations, the guidance strongly recommends that the views of the public are gathered to allow testing of assumptions around how and where people access services. It is proposed to run public surveys between January and March 2025 (although timescales may change to harmonise with the timescales of the other local authorities and Steering Group meetings).
- 4.11 Also, it is proposed to run the survey of pharmaceutical contractors and dispensing doctors in parallel with the public surveys.

Stage 5 - Analysis and Drafting

- 4.12 Drafting of the PNA will take place as the required data and information is gathered. A checklist of the statements that must be included will be produced in order to ensure the document meets the requirements of the 2013 Regulations.

Stage 6 - Consultation Draft PNA Review and Sign-Off

- 4.13 Once the data analysis and drafting of the PNA are complete, the Steering Group will then need to: review the draft document, identify any gaps in provision that currently exist or that will arise within the three-year lifetime of the PNA, and articulate these as needs for, or improvements or better access to, a pharmaceutical service or services. The consultation draft PNA will then be produced for sign-off. The guidance indicates that the Health and Wellbeing Board may delegate sign-off to the Steering Group.

Stage 7 - Consultation

- 4.14 The Health and Wellbeing Board must consult certain organisations on the contents of the PNA at least once, and that consultation must run for a minimum period of 60 days. It is proposed to run the consultation between May and July 2025 (although

timescales may change to harmonise with the timescales of the other local authorities and Steering Group meetings).

Review, Sign-Off and Publication

- 4.15 A report on the consultation must be included in the final version of the PNA. The Steering Group will need to review the consultation responses and agree what, if any, changes are to be made to the document.
- 4.16 Once the document is finalised it will then need to be signed-off by the Health and Wellbeing Board and published. The PNA will be published on the West Berkshire Observatory website, but a link to that site will be included on the Council's own website, as the Health and Wellbeing Board is under a duty to ensure that NHS England has access to the document and any supplementary statements that are included alongside it.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 The Board could nominate any of its members to take overall responsibility for ensuring the document meets the regulatory requirements and is published in a timely manner.
- 5.2 The Board could choose to discharge the responsibility to approve the consultation draft PNA, or delegate it to the Steering Group.

6. Proposal(s)

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Board nominates the Director of Public Health to take overall responsibility for ensuring the PNA meets the regulatory requirements and is published in a timely manner. This is the logical choice, since the Public Health Team has procured the consultants to develop the PNA.
- 6.2 It is proposed to delegate approval of the consultation draft PNA to the Steering Group, since meetings of the Steering Group could more easily be convened at short notice than meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

7. Conclusion(s)

The proposed approach is consistent with government guidance and would ensure that the Board meets its statutory obligation to develop and publish a PNA by end of September 2025.

8. Consultation and Engagement

The Director of Public Health and Consultant in Public Health have been consulted on this report.

9. Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Project Timeline for Producing the West Berkshire PNA.

Background Papers:

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

[Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments – Information pack for local authority health and wellbeing boards](#)

Health and Wellbeing Priorities Supported:

The proposals will support the following Joint 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 Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities by ensuring that provision of and access to pharmaceutical services in West Berkshire has been appropriately assessed relative to current and future needs, with any gaps in provision identified to inform future commissioning decisions.
