



Draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022: Executive Summary

Bedford Borough
Health and Wellbeing Board

1 Executive summary

1.1 Introduction

Every Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) has a statutory duty to carry out a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) every three years. A PNA was last published in Bedford Borough in 2018 and updated with supplementary statements reflecting changes in needs as required with the next PNA due to be published in April 2021. Due to the coronavirus pandemic the Department of Health and Social Care postponed the requirement for all HWBs to publish until 1 October 2022. This draft PNA for Bedford Borough fulfils the regulatory requirement.

1.1.2 Aim, Objectives, and Methodology

The aim of the Bedford Borough PNA is to enable local pharmacy service providers and commissioners to:

- Understand the pharmaceutical needs of the population
- Gain a clearer picture of pharmaceutical services currently provided
- Make appropriate decisions on applications for NHS pharmacy contracts
- Commission appropriate and accessible services from community pharmacies
- Clearly identify and address any local gaps in pharmaceutical services
- Target services to reduce health inequalities within local health communities

This was achieved by gathering the views on the adequacy of pharmaceutical services, from a wide range of stakeholders, including the public, through the distribution of surveys, one aimed at members of the public, pharmacy contractors, and Dispensing GP Practices. These were co-produced by a steering group which included representation from NHS England, the Local Medical Committee, Local Pharmaceutical Committee, Clinical Commissioning Group, Healthwatch Bedford Borough, and Public Health. The surveys addressed five key themes:

1. Necessary Services: current provision
2. Necessary Services: gaps in provision
3. Other relevant services¹: current provision
4. Improvements and better access: gaps in provision
5. Other services

Three hundred and sixty-four responses were received from members of the public. Seven responses were received from pharmacy contractors (out of a total of 32 pharmacies in Bedford Borough). The relatively low response rate has been noted.

¹ This includes Advanced, Enhanced and Locally Commissioned Services

1.2 NHS pharmaceutical services in England

NHS pharmaceutical services are provided by contractors on the pharmaceutical list held by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I). The types of providers are:

- **Community pharmacy contractors, including Distance-Selling Pharmacies (DSPs):** community contractors refer to a person providing local pharmaceutical services from registered pharmacy premises in Bedford Borough HWB, neighbouring areas and remote suppliers including DSPs who are required to offer services throughout England.
- **Dispensing Appliance Contractors (DACs):** required to provide a range of 'Essential Services' including advice on and home delivery of appliances, but they are unable to supply medicines.
- **Local Pharmaceutical Service (LPS):** refers to a pharmacy provider contracted by NHSE&I to perform specified services to their local population or a specific population which are outside the national framework.
- **Dispensing doctors:** refers to GPs who are allowed to dispense the medicines they prescribe for their patients.

NHS Pharmaceutical services refers to services commissioned through NHSE&I². The three main categories, as identified in The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF)³ are as follows:

1. **Essential Services:** These are services that every community pharmacy providing NHS pharmaceutical services must provide and are set out in their terms of service. These include: the dispensing of medicines and appliances, disposal of unwanted medicines, clinical governance, and promotion of healthy lifestyles.
2. **Advanced Services:** These are services community pharmacy contractors and dispensing appliance contractors can choose to provide subject to accreditation as set out in the Secretary of State Directions.
3. **Enhanced Services:** These are services commissioned directly by NHS England, introduced to assist the NHS in improving and delivering a better level of care in the community. Pharmacy contractors can choose to provide any of these services.

However, in the absence of a particular service being commissioned by NHSE&I, it is in some cases addressed by **Locally Commissioned Services**, funded by the Local Authority or Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). These are services community pharmacy contractors could choose to provide and are therefore included in the PNA.

² NHSE&I refers to NHS England and NHS Improvement

³ The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) was last agreed in 2019

1.3 Bedford Borough population

The population of Bedford Borough was estimated to be 174,700 in 2020 with a projected population growth of around 10,500 (5.9%) and housing growth of around 6,000 new households between 2022 and 2032 compared to England (4% and 7% respectively).

For the purpose of this PNA, Bedford Borough has been divided into three localities: Bedford North, South and Rural⁴ (see map in Appendix). There is a distinct difference in levels of deprivation across the localities in Bedford Borough, Bedford South being the most deprived and Bedford Rural being the least deprived. Bedford North population had extremes of most and least deprived. Bedford North and Bedford South are very different to Bedford Rural in the distribution and demographics of the residents. Bedford South is the least populated locality with approximately 47,200 residents but has the highest proportion of residents identifying as being of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) (approximately 28%) compared to England (15%). Bedford North is the most densely populated locality with approximately 75,600 residents, with approximately 22% identifying as being of BAME origin. Bedford Rural has approximately 52,000 residents with the smallest proportion of residents identifying as being of BAME origin (approximately 7%). Bedford Rural covers a significant geography of Bedford Borough.

Lifestyle

In Bedford Borough the prevalence of hypertension (14.1%), diabetes (7.4%) and adult obesity (62%) are similar to the England average (14%, 7.1% and 63% respectively). Whilst not statistically different to England, the level of obesity represents nearly two thirds of the adult population and presents a significant health burden especially in relation to diabetes now and in the future.

The under-18s conception rate for Bedford Borough (14.1 per 1,000) is similar to that of England (14.1 compared to 13.0 per 1,000), however the rates for all new Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) diagnosis for Bedford Borough (527 per 100,000) is statistically higher than its deprivation decile peers (412 per 100,000) but lower than England (562 per 100,000).

The prevalence of smoking in those aged 18 years and over (APS) in Bedford Borough is 10.8% which is statistically similar to England (15.9%)⁵. There are inequalities in smoking

⁴ The three neighbourhoods are based on Medium Super Output Areas

⁵ APS 2020

prevalence between certain groups with higher prevalence amongst those living in areas of higher deprivation, and those in routine and manual occupations.

Advanced, Enhanced and Locally Commissioned Services are provided by many community pharmacies to contribute to addressing these lifestyle issues although this is varied and would benefit from additional communication across professionals and the public.

1.4 Pharmaceutical service providers in Bedford Borough

Bedford Borough has 32 community pharmacies (as of December 2021) including two Distance Selling Pharmacies (DSPs) for a population of around 174,700. This equates to an average of 18.3 community pharmacies per 100,000 population (including DSPs), compared with 20.5 per 100,000 in England. Bedford Borough is well served with community pharmacies, but the number is lower than the East of England and national averages. Since the 2018 PNA there is one additional pharmacy due to a DSP added to the area.

In addition to the 32 pharmacies, Bedford Borough has seven dispensing GP practices providing pharmaceutical services. Combining these, Bedford Borough has an average of 22.3 community pharmacies and dispensing GP practices per 100,000 population. There are more pharmacies in areas where deprivation is higher with 28 out of the 32 community pharmacies in Bedford North (16) and Bedford South (12), with a further 2 dispensing GP practices in Bedford North. Whilst levels of deprivation are higher in Bedford South this is less densely populated which may explain the slightly reduced provision compared to Bedford North. The pharmaceutical provision in Bedford Rural locality reflects the nature of the rural nature of the area, with a greater number of dispensing GP practices and fewer community pharmacies with limited supplementary opening hours (5 and 4 respectively).

Across Bedford Borough, independent pharmacies represent 66% of all pharmacy providers which is higher than the England average (40%), with no one provider having a monopoly in any locality allowing for a greater choice of pharmacy type for Bedford Borough residents.

Bedford Borough has three pharmacies open for 100 hours, 2 in Bedford North and 1 in Bedford South with none in Bedford Rural. However, Bedford Rural does have one pharmacy open on Saturday between 09:00-13:00, 14:00-17:00 and one GP dispensing practice open from 09:30-12:30.

Provision of current pharmaceutical services and locally commissioned services are distributed across localities although more rural localities especially on the boundaries of Bedford North appear to be less well served.

There are no Local Pharmaceutical Service providers (LPS) in Bedford Borough.

1.5 Adequacy of Pharmaceutical Services in Bedford Borough

1.5.1 Current provision of Essential Services

There are 39 pharmacies (including 2 DSPs and 7 dispensing GP practices) within Bedford Borough, and all pharmacies provide all Essential Services as per the current Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF). No gaps have been identified although recommendations to enhance provision have been highlighted in section 1.6.

Due to the rurality of Bedford Borough, the percentage of the population that can access a community pharmacy within a 20-minute walk is lower in Bedford Borough than in England (78.7% compared to 89%) and 83.3% can reach a pharmacy within 2km by walking. However, 92.4% can access a pharmacy within 20 minutes irrespective of the time of day and 100% can reach their nearest pharmacy within 20 minutes by car during off peak hours, and 30 minutes during peak hours.

1.5.2 Current provision of services which provide improvement or better access in Bedford

Advanced Services

There is good access to Advanced Services, i.e., New Medicines Service and Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, with 94% and 97% of community pharmacies respectively providing these services across Bedford Borough. This is higher than the England average at 91% and 81% respectively.

The new hypertension case-finding service started in October 2021. Thirteen pharmacies across Bedford Borough have signed up to providing this service, with 11 of these in Bedford North and Bedford South. Activity data is still low at a national level (8%), regional level (7%), and in Bedford Borough (6%).

The Smoking Cessation Advanced Service⁶ commenced on 10 March 2022 and has been put into place in 6 out of 32 pharmacies across Bedford Borough with only 3 of these are in Bedford North and Bedford South where there are higher rates of smoking.

To date, there has been no data recorded on the use of the community pharmacy hepatitis C antibody-testing service (the service has had a low uptake nationally and regionally). There was a delay in introducing these services due to the coronavirus pandemic.

⁶ Smoking Cessation Advanced Service: NHS Trusts can refer patients to a community pharmacy of their choice for continuation of smoking cessation support on discharge

Enhanced Services

There are currently two Enhanced Services commissioned in Bedford Borough: the delivery of the COVID-19 vaccination service through 7 pharmacies in Bedford Borough; and coverage on Easter Sunday and Christmas Day to ensure that there are pharmacies open on these days to access medication if required.

Locally Commissioned Services

The following services are commissioned in Bedford Borough by the local authority or CCG:

- **Sexual health services⁷:** 10 (31%) community pharmacies provide this service (3 in Bedford North, 5 in Bedford South and 2 in Bedford Rural)
- **Stop smoking service:** 12 (38%) pharmacies provide this service (8 in Bedford North, 4 in Bedford South)
- **Harm reduction services:**
 - supervised consumption: 21 (66%) pharmacies provide this service (11 in Bedford North, 7 in Bedford South and 3 in Bedford Rural)
 - needle exchange: 3 (9%) pharmacies provide these services (2 in Bedford North and 1 in Bedford South)
- **End of life medicines service:** 7 (22%) pharmacies provide this service

Two out of seven responses from pharmacy contractors said that there was a need for further locally commissioned services.

1.5.3 Public Survey Feedback

From the 364 responses received from the public questionnaire:

- 94% have a regular or preferred pharmacy.
- 98% identified the 'availability of medication' and 'quality of service' influenced their choice of pharmacy.
- 86% describe the service as Good or Excellent, with 5% describing the pharmacy as Poor.
- 60% have visited a pharmacy once a month or more frequently for themselves in the past six months.
- 86% found it very easy or easy to speak to their pharmacy team during the pandemic.
- The main method of travel to access a pharmacy is by walking, with 52% using this method. The next most common method is to drive by car (36%).
- There was generally good awareness of 'Essential Services' provided from community pharmacies (most over 90%)

⁷ emergency hormonal contraception service, chlamydia screening and treatment

- Awareness of some of the available 'Advanced Services' was limited but respondents did wish for these services to be provided.

1.6 Recommendations (Draft): Opportunities to enhance local community pharmacy services in Bedford Borough

Whilst no gaps have been identified in the current provision of pharmaceutical services across Bedford Borough or in the future (over the next three years) there are opportunities to enhance provision and support improvement in the health of Bedford Borough residents in the following areas:

- a. Given the future housing and population growth anticipated in Bedford Borough, the provision of pharmaceutical services should be monitored and reviewed to ensure the demands of the population are met.
- b. Community pharmacy teams should promote healthy lifestyle messages and participate in national and local health campaigns especially in relation to obesity, diabetes, smoking and sexual health in line with NHS Long Term Plan priorities.
- c. Methods to enhance the awareness and uptake of all services on offer by community pharmacies should be considered. This could be through the adoption of a range of communication methods appropriate to professionals and the local community, especially those in Bedford North and Bedford South which are more deprived.
- d. All pharmacies and pharmacists should be encouraged to become accredited to deliver 'Advanced Services', delivering those services where there is identified need.
- e. Incentives should be considered for existing providers to deliver all services within the localities where deprivation is higher: Bedford North and Bedford South neighbourhoods.
- f. Pharmacies, especially those in more deprived neighbourhoods should work to increase the offer, and the uptake, of all Essential, Advanced and Locally commissioned public health services including sexual health services, and promote NHS Health Checks and the self-referral route to the NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme.
- g. Further investigation into accessibility of pharmaceutical services in more rural, isolated areas given the current locations of pharmacies and distribution of services should be considered.
- h. Additional approaches to improve stakeholder and public engagement should be adopted for future PNAs to increase responses rate and better understand the needs of the community.
- i. Consider the provision of new locally commissioned services to meet specific health needs. i.e., diabetes, respiratory services.

1.7 Conclusions (Draft)

The provision of current pharmaceutical services and Locally Commissioned Services is adequately distributed, with better provision in the more densely populated areas.

The rural nature, with sparse population of some parts of Bedford Borough, means that there are fewer community pharmacies present. The dispensing GP practices are important to ensure that medicines and services are available to these populations (especially Bedford Rural).

As part of this assessment, there is no evidence to suggest there is a gap in service that would equate to the need for additional access to Essential Services outside of normal hours anywhere in Bedford Borough. There is also adequate access to a range of services commissioned from pharmaceutical service providers across the whole of Bedford Borough. However, Bedford Borough HWB will monitor the uptake and need for Essential Services. It will also consider the impact of any changes in this locality in the future, including population growth, which may provide evidence that a need exists. Any required amendments should be made through the 3-year life cycle of this report.

The recommendations and subsequent conclusions are based on the responses to the two surveys, acknowledging that a higher response rate would have added weight to these.

Appendix: Pharmaceutical contractors in Bedford Borough HWB area split into three Neighbourhoods based on Medium Super Output Areas

