

Patients get same-day appointments with local pharmacists

More than 100,000 patients have had appointments with expert pharmacists in the last 10 weeks, relieving pressure on GPs and A&E departments.

The community pharmacist consultation service (CPCS) was introduced in October 2019. The service enables NHS 111 health advisers to refer patients with minor illnesses to their local pharmacy for assessment and treatment.

Since the scheme began 114,275 patients with minor illnesses or who needed medicines were referred to a local pharmacist. The appointments involved:

- 64,067 urgent medication requests for conditions, such as diabetes or asthma
- 50,208 people with a minor illness given clinical advice, such as for a sore throat or earache

CPCS is funded as part of the £2.592 billion per year agreed in [the community pharmacy 5-year contract](#).

The role of pharmacists is an important part of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#), encouraging the public to make better use of clinical expertise closer to home. 10,610 pharmacies are currently registered with the CPCS.

Pharmacists are highly skilled health professionals who have 5 years of training, giving them expert knowledge on how to use medicines to support patients.

Patients can use the free [NHS 111](#) phone and online service for urgent medical needs, see their local pharmacist for minor illnesses and ensure they have the medication they need.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I want to see pharmacists ready and able to do much more to help people stay healthy and prevent pressure on hospitals. This 'pharmacy first' approach makes life easier for patients and will help reduce pressure in the NHS. I want to see more patients with minor illnesses assessed close to home, saving them unnecessary trips to A&E or the GP, and helping people get the care and advice they need quicker.

Thousands of patients receiving same-day advice from highly skilled pharmacists is exactly what we need. Community pharmacy is an integral and trusted part of the NHS and we want every patient with a minor illness to think 'pharmacy first'.

This is just part of this government's work to deliver on the

people's priorities and strengthen our NHS. Our record financial commitment for the NHS of £33.9 billion extra every year within the next 5 years – which we're enshrining in law – will also allow us to expand frontline services with 50,000 more nurses, 6,000 more GPs and 6,000 more primary care professionals.

Dr Bruce Warner, Deputy Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for NHS England and NHS Improvement, said:

This unlocks the full potential of community pharmacy, giving it a more central role in healthcare and speeding up patients' access to excellent care and face-to-face consultations.

The number of referrals from NHS 111 in the first 2 months alone shows how well it is working and reaction has been good, with people telling us they have been satisfied with the service they received.