



Greater Manchester
Community Pharmacy
Provider Board



Community
Pharmacy
Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester Community Pharmacy Manifesto

A Vision For Greater Manchester

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Executive Summary

The **Greater Manchester Community Pharmacy Manifesto** outlines a strategic vision to leverage the region's 622 community pharmacies to deliver the ambitions of the NHS 10-Year Plan, CORE20plus5, and the GM Live Well programme. [Read about how we've been supporting GM Live Well.](#)

Currently, community pharmacies act as the **highly accessible front door to the NHS**, situated within a 20-minute walk of patients' homes. They are already reducing immense pressure on the wider healthcare system by delivering **4.32 million unfunded walk-in consultations and saving 2.31 million GP appointments annually** across Greater Manchester. Furthermore, they are uniquely positioned to tackle health inequalities, demonstrating a "positive pharmacy care law" by offering vital, face-to-face care in the most deprived neighbourhoods. [Learn how local pharmacies have aided early intervention with Hypertension and increased uptake amongst patients with vaccine hesitancy.](#)

Despite these achievements, pharmacies remain an underutilised asset. The Manifesto proposes **five key priorities** to shift more care into local communities:

- **Expanding Minor Illness Support:** By broadening the national Pharmacy First service to include a locally commissioned walk-in service and additional conditions, pharmacies could support an estimated **2.37 million more patients annually** in Greater Manchester.
- **CVD Prevention:** Building on the thousands of blood pressure checks already delivered, pharmacies aim to provide targeted screening for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cholesterol. This directly targets the **446,080 eligible patients in Greater Manchester who have missed CVD health checks** in the last five years.
- **Weight Management:** Implementing comprehensive, NHS-commissioned weight management programmes—including medication supply, regular monitoring, and behavioural support—to help tackle the **£3.21 billion annual local cost of obesity**.
- **Expanding Vaccinations:** Building on the successful delivery of over 42 million COVID-19 vaccines nationally, pharmacies propose expanding their immunisation offer to include **routine childhood vaccinations, RSV, shingles, and pneumonia** to reverse declining uptake and reach underserved groups.
- **Supporting Long-Term Conditions:** Leveraging the fact that all pharmacy graduates will qualify as Independent Prescribers from 2026/27, pharmacies can take on medication reviews and the management of respiratory conditions (like asthma and COPD) and skin conditions to reduce hospital admissions.

To successfully implement this expanded clinical role, the Manifesto identifies several **crucial enablers**. These include **sustainable multi-year investment**, local ICB standardisation of commissioned services, **full read and write access to shared clinical records**, and the inclusion of pharmacy leadership in primary care system transformation initiatives. Expanding the skilled workforce, including Pharmacy Technicians and Independent Prescribers, is also essential to broaden clinical capacity and deliver high-quality, integrated care closer to home.

Introduction

Community Pharmacies – The Beating Heart of Local Healthcare

Greater Manchester already has a powerful network of over 600 Pharmacies across the region helping people live longer and maintain healthier lives supporting delivery of the ambitions outlined in the NHS 10-Year Plan, CORE20plus5 and the GM Live Well and the national Neighbourhood Programme.

Why Community Pharmacy

Across England, Community Pharmacies remain an underutilised NHS asset, despite being one of the most accessible and trusted healthcare settings based in the heart of local communities.

Findings from the 2022 national Ipsos Community Pharmacy Survey commissioned by NHS England, shows that 91% of respondents rated the quality of service they received positively across a range of issues including advice for medicines, long term conditions, prevention, and health promotion.

More than 90% also reported feeling comfortable consulting a Community Pharmacist for minor illnesses in place of their GP (The King's Fund & Nuffield Trust, 2023).

Across England, Community Pharmacies are providing 69 million unfunded walk-in appointments every year which are not part of an NHS funded service. If the patient had not been able to access their local Community Pharmacy, they would have visited their GP, representing an avoidance of 37.7 million GP appointments per annum (CPE, 2024).

Community Pharmacy continue to safely supply over 1.2 billion NHS prescribed medicines a year to the public as well as dramatically increasing its clinical role through the expansion of national and locally commissioned clinical and private services (The Pharmacist, 2025).

The Contribution of Greater Manchester Community Pharmacies

In Greater Manchester, Community Pharmacies support 4.32 million unfunded patient walk-in consultations and save 2.31 million GP appointments annually.

Based on national data, Community Pharmacies in Greater Manchester are helping **266,000** patients annually who cannot access other parts of the NHS. (CPE, 2024)

Community Pharmacies in Greater Manchester can annually support a further **167,000** appointments for patients needing urgent help who are currently referred to other services. (CPE, 2024)

In 2023–24, **67 million** prescription items were dispensed by Greater Manchester Community Pharmacies at a cost of £570 million, with around 75% being repeat prescriptions accounting for around 6% of national spend. (Manchester World, 2024)

How Community Pharmacies benefit patients and communities

Accessibility: 622 Community Pharmacies are woven into the fabric of every neighbourhood in GM. They are located within a 20-minute walking distance of patients' homes acting as the front door to the NHS. They are often used as a safe, reliable and accessible first port of call for patients without

the need for an appointment, owing to their accessible high street locations and extended opening hours, including evenings and weekends

Equity and inclusion: Community Pharmacies are uniquely positioned to reach underserved populations and reduce health inequalities by providing culturally sensitive care walk-in care and reducing digital exclusion for people who struggle with access to online services.

Reducing NHS burden: In Greater Manchester, Community Pharmacies provide 4.32 million unfunded walk-in appointments per year and save 2.31 million GP appointments per annum. In addition, they deliver a portfolio of clinical services such as Pharmacy First, Contraception, DMS and Hypertension case finding reducing pressure on other NHS services e.g. General Practice and Urgent Care working in local neighbourhoods to support access to care. (CPE, 2024)

Trusted local hubs: Community Pharmacists are trusted healthcare professionals and a key part of their local community, offering accessible face-to-face support often with extended opening hours over evenings and weekends.

Promoting public health: Community Pharmacies contribute to health promotion, medication adherence, and long-term condition management to improve health outcomes and population health.

Supporting GM Live Well: As accredited Healthy Living Pharmacies, Community Pharmacies connect individuals to community-based wellbeing initiatives, support lifestyle and health promotion providing holistic patient centred care and mobilise community strengths and relationships to improve health outcomes. (NICE, 2018). Wider access to convenient care is a key enabler of economic productivity. Pharmacies are uniquely placed to serve working-age adults and parents who often cannot engage with traditional 9–5 healthcare. (APPG on Pharmacy, 2025)

Supporting Health Inequalities Community Pharmacies are more concentrated in areas of deprivation, ensuring that those with the greatest health need have **better access to care where it's needed the most** in contrast to the inverse care law, where access to good care decreases with increasing need. Community Pharmacies have historically shown a "positive Pharmacy care law" by being more accessible in deprived areas. (BMJ Open, 2025). The positive Pharmacy care law further supports the utilisation of Community Pharmacies to deliver health and well-being interventions to local communities. (NICE, 2018)

Integrated working: The Community Pharmacy sector is representing and working at system, place, and neighbourhood level with the GM ICB, GMCA, NHS GM, Primary Care and wider health and social care partners to support care coordination, improved patient experience and health outcomes within neighbourhoods and place. This is coordinated via Community Pharmacy Greater Manchester (CPGM), Community Pharmacy Provider Board (CPPB), CHL (the provider company) and the GM Primary Care Provider Board (PCB).

Under the new National Neighbourhood Health Framework, community pharmacies are essential to delivering the "left shift" of care from hospitals into the community. Their role is expanding from traditional dispensing to serving as **comprehensive health and wellbeing hubs**. (Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England, 2026)

Key developments include:

- **First Point of Contact:** Acting as the front door to the NHS for minor illnesses, diverting demand away from overstretched GPs.
- **Clinical Integration:** Integrating directly into **Integrated Neighbourhood Teams (INTs)** alongside GPs, social care, and other professionals. Furthermore, new Integrated Health Organisations (IHOs) will hold delegated commissioning responsibilities for pharmacy contracts, ensuring alignment with whole-population health budgets.
- **Independent Prescribing:** By September 2026, all newly qualified pharmacists will be independent prescribers, fundamentally expanding their ability to manage a much greater volume of patient needs directly.

Supporting Delivery of the GM ICP Strategy and NHS 10-Year Plan

Every person in Greater Manchester should receive high-quality, accessible care closer to home to help them live longer and maintain healthier lives. We are committed to and uniquely positioned to support delivery of this ambition.

Based on national data, Community Pharmacies in Greater Manchester can support a further **167,000** appointments a year for patients needing urgent help who are referred to other services with the right support and commissioning arrangements. (CPE, 2024)

Current Provision and Impact

Community Pharmacies can play a much stronger role in supporting **minor illness, expanding prescribing, prevention, and early detection**.

When adequately empowered and resourced, Community Pharmacies can provide integrated services across prevention, early detection, treatment, monitoring of long-term conditions, supporting public health, making them a vital part of the primary care system.

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework includes a portfolio of advanced services including Pharmacy First, vaccinations, contraception, hypertension case-finding, and smoking cessation, demonstrating Community Pharmacy's vital role in prevention, urgent care, and long-term condition management, (CPE, 2025).

By shifting more care into Pharmacies, we can help reduce pressure on other NHS services e.g. freeing up GP and Urgent Care and out of hours appointments, shorten waiting times, and ensure patients receive faster, more convenient support in the heart of their local community. (Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, and CPE, 2025)

Over 90% of Greater Manchester Community Pharmacies have delivered the highest number of Pharmacy First "completed" consultations across the 42 ICBs in England, delivering over **210,000 consultations** between February 2024 and January 2025. Around 50% of these referrals were from General practice and Urgent Care for urgent supply of medicines and minor illness demonstrating a reduction in NHS pressures. (NHSE, 2025).

27% of these consultations were provided in the 20% most deprived communities, as identified by the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (IMD). According to the data available, up until July 2024, there were nearly twice as many consultations in the most deprived communities. (CCA, 2025).

Across England, Community Pharmacy have delivered **5.4 million** Pharmacy First consultations since the start of the service in February 2024, with sore throat and UTIs the most common conditions treated. Nearly one-third of consultations occurred in deprived areas, evidencing Pharmacy's role in tackling inequalities and relieving GP workload, urgent and secondary care pressures. Of these, Pharmacies delivered **2.7 million consultations** for urgent supply or minor illness referrals from NHS 111 and GPs respectively. (Robertson, J. 2025).

Our Priorities

Expanding Minor Illness Support: Building on the success of Pharmacy First, expand locally commissioned minor ailment services and new winter support services to relieve pressure on GPs, urgent and emergency care ensuring patients receive timely, accessible care closer to home. The service needs to be supported with the development of integrated seamless clinical pathways and referral systems to Community Pharmacy, helping to utilise our capability and expertise to best effect.

If the Pharmacy First national service was expanded to include more conditions, allow a walk-in service and included **a locally commissioned minor illness service**, our Community Pharmacies could support a further **2.37 million patients** annually. (CCA, 2025)

CVD prevention: Building on the Hypertension Case Finding service, Community Pharmacy teams are ideally placed to provide targeted screening for diabetes, cardiovascular disease, blood pressure, cholesterol and other CVD risk factors supporting improvement in CVD outcomes to prevent premature death, reduce inequalities to reduce the estimated cost of £3.21 billion annually associated with healthcare, social care and productivity losses. (Health Innovation Manchester, 2024)

Over 90% of Community Pharmacies in GM have supported CVD prevention delivering 174,000 BP checks and ABPM in 2024/25. (GM NHS, 2025)

Since 2021, GM Community Pharmacies have supported delivery of an estimated 379,000 BP checks and ABPM since the start of the service. NHS England data suggests that a third of patients screened by Community Pharmacies may have high or very high blood pressure. On this basis, over 50,000 appointments have been delivered in the top 10 most deprived areas Greater Manchester. (Pharmaceutical Journal, 2025)

In the last 5 years, only 40.2% of CVD health checks have been delivered in Greater Manchester to eligible patients. 446,080 health checks have still not been delivered to eligible patients in the last 5 years equating to 63.3 % of the eligible population despite invitations being sent to patients (GM Tableau, 2025). For e.g. in Manchester and Stockport, this equates to 80% and 70% of the eligible population that Community Pharmacy can target to support prevention and improved CVD outcomes through its reach and accessibility to patients.

Weight Management: Community Pharmacies can expand their role by delivering NHS-commissioned weight management programmes with medicines supply, wrap-around care offering personalised support, regular monitoring, and behaviour change interventions to help patients achieve healthier outcomes. This approach enables earlier intervention, reduces obesity-related risks, and eases pressure on wider NHS services.

This service seeks to reduce the annual cost of obesity in GM which is estimated to be £3.21 billion, improve quality of life, reduce social care costs and productivity losses from absenteeism and burden of diabetes, CVD, and cancer. (Health Innovation Manchester, 2024)

Vaccinations: Community Pharmacies have already delivered over **42 million COVID-19 vaccinations** across England between December 2020 and August 2024. During Spring 2024, over half the vaccinations were delivered to Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups demonstrating their reach into underserved communities (Pharmacy Magazine, 2024). Community Pharmacies in England administered more than **4 million flu vaccinations** during the 2024/2025 flu season. 11% of vaccinations were delivered in areas of highest deprivation. (Pharmaceutical Journal, 2025).

In 2024/25 Community Pharmacies in GM delivered more than 165,000 flu vaccinations. As of December 2025, flu vaccination delivery has increased by 29% since last year delivering over 195,000 vaccinations. (NHSE, 2025)

Building on the proven success of COVID-19 and flu vaccination programmes in Community Pharmacies, the future expansion of Community Pharmacy vaccination provision should include a broader range of immunisations. E.g. pneumonia, shingles, meningitis, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus), and routine childhood vaccinations to increase uptake, reduce inequalities and improve access for underserved and hard to reach groups. (CCA, 2025).

The NHSE vaccination strategy recommends targeted outreach through community-based delivery models with a simplified single vaccination front door to address the low uptake whilst improving access and convenience which can be supported via local ICB commissioning support. (NHS England, 2023).

Expanding vaccination access through Community Pharmacy has the potential to reverse declining uptake, with none of the childhood vaccines in England meeting the 95% WHO coverage target in 2023/24. (NHS Digital, UKHSA, 2024).

Supporting Long Term Condition Management: Community Pharmacies can support Medicines optimisation, structured medication review and reducing hospital admissions and secondary care referrals through management, monitoring, and optimisation of care for many long-term conditions.

All pharmacy graduates will qualify with an Independent Prescribing qualification from 2026/27. Negotiations on a national Community Pharmacy prescribing service will begin from April 2026.

Nationally, over 33,000 consultations have taken place almost two-thirds of which were for minor ailments. (Pharmaceutical Journal, 2025). 10 IP Pathfinder sites in Greater Manchester have participated in the Pathfinder pilot. The national evaluation for the IP Pathfinder sites demonstrated that independent prescribing in Community Pharmacy is clinically safe, highly effective, and strongly valued by patients and Pharmacists. (University of Manchester and ICF 2025).

Community Pharmacies have a key role to support medication reviews, medicines optimisation and minor illness to support prevention, worsening outcomes and hospital admissions but will require support from local commissioners to support governance, assurance and workforce development support,

In Greater Manchester, there are 200,000 people living with asthma and 74,000 people living with COPD. It is recommended that respiratory patients should receive reviews at least every 12 months.

However, in the UK it's estimated that only 30% of people living with asthma and less than 20% people living with COPD, receive even basic levels of care. (Health Innovation Manchester, 2025).

Skin conditions impact 54% of the population at any one time costing the NHS £1.82 billion annually and many cases could be managed in Community Pharmacy and community settings. This would be supported by vaccinations and management of minor respiratory conditions using Pharmacy First pathways.

Enablers

To realise the full potential of Community Pharmacy, several key enablers must be in place:

- Representation of Primary Care and Community Pharmacy provider leadership in the system to support development of left shift transformation initiatives.
- Sustainable multi-year investment and local ICB standardised commissioned services to protect the network and ensure it can meet growing demand.
- Supporting funding flows for left shift models of care to reduce pressures on urgent care, supporting prevention, and preventing ill health.
- Access to shared clinical records with full read and write capability to deliver safer, integrated, high quality care.
- A skilled workforce supported by an increase in independent prescribers to broaden clinical capacity and capability.
- Development and recruitment of Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacy team members to support delivery of clinical services and support the left shift and care closer to home.
- Influence national and local policy decisions to support Community Pharmacy sustainability and development

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