

NHS Dorset Integrated Care Board

Date of Meeting	19/11/2025
Paper Title	Community Pharmacy Update
Responsible Chief Officer	
Author	Fiona Arnold
Confidentiality	N/A
Publishable Under FOI?	Yes

Community Pharmacy Update

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of Community Pharmacy in Dorset, highlighting workforce challenges, pharmacy closures and mitigation strategies, recent good news stories, and the range of services offered.

2. Report

2.1 Workforce

- 2.1.1 Workforce pressures continue to impact community pharmacies in Dorset, with recruitment and retention challenges. The 2024 Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey provides a comprehensive analysis of workforce trends across community pharmacies in the South West and nationally. The survey categorises staff into Pharmacists (including Independent Prescribers), Foundation Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians (including Accuracy Checkers), Other Pharmacy Roles (Dispensing Assistants, Medicine Counter Assistants), and Delivery Drivers. Overall response rate across South West ICBs: 93% Dorset response rate: 86%
- 2.1.2 Workforce Size & Composition:
- South West Headcount: 8,441 (↓3.5% from 2023)
 - FTE per Pharmacy: 6.50 (↑1.3%)
 - National Headcount: 98,551 (↓2.6%)
 - National FTE per Pharmacy: 6.62 (↓2.3%)
 - Vacancy Trends: South West Vacancy Rate: 11.2% (↓30.8%)
 - National Vacancy Rate: 12.3% (↓18.0%)
- 2.1.3 Efforts are underway to support workforce development through training and collaboration across the Dorset system, led the Pharmacy Workforce Faculty. We work collaboratively across all sectors of pharmacy in Dorset to increase trainee pharmacist uptake and retention.
- 2.1.4 From 2026 all Pharmacists graduating from university will be independent prescribers, Dorset is currently part of the national Independent Prescribing in Community Pharmacy Pathfinder program. We have four sites in Dorset who are providing prescribing clinical consultations for minor acute illness to patients, patient feedback as has been very positive so far.

2.2 Pharmacy Closures

- 2.2.1 Dorset ICB is aware of the impact that Community Pharmacy closures are having on patients and other services in the area. We are continuing to work with other local Primary Care providers to ensure there is a stable and reliable service for local residents. We have produced patient facing communications to inform patients of their options for accessing pharmaceutical services when their usual pharmacy is closed. The ICB is also taking formal contractual action relating to the pharmacy closures.

2.3 Pharmacy Services

- 2.3.1 Community pharmacies in Dorset provide a wide range of services in addition to the essential services they are required to provide as part of their standard contract.
- 2.3.2 We have 139 contracts in Dorset, 133 bricks and mortar pharmacies, 3 distance selling pharmacies and 3 dispensing appliance contractors.

- 2.3.3 We have good coverage for delivery of the three national clinical services: 131 pharmacies delivering Oral Contraception Service, 131 delivering the Hypertension Case Finding Service and 126 delivering the Pharmacy First Service. Around 9,000 patients per month are accessing these services from pharmacies in Dorset, this is increasing patient access to healthcare out in the community and delivery of neighbourhood health.
- 2.3.4 Dorset ICB works collaboratively with all system partners to increase utilisation of these services across the county.

Author's name and title: Fiona Arnold Community Pharmacy Clinical Lead

Date: 11/11/2025