

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022, 14.00-16.00**

## **Midlothian Community Pharmacy (Independent Contractors) Update**

**Item number: 5.10**

### **Executive summary**

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This report is presented to the Board jointly by the HSCP management team and NHS Lothian Pharmacy Service Leads, to sight the board on the contracted community pharmacy service within Midlothian and to raise awareness of the Pharmaceutical Care Service Plan for core and enhanced care services. These pharmacies are independent contractors, working to a nationally agreed contract, and are not managed by Midlothian HSCP.

Noting the significant demand across the health service, not least within primary care, this report provides data on the level of short-term unplanned pharmacy closures in Midlothian compounded by current workforce pressures and provides an update of actions being taken to address this to provide improved resilience and business continuity.

#### **Board members are asked to:**

Note the content of the report

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## Midlothian Community Pharmacy (Independent Contractors)

### 1 Purpose

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- 1.1 To update the Board of the current service within community pharmacy in Midlothian, with respect to demand and activity within core and enhanced services, as defined within the NHS Lothian Board Pharmaceutical Care Services Plan.

To advise of actions being taken by independent contractors to address current workforce challenges and associated short term, unplanned closures of community pharmacies.

### 2 Recommendations

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As a result of this report Members are asked to:

- 2.1 Note the content of the report.

### 3 Background and main report

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Pharmaceutical services are delivered through a network of 19 independent contractor community pharmacies. The services they provide are described in NHS Lothian's Plan for Pharmaceutical Care Services. The Pharmaceutical Care Service Plan is updated annually by NHS Lothian's Public Health Department and approved by NHS Lothian Board. Processes are in place to ensure IJB stakeholder involvement, ensuring that the range of core and enhanced services on offer, support the delivery of the Midlothian IJB strategic Plan.

#### 3.1 Core Services

The activity delivered by the 19 contracted Community Pharmacies in Midlothian across a 12-month period is summarised below:

##### Dispensed Items

1,500,000 prescribed items were dispensed in 2021. This represented a 3.6% increase on 2020 volumes and is understood to be driven by a number of factors, including population increases, advances in medicine, an ageing population and an increase in primary care consultations from the pandemic. The cost and volume of medicines is predicted to grow by a further 3.3% in the financial year 2022/2023.

## Pharmacy First Service

NHS Scotland launched the NHS Pharmacy First Service in 2020. This service replaced the Minor Ailment Service (MAS) and extended the criteria of patents eligible for consultation, advice, treatment and referral for common clinical conditions. This service forms an important part of the NHS redesign of urgent care programme.

Across Midlothian pharmacies, 17,465 people have received Pharmacy First consultations. Included are 764 prescription only treatments for Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) and 73 treatments for Impetigo skin infection. This represents over 800 people who would have previously required an appointment and consultation with a GP or Out of Hours Clinician. This service continues to grow, now also providing treatment for other conditions, including shingles.

Link: [NHS Pharmacy First Scotland | NHS inform](#)

## Public Health Services / Unscheduled Care

1,169 people accessed Emergency Hormonal Contraception via their community pharmacy in Midlothian.

11,188 people in Midlothian were prescribed treatments by their community pharmacist in the unscheduled care period, utilising the Unscheduled Care Service (UCS) Patient Group Direction, relieving pressure on other services including NHS24 and Lothian Unscheduled Care Service (LUCS), by providing a 7-day supply of regularly prescribed medicines and treatment that they have run out of.

Across a 6- month period, **899 smoking cessation treatments** were prescribed by Midlothian community pharmacists. The smoking cessation service through community pharmacy includes supportive consultations throughout the patients quit attempt.

## Medication Care and Review (MCR services)

This service, enabling a patient to receive a long-term prescription, without needing repeated interval prescriptions from their GP, dispensed at regular intervals by their pharmacy, requires close collaboration and assessment of patients by both the community pharmacist and GP practice.

Medication Care and review is currently embedded in 3 of 12 GP practices in Midlothian. 2.62% of patients receive a serial prescription.

The core services detailed above have been delivered on a landscape of pandemic recovery and remobilisation with increased demand on primary care and unscheduled care resulting in increasing numbers of patients being sign-posted directly to community pharmacy at triage or initial care navigation. Workplace and workforce issues have also presented a challenge as pharmacy staff have adhered to social distancing and self-isolation procedures, in line with national Scottish Government guidance.

### 3.2 Additional Services

Additional services described in the NHS Lothian Pharmaceutical Care Services Plan are also provided by community pharmacies in Midlothian. These include:

- Services for patients with addiction including instalment and supervised dispensing
- Injection equipment provision
- Pharmaceutical advice to care homes
- Supply of oral systemic anticancer therapy,
- Pharmaceutical care of patients with hepatitis C including eradication treatment
- Gluten free food service
- 2 pharmacies are member of the palliative care network
- Provision of medicine administration record charts
- Sharps and medicine waste services
- Vaccination services
- Collection and delivery services
- Continence care
- Other non-commissioned services e.g. blood pressure checks, compliance aids

### 3.3 Unplanned Closures

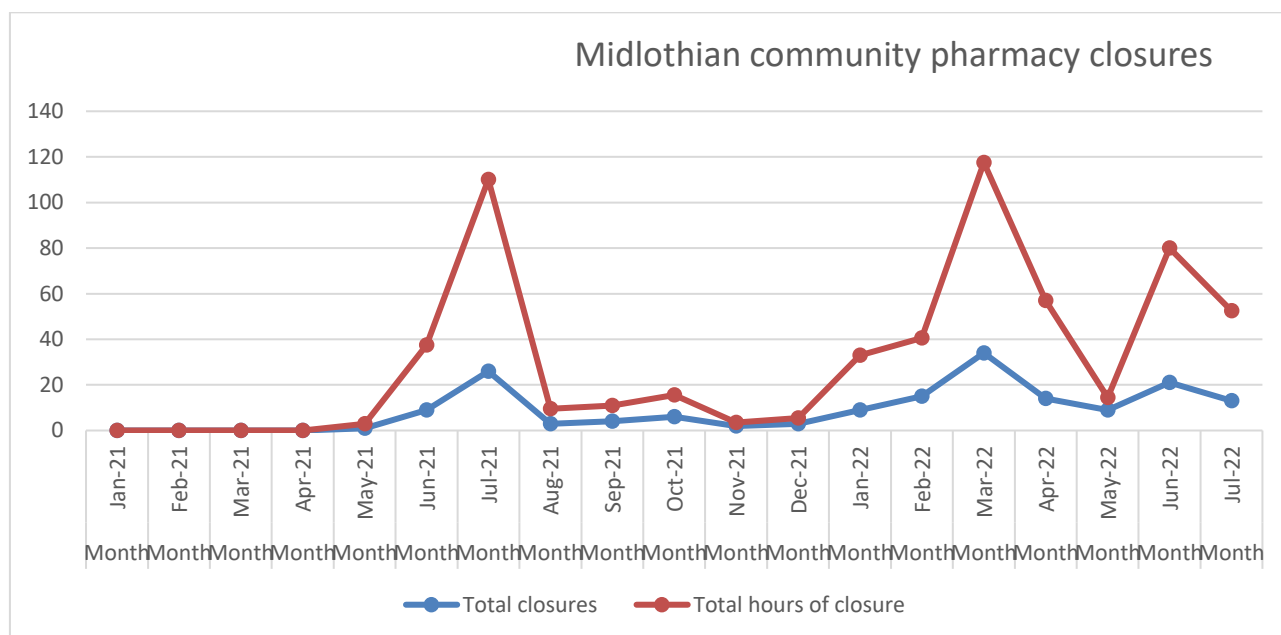
NHS Lothian has a pharmaceutical hours of service scheme which states the core hours pharmacies must contractually provide, and this hours-of-service scheme is agreed by Scottish Ministers. These hours are 9am-6pm Monday to Friday (with a one hour break for lunch) and 9am-1pm on a Saturday. Some pharmacies will also provide extended opening hours in addition to these core hours.

The community pharmacy contract is subject to national negotiation between the Scottish Government and Community Pharmacy Scotland (CPS).

Where a contractor cannot open, for any reason, they must notify the Health Board of that unplanned closure and take a number of actions to inform patients, the public and other health and care services.

- Inform local GP practices
- Inform other local Community Pharmacies
- Display a sign directing patient to the nearest open Pharmacy
- Enact individual business continuity plan ensuring that high risk patients (eg instalment dispensing and compliance aids) are informed and arrangements for medicines supply are agreed
- Complete and email the closures template to inform NHS Lothian
- If the closure is in the evening or at weekends NHS24 and LUCS should be informed

Across Midlothian HSCP from January to August 2022, there have been 121 instances of unplanned community pharmacy closure notified to the NHS Lothian. This represents 1.6% of the available opening hours of community pharmacy.



### Actions taken to mitigate the impact of pharmacy closures:

NHS Lothian are aware of the current situation of ongoing, short notice, pharmacy closures across Lothian. This is an issue across Scotland, with pharmacist and pharmacy staff availability the most common reason for an unplanned closure. This is subject to ongoing dialogue with Scottish Government.

NHS Lothian regularly engage pharmacy contractors, to remind them of their obligations to deliver services within their contracted hours. There have been numerous communications to remind contractors of the steps that must be followed when an unplanned closure occurs, for example: informing the local GP practices, neighbouring community pharmacies, contacting vulnerable patients and ensuring deliveries have been made to patients expecting medicines supply.

In relation to concerns about individual closures, as these occur the NHS Lothian Primary Care Contracts Team (PCCO) are noting the hours of closure where these have been reported and advise that any specific complaint regarding a community pharmacy service is made to the business owner/superintendent in the first instance. Community pharmacies are independent contractors and are therefore responsible for managing and responding to complaints regarding their service. Where NHS Lothian are aware of repeated closures, these are raised with the community pharmacy companies as a matter of concern.

Colleagues from the Primary Care and Pharmacy Directorates have met with Community Pharmacy Lothian representatives (representing all contractors) and have asked all pharmacy contractors for resilience plans to be developed, and for the health board to be notified of any issues, actions being taken to mitigate closures, and what temporary support, if any, is required from the board.

In order to better support resilience and communications with all stakeholders, including patients and the public, NHS Lothian has asked all contractors to inform them of any staffing gaps for the week ahead. In doing so, the health board pharmacy and contracts team will work with the contractor to ensure stakeholders including; out of hours services, substance misuse hubs, patients and the public, are made aware of the risk of a closure and plan

accordingly to ensure patients have collected or had delivered their medicines in advance of closures. Contractors are brought together when it is identified that more than one pharmacy in a locality is at risk of closure. In this event, the contractors will work together to secure pharmacy service provision to the population, for example this may mean partial closures to ensure patients have access to their medicines at a time communicated to them. Pharmacy owners are expected to continue to take every action to mitigate the risk of closure and to continue to source pharmacy staffing including from the locum pool. Any pharmacy which subsequently closes is recorded as an unplanned closure.

It has also been recommended that any patient harm or near-miss incidents be recorded on the incident management system (Datix) by the healthcare professional who has identified the adverse event (for example a GP). Reports are reviewed and the Superintendent Pharmacist with professional responsibility for the community pharmacy is asked to undertake an investigation and inform NHS Lothian of their learning. NHS Lothian will inform the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), as the regulator of pharmacy premises and registered healthcare professionals, where there is a concern regarding a particular pharmacy or its registered staff.

There are a smaller number of occasions in which the reason given for the risk of closure is acutely linked to a covid outbreak or other factors including significant increased demand, and issues like prescription backlog relating to new IT systems issues. In such cases, NHS Lothian work with the contractor and may agree a short-term reduction in patient facing hours, for example to close at lunchtime to ensure staff get a break or opening to the public an hour later to enable the backlog of prescriptions to be dispensed safely.

The local HSCP pharmacy team also continue to support community pharmacy colleagues through delivery of pharmacotherapy services. In Midlothian this includes a commitment to Medicines Care and Review (serial prescribing) which improves the management of repeat prescribing and allows community pharmacy to plan the associated workload.

## **4 Policy Implications**

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- 4.1 There are no policy implications with regard to the content or recommendations of this paper.

## **5 Directions**

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- 5.1 There are no directions sought as a result of the content or recommendations of this paper.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

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- 6.1 Closure affected communities experience a reduction in access to pharmaceutical services agreed in the NHS Lothian's Plan for Pharmaceutical Services.

## 7 Resource Implications

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- 7.1 There are no resource implications to the IJB with regard to the content or recommendations of this paper.

## 8 Risk

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- 8.1 Unplanned closure of a pharmacy increases the risk of unmet health needs in the population of the area affected.

## 9 Involving people

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- 9.1 This paper has been produced jointly by NHS Lothian Pharmacy Services Team and Midlothian HSCP Pharmacy Team. The paper describes ongoing collaborative working with Community Pharmacy Lothian – representatives of community pharmacy contractors, and Scottish Government.

## 10 Background Papers

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- 10.1 Plan for Pharmaceutical Care Services Delivered by Community Pharmacy 2021 [plan-for-pharmaceutical-care-services-delivered-by-community-pharmacy.pdf](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/plan-for-pharmaceutical-care-services-delivered-by-community-pharmacy.pdf) ([scot.nhs.uk](https://www.scot.nhs.uk))

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### Appendices: