



SECURING THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY PHARMACY IN WALES

A MANIFESTO FOR COMMUNITY
PHARMACY

2026

INTRODUCTION

Community pharmacies are a cornerstone of primary care provision in Wales, delivering a broad range of vital services to patients, benefitting the NHS, and the wider economy.

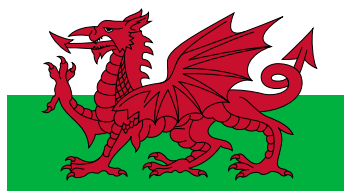
Welsh governments have long taken a forward-thinking approach to the role that community pharmacy performs within healthcare. However, pharmacies in Wales face an ever-rising workload. Consequently, funding and cost pressures have increased considerably in recent years.

Despite this, community pharmacy has stepped up and played a huge role in increasing patient access to healthcare and relieving pressure on other parts of primary care.

We believe that community pharmacy can do even more to support citizens in Wales. With the NHS and wider society facing considerable challenges, it is imperative that the next Welsh Government builds on the sector's successes to date and invests further in community pharmacy. This will ensure that patients and members of the public continue to benefit from the world-class NHS care they need, and pharmacies can continue to take pressure off other parts of the system.



MALCOLM HARRISON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
COMPANY CHEMISTS' ASSOCIATION



THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY PHARMACIES IN WALES

Community pharmacies provide an essential care service – pharmacies act as the first port of call for a range of common conditions, providing care close to where people live and work, and helping to alleviate pressure on GPs and hospitals. 86 million prescriptions are dispensed by pharmacies in Wales each year – over 1.6 million prescriptions each week.[1]

86M

prescriptions dispensed by pharmacies in Wales each year



1.6M+

Prescriptions dispensed each week

With a greater concentration of community pharmacies in more deprived areas, delivering NHS services through pharmacies immediately addresses health inequalities. **Commissioning more care through the community pharmacy network in Wales will ensure that access to healthcare is available to those that need it the most.**

Pharmacies also make significant contributions to their **local economies** – creating employment opportunities and acting as an anchor to local high streets, driving footfall to neighbouring retail outlets.



[1] Welsh Government, [Primary care prescriptions: April 2024 to March 2025](#), 2 October 2025


THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE IN WALES

Over time, the role of community pharmacies in Wales has transformed.

Wales has long taken a leading role in enhancing what community pharmacies can offer to patients. Pharmacies in Wales are now the first port of call for advice and treatment for a whole range of common conditions.

The rollout of the Common Ailments Service (CAS) allows patients to get free NHS advice or treatment for almost thirty conditions. Across 2024 alone, more than **400,000** patients visited pharmacies to access this service. [2] CAS activity across 2023/24 represented a **44% rise** compared to the year before. [3]

Wales has also taken a leading role in pioneering **independent prescribing** services, ensuring that even more patients can have their episodes of care completed within their local pharmacy. Around a third of community pharmacies currently offer an independent prescribing service. [4] By 2030, there is an expectation that there will be an independent prescriber in every community pharmacy. [5]



*Around a third of
community
pharmacies currently
offer an independent
prescribing service*

In 2024
400,000
patients accessed the
Common Ailments Service

In 2023/24 there was a
44% ↑
in **Common Ailments
Service activity compared
to the year before**



[2] Welsh Government, '[More than 400,000 visit pharmacies for common health issues](#)', 21 January 2025

[3] StatsWales, '[Common ailments service - number of consultations per ailment, by local health board](#)

[4] Welsh Government, '[More than 400,000 visit pharmacies for common health issues](#)', 21 January 2025

[5] Welsh Pharmaceutical Committee, '[Pharmacy: Delivering a Healthier Wales](#)', 2019

CASE STUDY

A 67-year-old lady came into my pharmacy presenting with symptoms of a lower UTI. We were unable to treat her using the PGD due to her age but as it was within my scope as an Independent Prescriber, I booked her in for a consultation.

I was able to safely assess and treat her whilst getting her to drop a sample at the Doctors to make sure we had provided the correct antibiotics. I safety netted and counselled on how to speed up recovery and what to watch out for medication wise.

She left satisfied and with timely treatment.

Amy Fjelle, pharmacist independent prescriber for Rowlands Pharmacy, Wrexham



In recent times, however, the cost pressures and workload demand on community pharmacies have risen considerably. Unlike other businesses, when their costs increase, pharmacies cannot pass those costs onto patients. This erodes the ability of businesses to invest in their people, processes and premises, leaving little room for innovation.

It's imperative that the next Government builds upon the achievements of the community pharmacy sector.

With investment, pharmacies can:

- play an even greater role in **urgent and emergency care**, providing an additional access route to patients;
- harness independent prescribing to provide even more NHS services including a **greater role in managing chronic conditions**, alleviating pressure on general practice; and
- deliver more **vital preventative services** including vaccinations, chronic disease risk checks, smoking cessation and weight management, which would stop patients and members of the public from becoming ill in the first place.



CURRENT CHALLENGES

Ever-increasing demand

Like other parts of the NHS, pharmacies are having to deal with the challenges of an ageing population with ever-complex health conditions. Funding is struggling to keep up with this ever-increasing demand, which has led to **4%** reduction in community pharmacies in 2023-24 alone.

There was a

4%

**contraction in the
pharmacy network in 2023-
24 alone.**

Rising operational costs

Pharmacies have absorbed and continue to absorb **considerable cost pressures**. Unlike other business, pharmacies cannot pass on increasing costs to patients, intensifying financial pressures.

Workforce challenges

In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to recruit and retain pharmacy teams. Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) identified **workforce shortages** as the most frequently raised concern in its national pharmacy survey, reinforcing the need for investment to support and sustain the sector.



Digital

Digital changes have failed to keep pace with the ambitious role envisaged of community pharmacy. Currently, pharmacy teams must use different platforms for various services, including the Choose Pharmacy platform to log a patient consultation, update the patient medical record used to dispense and supply medicines, and claim via a separate online portal. All of this creates an **administrative burden**, limiting pharmacies' capacity to deliver more care.

Data gaps

Current **fragmentation and limited outcome data** in community pharmacy spread across multiple systems hinders the ability to evidence success and target improvements to ensure more people get the care they need.

OUR ASKS OF THE NEXT GOVERNMENT

The next Welsh Government must:

- 1 Fund community pharmacy in line with workload and inflationary costs:** Ensure funding rises in line with increasing patient demand to safeguard and expand community pharmacy care.
- 2 Invest in the pharmacy workforce:** Support frontline teams, grow the number of independent prescribing pharmacists, and support the sector to ensure community pharmacy remains an attractive place to work.
- 3 Rollout and accelerate digital changes** to ensure community pharmacies have the tools to meet the needs of patient. This should include moving all health and care data into the National Data Resource (NDR) to create a single national clinical data repository, improving interoperability of systems, and developing standards to receive and send digital referrals across the NHS. Taken together, these measures will ensure vital information is readily available to support pharmacies to meet patient need.
- 4 Ensure performance data is shared with the sector:** Data collected on community pharmacy service uptake and performance should be proactively shared and publicised. This will help drive further service improvements, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.
- 5 Drive greater collaboration across the entire NHS** to identify ways in which demand can be reduced across the entire system, as well as measures that can be taken to free up capacity.



HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY

We urge all political parties to commit to supporting and strengthening the community pharmacy sector, so that patients and the public alike can continue to access the world-class care they need.

You can support local community pharmacies by:

- Speaking to colleagues developing your party's manifesto about the support the community pharmacy network needs to continue to deliver for patients and the NHS.
- Visiting a local pharmacy to see and experience the world-class care they deliver each and every day, and to witness first-hand the challenges that pharmacies are currently facing.
- Use your reach to highlight the excellent care that pharmacies provide to patients and members of the public via social media.
- Supporting this manifesto on social media and in the local media.
- Inform your constituents about how you are supporting their local community pharmacies.

The next Welsh Government must ensure community pharmacy can not only continue to deliver for the people of Wales but can also lead the innovation and evolution of primary care. By addressing the challenges set out in this manifesto, Wales can secure a healthier future for all its communities.



Contact and Support

We urge politicians, stakeholders, and the public to back these priorities and work with us to champion the invaluable role of community pharmacy in Wales.

If you'd like further information on the community pharmacy sector, please contact Neeraj Shah, Head of Public Affairs at the Company Chemists' Association via Neeraj.Shah@thecca.org.uk.

WHO WE ARE

COMPANY CHEMISTS' ASSOCIATION

Established in 1898, the CCA is the trade association for multiple pharmacy operators in England, Scotland and Wales. The CCA membership includes ASDA, Boots, Morrisons, Rowlands Pharmacy, Superdrug, Tesco, and Well, who between them own and operate nearly 300 pharmacies across Wales.



OFFICE@THECCA.ORG.UK



[@CCAPHARMACY](https://twitter.com/CCAPHARMACY)



THECCA.ORG.UK



[COMPANY CHEMISTS'
ASSOCIATION](https://www.linkedin.com/company/company-chemists-association)