

Background:

Community pharmacies are an accessible and convenient place for people to receive advice and support for NHS contraception.

The [NHS Long Term Plan \(LTP\) Chapter 2](#) highlights the importance of NHS services complementing the action taken by local government to support the commissioning of sexual health services and exploring the future commissioning arrangements to widen access and create capacity where it is needed.

Since September 2021 NHS England have been testing the option for people to be offered a confidential consultation with a community pharmacist to access their next supply of oral contraception. This is for people who have been previously initiated on oral contraception by general practice or a sexual health clinic.

The service was successfully piloted at 145 community pharmacies across England.

Following the positive evaluation of this pilot, the service will now be available nationally from January 2023.

Pharmacies have the option to register for the service and all community pharmacists offering the service will have demonstrated competence in the specific skills and knowledge required.

People who wish to consult another healthcare provider for contraception support are still free to do so.

Benefits of the Service:

The service is an integrated pathway between existing services and community pharmacies to enable greater choice and widen access to services and support for high-risk communities and vulnerable patients.

The service has been reported to free up capacity in primary care, build the capabilities of pharmacists and provide greater patient choice.

- Patients reported that the consulting pharmacist was professional and reassuring during the consultation. 95% of survey respondents stated they were comfortable discussing their contraception with the pharmacist.
- 97% of patients surveyed were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the service. Most often citing its convenience and speed compared to a GP consultation, allowing them to fit their consultation around their own schedules more easily.
- 98% of patients surveyed said they were 'likely' or 'very likely' to use the service again.

Key Information:

The service will be an Advanced Service within the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) agreement. All community pharmacies can choose to deliver the service as long as they meet the requirements of the specification.

Patient-facing promotional materials for community pharmacies, sexual health clinics and GPs can be found on our [FutureNHS page](#). **Community pharmacists and local stakeholders are encouraged to have conversations with eligible people.**

A person may self-refer or be referred by their GP or sexual health clinic to a participating pharmacy. The pharmacist will offer a confidential consultation and as part of that will reach a shared decision with the person on the ongoing supply of their current oral contraception, ensuring clinical appropriateness.

This is an NHS service and so the supply of oral contraception will be exempt from any prescription charges.

People access the service by one of the following routes:

- Offered by the community pharmacy team;
- Self-refer to a community pharmacy;
- Referred by their GP practice as they have requested a repeat prescription, and a review is needed;
- Referred from a sexual health clinic or equivalent.

To be eligible to access this service a person must either:

- Be an individual (age from menarche to up to 50 years) seeking a repeat supply of their ongoing oral contraception.
- Have already been supplied with an oral contraception by their general practice or a sexual health clinic (or equivalent) and a subsequent supply is needed. Their current supply of oral contraception should still be in use.

For more information you can visit:

[NHS England » NHS Community Pharmacy Contraception Management Service Pilot: Access to Ongoing Management of Oral Contraception \(Tier 1\)](#)

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