

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD  
13 MARCH 2025**

**ITEM NO.**

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**PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PNA) REPORT**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Health and Wellbeing Board regarding the progress of the review and re-write of Darlington's Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).
2. To request the Board to delegate authority to the Chair of Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board and Director of Public Health to manage and approve the PNA process, to ensure that a final draft of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment is ready for sign off by the Health and Wellbeing Board for publication before 30 September 2025.

**Summary**

3. Since 1 April 2013, every Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) in England has had a statutory responsibility to publish and keep up to date a statement of the needs for pharmaceutical services of the population in its area, referred to as a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).
4. The government requires all Health and Wellbeing Boards to produce an assessment of pharmaceutical services in its area every three years (or sooner where major changes have occurred), to inform the Integrated Care Board as commissioners of pharmacy provision. This is undertaken using a nationally defined set of criteria.
5. The current PNA was published in October 2022 with a lifespan of three years, with a new one required to be published by the end of September 2025.
6. The purpose of a PNA is to identify the pharmaceutical services which currently exist in the borough, map service provision to local needs and identify any gaps. The PNA should then be used as a tool to inform commissioners of the current provision of pharmaceutical services in relation to local health priorities. The Integrated Care Board is required to use the PNA in their commissioning decisions. Whilst the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Local Authority Public Health, as commissioners, would find it useful the document must also be accessible to public, patients, providers, partners and external stakeholders.
7. The Board is requested to delegate authority to Chair of Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board and Director of Public Health to approve and manage the process of producing the PNA for approval by the HWBB, for publication by 30 September 2025.
8. This will facilitate meeting the schedule of actions required to be undertaken at each step of the process without requiring approval from the HWBB at each stage of the process. This will allow for the PNA to be signed off at a full Board meeting before this deadline.

## Recommendation

9. It is recommended that members of the Health and Wellbeing Board:
- (a) Note their duties and responsibilities in regulation in relation to the production of a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment for Darlington.
  - (b) Note the requirement to publish a new refreshed PNA by the end of September 2025.
  - (c) Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are aware of the process involved including the requirement for consultation which includes the public, professional bodies and other stakeholders.
  - (d) Delegate authority to the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Director of Public Health to manage and approve the PNA process, to ensure that it is ready for approval and publication by 30th September 2025.

## Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported as failure to produce a robust PNA could lead to legal challenges due to the PNA's relevance to decisions about commissioning services, including applications for new pharmacies.

**Lorraine Hughes**  
**Director of Public Health**

Ken Ross - Public Health Principal

Council Plan	The report supports the Council Plan priority of Living Well as it focuses on the health and wellbeing of the population.
Addressing Inequalities	The Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment ensures that pharmaceutical services are accessible to all inclusion groups in Darlington.
Tackling Climate Change	There are no implications arising from this report.
Efficient and effective use of resources	This report has no impact on the Council's Efficiency Programme as actions delivered will need to be contained within agreed budgets.
Health and Wellbeing	The PNA is intended to be used in relation to commissioning for the pharmaceutical needs of the local population
S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications arising from this report
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	The whole population of Darlington
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	N/A
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

11. From 1 April 2013, every Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) in England has had a statutory responsibility to publish and keep up to date a statement of the needs for pharmaceutical services of the population in its area, referred to as a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).
12. The purpose of the PNA is to identify what pharmaceutical services currently exist in the borough, map service provision to local needs and identify any gaps.
13. The PNA should then be used as a tool to inform commissioners of the current provision of pharmaceutical services in relation to local health priorities. The Integrated Care Board is required to use the PNA for commissioning decisions. Commissioners such as the Integrated Care Board and Local Authority Public Health are the primary audience for this document, however the document must also be accessible to public, patients, providers, partners and external stakeholders.
14. Failure to comply with the regulatory duties may lead to a legal challenge, for example where a party believes that they have been disadvantaged following the refusal by the NHS England of their application to open new premises.
15. This paper will formally commence the process of the review of the existing PNA in accordance with the Regulations and with a view to publishing the PNA within the statutory timeframe.

### Progress to date

16. A PNA project steering group for Darlington is being established. This group will be led by the Public Health Team (Public Health Principal) and supported by the North of England Commissioning Support (NECS) through the provision of specialist pharmaceutical and Public Health intelligence, contracting, policy and clinical advice.
17. This group will meet regularly to provide clear direction, project management, monitoring and practical operational delivery towards completion of the PNA.
18. A timeline has been produced and will inform a detailed action plan to efficiently utilize the time leading up to the publication of the PNA.
19. Preliminary data on the Pharmaceutical List, pharmaceutical services, appliance contractors, dispensing doctor practices, prescribing services (including general practices) and other locally contracted services which might impact on the PNA have been sought from NHS England and ICBs and any relevant sub-contractors. Public Health Intelligence information and specialist pharmaceutical advice is being provided by NECS
20. Information with regard to any changes in local population that may change the need for pharmaceutical services (e.g. new major housing estates) and an overview of Darlington's Health and Wellbeing Strategy to ensure that the PNA feeds into the wider outcomes of Darlington Borough Council is being collected and collated.
21. Regulations list those persons and organisations that must be consulted, e.g. the NHS Commissioners (NHS England, ICB), the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) and Local Medical Committee, (LMC), Healthwatch Darlington and other patient and public groups.

22. All above parties will be contacted and informed at the start of Darlington's consultation, and an online copy of Darlington's PNA will be made available so that individuals or groups can view the draft and submit their comments.
23. Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board will also receive requests from neighbouring authorities to comment on their PNAs. For Darlington this is Durham, North Yorkshire and Stockton.

#### **Next Steps**

24. The process of data collection and drafting of the PNA will commence immediately, supported by NECS and led by Public Health
25. A draft will be produced for consultation as per regulation to allow time for the feedback to be analysed and addressed to inform the final draft.
26. The final draft informed by the consultation will then be produced for sign off by the Health and Wellbeing Board in the meeting before the end of September 2025,
27. The final version of the Darlington PNA will be published by 1 October 2025.