

Birmingham and Solihull's Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2022

Healthwatch Birmingham and Healthwatch Solihull welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Birmingham and Solihull's Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) 2022. Our key role is to make sure that patients, the public, service users, and carers (PPSuC) are at the heart of service improvement in health and social care. In line with our role, we have focused our comments on:

- Patient and Public Involvement and engagement
- How the assessment meets the needs of Birmingham and Solihull residents

Healthwatch Birmingham and Healthwatch Solihull note that the opportunity to share views has been available on Solihull MBC website since the 31st October. We are pleased that this has given patients and the public time to consider their views to respond. We also note that email addresses and telephone numbers have been available for the public to contact if needed, which is useful for those without digital access or who need assistance in responding.

We note however that the consultation does not appear to have been available on or promoted by any other websites, including Birmingham City Council's website. This means that only a limited about of stakeholders and the public will have been aware of the consultation.

Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment

The Draft Birmingham and Solihull PNA reflects the current supply of pharmaceutical services within Birmingham and Solihull.

We recognise that the PNA does reflect the current supply of pharmaceutical services within Birmingham and Solihull. However we note that patient feedback on services does sometimes comment on overstretched services with long waits or queues. By looking at the supply of services it is hard to judge fully whether those services are meeting the needs of the local population. We ask that patient feedback is considered to examine this issue throughout the life of the PNA.

"Always a queue outside. They rarely answer the phone so that I can check if my prescription has arrived/ is correct. Often phone line is connected to the fax machine. This means I have to make repeated journeys to queue outside the chemist to find out whether or not my GP had sent out the requested prescription or whether it is ready for collection or in stock. Goodness knows how elderly or infirm people are managing."

"They don't answer the phone and then you make your way there to be told you should have called to check and that your prescription won't be ready for another day. You then go back the next day to be told its still not ready and to come back the following day but when you put your foot down they can magically have your prescription ready in 15 mins."



"Left to stand for 25 minutes twice in a day for the same prescription only to be told that they hadn't got my medication and to come back the next day."

"Wait times at the pharmacy is very bad. You are waiting ½ an hour in the queue. Had a text to say the medication are ready but when I arrive, most often it is not ready and even after queuing it is still the case..."

It also doesn't take into account where a service exists, but the local population choose not use it due to poor experiences.

"On the occasions I have had to use this pharmacy I dread going in. Pharmacist is Consistently rude, unhelpful and obnoxious and always makes you feel like you're an inconvenience."

"They shouldn't be Pharmacists. This isn't the first time but I can be certain it will be the last"

"...Their service became so unreliable we have changed to another chemist."

"I wish I had a tenner for every time I have been to this pharmacy and have received wrong medication or they have mislaid the prescription. The pharmacist is arrogant and rude. If it wasn't for the fact that its our nearest pharmacy we wouldn't bother going there."

The Draft PNA reflects the future (over the next three years) pharmaceutical needs of Birmingham and Solihull residents

As population grows in some areas, we ask that patient feedback is carefully reviewed in these areas for early signs of poor performing or overstretched services. These then need to be acted on promptly to ensure the public of Birmingham and Solihull receive the services they need.

Any other comments

We are often contacted by people living in Birmingham and Solihull who are unsure about the complaints route to follow when unhappy with the pharmacy services local to them. We would like to see clearer communication to residents about who to contact if they need to raise complaints or concerns about their care.

We welcome the use of community pharmacy services, and often hear feedback from people who are happy with the services they can receive at their pharmacy.

"Absolutely brilliant chemist. He's always helped me with anything I have problems with and advice is 100%"

"They are very helpful always they when I need them I prefer going to them for advice they listen"

"Had a rash on arm which turned out to be shingles was seen by the pharmacist who correctly diagnosed it whereas when ringing the surgery had to send photos and a telephone consultation. This chemist is always my first port of call"



for medical help unless it's obvious I need to speak to the surgery. They are a vital and well loved service to the local community"

"All my vaccinations done at [pharmacy] excellent service. Just so lucky we have this vaccination service available. Sore arm small price to pay for being protected."

We note though that we have also received comments from the public who are unsure about seeing community pharmacies, as they are unsure about pharmacists qualifications. We recommend that communication about any community and additional services are clear about the professionalism of the advice people can receive.

Healthwatch Birmingham and Healthwatch Solihull welcome the chance to comment on the PNA and look forward to seeing it develop throughout it's lifespan.

Yours Sincerely,



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