

From Kathryn Turner
Head of Pharmacy & Medicines Management
(Interim), SPPG



Strategic Planning and Performance Group

By email

To Community Pharmacies in the Northern Health & Social Care Trust area

5th Floor,
Linenhall Street
Belfast
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Email: kathryn.turner@hscni.net

Date: 3rd April 2026

Dear Colleague,

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY PHARMACY OVER-THE-COUNTER CODEINE BRIEF INTERVENTION & REFERRAL PILOT SERVICE

The purpose of this letter is to seek Expressions of Interest from Community Pharmacies wishing to provide the Community Pharmacy Over-the-Counter (OTC) Codeine Brief Intervention & Referral Pilot Service in the Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area.

Background

The Community Pharmacy OTC Codeine Brief Intervention & Referral Pilot Service was initially planned in the East Antrim area and [correspondence](#), highlighting some background information, was issued to Community Pharmacies invited to participate in the Pilot Service. Due to the availability of funding, it is now possible to offer the Pilot Service to additional Community Pharmacies in the NHSCT area.

The Pilot Service is initially commissioned from Monday 13th April 2026 until Sunday 13th September 2026, in the first instance, subject to available funding. **The service is dependent on available funding therefore, it may be paused or withdrawn if funding is no longer available.** PHA will undertake a formal evaluation of the service during this period and there will be the potential to extend the pilot, subject to available funding.

The Service Specification and supporting resources for the pilot are available on the [BSO Harm Reduction Services website](#). Printed copies of some resources, including the Risk Assessment Tool and information leaflets, will be issued by the Public Health Agency (PHA) to all participating Community Pharmacies.

Remuneration and reimbursement

Remuneration for the Over the Counter (OTC) Codeine Brief Intervention & Referral Pilot is provided by the Public Health Agency.

The payment for service delivery consists of the following components:

- A one-off set up fee of £200 per Pharmacy Contractor
- A fee of £20 per completed Brief intervention and Risk Assessment form
- A fee of £10 per completed referral to the NHSCT Community Addiction Service

Training Requirements

Prior to service commencement, relevant pharmacy staff will be expected to undertake the required training as outlined in the Community Pharmacy Over-the-Counter (OTC) Codeine Brief Intervention & Referral Pilot Service Specification.

The ASCERT “*Codeine Awareness and Brief Interventions for Pharmacists*” training, as outlined in the training requirements section of the Service Specification, can be accessed via the link [Codeine Awareness and Brief Interventions for Pharmacists Webinar](#) using the passcode: bmC!S4m+

Expression of interest

Funding is available to facilitate up to a total of 31 pharmacies across the NHSCT area to provide the Pilot Service.

If you wish to be considered for this Pilot Service and have not already submitted a contract, please complete the Expression of Interest Form in Appendix 1 and return it to Michael.McCabe@hscni.net **by 5pm on Thursday 16th April 2026; forms received after this date and time will not be accepted.** N.B. If successful, pharmacies will be advised on next steps including contract submission and service commencement.

Selection of Pilot Service Providers

Community Pharmacies who express an interest to provide the Pilot Service will be considered based on the following;

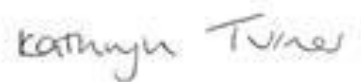
- Availability of an appropriate consultation area, as outlined in the Service Specification

If more Pharmacies express an interest than funding permits then consideration will be given to the following;

- Total number of contracted opening hours
- Geographical location to ensure access to the service across the NHSCT area
- Contracted to provide other HSC commissioned Community Pharmacy Harm Reduction Services

If you have any queries in relation to this Pilot Service, please contact Michael.McCabe@hscni.net (Pharmacy Advisor, SPPG) in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Turner". The script is cursive and somewhat informal.

Kathryn Turner
Head of Pharmacy and Medicines
Management (Interim), SPPG

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Hanlon". The script is cursive and elegant.

Stephanie Hanlon,
Joint Substance Use Lead,
PHA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Byers". The script is cursive and fluid.

Dr Lisa Byers, PHD, IP, MPSNI
Controlled Drugs Accountable Officer

Appendix 1

Community Pharmacy Over-the-Counter (OTC) Codeine Brief Intervention & Referral Pilot Service Expression of Interest
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Pharmacy name	
Contractor number	
Pharmacy premises address	
Name of Pharmacist(s) responsible for the service	
Email address	
Telephone number	

Pharmacy Opening Hours

Complete table below with the pharmacy's actual opening hours.

	Opening Time	Closing Time	Lunch-break
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM TO BE RETURNED:

To Michael.McCabe@hscni.net By 5pm on Thursday 16th April 2026

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