

My ref:

27 March 2015

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Dear Ms Thompson

RE: LINCOLNSHIRE PHARMACEUTICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairman of the Lincolnshire Health and Wellbeing Board to highlight a number of concerns raised by the Board regarding access to pharmaceutical services in many rural parts of Lincolnshire.

In line with statutory requirements, the Board formally approved the Lincolnshire Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) at its meeting on 24 March 2015. I have attached a copy of the PNA which will shortly be made available on the Lincolnshire Research Observatory.

The PNA concludes that Lincolnshire residents are adequately served by providers of dispensing services in both urban and rural areas. However, there are many rural areas of Lincolnshire where dispensing services are available but patients have no access to self-care over the counter medicines or community pharmacy advanced services such as Medicines Use Reviews and the New Medicine Service.

The Board discussed the rural nature of Lincolnshire, particularly in the east of the county, which combined with an increasing ageing population means many local residents struggle to access self-care or basic community pharmacy services. The lack of or limited access to services is forcing many rural residents to seek help from either their GP or A&E for minor conditions which can easily be treated by visiting a pharmacy. The only alternative is to travel considerable distances to larger towns where community pharmacy services are more readily available.

This apparent inconsistency and gaps in service provision seem at odds with the national *'Feeling under the weather'* campaign which aims to reduce the pressure on NHS urgent and emergency care by influencing changes in public behaviour to help reduce the number of elderly and frail people requiring admission to hospital or A&E with illnesses that could have been effectively managed through earlier access to health advice and self-care information from community pharmacy services.

To address these issues, the PNA calls for further expansion and wider availability to a range of services currently provided through community pharmacies. This expansion should be done with existing community pharmacies, by for example extending opening hours, rather than establishing new pharmacies which could lead to an over-provision of essential services or destabilise current provision.

Given the conclusions and recommendations highlighted in Lincolnshire's PNA, the Health and Wellbeing Board would like to know what plans NHS England has to address the gaps in community pharmacy provision, particularly in the east of the county.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Woolley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'S' and a clear 'Woolley'.

Cllr Sue Woolley
Chairman, Lincolnshire Health & Wellbeing Board
Executive Councillor, NHS Liaison, Community Engagement

cc Jim Heys, Locality Director (North), NHS England
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