

## **New research highlights that privacy, reassurance and education are essential for Pharmacy First to be adopted by people in England**

With Pharmacy First launching on the 31<sup>st</sup> January, signalling the greatest shift in pharmacy services for English patients in years, new research by Superdrug highlights that essential information and actions are required to encourage more people to use the new services.

The survey results\* reveal the extent that people would be more willing to talk to their pharmacist about the new health conditions under Pharmacy First:

- Nearly three quarters of people (73%) would consider the service if there's a private consultation room
- Three-fifths (59%) would use the service if it was clear how qualified the pharmacists are to be able to help
- 63% would use the service if they could get a prescription quicker
- Two-thirds (67%) would consider the service if it was clear what services pharmacists can offer

Pharmacists will now be able to offer prescription medicines for the seven conditions as part of the service but while the 85% of people positively welcome its introduction, there's still some education needed around different health conditions it supports, with a third (32%) not having heard of impetigo, nearly a quarter (23%) not having heard of sinusitis, 18% not having heard of shingles, and 15% not having heard of a UTI (urinary tract infection).

Niamh McMillan, Superdrug's Pharmacy Superintendent, commented, "All pharmacists have undertaken at least four years of training at University and a further year of study after graduating before qualifying as a Pharmacist. Pharmacists are experts in medicines and able to support patients with a wide range of different minor illnesses. Pharmacy First is an excellent opportunity for pharmacists to utilise these skills and support the health of their local community with this new service. Ahead of the launch, our pharmacists have undertaken additional training which covers all seven clinical conditions, clinical history taking and practical assessment skills, to accommodate the service and ensure our teams can provide the best patient care. To put patients at ease, there are private consultation rooms in every Superdrug pharmacy."

Ghada Beal, Superdrug's Healthcare Director, commented, "The Pharmacy First initiative is a fantastic resource for local communities, with pharmacists now being able to supply prescription medications for the seven conditions, which means people will be able to access quicker and more convenient care. If you do have any minor healthcare concerns, then please head to a Superdrug store to speak with a pharmacist about the best options for you."

Malcolm Harrison, Chief Executive of the Company Chemists' Association, commented: "Pharmacy First will improve patient access to care for several common conditions. 10,000+ community pharmacies are signed up to deliver the service which will also free up GP capacity at a critical time for the NHS. We are confident the sector will deliver the service successfully and make a strong case

for its future expansion to cover further common conditions. An ambitious and fully funded Pharmacy First service could free up 30m+<sup>[1]</sup> GP appointments annually.”

Pharmacy First is a service where pharmacists can provide people with professional health care advice, treatments, and medicines for seven common illnesses, instead of the patient going to a GP surgery. As part of the service, seven common health conditions that pharmacists will be able to help with are sinusitis, sore throat, earache, infected insect bites, impetigo, shingles, and minor urinary tract infections in women. Superdrug has private consultation rooms in every pharmacy to conduct the service and offer healthcare advice.

The new Pharmacy First service launches nationwide and in Superdrug pharmacies from 31st January.

\*Survey conducted by Superdrug in December 2023 with 937 Superdrug Health and BeautyCard Members

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For further information or comment please contact [superdrug@itsmaven.com](mailto:superdrug@itsmaven.com)

[1] CCA, [‘Pharmacy First’ could be a game-changer for primary care if Government and the NHS demonstrate ambition](#), June 2023