**News release**

18 November 2024

**People urged to 'Think Pharmacy First' this winter**

Health leaders in Humber and North Yorkshire are encouraging people with minor illnesses to 'Think Pharmacy First' this winter.

Under the scheme, launched earlier this year, patients can get [treatment for seven common conditions](https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/how-pharmacies-can-help/?wt.mc_id=pharmacyfirst_General_phrase&wt.tsrc=ppc&gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQiA6Ou5BhCrARIsAPoTxrDY3gc0zyWhcIFimSpyaJxVXyTjc4J6wnYqHaOOGbzbsR5A2dFmHN0aAjryEALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds) directly from their local community pharmacy, without needing a GP appointment or prescription.

Pharmacists are able to supply prescription-only medicines, including antibiotics and antivirals where clinically appropriate, to treat:-

* Sinusitis
* Sore throat
* Earache
* Infected insect bite
* Impetigo (a bacterial skin infection)
* Shingles
* Uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women.

Latest figures published on 25 October show a total of 9,235 pharmacies in England conducted 186,190 consultations under the scheme in July.

It is hoped the continued rollout of Pharmacy First will eventually free up around 10 million GP practice appointments a year.

Dr Nigel Wells, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board's (ICB) Executive Director for Clinical and Professional, said: "Nearly every pharmacy in our area – almost 300 – is signed up to deliver Pharmacy First services, giving people easy and convenient access to advice and treatment for a number of common health conditions, without needing to see a GP.

"Pharmacies are also playing an increasingly vital role in self-care, with expert advice and guidance and a wide range of over-the-counter products for minor, short-term illnesses, as well as important services like providing emergency contraception, vaccinations and medication reviews."

Community pharmacies are staffed by highly-skilled and qualified health professionals who are trusted parts of local communities. All pharmacists train for five years in the use of medicines before they qualify and are also trained in clinically assessing and treating minor illnesses and giving health and wellbeing advice to help people stay well.

Pharmacy technicians are part of the pharmacy team and are also registered health professionals.

Katy Tennyson, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire ICB's Community Pharmacy Clinical Lead, added: "Local pharmacy teams are highly skilled and well equipped to provide convenient clinical care, including treatment for common illnesses, and work closely with GPs and other local healthcare teams to make sure patients get the best possible care.

"As we head into winter, pharmacy teams will be playing an increasingly important part in helping people to stay well – and offering treatment to patients when they're poorly."

Four in five people in England can reach a community pharmacy within a 20-minute walk and there are twice as many pharmacies in the most deprived communities, making access to care quicker and more convenient.

You can find your nearest pharmacy online at [www.nhs.uk/find-a-pharmacy](http://www.nhs.uk/find-a-pharmacy)

**ENDS**

For media enquiries, email: hnyicb.communications@nhs.net

 **Notes to editors**

**About Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership**

The [Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership](https://humberandnorthyorkshire.org.uk/) is a collaboration of health and care organisations bringing together NHS organisations, local councils, health and care providers and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. It is committed to ensuring everyone living in in the area can live a happy, healthy life. Six geographical places make up Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership: North Yorkshire, City of York, Hull, East Riding, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.

**About Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board**

[NHS Humber and North Yorkshire ICB](https://humberandnorthyorkshire.icb.nhs.uk/) is a statutory organisation accountable for NHS spend and performance on behalf of 1.7 million people across York, North Yorkshire, East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. The ICB is a core member of the Humber and North Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership, alongside NHS providers, local councils, health and care providers and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations.