

Newsletter for community pharmacies providing substance use services

June 2025

Supplying take home naloxone without a prescription

Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians can now supply Take Home Naloxone kits without a prescription, after amendments to the legislation, which came into force on **02 December 2024**.

It is important to note that these new powers are **enabling, and not mandatory**. The intention of these changes is to provide an opportunity for provision, based on local need. Whether services take up this new power will be subject to local decisions and funding.

People who can be supplied naloxone

Regulations do not limit supply to specific individuals, except to state that the "supply shall be for the purpose of saving life in an emergency". So, services and professionals named in the legislation could supply naloxone to, for example:

- a person who uses drugs
- a carer, a friend, a family member or a peer of someone who uses drugs
- an outreach worker
- a hostel manager
- any individual working in an environment where there is a risk of someone overdosing

The regulations do not allow people who have been given naloxone by one of the above individuals to supply it on to others for their possible future use. However, in an emergency, anyone can use any available naloxone to save a life.

Further guidance was published on 23 April 2025 (Scan QR code to view).



"Supplying

Take Home Naloxone is super easy. We offered naloxone kits to all people, who we support with getting their blue prescriptions medicines and they accepted supply. We have a naloxone sticker displayed on the window so public know that we can supply naloxone kits."

(Yousuf, Barnsley)

"Training to provide naloxone services was very straightforward."

(Community Pharmacy colleague, Leeds)

"We have been supplying Take Home Naloxone kits mainly to people using Needle and Syringe Programme and, for many, it was an initial supply."

(Community Pharmacy colleague, Sheffield)

"My view

is that the Emergency Naloxone Administration Programme (ENAP) along with the availability of a defibrillator has been a real positive benefit for our staff and for the patients that have needed it used on them!

In the past we would have to deal with people who had overdosed, and our staff would be extremely stressed as there was little, we could do to improve things – just stand and wait until an ambulance arrivedhopefully in time. We now have a tool that can definitely help.

It's a simple process, easy to learn and a potential lifesaver. All pharmacies should take advantage of it."

(Martin, Sheffield)

Good practice/ feedback

Thank you to all community pharmacies supporting our people and cooperating with our services to offer the best possible care.

Please feel free to share examples how you support people affected by substance use. Please share by sending the email to: barbara.zub@waythrough.org.uk

"I have come across a person with agoraphobia, who felt unsettled while waiting in the pharmacy alongside other people.

I spoke to this client to address some behaviours, and we agreed for his medicine to be given out in a safe for-this-person way, and since then, we have not had any issues with this person anymore."

Generic buprenorphine supply issue

We are aware of reports of consistent shortages of buprenorphine 2mg and 8mg sublingual tablets across the country.

We would like to take an opportunity to say **THANK YOU** to all community pharmacies supporting our people and cooperating with their local substance use services to ensure medication supply to people, we support.



Pharmacy Professionals Recovery Group. A Dedicated Peer Support Group for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians

We would like to share details of the Pharmacy Professionals Recovery Group, this is not a Waythrough service but offers valuable support to members of the pharmacy professions impacted by substance use.

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) can affect anyone, including those of us working in healthcare. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are not immune. The unique pressures of our profession, from high workloads and easy access to medications to the constant expectation of infallibility, can increase vulnerability to substance use. Stigma, shame, and fear of professional consequences often prevent individuals from seeking help.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians face distinct challenges when dealing with substance use disorders. Professional and regulatory concerns often add layers of fear and isolation. While general recovery groups such as AA and NA, are invaluable, a peer group tailored to the realities of pharmacy practice offers a deeper understanding and support that can make all the difference.

The Pharmacy Professionals Recovery Group is:

- Confidential: Protecting the identity and privacy of participants is paramount
- Peer-led: Run by individuals with lived experience of recovery
- Supportive: Focused on sharing experiences, strategies, and encouragement
- Profession-specific: Addressing the unique pressures of working in pharmacy

Meetings provide a safe space to speak openly about struggles and successes, without fear of judgment.

Peer support is a proven factor in successful recovery. For healthcare professionals, it helps to:

- Break down stigma and shame
- Restore personal and professional self-esteem
- Share strategies for handling workplace-specific stress and dealing with Fitness to Practice issues
- Build resilience for the long term

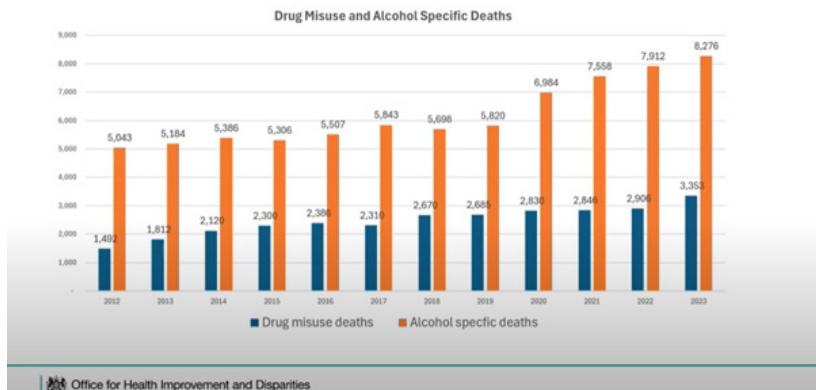
For more information about the peer support group, or to find out how to join, please contact: PharmProfRG@proton.me

As pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, we dedicate our careers to caring for others. When we need help ourselves, we deserve the same compassion and support.

Did you know?

How can community pharmacies support reducing drug related deaths (DRDs)?

Drug misuse deaths and alcohol specific deaths are the highest they have ever been and are one of the leading causes of deaths in people under 50



Who may be at increased risk?

- People accessing pharmacy for needle exchange service and not being in treatment
- People with prescriptions for Opioid Substitution Treatment (OST), although evidence shows that being in treatment is protective against the risk of mortality

What could I do?

- A warm person-centred and holistic approach can make all the difference (there is value and connection in a friendly smile and treating people with dignity and kindness)
- Building relationship and rapport (you might be the only person this person connects with during the day) with little acts of kindness and compassion
- Signposting to their local substance use service if they wish to access treatment for their substance use, or to provide naloxone kit if your pharmacy currently doesn't offer this service

- Reporting any concerns about a person to the service (if in treatment)
- Harm reduction advice (whether in treatment or not)

The harm reduction model focusses on people making positive changes and on working with people without judgement, coercion, discrimination, or requiring that they stop using drugs as a precondition of support. Advice may include:

Details of local substance use service and local support groups

Details of local needle exchange services (information is usually available on your local substance use service website)

Using a "test dose" before using the substance

Details of where to obtain supplies of naloxone (or supply direct from the pharmacy if this service is available in your local area)

Advice on how to transfer to a safer form of drug use, for example smoking vs. injecting

Signs of overdose (drugs and alcohol) and how to respond to an overdose including the importance of calling an ambulance if overdose is suspected

The importance of not using illicit drugs alone especially when injecting

Safer injecting practices and wound care advice (signposting to your local substance use service if unsure).

The risks associated with poly-substance use including risks from alcohol and prescription medicine use in combination with other substances

If you need any support/training or have any questions, please contact your local substance use service.

Further information on reducing DRDs can be found at the following sites:

PHE (2017) Guidance-Health matters: preventing drug misuse deaths. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-matters-preventing-drug-misuse-deaths/health-matters-preventing-drug-misuse-deaths>

ACMD (2016) Reducing Opioid-Related Deaths in the UK. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/576560/ACMD-Drug-Related-Deaths-Report-161212.pdf

Service updates



Contact Details

Tel: **01226 779066**

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Contact Details

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590 Seven Sisters Rd, London N15 6HR

Service updates



RECOVERY
STEPS
CALDERDALE

Contact Details

Tel: **01422 415550**

Basement House, 10 Carlton St, Halifax HX1 2AL

Alternatively if a pharmacy is struggling to get through the could email our dispensing team

pharmacy@calderdalerecoverysteps.org.uk

Local Update

Missed doses communication

To enable our services to effectively support and conduct welfare checks for people on Oral Substitution Treatment, it is crucial that we are notified immediately when a dose is missed.

You should usually inform the prescriber within one working day if you have concerns about:

- * a person's missed attendance
- * changes in a person's presentation (such as intoxication)
- * any safeguarding issues

Missed attendance includes:

- * missed doses during a titration period
- * missing 3 consecutive doses of opioid substitute medication¹
- * sporadic attendance
- * unusual non-attendance



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Service updates



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Forward Leeds Celebrates 10 Years of Impact with Open House Events

To mark a decade of transforming lives and supporting communities, Forward Leeds is inviting people to attend one of the special Open House events happening across their sites in Leeds. This offers a rare behind-the-scenes look at the work being done to help people affected by alcohol and drug use in the city.

"We'd love to see some of the pharmacy staff we work so closely with take this opportunity to visit and get a behind-the-scenes look at the work we do," said Service Clinical Director Nicole Clark.

What's On at the Open House:

- Inspiring talks on the progress Leeds has made in tackling substance use over the past decade
- Personal stories from individuals who have received support from Forward Leeds
- Guided tours of the facilities to see how the service is delivered
- Meet the team – chat with staff about their roles, experiences, and the impact of their work

Scan the QR code to
Book on through EventBrite



Service updates



Contact Details

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Local Update

Naloxone services training is now available online (Waythrough website) for pharmacies wanting to join!



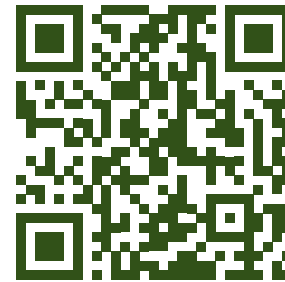
scan to access our
naloxone training

We developed the training package, which can be accessed via Waythrough website for colleagues to be able to complete it in their own time. Please go through our website carefully and chose an option for training you need.

Please note that this training package can be also utilised if you are due for a refresher training (must be completed annually).

Wicker Pharmacy kept 5 people alive, by administering naloxone, since introduction naloxone services to community pharmacies in Sheffield.

Thank you to all community pharmacies providing naloxone services whether administering naloxone or distributing naloxone kits to people, who may benefit from it.



Scan the QR code
to visit our website

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