



Pharmacy Website Reviews

An observational review of the NHS
pharmacy websites within Luton

January 2021

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Introduction

Luton has a population of 214,658 people (www.localhealth.org.uk), who have 47 pharmacies to choose from. In Luton there is a local pharmaceutical committee, which is part of the Bedfordshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee. ([About us : Bedfordshire LPC \(psnc.org.uk\)](http://About us : Bedfordshire LPC (psnc.org.uk))). The LPC is a statutory independent body, bound by the NHS Act of 1977, representing individuals at a local level ([National Health Service Act 1977 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://National Health Service Act 1977 (legislation.gov.uk))).

Those who work as pharmacists are medical professionals, who are able to give advice on minor illnesses and health and wellbeing. Clinical advice can be offered on a range of ailments, including tummy concerns, sore throats, skin conditions and aches and pains. Pharmacists are also able to give certain vaccinations. All pharmacies should dispense prescriptions ([How your pharmacy can help - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://How your pharmacy can help - NHS (www.nhs.uk))).

There are six **Advanced Services** within the NHS community pharmacy contractual framework (CPCF).

Along with Advanced Services each pharmacy offers a range of locally commissioned services such as:

- Drug and Alcohol
- Sexual Health
- Stop Smoking
- End of Life medicines
- HIV
- Emergency medicines

Over the last year, Healthwatch Luton had received 25 pieces of feedback about pharmacies. Of these reviews, there was a variance across the star ratings, with 4 and 5 stars being given seven times each, 3 stars given eight times, 2 stars twice and one star once. Feedback was a mixture of negative and positive feedback, including comments relating to time during the pandemic which stated that pharmacies 'were good' or working well'.

In recent months, with the pandemic, access to face to face appointments at GP practices has vastly reduced and as such, people could be using the pharmacy more. It is important to understand, with the remote access to services, what information is available on the websites of the pharmacies, for individuals to be able to make informed choices about whether to visit the pharmacy and what services would be available to them.



Methodology

Healthwatch Luton based the review criteria on queries that had been raised and information needed to make an informed decision about care choices.

The reviews were carried out in a non-invasive manner, by visiting websites online and completing a checklist. This meant there was no need for consent from the pharmacies as all data collected was within the public domains.

Any recommendations made would have taken into consideration the pandemic at the time, the workload and capacity of the practices. Volunteers were fully briefed before completing the reviews. Once the reviews were completed, they were sent to be reported on.

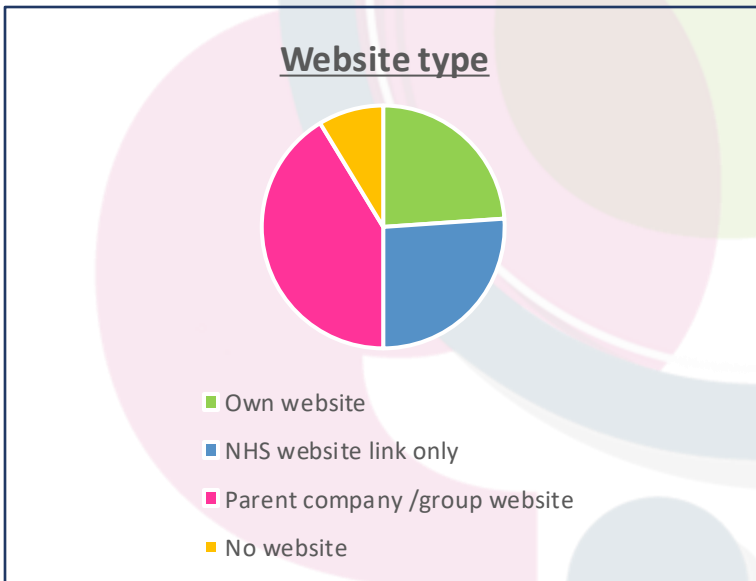
To ensure there were no changes missed, each website was reviewed in one go, with no return once completed. To allow for any conflict of interest, those carrying out the reviews did not carry them out on the pharmacy they used.



Results

Healthwatch Luton reviewed the websites of 46 pharmacies within Luton. These included those which are independently located curb side, but also some which were inside supermarkets or other buildings. All reviews were carried out within a 5 week period between mid-December 2020 and mid-January 2021.

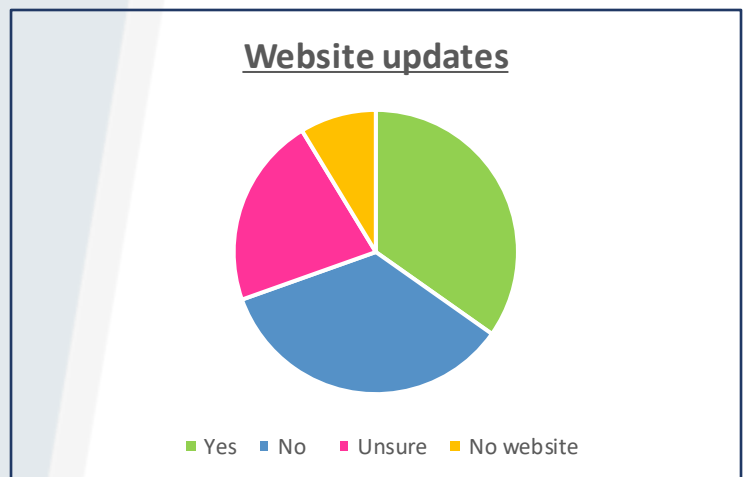
Of the reviews carried out, only 24% (11/46) had their own website. A further 26% (12/46) linked to NHS website pages and 41% (19/46) had websites that were part of a parent company or group of pharmacies, either national, or more localised. Where pharmacies were part of a parent company or group, the pharmacies were reviewed separately, as there were separate parts of the website for different pharmacy locations, such as Lloyds Chemist and Jardines.



The hosts used for the websites by the pharmacies were a wide range including Asda, Web Solutions, Pharmacy Centre, Lloyds Pharmacy Limited and Avicenna.



It was hard to ascertain when some (16/42 - 38%) websites were last updated and of those that were updated (16/42 - 38%) the update dates varied, from October 2019 to January 2021. Where there was no information about coronavirus and no date, it was assumed they had not been updated since March 2020 at least.

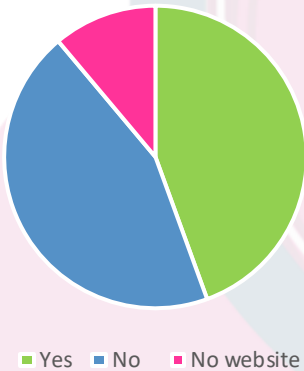


Results

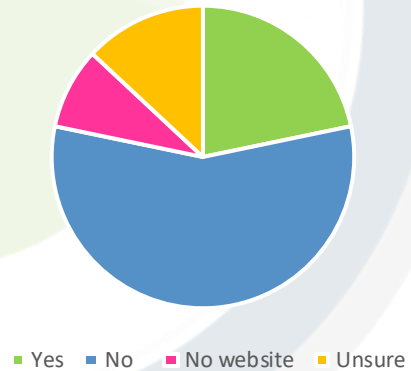
England are included in the current global pandemic and as a result information is being sought online and in remote situations across the health and care system.

When reviewing the websites 46% had information about coronavirus and any changes to their way of working, as well as two stating they were able to complete covid swab tests. When looking at information for vulnerable patients, 22% of pharmacies provided this through their websites.

Coronavirus information on website

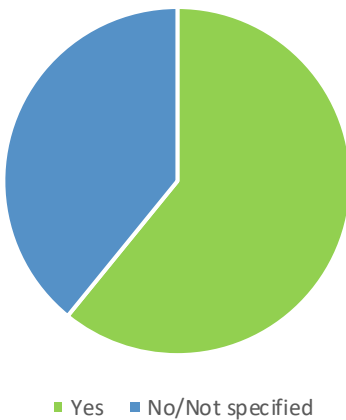


Information for vulnerable patients

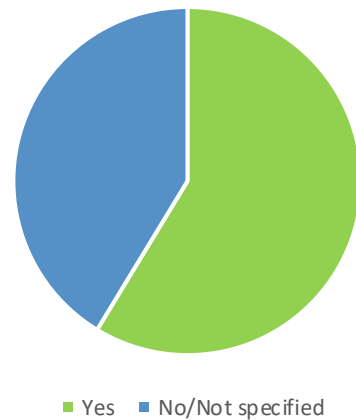


Information about prescriptions was available on some of the websites (average 60%). Of those with information about prescription services, 61% stated they offered a prescription collection service at the current time and 59% stated they offered a delivery service.

Prescription collection service



Prescription delivery service



In charts where it states 'unsure' this is due to it being unclear on the website if it is applicable.



Results

One item checked for was information about the flu vaccine and if this was offered. Flu vaccination information could be found relating to 63% (29/42) of pharmacies. In addition to this, there was flu information and guidance on 45% (19/42) of websites. Travel vaccination information could be found on 63% (29/42) of websites, with some stating information about travel clinics where advice could also be given to ensure the correct vaccines were given.

Some pharmacies provide an appointment service where individuals can book to seek advice or minor medical assistance from the trained staff in the pharmacy. On the websites reviewed, 55% (23/42) offered this, with more also stating there was no need to book an appointment and it worked on a 'drop in' basis. On 14% (6/42) of websites, there was information about what to do in an emergency or out of hours.

Information about how to make complaints or compliments was available on 40% (17/42) of websites. There were further 'contact us pages' on other websites. None of the websites reviewed contained information about how to contact Healthwatch Luton. Legally, all NHS providers should have the contact information to the local Healthwatch on their website.



Section 16 of the Standard NHS Contract 2019/20:

" SC16 Complaints 16.1 The Commissioners and the Provider must each publish, maintain and operate a complaints procedure in compliance with the Fundamental Standards and other Law and Guidance.

*"All 16.2 The Provider must:
16.2.1 provide clear information to Service Users, their Carers and representatives, and to the public, **displayed prominently in the Services Environment as appropriate, on how to make a complaint or to provide other feedback and on how to contact Local Healthwatch"***



Recommendations

Based on the results from the reviews of the websites, Healthwatch Luton would like the following recommendations to be considered by all Luton based pharmacies and the Local Pharmaceutical Committee, to enable the public to access consistent information about the pharmacy, whichever they chose to use.

- **Include information about Healthwatch Luton**

Websites did not contain information about Healthwatch Luton. It is a legal requirement, that all NHS providers have this on their website (see page 7 for information) and as such it would be a recommendation of this report that this information is added to the websites. It would also be of benefit to the practice, as there would be an opportunity for Healthwatch Luton to share any information gathered about them in a Brief Summary Report, which could be produced monthly and quarterly.

- **Website**

In this current time in particular, it would be useful for individuals to be able to access information about the local pharmacy to them. This does not need to be a large website, but a small personal website where people can easily understand the information provided and the information to be specific to that pharmacy.

- **Complaint information**

It would be useful for people to be able to find the information about the complaints process and how they would make a complaint if they were unhappy with the service, care or treatment they had received at a pharmacy. It would be a recommendation of this report that an easy way for individuals to make compliments or complaints to the pharmacy be considered.



Quality Assurance

To quality assure the work, Healthwatch Luton reviewed a small and random sample (4 pharmacy websites) of the reviews, to ensure they were an accurate reflection of the information found on the websites.

Healthwatch Luton ensured the information was a correct and true reflection of the websites and will ensure any recommendations are shared with LCCG, NHS E, CQC, pharmacies and LPC.

Data Information

Whilst the data was in the public domain, it was gathered and collated by Healthwatch Luton and as such this report will remain the property of Healthwatch Luton and any use for sources should be referenced.

Evaluation

Healthwatch Luton have completed a series of website reviews on a variety of providers and this one has been less informative. There was much less information available about the pharmacies, and fewer pharmacies had websites.

This piece of work was productive and useful as it can be used as a starting point for information available about pharmacies in Luton. In a time when the country is amidst a pandemic, it is useful to be able to see remotely what information and services can be accessed via local pharmacies. It does not take into account those who are 'digitally excluded' due to not being online or using websites regularly.

Healthwatch Luton will share the information in this report with the local CCG, NHS E, Local Pharmaceutical Committee and the pharmacies in Luton.

Healthwatch Luton will continue to gather information and feedback about experiences of those within Luton accessing the pharmacies and share this where appropriate with providers.

Recommendations will be reviewed in the next twelve months.



Appendix

I Checklist



Appendix I



Questions	Yes/No	Notes
1. Does the Pharmacy have an individual website or are they part of a larger website/group?		
2. Is the website up to date? When was it last updated?		
3. Who is the web/host provider?		
3. Is there current Covid19 information including any changes in their method of operation?		
5. Is there advice for shielding or vulnerable patients?		
6. Do they have information about prescription collection?		
7. Do they offer delivery service? Is it free or chargeable?		
8. Do they provide travel immunisations?		
9. Are they offering flu vaccines?		
10. Do they offer information about flu and where to get support?		
11. Are there any links or advice to make an appointment?		
12. Is there information available on the website about what to do during out of hours or in an emergency?		
13. Is there information available on the website to make a complaint or submit a compliment?		
14. Is there any information or a link to Healthwatch Luton?		





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