7 Community Pharmacies – Access and travelling time

At present there are 100 community pharmacies within Oxfordshire and 29 dispensing doctor practices. 74% of the community pharmacies are operated by large multiples (e.g. Boots), and the remaining 27% pharmacies are run by independent pharmacy contractors. The pharmacies range from those that are co-located with GP practices and busy high street pharmacies to smaller establishments.

For pharmaceutical services to contribute effectively to the wider network of public health services, it is important that people have relatively easy access. It is difficult to state how far people should be expected to travel to access pharmacy services as this will be affected by local geography, transport links and other factors. However, the Department of Health periodically assesses the accessibility of pharmacies to the general population. The latest estimate, identified in the Pharmacy White Paper - Pharmacy in England Building on strengths – delivering the future published in April 2008, states that 99 percent of the population, even those living in the most deprived areas, can get to a pharmacy within 20 minutes. Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural county and is the most rural county in the South East Region. Therefore, the PCT has taken this into account when looking at travel times to pharmacies. We have also included pharmacies on our borders that provide services in neighbouring PCT areas as some people will access these while being residents of Oxfordshire, as shown in the map overleaf.

7.1 Accessibility analysis

The accessibility analysis was carried out using the Accession™ accessibility software. Accession™ was developed for the Department of Transport and is an accessibility modelling programme, which principally calculates the journey times between a set of ‘origins’ (typically residential areas) and ‘destinations’ (typically representing the locations of essential facilities and services). Journey time calculations can be undertaken using timetabled public transport information (bus and rail), private vehicles, on foot, or by bicycle. The software then allows these journey times to be displayed graphically as contours. For the PNA an accessibility model was developed for the study area, encompassing the Oxfordshire PCT boundary and the surrounding area, in order that all the agreed facilities were included. The full methodology is contained within Appendix 7.

The areas shown in white on the maps depict travel times of longer than 30 minutes and these are inverse correlation to the population density for those rural areas (please see the population density map on page 67).
Access to:

Essential Service 2, 6 & 8
(Community Pharmacies)
All destinations tested in Accession

Oxfordshire PCT Boundary
### 7.2 Definition of Essential services

The table below explains the essential services provided by community pharmacies. These services are referred to in the accessibility analysis which follows:

| Essential Service 1 – Dispensing | The supply of medicines and appliances ordered on NHS prescriptions, together with information and advice, to enable safe and effective use by patients and carers, and maintenance of appropriate records. |
| Essential Service 2 - Repeat Dispensing | The management and dispensing of repeatable NHS prescriptions for medicines and appliances, in partnership with the patient and the prescriber. The service specification covers the requirements in addition to those for dispensing, such that the pharmacist ascertains the patient's need for a repeat supply and communicates any clinically significant issues to the prescriber. |
| Essential Service 3 - Disposal of unwanted medicines | Acceptance, by community pharmacies, of unwanted medicines from households and individuals which require safe disposal. Local Health Boards should need to have in place suitable arrangements for the collection and disposal of waste medicines from pharmacies. |
| Essential Service 4 - Promotion of healthy lifestyles | The provision of opportunistic advice on lifestyle and public health issues to patients receiving prescriptions and pro-active participation in national/local campaigns, to promote public health messages to general pharmacy visitors during specific targeted campaign periods. |
| Essential Service 5 - Signposting | The provision of information to people visiting the pharmacy, who require further support, advice or treatment which cannot be provided by the pharmacy, on alternative health and social care providers who may be able to assist the person. Where appropriate, this may take the form of a referral. |
| Essential Service 6- Support for self-care | The provision of advice and support by pharmacy staff to enable people to derive maximum benefit from caring for themselves or their families. |
| Essential Service 8 - Clinical governance requirements | Pharmacies have an identifiable clinical governance lead and apply clinical governance principles to the delivery of services. This should include use of standard operating procedures; recording, reporting and learning from adverse incidents; participation in continuing professional development and clinical audit; and assessing patient satisfaction. |
7.3 Essential Services 1 (Community Pharmacy and Dispensing Practices) – by Car

Access to Essential Service 1 provided by community pharmacies and dispensing doctor practices by car is shown to be possible in less than 20 minutes from the whole of the PCT area. This assessment shows that access to dispensing services by car is reasonable as access times are within the 20 minute envelope for the whole of the population.
7.4 Essential Services 1 (Community Pharmacy and Dispensing Practices) – by Public Transport

As previously stated, Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural county with West Oxfordshire being one of the regions least densely populated areas. Access to Essential Service 1 provided by community pharmacies and dispensing doctor practices is shown to be possible in less than 20 minutes from the urban areas of the PCT in the map shown overleaf. The areas shown in white depicting travel times of longer than 30 minutes are inverse correlation to the population density for those rural areas (please see the population density map on page 67). There are a small number of variations in accessibility to Essential Service 1 provided by community pharmacies and dispensing practices between Tuesday and Saturday, although these appear to be minimal. Two areas of note are north of Cropredy and west of Henley-on-Thames/Sonning Common.

The majority of community pharmacies and dispensing doctor practices offer home delivery services. Home delivery services are not currently commissioned by the PCT as a service from community pharmacies. Many pharmacies chose to offer delivery services to patients on a free of charge basis based on their own criteria for eligibility. The recent PCT survey of community pharmacies and dispensing practice showed that currently 76 pharmacies offer a free home delivery service to their patients and 20 of the 26 dispensing GP practices responding to the survey reported they offer a delivery service to their patients.

The survey has shown that the following areas have access to delivery services:

7.5 Essential Services 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 (Community Pharmacy) – by Car

Access to Essential Service 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 provided by community pharmacies by car is shown to be possible in less than 20 minutes from the whole of the PCT area. This assessment shows that access to Essential Service 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 by car is reasonable as access times are within the 20 minute envelope for the whole of the population.
7.6 Essential Services 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 (Community Pharmacy) – by Public Transport

Access to Essential Service 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 provided by community pharmacies is shown to be possible in less than 20 minutes from the urban areas of the PCT area. The areas shown in white depicting travel times of longer than 30 minutes are inverse correlation to the population density for those rural areas (please see the population density map on page 67).

Travel times to access Essential Service 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 in some areas is longer than travel times to access to Essential Service 1 (dispensing) but often dispensing is the most significant service for the population to be able to access. It is reasonable to assume that the population in rural areas will travel outside of their rural area to access other services, such as shops, post office and GP practice. Therefore there is a reasonable level of access to Essential Services 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 by public transport.