

Petition: Pharmaceutical Needs for Thames Ditton

Statement

We the undersigned petition Surrey County Council to We, the undersigned, request that Surrey County Council's Health & Wellbeing Board and the NHS recognise the need for a pharmacy in Thames Ditton village itself (which until early 2024 had had a pharmacy for as long as residents can recall) regardless of any conclusions to the contrary which may be indicated in the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) due for publication in April 2025.

Justification

The PNA is a statutorily required statement of the need for pharmaceutical services in Surrey. It is the responsibility of the Surrey County Council's Health & Wellbeing Board and will be used by the appropriate part of the NHS (in this case the Surrey Heartlands & Frimley Integrated Care Board) as the basis for approving/licensing new pharmacies in Surrey. A revised draft PNA is currently out for consultation (until 24th January) and can be found by going to Surrey County Council's website and putting 'Draft PNA 2025' in the search box.

There has been some interest, by an independent pharmacist, in the re-opening of the pharmacy in the High Street. You will recall Boots closed this outlet in early 2024. However, the draft PNA, based on up-to-date data following the loss of Boots, clearly does not accept that there is any need for a replacement pharmacy in Thames Ditton.

ON THIS BASIS IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT THAMES DITTON WOULD GET APPROVAL FOR A REPLACEMENT PHARMACY IN THE VILLAGE.

IF YOU FEEL STRONGLY THAT THAMES DITTON SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO HAVE ITS OWN PHARMACY, PLEASE SIGN THE PETITION BELOW.

THE PETITION WILL REMAIN OPEN UNTIL AT LEAST FEBRUARY 14TH (unless we learn that the Health & Wellbeing Board will be meeting earlier than March to approve the PNA).

PLEASE NOTE THAT A PAPER VERSION OF THIS PETITION HAS BEEN PLACED IN SEVERAL SITES IN THAMES DITTON. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ONLY SIGN EITHER THE ONLINE PETITION OR THE PAPER PETITION BUT NOT BOTH.

Response

Thank you for your interest in the findings of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) for Surrey, which was published in a draft form in November 2024, and is due for discussion at today's board meeting. We acknowledge the petition signed by residents of Thames Ditton requesting that the area be permitted to have its own pharmacy. This response outlines the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board in assessing pharmaceutical need and our influence on pharmacy market entry applications.

Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), like all HWBs in England, have a statutory duty to produce and maintain a PNA. The purpose of the PNA is to assess pharmaceutical need. The development of the Surrey PNA 2025 is delegated to the PNA Steering Group, represented by subject matter experts from across the health and care system, including Surrey Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC), Surrey Local Medical Committee (LMC), Healthwatch Surrey, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), and Surrey County Council's public health, population insight, and communications teams.

The analysis of pharmaceutical needs by the Steering Group took a series of systematic steps to ensure the findings are evidence-based and driven by an understanding of resident needs, pharmacy provision and clear and transparent consultation with providers, residents and subject matter experts.

The PNA was conducted in keeping with statutory requirements to ensure a fair, robust and transparent process. The assessment concluded there is no gap in pharmaceutical provision in Surrey.

Under NHS Regulations (2013), a new pharmacy cannot be opened until a market entry application has been approved. Applications are considered by the Pharmaceutical Services Regulations Committee (PSRC), of the relevant Integrated Care Board (ICB), which in this instance is Surrey Heartlands ICB.

Applications for entry to the pharmacy market are made in relation to the PNA. There are various types of pharmacy applications (as per the regulations) depending on whether needs for services have been expressed in the PNA.

If a need has not been identified in the PNA, prospective contractors can apply on the basis of 'unforeseen benefits'. This means that they are making the case that there are benefits that were not identified when the PNA was written. These applications are assessed according to

the information and evidence provided by the applicant. Two new pharmacies have been approved in Guildford as a result of this type of application.

Health and Wellbeing Boards are asked to comment on pharmacy market entry applications but are not represented on the PSRC. Therefore, Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board does not have any direct influence on market entry application outcomes.

We contacted Surrey Heartlands ICB and they have been unable to consider a new pharmacy in Thames Ditton because they have not received any application for a new pharmacy to open in that area.

We thank you for raising your concerns regarding the future of pharmacy provision in Thames Ditton via this petition, and hope that this response provides reassurance as to the rigor of the PNA.

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