

Name: Jahmai Simone Howe

Student ID: 2507679

Module Code: LCHS4003

Module: Introduction to Health and Social Care

Lecture: Dr Helen Parsons



Community Mental Health Services are health services designed to provide mental health care in community settings (rather than in hospitals) for people with ongoing mental health needs. They aim to deliver accessible assessment, treatment, crisis support, therapies, coordination of care, and rehabilitation close to where people live. These services are often multidisciplinary, including psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers and mental health practitioners working together to support recovery and independence support outside of hospitals, directly within the local community. They aim to make care more accessible, preventive, and holistic. Instead of relying on long-term institutionalization in psychiatric hospitals, CMHS bring services closer to where people live, allowing for early intervention, ongoing support, and rehabilitation.

Main Purpose for (CMHS)

1. **Accessible Care:** Ensure people can get help locally rather than traveling long distances or being admitted to hospital.
2. **Crisis Support:** Provide rapid response for individuals experiencing acute mental health crises.
3. **Recovery and Rehabilitation:** Help individuals develop life skills, maintain employment, and reintegrate into society.
4. **Preventive Care:** Reduce the likelihood of relapse through therapy, education, and community support programs.
5. **Integrated Care:** Coordinate with GPs, social services, and voluntary organizations for comprehensive support.



Brief History of the Service

- Deinstitutionalisation and Community Care: In the mid-20th century, there was a significant policy shift away from institutional psychiatric care toward community-based care. This was reflected in mental health legislation such as the UK's **1959 Mental Health Act**, which required hospitals to work with local social services and support discharged patients in the community.
- The vision evolved further in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, aiming to provide *holistic care* and reduce reliance on inpatient settings. However, some scholars argue that the *ideal of community care has never been fully realised*, often due to systemic barriers in policy and funding.

Community Mental Health Services in the UK (e.g., NHS England) aim to deliver integrated care that:

- Supports people with *severe mental illness* in local settings
- Provides psychological therapies, medication management, social support and employment advice
- Works with Primary Care Networks, social services and third sector organisations to coordinate care
- Offers crisis intervention and pathways to specialist services

This community-led approach has also been part of the NHS Long Term Plan to transform mental health care, backed by funding to expand access and develop new professional roles like Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioners.

Community Mental Health Services are designed to support people with mental health problems outside of hospital settings, making care more accessible, continuous, and personalised. The way these services operate now reflects *integration, multidisciplinary work, and a focus on recovery*.

People enter CMHS through:

- GP referrals
- Self-referral (in some areas)
- Crisis teams or emergency services
- Other health professionals

Once referred, individuals are triaged and assessed to determine their level of need. This helps prioritise urgent cases and tailor care plans.

Despite significant investment in community mental health services, demand continues to outpace supply, resulting in long waiting times and increasing pressure on staff. Many individuals do not receive timely or coordinated support, particularly during out-of-hours or crisis situations. Workforce shortages, difficulties with recruitment and retention, and uneven regional funding further exacerbate the problem, leading to inconsistent care across different areas. Fragmented services and poor coordination between mental health teams, primary care, and social services make it harder for patients to navigate the system, while vulnerable groups—such as refugees, homeless individuals, and young people—face additional barriers to accessing support. These challenges collectively contribute to delayed treatment, worsening mental health outcomes, and higher reliance on emergency services.

- **Community Pharmacy Services in the UK**

Community pharmacy services are a key component of primary care within the National Health Service (NHS). Although historically focused on dispensing medicines, community pharmacies have evolved into accessible healthcare settings delivering clinical advice, preventative services and public health interventions. This essay explores the origins of community pharmacy, critically evaluates how the service functions today, and discusses its significance in enhancing service users' quality of life.

Modern community pharmacy really started to take shape after the NHS was set up in 1948. Prior to this, pharmacists mainly supplied medicines prescribed by doctors and were often perceived as retailers rather than healthcare professionals. Following the introduction of universal healthcare, prescription volumes increased significantly, expanding the pharmacist's role within a regulated national system (Jesson and Bissell, 2007). Over time, pharmacy education moved from apprenticeship models to university-based qualifications, strengthening professional identity and accountability. More recently, policy developments such as the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework have formalised pharmacy's contribution to NHS primary care (Baird, 2025). This shows how health policy has gradually moved towards prevention, better access to services and professionals working together. Therefore, the historical evolution of pharmacy demonstrates how healthcare services adapt in response to social need and government reform.

Currently, community pharmacies provide services that extend far beyond dispensing. These include blood pressure monitoring, smoking cessation support, emergency contraception, vaccination programmes and treatment of minor illnesses. Approximately 90% of the population in England live within a 20-minute walk of a

pharmacy, highlighting their accessibility compared to other primary care services (Baird, 2025). This accessibility reduces pressure on GP practices and supports early intervention. Initiatives such as Pharmacy First further expand pharmacists' clinical responsibilities, allowing them to supply prescription medicines for certain conditions without a GP appointment (NHS England, 2024).

However, despite these strengths, the service faces significant challenges. Funding reductions and rising operational costs have resulted in pharmacy closures in some areas, raising concerns about sustainability and equitable access (House of Commons Library, 2023). Workforce pressures are also increasing as pharmacists take on independent prescribing roles and additional public health responsibilities. While expanding scope of practice can improve efficiency, insufficient funding may compromise service quality and staff wellbeing. However, although community pharmacy now plays a bigger clinical role, its future success depends on proper funding and having enough trained staff.

Community pharmacy services significantly enhance quality of life through prevention, accessibility and continuity of care. Their walk-in nature reduces barriers for individuals who struggle to access GP appointments, particularly those from deprived communities. Community Pharmacy England (2023) highlights the role of pharmacies in delivering millions of consultations annually, contributing to early treatment and preventing avoidable hospital admissions. Furthermore, pharmacists support individuals with long-term conditions through medication reviews and health advice, promoting independence and safer self-management. Public health initiatives delivered through pharmacies, such as vaccination and smoking cessation services, contribute to improved population health outcomes (UK Health Security Agency, 2019). From a Health and Social Care perspective, this reflects person-centred care, empowerment and the reduction of health inequalities.

In conclusion, community pharmacy services have evolved from a dispensing-focused role into a vital element of NHS primary care. Shaped by historical reforms and contemporary policy changes, they now provide accessible clinical and public health services. Although funding and workforce challenges present ongoing concerns, community pharmacies make a significant contribution to improving quality of life through prevention, accessibility and support for vulnerable populations.

Baird, B. (2025) *Community pharmacy explained*. London: The King's Fund. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk> (Accessed: 22 February 2026).

- Community Pharmacy England (2023) *The value of community pharmacy*. London: Community Pharmacy England. Available at: <https://cpe.org.uk> (Accessed: 22 February 2026).
- House of Commons Library (2023) *Community pharmacy in England*. London: UK Parliament. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk> (Accessed: 22 February 2026).
- Jesson, J. and Bissell, P. (2007) 'Community pharmacy and public health in Great Britain, 1936–2006', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 61(10), pp. 844–848.
- NHS England (2024) *Update on the Pharmacy First service*. London: NHS England. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk> (Accessed: 22 February 2026).
- UK Health Security Agency (2019) *Pharmacy playing a pivotal role in prevention and public health*. London: UKHSA. Available at: <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk> (Accessed: 22 February 2026).
- Anthony, W.A. (1993) 'Recovery from mental illness', *Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal*, 16(4), pp. 11–23.
- Care Quality Commission (2023) *Monitoring the Mental Health Act 2022/23*. London: CQC.
- Department of Health (1990) *NHS and Community Care Act 1990*. London: HMSO.
- NHS Digital (2023) *Mental Health Services Monthly Statistics*. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk> (Accessed: Feb 2026).
- NHS England (2019) *The Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults*.
- World Health Organization (2021) *Guidance on community mental health services*.

