

## **Expressions of Interest: TympaHealth Ear and hearing health Pathway- Community Pharmacy Pilot (Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly)**

*If you would like to express your interest in participating in this pilot, please complete the MS form [HERE](#) Closing date is 30th January 2026*

### **Pilot summary**

**The aim of the project is to pilot a novel digital otoscopy device to reduce ENT care delays across Cornwall and the isles of Scilly.**

Expressions of interest are invited from community pharmacies to participate in a 12-month pilot to deliver an Ear health service with the use of a 3-in-1 innovative otoscopy Tympa system, provided by TympaHealth. The device would enable:

- digital otoscopy
- wax removal
- hearing checks
- treatment of minor ear infections (Otitis Media and Otitis Externa)

The device can be used by trained staff (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians or assistants). The pilot is available to a total of 15 community pharmacies.



## Pilot background

Hearing loss is a significant public health issue, affecting around 9 million people in England. Access to assessment and care is variable, and many patients experience delays in identification and management. In Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, there is a clear need to improve access to ENT-related care that does not require specialist ENT input, helping to reduce pressure on secondary care.

This pilot aims to address gaps in access to NHS ear wax removal and hearing assessment services locally. Provision in general practice is variable due to capacity constraints and non-standardised arrangements, meaning many patients face long waits or are signposted to private treatment. This contributes to health inequalities, backlog pressures and poor value use of specialist ENT capacity.

The pilot will be delivered in partnership with NHS Cornwall and Isles of Scilly ICB, Community Pharmacy Cornwall (LPC), selected community pharmacies and GP practices (via an EOI process), and TympaHealth.

## Aim

To evaluate the use of the TympaHealth platform in community pharmacy to improve access to ear and hearing care.

## Objectives

- Assess benefits for patients and the wider health system
- Determine whether GP referral into pharmacy is a cost-effective alternative to current pathways
- Evaluate impact on ENT waiting lists and patient experience
- Generate evidence to inform future commissioning decisions and a potential business case

*Note: Some pharmacies may already provide similar services privately; this pilot will assess the impact of offering an equitable NHS service to eligible patients.*

*Pharmacies already using TympaHealth are welcome to apply; prior experience will not exclude participation.*

## Patient pathway

The pathway is for patients with hearing-related problems, following self-care treatment, to be triaged into community pharmacy subject to an inclusion criterion.

**Tier 1 (approximately 15 minutes appointment):** Pharmacy initial clinical assessment should be performed for every patient and will consist of:

- a consultation (a patient interview)
- and an ear canal(s) examination (an otoscopy procedure) using the TympaHealth device (as appropriate based on consultation outcome).

**Tier 2 (approximately 30 minutes appointment):** Following the examination, the patient may require:

- ear wax removal from one or two ears (microsuction via the TympaHealth device).
- a hearing screening test.
- Treatment for otitis media or otitis externa using relevant PGDs.
- a referral back to general practice if the problem cannot be not resolved. The GP may then decide to treat the patient or refer them to secondary care depending on the presenting condition.

### **Criteria for participation in the pilot**

Service providers (community pharmacies) will need to satisfy the following criteria to demonstrate their suitability to take part in the pilot:

#### **Criteria 1 (stakeholder relationships)**

- Willingness to work with Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Integrated Care Board, the LPC, TympaHealth and commitment to attending bimonthly peer review meetings.
- Be in good standing with NHS England and NHS Improvement.
- Have positive professional relationships with neighbouring primary care networks (PCNs) and links in often with PCN Engagement leads.
- Pharmacies must have good solid working relationships with a GP practice that can refer patients directly into the service.
- The GP - pharmacy relationship should already be established and actively used for patient referral (e.g. via Pharmacy First, BP checks, or other joint pathways).
- The pharmacy must have a clear process in place to contact the referring practice during the consultation if patient escalation is required.
- Be able to provide continuity of service during the pilot duration (12 months).

#### **Criteria 2 (resources and infrastructure)**

- Commitment to enrol two permanent staff members (pharmacist and pharmacy technician or assistant) in TympaHealth's accredited training programme for otoscopy and aural care using Microsuction. Locum staff cannot be enrolled in the pilot.
- A consultation room which meets the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) standards for registered premises and is of a suitable size and accessible to people with limited mobility.
- Confident in using and navigating the PharmOutcomes system.
- Have a good Wi-Fi connection.

- Have an 'nhs.net' email address.

### **Criteria 3 (monitoring and evaluation) Additional training requirements**

- Commitment to input patient information to PharmOutcomes in a timely manner and submit to the referring GP within 24 hours of the consultation.
- Complete Evaluation Questionnaires and participate in evaluation interviews.
- Actively offer every patient the opportunity to complete a patient experience questionnaire at the end of the consultation.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Who will provide the equipment and is it insured?**

The required TympaHealth equipment, its consumables and servicing/device insurance will be purchased as part of the pilot and provided free of charge to the participating pharmacies over the 12-month period.

Each participating pharmacy will be provided with one Tympa device, one hearing screener and one suction unit.

Should additional consumables be required, these can be requested by emailing Community Pharmacy Cornwall (LPC).

### **How will I be trained to use the device?**

Comprehensive accredited training will be provided by TympaHealth<sup>1</sup>, consisting of a mixture of on-line and face to face sessions for 17 hours in total (3-4 hours online learning and 2 face to face days).

Training will be available to 1 pharmacist and 1 pharmacy technician or assistant in each of the participating pharmacies.

The training course will be carried out on the following dates in February, and ongoing support will be available. Please ensure that you can attend one of the following training events:

- Training event 1 - 24th & 25th February
- Training event 2 - 26th & 27th February

### **How much will I be paid?**

As part of the 12-month pilot, TympaHealth equipment and initial training will be provided free of charge by Cornwall and Isles of Scilly ICB to participating pharmacies. The pharmacy tariff is set at up to £45 per patient per visit, capped at 20 patients per month per site, in line with NHSE recommendations. Consumables, estimated at £3 per patient, are included within the tariff.

The community pharmacy receives payment for patients based on a two-tier system, as outlined in patient pathway above.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1

Therefore, a remuneration for each appointment will vary between £17 or £45 depending on the service delivered. Occasionally, where a follow up appointment will be required (when ear wax could not be fully removed in one microsuction procedure), a pharmacy will be expected to deliver that service as part of the initial payment.

As usual a professional fee of £9.50 will be paid for each supply of medication made under a PGD.

In addition, a one-off payment for the training backfills will be offered at the following rates:

- £487.69 for the pharmacist
- £205.61 for the pharmacy technician or assistant

Funding	
Pilot set up cost per pharmacy (one off initial payment for pilot sites)	£500
Pharmacy tariff for service delivery	
Tier one	£17
Tier two	£45
Patients	
Cap [Patients per pharmacy per month]	20
Cap [Patients per pharmacy per Year]	£240

### How long should an appointment take?

A whole appointment is expected to take 15-30min.

A follow up appointment at the pharmacy may be required if the ear wax could not be fully removed during the microsuction procedure. A follow up appointment with the patient should be arranged by the pharmacist during the appointment. In that case, the post-event message should be emailed to the patient's GP Practice after the follow up appointment. Similarly, the payment claims for the service provided should be submitted after the follow up appointment.

If a patient does not attend for the follow up appointment, the pharmacy should try to contact the patient and rearrange. If that attempt is unsuccessful and/or the patient showed no desire to attend/reschedule the follow up appointment, then the pharmacy should record that in the post-event message and email it to the patient's GP Practice. A pharmacy claim for the delivered service should be submitted.

### How do I communicate patient outcomes back to primary care?

Pharmacies will be asked to send a post event message to the patient's GP practice using secure nhs.net email address and complete a digital questionnaire for each patient providing some additional information for the service evaluation purposes.

This is a 12-month pilot project in the first instance. The continuation of the service will be subject to confirmation of funding and equipment may need to be returned if the pilot does not continue beyond the pilot phase.

### **How does indemnity work?**

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA) has confirmed that pharmacists will be covered by their existing indemnity insurance. Participating pharmacies will be expected to confirm with their individual indemnity providers if their employed pharmacy technicians or assistants have adequate indemnity before enrolling them in the pilot. TympaHealth will provide all participating staff with proof of training.

**If you would like to participate in this pilot, please complete the accompanying EOI form and submit via this [MS forms link](#) provided.**

## Appendix 1

### Training pathway

