

How can community pharmacy mitigate against health inequality?

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Overview

- Local health inequalities
- Challenges and barriers
- What pharmacies could do

Understanding health inequalities

- Marmot Review
- Gateshead, one in five children live in poverty
- 7,800 people accessed food banks
- Inc. 2500 children
- Over 3000 needed support and advice to prevent and deal with homelessness
- Over ten years of austerity which has seen public sector funding continually reduced by central government
- Nearly half of our previous funding has been lost, the equivalent of £900 less to spend per year on every household in Gateshead
- Largely preventable
- Social justice and economic case

A unique position

- **Access to healthcare is known to be reduced in areas of higher deprivation. This phenomenon is often referred to as the 'inverse care law'.**
- **However, the reverse is true for pharmacies, where access is greater in more deprived areas. This is known as the 'positive pharmacy care law'**
- Recognised as a trusted source of clinical expertise, equipped with an in-depth knowledge of their local population health needs and profiles.
- In 2021, community pharmacies in England dispensed over 1 billion medicines to patients whilst also delivering key medicine and lifestyle support, and an increasing number of clinical care services.

Barriers

- Geographic pharmacy deserts
- Socioeconomic
- Limited pharmacy hours
- Language and cultural
- Health literacy and medication understanding
- Medication shortages
- Digital exclusion
- Health information disparities
- Prescription delays and paperwork
- Transportation issues

Key strategies

- Health promotion and education programs
- Medicines adherence support/access
- Expanded clinical services
- Collaborative care and referral networks
- Telepharmacy and digital solutions
- Social prescribing initiatives
- Targeted outreach programs
- CPD/training alignment nationally
- Language/cultural campaigns

Conclusion

- Health inequalities are largely preventable
- well evidenced business case for national and local action to address health inequalities
- Pharmacy has a vital role supporting individuals and families

Breakout

- What would having No health inequalities be like/mean to pharmacy?
- What THREE things would you choose to keep/have now?