

## Expression of Interest: *TympaHealth Platform in a real-world Pharmacy setting as an NHS service within Frimley ICS*

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*If you would like to express your interest in participating in this pilot, please complete the MS form [HERE](#) Closing date is 7<sup>th</sup> November 25*

*Or Click here: [TympaHealth EOI](#)*

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### 1 Background

Hearing loss is a major public health issue affecting about nine million people in England. The care offered to people with hearing difficulties is varied and many people face delays in having their hearing loss identified and managed.

There is therefore a need to transform outpatient provision in the Frimley area to improve access to services for ENT-related problems that don't need specialist ENT input, thus reducing the burden on secondary care. Many ENT problems are minor and can be managed effectively in primary/community care.

### 2 Proposed solution

Pilot the use of the [Tympa Health Platform](#), an innovative otoscopy device that enables screening hearing tests, digital otoscopy, and wax removal for NHS patients by trained non-ENT specialists in the pharmacy setting within Frimley ICB, with a view to primary care-wide adoption should the pilot prove successful.

The following partners will deliver this pilot:

- Health Innovation Oxford & Thames Valley
- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Local Pharmaceutical Committee (Community Pharmacy Thames Valley)
- Pharmacy and GP practices, selected via an Expression of Interest (EOI) process
- TympaHealth.

### 3 Aim

The pilot will evaluate the use of the TympaHealth Platform in community pharmacy to improve access to ENT services.

Objectives are to:

- Assess this type of platform's value for patients and the health system as a whole
- Determine whether GP referral to pharmacies using a hearing healthcare platform is a cost-effective pathway for managing hearing loss, compared to the current pathway [secondary care pathway]
- Evaluate the impact of a hearing healthcare platform on ENT waiting lists in secondary care and on patient experience
- Gather evidence to inform a future business case for wider adoption

The overall objective is to establish whether patient referral by a GP for use of a hearing healthcare platform in a pharmacy setting is a cost-effective approach for treating patients with hearing loss and for reducing the pressure on secondary care waiting lists.

Note: It is acknowledged that some pharmacies may already offer a similar TympaHealth service to patients on a private basis; this pilot is to assess the impact of offering the service to NHS patients via GP referral.

### 4 Study Design

- **Study design:** Service Implementation Evaluation
- **Study setting:** Pharmacy
- **Study duration:** 12-month live phase
- **Site recruitment:** pilot sites will be recruited through an expression of interest (EOI) process.

### 5 Pharmacy Requirements

To take part in the Hearing Healthcare platform pilot, participating pharmacies must meet the following requirements:

#### 5.1 Location and GP Partnership

- Participating pharmacies must be in the geographical footprint in the East Berkshire area of Frimley.

- 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

## 5.2 Staffing and Training

- Each pharmacy must nominate a minimum of two colleagues to deliver the service:
  - One Pharmacist (GPhC registered).
  - One other member of staff -NVQ3 qualification registered Pharmacy technician
- Prior to commencing in the pilot, pharmacy staff must complete TympaHealth's structured training programme, consisting of:
  - Online training modules with assessments (certificates must be retained in training records).
  - Face-to-face competency training with a TympaHealth representative (one day).
  - Demonstration of satisfactory competence in observed practice before providing the service.
  - ***Must be available for TympaHealth platform training on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 9am-5pm. Please note: these dates are subject to change.***
- Additional training requirements:
  - GPhC-registered colleagues must provide evidence of passing Level 3 safeguarding (adults and children) completed via CPPE (or equivalent) within the last 2 years. Unregistered staff must provide evidence of passing Level 2 safeguarding
  - Certificates/evidence of training should be made available upon request.
  - Training and competency records must be kept and made available for audit in line with [Records Management Code of Practice](#).

## 5.3 Service Delivery Requirements

- The pharmacy must have a private consultation room that meets [good consultation standards](#) that allows safe use of the TympaHealth Platform. For example, the consultation room needs to be:
  - clean and clutter free

- appropriate privacy- e.g. doors that fully closes [especially important for the hearing check test]
- secure access - systems like keycards or codes to control access and protect patient data
- equipped wash basin area
- suitable storage for equipment and consumables
- A robust referral pathway must already be in place to support GP-to-pharmacy referral and onward signposting.
- Pharmacies must follow agreed clinical governance procedures, including record-keeping, infection control, patient consent, and incident reporting.
- The service should be delivered in line with [NHS service standards](#), including equitable access. Staff must make reasonable adjustments for patients with additional needs if required, in line with the terms of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF)
- Where wax removal or hearing assessment is not clinically appropriate (for example, presence of red flags, consent not obtained from patient), pharmacies must use clear pathways for referral back to the patients GP or secondary care.
- Preference for EOI award will be given to pharmacies operating seven days a week (Monday–Sunday), rather than those open Monday–Saturday only, for example.
- Preference will be given to premises with two consultation rooms to help with capacity management; however, proposals from contractors with a single consultation room will also be considered.

## 5.4 Evaluation and Reporting

- Pharmacies must agree to take part in the independent evaluation led by Health Innovation Oxford & Thames Valley (HIOTV).
- This includes:
  - Routine service activity reporting (using agreed templates). This also includes scheduled team meetings on progress and delivery.
  - Participation by all Tympa-trained practitioners in semi-structured interviews with HIOTV.
  - Providing feedback on training, service delivery, and patient outcomes
- Note: Data collected will be used for service evaluation and business case development in line with the aims of this project, not for performance management of individual pharmacies.

## 5.5 Other Considerations

- Pharmacies already using TympaHealth are welcome to apply; prior experience will not exclude participation.
- Pharmacies must commit to providing the service for the full 12-month pilot period
- Any potential risks or barriers (e.g. staffing challenges, space limitations) should be highlighted at the point of EOI submission.

## 6 Funding

As part of the 12-month pilot, TympaHealth equipment and initial training will be provided free of charge by Frimley ICB to participating pharmacies. The pharmacy tariff is set at up to £50 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 below.

**Tier 1 [approx. 15 min appts]: Pharmacy initial clinical assessment performed for every patient, consisting of:**

- a patient consultation
- otoscopic examination of the ear canal(s) using the TympaHealth device (as appropriate based on consultation outcome)
- a hearing check

**Tier 2 [approx. c30 min appts]: Following the examination, the patient may require:**

- earwax removal from one or both ears (microsuction via the TympaHealth device)
- a hearing check
- a referral back to their general practice, community ENT sites, or secondary care if the problem could not be resolved at the community pharmacy.
- the general practice may decide to treat the patient or also refer patient to secondary care, depending on the presenting condition.

Funding	
Pilot set up cost per pharmacy (one off initial payment for pilot sites)	£500
Pharmacy tariff for service delivery	
Tier 1 appointment/ patient	£22.50
Tier 2 (full service) appointment/patient	£50.00
Patients	
Cap [Patients per pharmacy per month]	20.0
Cap [Patients per pharmacy per Year]	240

***If you would like to express your interest in participating in this trial, or if you have any questions, please complete the MS form [HERE](#) and submit to:***

***Contact for queries: [Lauren.hudson@healthinnovationoxford.org](mailto:Lauren.hudson@healthinnovationoxford.org)***

#### Bibliography

- [1] National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, "Hearing loss in adults: assessment and management NG98," 21 June 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng98/resources/hearing-loss-in-adults-assessment-and-management-pdf-1837761878725>.