

What are community health services?

Community health services cover an extensive and diverse range of activities and are difficult to define. Services are delivered in a wide range of settings – including in people’s own homes as well as in community clinics, community centres and schools – so are less visible than services delivered in hospitals and GP surgeries.

The precise range and configuration of services vary between local areas. They commonly include adult community nursing, specialist long-term condition nursing, therapy services, preventive services such as sexual health and smoking cessation clinics, and child health services including health visiting and school nursing. Some providers also deliver specialist services such as prison health care and dentistry. **Source:** [Kings Fund](#)

Examples of NHS community health services

Targeted/ specialist services

- Child health services
- Community occupational therapy
- Community paediatric clinics
- Community palliative care
- Community physiotherapy
- Community podiatry
- Community speech and language therapy
- District nursing
- Falls services
- Intermediate care
- Specialist nurses (eg, diabetes, heart failure, incontinence, tissue viability)
- Wheelchair services

Universal public health functions

- Health visiting
- School nursing
- Sexual health services

Note: This list is not exhaustive

Community health services provide support across a range of needs and age groups but are most often used by children, older people, those living with frailty or chronic conditions and people who are near the end of their life. Community services often support people with multiple, complex health needs who depend on many health and social care services to meet those needs. They therefore work closely with other parts of the health and care system, such as GPs, hospitals, pharmacies and care homes. The increasing numbers of people living with long-term conditions means that more people are likely to need support from community health services in the future.

Beyond NHS services, a much wider network delivers care and support to people in their homes and communities. This includes pharmacies, hospices, nursing homes, home care agencies, voluntary sector services and carers.