# Pharmacies across England expand free NHS blood pressure checks to boost early detection



Certain pharmacies across England are offering free NHS blood pressure checks to residents aged over 40 who have not been previously diagnosed with high blood pressure, providing a convenient alternative to scheduling GP appointments solely for this purpose. The initiative aims to identify individuals unaware of having high blood pressure, a common condition that, if left untreated, can lead to serious health issues such as heart attacks and strokes. According to NHS guidance, these checks involve a pharmacist or trained team member wrapping a cuff around the upper arm to take a reading, with results then used to advise on follow-up steps, such as visiting a GP or adopting healthier lifestyle measures.

The service is targeted at individuals without a prior diagnosis or who have not had their blood pressure measured in the last six months. Readings taken during these pharmacy visits are added to the patient's GP health record if they are registered with a surgery, but only shared beyond this if urgent medical help is required due to dangerously high or low blood pressure. This provision aims to reduce the burden on primary care services, while facilitating early detection of hypertension, which is often symptomless but exerts strain on vital organs including the heart, brain, kidneys, and eyes.

Boots has been a major participant by launching free NHS blood pressure screenings in over 650 of its stores. Their service includes an initial in-store measurement followed, if necessary, by 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM) to provide a clearer picture of an individual’s blood pressure throughout the day and night. This approach supports NHS efforts to address the high rates of undiagnosed cardiovascular disease.

The NHS Community Pharmacy Blood Pressure Check Service has been widely utilised across regions such as the Midlands and West Midlands. Over 500,000 checks have been performed in these areas in the past year alone, identifying more than 14,000 cases of high blood pressure. Regional chief pharmacists have actively promoted the scheme during initiatives like 'Know Your Numbers! Week' to encourage eligible residents to take advantage of easily accessible checks at community pharmacies.

Data from Stroke Prevention Day highlights the service's impact, with over 263,000 people in the West Midlands getting their blood pressure checked through pharmacies in a year. From these, approximately 27,000 cases of high blood pressure were discovered, underscoring the critical role the service plays in preventing strokes and other cardiovascular conditions.

Despite these efforts, awareness of the service remains a challenge. A survey reported that 44% of adults are unaware they can receive a free blood pressure check at community pharmacies, and 59% are not aware that no appointment is necessary, creating barriers to access. Given that high blood pressure is often asymptomatic—yet remains a significant health risk—experts stress the importance of increasing public knowledge about pharmacy-based screening as a practical means of early detection and intervention.

Blood pressure readings consist of two numbers: the systolic (higher number) and diastolic (lower number). NHS guidelines typically consider readings of 140/90 mmHg or higher as high when measured in a clinical setting for adults under 80 years old, or 135/85 mmHg or higher if measured at home. For people aged 80 and above, slightly different thresholds apply. Early identification through community pharmacy checks and timely management can significantly reduce the risk of cardiovascular damage and associated complications by prompting appropriate lifestyle changes and medical treatment.

Residents eligible for the free checks can locate participating pharmacies via the NHS website by entering their town, city, or postcode. Those concerned about their blood pressure or experiencing related symptoms are advised to consult a GP or contact NHS 111 for further support.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/free-nhs-blood-pressure-checks-36099150), [[6]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/nhs-community-pharmacy-blood-pressure-check-service/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/free-nhs-blood-pressure-checks-36099150), [[6]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/nhs-community-pharmacy-blood-pressure-check-service/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.boots-uk.com/newsroom/news/free-blood-pressure-checks-now-available-in-over-650-boots-stores/), [[6]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/nhs-community-pharmacy-blood-pressure-check-service/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/2025/09/08/midlands-chief-pharmacist-encourages-people-to-take-up-free-blood-check-at-pharmacies-across-east-midlands-this-know-your-numbers-week/), [[4]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/2025/09/08/midlands-chief-pharmacist-encourages-people-to-take-up-free-blood-check-at-pharmacies-across-the-west-midlands-this-know-your-numbers-week/), [[6]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/nhs-community-pharmacy-blood-pressure-check-service/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/2025/01/28/free-blood-pressure-checks-in-community-pharmacies-helps-prevent-strokes-in-west-midlands/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[7]](https://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/more-than-40-of-adults-are-unaware-of-the-community-pharmacy-blood-pressure-service), [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/free-nhs-blood-pressure-checks-36099150)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/free-nhs-blood-pressure-checks-36099150), [[6]](https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/nhs-community-pharmacy-blood-pressure-check-service/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/health/free-nhs-blood-pressure-checks-36099150> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.boots-uk.com/newsroom/news/free-blood-pressure-checks-now-available-in-over-650-boots-stores/> - Boots has launched a free NHS blood pressure screening service in over 650 of its pharmacies to help detect and diagnose high blood pressure, known as hypertension. The service is available to patients over the age of 40 who have not previously been diagnosed with hypertension. The process involves an initial blood pressure check in-store, followed by a 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure monitoring (ABPM) if required. This initiative aims to support the NHS in tackling high rates of undiagnosed cardiovascular disease.
3. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/2025/09/08/midlands-chief-pharmacist-encourages-people-to-take-up-free-blood-check-at-pharmacies-across-east-midlands-this-know-your-numbers-week/> - During the 'Know Your Numbers! Week', Midlands Chief Pharmacist Richard Seal encouraged residents aged 40 and over to take advantage of free blood pressure checks at local community pharmacies. High blood pressure often has no symptoms but can lead to serious health issues like heart attacks and strokes. The NHS Pharmacy Blood Pressure Check Service offers a quick and easy way to detect high blood pressure, with over 500,000 checks conducted in the Midlands over the past 12 months, identifying more than 14,000 cases of high blood pressure.
4. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/2025/09/08/midlands-chief-pharmacist-encourages-people-to-take-up-free-blood-check-at-pharmacies-across-the-west-midlands-this-know-your-numbers-week/> - In the West Midlands, Chief Pharmacist Richard Seal urged residents aged 40 and over to utilise free blood pressure checks available at community pharmacies during the 'Know Your Numbers! Week'. High blood pressure, often without noticeable symptoms, increases the risk of heart attacks and strokes. The NHS Pharmacy Blood Pressure Check Service provides a convenient method to detect high blood pressure, with over 500,000 checks conducted in the Midlands over the past year, identifying more than 14,000 cases of high blood pressure.
5. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/2025/01/28/free-blood-pressure-checks-in-community-pharmacies-helps-prevent-strokes-in-west-midlands/> - On Stroke Prevention Day, West Midlands residents aged 40 and over were encouraged to get free NHS blood pressure checks at local community pharmacies. Over the past year, community pharmacies in the West Midlands provided free blood pressure checks to more than 263,000 people, identifying 27,000 cases of high blood pressure. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, including strokes, and the NHS community pharmacy blood pressure service aims to help prevent such conditions.
6. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/pharmacy-services/nhs-community-pharmacy-blood-pressure-check-service/> - The NHS Community Pharmacy Blood Pressure Check Service allows adults over 40, who have not previously been identified with hypertension or related conditions, to receive free blood pressure checks at participating pharmacies. The service aims to identify undiagnosed high blood pressure, a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and provide appropriate management to reduce health risks.
7. <https://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/article/news/more-than-40-of-adults-are-unaware-of-the-community-pharmacy-blood-pressure-service> - A survey revealed that 44% of adults are unaware they can get a free blood pressure check at a community pharmacy, and 59% are unaware that no appointment is necessary. Despite most high blood pressure cases being asymptomatic, only 7% of adults think the condition has no symptoms. This highlights the need for increased awareness of the NHS community pharmacy blood pressure check service.