

Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

Issue: 31

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1. Managing repeat prescription demand during the pandemic

Thank you for continuing to follow previous advice around the appropriate prescribing of repeat medications. As we enter the period of increased winter pressure demands and the second wave of the pandemic, the advice from NHS England and Improvement still stands. It is essential that prescribers do not issue prescriptions extra early or for longer durations, pharmacies do not over-order stocks and that patients do not seek to stock-pile medicines. Such activities all put undue strain on the supply chains. Practices should continue to use Electronic Prescription Service (EPS) and should build upon the hard work they have already implemented to move patients onto electronic Repeat Dispensing (eRD), where appropriate. Please continue to communicate and involve your local community pharmacies in decisions regarding medicines and patient services.

2. Vitamin D supplements: Buy over- the- counter

This is a reminder that the advice regarding vitamin D has not changed. Please refer to: A rapid review of the evidence for the treatment or prevention in COVID-19 by Centre for Evidence Based Medicine (CEBM, Univ. of Oxford) See [CEBM link](#) (1st May 2020)

The current advice is that the whole population of the UK should take vitamin D supplements (10 micrograms/ 400 IU per day), purchased over the counter, except those requiring high treatment doses to prevent vitamin D deficiency. [LINK](#). This advice applies irrespective of any possible link with respiratory infection.

3. GP referral to Community Pharmacist Consultation Service to be rolled out to PCNs

GP practices across England will be able to refer patients with minor illnesses asking for a GP appointment for a same day consultation with a community pharmacist, [as part of a new referral pathway to the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service \(CPCS\)](#).

The Community Pharmacy Consultation Service was first introduced in 2019 for referrals from NHS 111, for minor illnesses and urgent medicines supply. Pilots for referrals from GP surgeries have been taking place for several months.

[Findings from a pilot in the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire area saw thousands of patients using the service](#): 71% of patients referred by their GP practice team, who had a consultation with a pharmacist, received clinical advice or advice and an over the counter product, to manage their minor illness. Only 12% required an urgent GP appointment and 17% were signposted to another health care professional, or back to the GP for a non-urgent appointment.

Dr James Case, GP, Concord Medical Centre, Bristol, explains the benefits: “The community pharmacist consultation service is a real opportunity to help practices reduce our daily demand and manage our more complex patients, which is very valuable for us.”

The NHS CPCS service specification has been refreshed to include GP referrals and is now available via this [link](#).

PCNs are encouraged to implement the service [as part of the Structured Medication and Medicines Optimisation Service Specification](#); and NHS England and NHS Improvement will commission this service from pharmacies from across England from November.

GP referrals to the CPCS are being rolled out on a PCN by PCN basis from November 2020. PCNs should contact NHSE&I South East region to be scheduled for roll out. Deborah Crockford (Chief Officer, Community Pharmacy South Central) is co-ordinating the interest from HIOW PCNs. She may be contacted via Deborah.crockford@cpsc.org.uk

Patients will need to purchase any recommended over-the-counter treatments themselves for the minor illness, as this is not included in the service.

4. Nurseries, schools and OTC medicines- Wessex LMC advice ([link](#))

This is a reminder that non-prescription (OTC) medication does not need a GP signature or authorisation in place to enable a school, nursery or childminder to give it. Further information is detailed on the Wessex LMC website, including template letters for use where nurseries or schools are insistent on this matter.

5. Serious Shortages Protocols (SSP) update. October 2020. ([Link](#))

SSPs for individual medications may be issued by the Department of Health and Social Care when shortages are widespread. This allows the pharmacist to use their professional judgement to decide whether it's reasonable and appropriate to substitute the patient's prescribed item for an alternative detailed in the issued SSP, without contacting the prescriber. Additionally, the patient has to agree to the alternative supply. The most recent SSP update from NHS BSA for October is below:

Name of SSP	Start and end date	Supporting guidance
Salazopyrin 500mg EN tablets	20 Oct 20 to 4 Dec 20	Salazopyrin EN supporting guidance plus Q&A (Link) Generic alternatives remain available.
Fluoxetine 30mg capsules	20 Oct 20 to 22 Dec 20	Fluoxetine supporting guidance plus Q&A (Link) Alternative strengths remain available
Fluoxetine 40mg capsules	20 May 20 to 2 Oct 20 This SSP has been revised.	Fluoxetine supporting guidance plus Q&A (Link) Alternative strengths remain available

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Previous bulletins can be found at:

www.westhampshireccg.nhs.uk/medicines-optimisation/covid-19-medicines-information/covid-19-medicines-optimisation-bulletins