

## Phase two self-care consultation outcome - What should we prescribe in Warrington?

### What is happening?

We've recently reviewed more medicines that should be bought over-the-counter rather than being routinely prescribed. The first phase took place in 2015 and was implemented in 2016.

After a formal public consultation for phase two in 2017, it has been agreed that patients will be expected to buy the medicines listed in appendix A over-the-counter at a local pharmacy or supermarket.

This means that **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018** health professionals in Warrington will no longer prescribe additional medications for short term **minor** health problems, unless there is a specialist clinical need or for certain other exemptions.

Medicines involved in phase two of the consultation were broken down into three categories:

- Medicines and treatments that are available to purchase over-the-counter, used for the treatment of minor, short-term medical conditions
- Medicines and treatments where there is limited evidence of clinical benefit or cost-effectiveness
- Medicines and treatments that are prescribed to treat conditions where there is no clinical need for treatment

The outcome of the consultation, that ended on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017, saw on average 75% of people who took part support the CCG in its belief that the medicines involved in phase two of the self-care consultation should be bought over-the-counter, rather than being routinely prescribed by a healthcare professional.

The CCG's Governing Body, which includes public lay members and GP leads received the consultation outcome report on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and agreed with the recommendations, therefore from **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2018**, unless there are exceptional circumstances, these medicines will **no longer routinely be prescribed** for short term, minor conditions and patients will be expected to buy these over-the-counter. Patients are advised to speak to their local pharmacist for advice and guidance.

Some medicines are only available over-the-counter in certain circumstances. For example, some medicines are not suitable for very young children. Where this is the case a healthcare professional will be able to prescribe these medicines.

These medications will still be available if a patient needs them for a long term condition or needs a higher dose/strength than is available over-the-counter.

## **Appendix A**

### **Self-care medicines for patients in Warrington**

The medicines in phase two now join the medicines outlined in phase one's consultation, meaning that unless there is an exceptional circumstance or a patient has a long term condition patients will need to buy these medicines over-the-counter:

- Pain killers for **minor** aches and pains
- Tonics, vitamins and health supplements
- Ear wax removers
- Lozenges, throat sprays, mouthwashes, gargles and toothpastes
- Indigestion remedies for occasional use
- Creams for bruising, tattoos, and scars
- Hair removal creams
- Moisturisers and bath additives for dry skin
- Sun creams
- Foods and food supplements
- Pain relief cream/ointment for short-term use
- Oral antihistamines for hay fever
- Decongestant nasal sprays and tablets
- Teething gels and mouth ulcer treatments
- Vaginal moisturisers (for example lubricant gels and creams)
- Warts and verrucae paints
- Heparinoid gel/cream
- Antiperspirants
- Antifungal treatments (for example for athletes foot)
- Treatments for bites and stings
- Treatments for cold sores
- Antibacterial eye drops
- Treatment for diarrhoea

- Head lice treatments
- Treatments for infant colic
- Creams/ointments for nappy rash
- Threadworm treatments
- Treatments for vaginal thrush
- Haemorrhoids treatment
- Cough preparations
- Eye care products (for example blepharitis wipes)
- Probiotics
- Treatments for mild acne
- Dandruff and cradle cap treatments
- Baby milks (unless a clinical need for a specialist milk)

### **What medicines will I now be expected to buy over the counter?**

The medicines in phase two now join the medicines outlined in phase one's consultation, meaning that unless there is an exceptional circumstance or a patient has a long term condition patients will need to buy these medicines over-the-counter:

- Pain killers for **minor** aches and pains
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### **Why are we doing this?**

Each year, we spend over £1million on prescribing medicines that patients can buy over-the-counter for minor, short term health problems.

We feel this is money that could, and should, be spent on other vital treatments for local people and make better use of our precious NHS resources.

For example, did you know that:

- Last year, we spent over £8,000 on dandruff and cradle cap treatments
- Each GP consultation costs on average £36 and prescription costs are an additional £27 per consultation
- We could save over £5,000 per month by not prescribing tablets for hayfever

### **What local people have told us?**

From the first phase of our consultation last year on average 87% of people who took part said that it made sense not to prescribe items such as pain killers for minor aches and pains, or vitamins unless there is a clinical need.

For phase two, 75% of people agreed with our proposal to encourage people to buy over the counter medicines for minor, short term ailments. Comments received from members of the public included:

*“Makes sense to use the budget where it is really needed”*

*“I think it is time the public started to take some responsibility for their own health, and not expect to see a doctor for every minor ailment”*

**Are there any exclusions as to what I can buy over the counter?**

Yes, there are some exclusions as to what you can buy over the counter. Some medicines are only available over the counter in certain circumstances. For example, some medicines are not suitable for very young children. Where this is the case a healthcare professional will be able to prescribe these medicines.

**I currently don't pay for my prescriptions will I still be able to get the listed medications from my GP?**

No, these medications will no longer be prescribed to any patient. Exceptional clinical need can be determined by your GP.

**I have a long term condition and currently receive self-care medicines that are not directly related to my long term condition - will I still continue to receive these self-care medicines?**

No. If the free medicines you take are not related to your long term condition and are listed in phase one and phase two as self-care medicines, you'll need to buy these over-the-counter from a local pharmacy or supermarket.

**Isn't this a blanket ban on me accessing medicines?**

No, it isn't a blanket ban on enabling people to access medicines. Some medicines are only available over the counter in certain circumstances. For example, some medicines are not suitable for very young children. Where this is the case a healthcare professional will be able to prescribe these medicines

These medications will still be available if a patient needs them for a long term condition or needs a higher dose/strength than is available over the counter.

**Can I still go and see my GP or Nurse?**

This isn't about stopping you seeing your GP or Nurse. If you are worried about your symptoms and you haven't seen an improvement after self-care at home, your GP Practice is the right point of call.

This project is about being sensible with NHS resources - looking at what medicines have the best outcomes and what medicines people should buy over-the-counter rather than being prescribed routinely.

### **Where can I get the listed medications from if not from my GP?**

Many of the medications are available from the high street, Pharmacists or from supermarkets and can often be bought for less than the cost of a prescription.

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### **I am on a repeat prescription for some of these medications what will happen?**

Speak to your GP practice about any impact for you if you have a repeat prescription. Some historic repeat prescriptions will need to be reviewed, not all current repeat medicines will be appropriate with the new guidance.

### **Are GPs aware of these changes?**

Yes, all GPs have been informed through the CCG's existing communication channels about the changes brought about by this consultation.

### **How will the public be made aware of these changes if they are implemented?**

A public awareness campaign is underway and includes information on self-care.

### **What's happening nationally about reviewing medicines?**

NHS England has partnered with NHS Clinical Commissioners to support CCGs in ensuring that we use our prescribing resources effectively and deliver best patient outcomes from the medicines that our local population uses.

CCGs asked for a nationally coordinated approach to the development of commissioning guidance in this area to ensure consistency and address unwanted variation. NHS England is undertaking a national consultation on medicines which can be considered to be of low priority for NHS Funding. This consultation will close on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

### **Where can I get self-care information?**

Self-care factsheets about certain medicines highlighted in phase one and phase two has been created for use. [You can access them by clicking here](http://www.warringtonccg.nhs.uk/Page%20images/get-involved/phase-two-self-care-medicines-outcome.htm) or visiting: [www.warringtonccg.nhs.uk/Page%20images/get-involved/phase-two-self-care-medicines-outcome.htm](http://www.warringtonccg.nhs.uk/Page%20images/get-involved/phase-two-self-care-medicines-outcome.htm)

**What should patients do if they have a concern?**

They can contact the CCG's Patient Experience Team on (Freephone) 0800 389 6973 or on 01925 843 743.

They can also contact the Patient Experience Team in writing by  
NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group  
Arpley House  
110 Birchwood Boulevard  
Birchwood  
Warrington  
WA3 7QH

Or they can email [complaints.nhswarringtonccg@nhs.net](mailto:complaints.nhswarringtonccg@nhs.net)