

Pharmacy First – Your local pharmacy: fast care, closer to home

Patient Engagement Meeting,
Acton Primary Care Network
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Overview

- Introduction
- Animation of the service
- National results so far
- How the service works
- Pharmacists and their teams
- Other services provided in community pharmacies
- Q&A

Pharmacy First helps you get fast treatment for common conditions without waiting for a GP appointment

- ✓ **Fast treatment** — no wait for a GP practice appointment
- ✓ **Expert advice** — from trained pharmacists
- ✓ **Convenient** — many have long opening hours in evenings and are open at weekends
- ✓ **Private consultations** — pharmacies have consultation rooms where you can be seen in confidence

Animation of the service

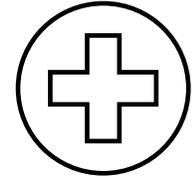
- Watch the animation at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec-43uOnzPY>

National outcomes to date

- 5 million Pharmacy First consultations undertaken
- 94% consultations completed by the pharmacy without onward referral
- 86% patient satisfaction with Pharmacy First clinical pathway consultations (independent evaluation from Healthwatch)
- 88% patient satisfaction with Pharmacy services overall (results of GP Patient Survey)

The Pharmacy First service

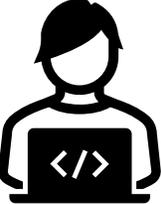


- The service started on 31st January 2024
- It is an optional service for pharmacies to provide but over 95% of pharmacies in England have signed up to provide the service
- You can find your nearest pharmacy here: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy>



How the service works



- If you have a minor illness, your GP surgery can electronically refer or you to a pharmacy of your choice
 - You can also be referred by NHS 111 (online or telephony), an out of hours service, 999 or urgent emergency care settings, e.g. A&E
 - For some conditions, the GP surgery will signpost you to a pharmacy of your choice
- The pharmacist will have a consultation with you
 - In a private consultation room in the pharmacy; or
 - Remotely online
-  With your consent, they will check your GP record or other clinical record

How the service works

- Advice will be provided and if appropriate, a medicine will be recommended for you to buy or...
- If you have certain symptoms of one of seven conditions or minor conditions and fall within an age category, you may be offered an NHS medicine to treat your condition
 - NHS prescription charges apply if you normally pay for medicines supplied on prescriptions
- An electronic message will be sent to your GP surgery so your GP health record can be updated
- If the pharmacist cannot help you, you will be directed to your GP surgery or other healthcare professional as appropriate



How the service works - summary

Symptoms → Check eligibility →
Pharmacy consultation →
Treatment / Advice →
GP record updated



The Pharmacy First service

- The service consists of **three elements**:

Electronic referrals for minor illness consultations with a pharmacist

Requires referral from NHS 111, NHS 111 online or GP Practice

Urgent supply of repeat meds and appliances

Requires referral from NHS 111, NHS online or ask your pharmacy

Clinical pathway consultations

Ask your pharmacy or you can be referred by NHS 111, NHS 111 online or your GP practice

Examples of minor illnesses for pharmacy advice or treatment purchase recommendations?

- **Respiratory / ENT:**
 - Coughs & colds
 - Nasal congestion
 - Red or irritated eyes
- **Skin & Allergy:**
 - Hay fever & mild allergies
 - Rashes & mild eczema
 - Non-infected insect bites
 - Athlete's foot
 - Headlice
 - Scabies
- **Gastrointestinal**
 - Constipation, diarrhoea or vomiting
 - Indigestion or heartburn
- **Oral Health**
 - Mouth ulcers or teething
- **Genitourinary & General**
 - Vaginal itch/discomfort
 - Mild urinary symptom
 - Blocked ears/ear wax
 - Minor cuts and wounds and dressings advice

What are the seven conditions?

Sinusitis 12 years and over	Sore throat 5 years and over	Acute otitis media 1 to 17 years	Infected insect bite 1 year and over
Impetigo 1 year and over	Shingles 18 years and over	Uncomplicated UTI Women 16 to 64 years	

How the service works

- If you have certain symptoms of one of the seven conditions and fall with the age category, you can also walk into your pharmacy (self refer) and access the service 
- You may be seen by another trained member of staff first who can triage you to see if your symptoms are typical of the seven conditions and then refer you to the pharmacist if appropriate
- If you have symptoms which mean you are eligible for the service, an electronic message will be sent to the GP surgery so your GP health record can be updated 

Protocols that pharmacist must follow

- Pharmacists must follow strict protocols for the seven conditions that are included in Pharmacy First
- They cannot deviate from these, so if you do not meet the inclusion criteria, the pharmacist cannot provide you with NHS medicines such as antibiotics
- You may be asked to return to the pharmacy after a period of time for the pharmacist to reassess your symptoms to see if it would then be appropriate for them to supply you with an NHS medicine or refer you to another healthcare professional

Supply of urgent medicines or appliances

- There is another strand to the service which allows pharmacists to supply medicines or appliances to patients who urgently require them
- You **must be** electronically referred, patients cannot 'walk-in' (self-refer) for this strand of the service
 - GP practices **cannot** refer patients for this strand of the service
 - Electronic referrals can be sent from NHS 111 (online or telephony), an out of hours service, 999 or urgent emergency care settings, e.g. A&E
- Once a referral has been sent to your choice of pharmacy, you should be advised to phone the pharmacy to speak to the pharmacist

Supply of urgent medicines or appliances

- The pharmacist will check for a referral message and then have a consultation with you on the phone (or face-to-face if the patient chooses to visit the pharmacy instead)
- You will be interviewed to assess the suitability of an emergency supply of your medicine or appliance and your eligibility to use the service
- With your consent, they will check your GP record or other clinical record

Supply of urgent medicines or appliances

- If suitable and the pharmacy has the medicine or appliance in stock, they can make a supply
 - NHS prescription charges apply if you normally pay for medicines supplied on prescriptions
- If not suitable or the pharmacy does not have the medicine or appliance in stock, the pharmacist should organise support from another healthcare professional for you
- An electronic message will be sent to your GP surgery so your GP health record can be updated



Examples of patient care transformation: 1

- Source: [NHS England](#)
- A patient experienced pain she thought was a water infection and submitted an online form (e-Consult). She was quickly connected to her local pharmacy, which contacted her the same day to offer a consultation. After assessing her, the pharmacist supplied antibiotics and within 48 hours, her symptoms had fully resolved.
- The patient commented: “Initially I wasn’t sure a pharmacy could help, but the pharmacist identified the problem immediately and gave me exactly what I needed. Getting fast, effective treatment during a busy week was a huge relief. I didn’t realise pharmacists could provide prescription medication for UTIs without seeing a GP — it’s fantastic that they can.”

Examples of patient care transformation: 2

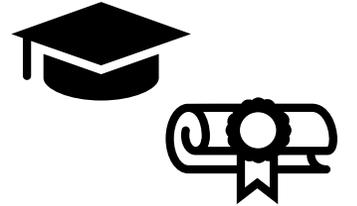
- Patient left inhalers at home travelling away for Christmas
- Patient used www.111.nhs.uk/emergency-prescription to request help.
- Patient connected with local pharmacy open on Christmas Day and received inhalers within 20 minutes.

Examples of patient care transformation: 3

- A patient developed severe painful red rash on left flank and recognised it could be shingles
- The patient attended their community pharmacy within 2 hours
- The pharmacist confirmed it was most likely shingles and after assessing the patient Provided shingles treatment (antiviral tablets).
- The patient's symptoms resolved in 2 weeks with no long-term pain or complications.

Pharmacists and their teams

- Pharmacists are experts in medicines and minor health conditions
- As part of their training, they undergo a four-year degree and a foundation training year (where they work as a trainee pharmacist in a pharmacy, hospital or other appropriate location)
- Pharmacists have been provided with lots of support to upskill and give them the confidence to offer this service
- Other members of the pharmacy team also have relevant qualifications for their roles to ensure they are appropriately trained to offer health advice



Other services provided in pharmacies

- While you are at your pharmacy, why not ask about other services that they provide
- Many pharmacies now provide the following NHS services:
 - **Blood pressure checks service** – A service aimed at patients aged 40 years and above
 - **Pharmacy contraception service** – Initiation and provision of an on-going supply of oral contraception, supply of emergency hormonal contraception
 - **Flu and COVID vaccination service**
 - **New Medicine Service** – provides support to patients with certain long-term conditions newly prescribed certain medicines
 - **Discharge Medicines Service** – support and checking of your medicines when you are discharged from hospital (requires a referral from the hospital)

Questions



Thank You!

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Further Information:

<https://communitypharmacy.org.uk/>

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