

## WE MAJOR IN MINOR AILMENTS

### Your first point of contact

Community Pharmacies offer a wide range of minor ailment services on the NHS.

A survey by IMS Health UK, commissioned by PAGB and PSNC in 2007 found that the treatment of minor ailments accounts for 18-20% of GB workload, incurring a significant cost of around £2 billion a year to the NHS. A huge 57 million consultations are for minor ailments (51.4 million of which are for minor ailments alone), resulting in over an hour a day for every GP and 52 million prescriptions.

**£1.8bn of NHS resource (consultation & prescription costs) is for minor ailment only consultations.**

The Minor Ailments Service is based on a simple premise:

Many people used to go to the GP for minor ailments just so that they can get their medicines for free.

This was wasting everybody's time and NHS money; it was driving up waiting times, taking up valuable appointment time and so resulting in poorer quality care for the patients who really need it.

Meanwhile, community pharmacists were getting frustrated: too many patients were asking for medicines to manage their symptoms, listening carefully to the advice and then instead of buying the recommended product they made an appointment at the GP to get a

prescription – often going through the entire consultation process twice. The radical step was simply to enable community pharmacists to supply the medicine at NHS expense with access to a health care professional without an appointment, so that patients entitled to free medicines, get free medicines, but without the need to waste the GP's valuable time. If a medicine is supplied (and around 10% of the time they are not), it follows a consultation in the pharmacy where appropriate advice is given, including an assessment of whether there are any 'red flag' symptoms present indicating that the condition might not be as 'minor' as the patient thinks. At the point they are referred to see a GP, urgently if appropriate. Independent evaluation of the local Sheffield scheme in 2012 showed that 70% of patients who accessed the service said that they would have attended for a GP appointment if the scheme was not available – this equates to approximately 10,000 additional consultations to be absorbed by general practise.

**Speak to a friendly face at your local community pharmacy**



## Choose Well

Minor Ailment Schemes support the Choose Well campaign by removing the financial incentive for some patients to attend Accident and Emergency Departments or Walk-in Centres rather than visit a pharmacy. In Sheffield, 18% of patients who used the Minor Ailment service in 2012 said that they would have used other urgent care services such as A&E or Walk-in Centres if the scheme was not available.

A 21st century NHS will need to be used by people who can both behave independently and know when an intervention is most effective. Is it one that deals with coughs and colds or is it one that deals with the more complex needs of a modern population? It must now be time to consider a shift in behaviour from GP to self-care and pharmacy as the first point of call for minor ailments

## Community Pharmacy Unfulfilled Potential?

Community pharmacies across South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw already making a significant contribution to the health of our population. A South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw wide Minor Ailment Scheme would improve access and convenience, while improving the overall quality of care. It would also ensure equitable service by removing differences across locality borders. Currently patients resident in one postcode, or registered with a particular GP, are too often denied treatment under a scheme that is available to their neighbours in a different postcode or on a different GP practise list.

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Community pharmacists are by definition, embedded within our communities. Pharmacies are well placed to offer services at a time that is right for most people, removing the barriers that once may have prevented people from accessing care. Minor Ailments Services make best use of this accessibility by making it easier for all patients to manage their own health.

### Service description

- The pharmacy provides advice and support to people on the management of minor ailments including where necessary the supply of medicines for the treatments of the minor ailment, for those people who would have otherwise gone to their GP for a prescription
- Where appropriate the pharmacy may sell non-prescription medicines to the person to help manage the minor ailment
- The pharmacy will operate a triage system, including referral to other health and social care professionals, where appropriate

### Aims & Outcomes:

To improve access and choice for people with minor ailments by:

- Promoting self-care through the pharmacy, including provision of advice and where appropriate medicines and/or appliances without the need to visit the GP practise;
- Operating a referral system from local medical practises or other primary care providers; and

- Supplying appropriate medicines and devices (dressings etc.) at NHS expense.
- To improve primary care capacity by reducing medical practise workload related to minor ailments
- To reduce inappropriate use of Accident & Emergency Departments and Urgent Care Centres

### Ailments which have been commonly included in Minor Ailments Schemes:

- Back ache, sprains and strains
- Colds
- Conjunctivitis
- Constipation
- Coughs diarrhoea
- Earache
- Haemorrhoids
- Hay fever
- Head lice
- Headache and fever
- Heartburn and indigestion
- Insect bites and stings
- Mild eczema and dermatitis
- Minor fungal infections of the skin
- Mouth ulcers
- Nappy rash
- Sore throat
- Teething
- Threadworm
- Thrush
- Warts & Verrucas

This service saves NHS time and money by making sure that patients get the right treatment for the symptoms of self-limiting conditions, in the right place, at the right time, and at no extra cost to themselves.

**We wish to work with local stakeholders to find ways to better use the skills of Community Pharmacy teams.**

Community Pharmacy South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw

For further information

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Providing NHS services

