

Protocol for the review of self-care prescribing

Purpose of protocol

To implement the NHSE Guidance to CCG's on the prescribing of OTC medicines

Protocol approval details

	Name	Position	Date
Written by:	Mandy Pell	Senior pharmaceutical advisor	19 Mar 2020
Checked by:	Kirsty Philp	Senior prescribing support technician	
Tested in practice by:			
Authorised by:		MOPB	August 2020
Review by:			August 2023

Contributors to protocol

Name	Position
Mandy Pell	Senior pharmaceutical advisor and lead author
Kirsty Philp	Senior prescribing support technician
Laura Hawthorne	Prescribing support technician

Document version control

Version	Changes	New version	Actioned by
V1.1	Approved	V2	Admin

Link to NHS Long Term Plan

Promotion of Self-care is a recommendation following the NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners public consultation of 2017.¹

CCGs will also develop pharmacy connection schemes for patients who don't need primary medical services.² The promotion of self-care is also part of the drive to deliver value from the £16 billion spent on medicines. This will be delivered in part by pharmacists, both those working in general practice and in community to support patients to get the best from their medicines and to support self-care.³

¹ NHS England and NHS Clinical Commissioners, Guidance on conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines-2/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed/>

² NHS Long Term Plan <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/nhs-long-term-plan-version-1.2.pdf>

³ Ibid p106

Aims

The aim of this protocol is to:

- reduce the amount that NHS Kernow spends on items that can be purchased over the counter
- implement the recommendations of NHS England

Background

It is estimated that the cost of prescribed OTC products, to NHS Kernow amounts to £2.5 million per year. The quarterly cost of prescribing of items that may be suitable for Self-care in NHS Kernow was £685k (Apr 20 to June 20) ⁴

A reduction in OTC prescribing via FP10 of just 10% overall would result in savings of **£260,000** in one year.

The current situation results in patients taking up GP appointments when they could be directed to the pharmacy to get the self-care medication they need. Patients tend to use the GP surgery rather than the pharmacy as they assume either an increased cost if they go to the Pharmacy, or are not aware that pharmacists can help them with a range of symptoms and self-limiting illnesses or are used to obtaining medication this way.

CCGs need to make increasingly difficult decisions about how to spend the NHS budget and this means prioritising those things that will give patients the best clinical outcomes.

NHSE have conducted a consultation on medicines that could be bought over-the-counter (OTC) for the treatment of minor health concerns that are either self-limiting or suitable for self-care. The consultation has concluded and guidance has been made available to CCGs.

The guidance recommends that, for 35 minor, short-term conditions, medicines which are available over the counter are **no longer routinely prescribed**.

With the use of this protocol and quarterly reviews our aim is:

- To manage safe and cost effective patient flow for self-care.
- To reduce the cost of prescribing items suitable for self-care by 10%.
- To reduce consultations in practice for self-care.
- To promote the clinical skills of the pharmacist in supporting patients to manage certain conditions safely and appropriately.
- To support care homes (with and without nursing) to manage these conditions with a Homely remedy Protocol (NICE SC1)

Method

⁴ Source ePACT OTC Prescribing Dashboard accessed 19 Aug 2020

NHS Kernow Actions

Delivery of these key areas in conjunction with routine work has the potential to save £252,997 per annum

	Activity	Actions	Current Spend per annum (ePACT data July 19 to June 20)	Potential savings
Oct-Dec	Dry Skin	Using supporting protocol to identify patients who are prescribed emollients and other topical products that do not have a chronic skin condition and symptoms could be treated with items purchased over the counter	£179,123	40% reduction in overall spend = £71,649
Jan-Mar	Dry eyes	Using supporting protocol to identify patients who are prescribed OTC items to treat dry eyes, with no clinical reasoning, and symptoms could be treated with items purchased over the counter	£ 345,417	30% reduction = £103,625
Apr-June	Diarrhoea/ Constipation	Using supporting protocol to identify patients who are prescribed OTC items to treat diarrhoea or constipation, with no clinical reasoning, and symptoms could be treated with items purchased over the counter	£117,023	30% reduction = £35,106
July-Sept	Indigestion remedies	Using supporting protocol to identify patients who are prescribed OTC items to treat indigestion, with no clinical reasoning, and symptoms could be treated with items purchased over the counter	£142.068	30% reduction =£42,620

Note:

1. Vitamins and Minerals is included in a separate protocol
2. Support for Care Homes to implement the national RMOC Homely remedy protocol will be delivered through our Care Home work.

GP practice actions

- The practice will make full use of the posters provided by NHS Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group to support the guidance issued.
- NHS Kernow will provide updates to the practice to monitor progress
- NHS Kernow will support practice's to identify suitable patients and support them with reducing prescribing

Community Pharmacy Actions

- Community Pharmacy will support the NHS Kernow and GP Practices will make full use of the posters provided by NHS Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group to support the guidance issued.




Exclusions

- The guidance does not apply to people with long-term or more complex conditions who will continue to get their usual prescriptions.

Notes:-

- People who receive free prescriptions will not automatically be exempt from the guidance.
- For patients where the clinician considers that their ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability; these patients will continue to receive prescriptions for over the counter items subject to the item being clinically effective.

Supporting Documents

NHS Clinical Commissioners: Quick reference guide for healthcare professionals	 over-the-counter-quick-reference-guide.pdf
Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: A Consultation on guidance for CCGs.	 otc-guidance-2.pdf
Regional Medicines Optimisation Committee Homely Remedy Protocol	 2019 05 24 KCCG Homely remedy polic

Appendix one: Agreement to protocol

Please detail any amendments to the protocol

Signed on behalf of practice:	
Practice name:	
Date:	
Signed on behalf of MOT:	
Preferred contact details of the surgery:	

Appendix two: Completion of protocol

GP practice:	
Date of review:	
Review conducted by:	
Number of patients reviewed:	Q1
	Q2
	Q3
	Q4
Feedback:	
Difficulties encountered:	
Completed by:	

Appendix three: Draft letter

Note: letter to be addressed to patient or parent/guardian of patient.

Addressee**Your department**

Your location

Your street

Your town

Your postcode

Tel: xxxxx xxxxxx

Fax: xxxxx xxxxxx

Email: xxxxx@nhs.net

Dear <patient name>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PRESCRIPTION FOR << INSERT >>

We are writing to you because you have a repeat prescription for [insert drug name]. NHS Kernow have reviewed the evidence for the prescribing of this medicine/product and have decided that they can no longer support the prescribing of [insert drug name]

This letter explains the reason for this decision.

<<INSERT MEDICINE>> is sometimes taken to [insert rationale for prescribing].

Optional text for vitamins:- The Department of Health recommends that vitamin supplements and similar products have limited benefit and only benefit those patients where a true deficiency has been confirmed.

The benefits you may receive from taking xxxx can be obtained by eating xxxxx

Therefore NHS Kernow has requested your practice to act on this advice to stop prescribing xxxxx to patients currently taking it. This means you will no longer be able to order xxxx on prescription.

If you have any further questions about this letter then you can speak to a prescribing advisor at the **NHS Kernow Medicines Optimisation team on 01726 627953.**

Yours sincerely

<Add Name>