

Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group

Draft proposal to restrict over the counter medicines on prescription for minor illnesses

October 2018

We would like to hear your views





Harrogate and Rural District
Clinical Commissioning Group

In the year prior to June 2017, the NHS spent approximately £569 million on prescriptions for medicines which can be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy and other outlets such as supermarkets. In Harrogate and Rural District CCG we spend about £1 million a year on medicines that can be purchased over the counter. The NHS has a limited budget and with an increasing demand for services it must evaluate every service it pays for. Any money saved on over the counter medicines could be spent elsewhere in the health care system.

NHS Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group are planning to implement national guidance on restricting in certain circumstances prescribing of over the counter medicines. We would like to hear your views

The consultation is open from 15 October to 12 November. This consultation document is also available at;

<http://www.harrogateandruraldistrictccg.nhs.uk/>

If you need more information about this consultation or would like the consultation document in another format please contact christopher.ranson@nhs.net or call 01423 799300.



Who are NHS Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)?

NHS Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is a local NHS organisation which was created by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. As more than 90% of patients' contact with the NHS is with their GP, CCGs were created to enable GPs to buy the services that their patients need. All GP practices across the district now work together as a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide primary care services and buy most of the services that they refer their patients on to such as hospital, mental health and community services. The CCG is led by an accountable officer who works with a team of GPs, other clinicians and NHS managers.

How we commission NHS services

The NHS is funded through taxation and this provides a fixed budget to buy and provide health services for the whole population. Commissioning health services is about understanding the health of a population group, planning what services to purchase to meet those needs and monitoring the quality of services that are delivered. As local commissioners, Harrogate and Rural District CCG is responsible for assessing the needs of people living in the Harrogate and Rural District and decides which health services to purchase for our population. NHS England is responsible for direct commissioning of services outside the remit of clinical commissioning groups, specialist services, dentistry, pharmacy, optometrists, offender health, military and veteran health and specialised services.

The challenge faced by organisations across the NHS is how to spend their set budgets in a way that benefits the health of the whole population while ensuring that services also meet the needs of individuals and deliver value for money. With a growing population, rising demand for services and a limited budget, like other NHS organisations, the CCG has to evaluate every service it commissions to see if it offers good quality, value for money and is an effective and equitable way of using our resources.

What is this document about?

Harrogate and Rural District CCG regularly reviews all the services we commission to ensure that we are using NHS funds appropriately and fairly. We are committed to ensuring that the money we spend on the public's behalf is used to achieve the best value for patients and delivers the services they most need. Following a recent Government consultation, and in line with the subsequent national guidance, the CCG is proposing that patients with minor ailments and/or using medicines and vitamins of low clinical priority are provided with information to self care and purchase medicines over the counter and should now not be routinely prescribed in primary care.

Which minor ailments and treatments do these proposals relate to?

We are proposing that the following minor illnesses can be treated safely and effectively using over the counter medicines. Our recommendation is that treatments for these conditions are no longer available on prescription.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acute sore throat• Conjunctivitis• Coughs, colds and nasal congestion• Cradle Cap• Dandruff• Diarrhoea (adults)• Dry eyes/sore tired eyes• Earwax• Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis)• Haemorrhoids• Head lice• Infant colic• Infrequent cold sore of lips• Indigestion and heartburn• Infrequent constipation• Infrequent migraine• Insect bites/stings• Mild cystitis• Mild irritant dermatitis• Mild acne• Mild dry skin | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mild to moderate hay fever/seasonal rhinitis• Minor burns/scalds• Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and/or fever (e.g. aches and sprain, headache, period pain, back pain)• Mouth ulcers• Nappy rash• Oral thrush• Prevention of dental cavities• Probiotics• Ringworm/athletes foot• Sunburn due to excessive sun exposure• Sun protection• Teething/mild toothache• Threadworm• Travel Sickness• Vitamins and minerals for prevention/ maintenance.• Warts and verrucae |
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Further details can be found in the NHS England guidance document:
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/otc-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>

Are there any exceptions to this policy?

In accordance with national guidance we propose the policy would include the following exceptions. There are certain situations where patients should continue to have their treatments prescribed. They are:

- Patients prescribed an over the counter treatment for a long term condition (e.g.regular pain relief for chronic arthritis).
- For the treatment of more complex forms of minor illnesses (e.g. severe migraines that are unresponsive to over the counter medicines).
- For those patients that have symptoms that suggest the condition is not minor.
- Treatment for complex patients (eg immunosuppressed patients)
- Patients on prescription only treatments.
- Patients prescribed over the counter products to treat adverse effect or symptom of a more complex illness and /or prescription only medications.
- Circumstances where the product licence doesn't allow the product to be sold over the counter to certain groups of patients. This may vary by medicine, but could include babies, children and/or women who are pregnant or breast-feeding.
- Patients with a minor condition suitable for self care that has not responded enough to treatment with an over the counter product.
- Patients where the clinician considers that the presenting symptom is due to a condition that would not be considered a minor condition.
- Circumstances where the prescriber believes in their clinical judgement, exceptional circumstances exist that warrant deviation from the recommendation to self-care.
- Individual patients where the clinician considers that their ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability to the extent that their health and/or wellbeing could be adversely affected, if reliant on self-care.
- Consideration should be given to safe guarding issues.

Please note - being exempt from paying a prescription charge does not automatically provide an exception to the guidance (this includes having a prescription pre-payment certificate)

What is the cost of prescribing over the counter medicines to the NHS?

In the year prior to June 2017, the NHS spent approximately £569 million on prescriptions for medicines for minor conditions, which could otherwise be purchased over the counter from a pharmacy and/or other outlets such as petrol stations or supermarkets. It has been estimated that 57 million GP consultations and 3.7 million visits to A&E every year are for minor ailments that could be self-treated at home.



This costs the NHS £2.3 billion. In Harrogate and Rural District CCG we spend about £1 million a year on medicines that can be purchased over the counter. This could go towards funding:

- 39 more community nurses; or
- 270 more hip replacements; or
- 66 more drug treatment courses for breast cancer; or
- 1000 more drug treatment courses for Alzheimer's; or
- 1040 more cataract operations

How are we engaging on this proposal?

We are inviting patients, stakeholders and local clinicians to tell us their views on our proposal to stop prescribing over the counter medicines by filling in the following questionnaire. To share your views with us you can fill out the questionnaire which starts on the next page. You can also fill out this questionnaire online at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/OTCmeds/>.

Next steps

Following this consultation we will carefully review feedback from patients and local clinicians. There will then be a further review of the feedback from the consultation before the final decision is taken by Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group.



Over the counter medicines Questionnaire

We would like to hear your views on our proposal to stop the prescribing of over the counter medicines. We would particularly like to hear from those affected by the proposals, but everyone's views are welcome as this consultation affects the way the CCG spends public money on healthcare.

You can also fill out this questionnaire online at
<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/OTCmeds/>.

1. Which of the following applies to you? (you can choose more than one)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Patient
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family member or carer of patient
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am a resident of Harrogate and Rural District.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Patient representative organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Voluntary organisation or charity
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pharmacist
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am a clinician (GP, nurse, consultant). Please tell us your role in the comments box.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please specify below)

2. What is the first part of your post code (e.g. HD8)?



3. If you live in Harrogate and Rural District, please tell us the name of your GP practice.

4. Harrogate and Rural District CCG is proposing that it no longer routinely funds prescriptions for over the counter medicines to manage minor ailments for the reasons given in the consultation document. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposals?

	Strongly Agree
	Agree
	Not Sure
	Disagree
	Strongly Disagree

5. The proposal has a number of exceptions. Do you think there any other exceptions we need to think about?



6. Please add any other comments you would like to make.

7. We would like to ensure we hear from all parts of our community and would be grateful if you could answer a few questions.

Any information you provide will remain anonymous.

Please could you tell us:

Your Age

Your sex

How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Your religion or belief

How would you describe your sexual orientation?



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Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your responses will be used to produce a consultation report which will help inform Harrogate and Rural District CCGs final decision.

Please return this questionnaire to the: Chris Ranson, Medicine Management Team, Harrogate and Rural District CCG, 1 Grimbald Crag Court, St James Business Park, Knaresborough HG5 8QB. or by email to christopher.ranson@nhs.net.