

COMMISSIONING POLICY FOR SELF CARE

NHS Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group does not fund the prescribing of medication for minor short term health problems (as defined below)

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Intended Audience	All providers of services commissioned by NHS Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group, including GPs and Non-Medical Prescribers (NMPs), Hospital Trusts, Community providers, community pharmacies. Stakeholders of NHS Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group members, governing body and employees. For publication on our web site
Impact Assessed	Comprehensive National EQIA completed by NHS England in November 2017. The

	<p>document asks that CCGs assess the impact of their population with regard to the particular demographics of their local population.</p> <p>Local Stage 2 EQIA assessment completed both on the proposal to cease prescribing of items for self-limiting conditions and on the impact of the implementation of the commissioning policy. This includes a comprehensive communication and engagement strategy.</p>
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Further information about this document:

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INTRODUCTION:

NHS England has published new prescribing guidance which covers 35 minor, short-term health conditions, which are either 'self-limiting' or suitable for 'self-care'. For these minor, short-term conditions, medicines which are available over the counter (OTC) are no longer to be routinely prescribed on the NHS.

NHS prescribers are often asked to issue an NHS prescription for medicines to treat minor short-term medical conditions, for medications where there is limited evidence of clinical benefit or cost-effectiveness, and for conditions where there is no clinical need for treatment.

Promoting the concept of self-care and increasing the awareness that there are alternatives to making GP appointments, or attendance at OOHs or A&E departments with minor conditions, will encourage patients to explore self-care in the future, so changing the culture of dependency in the NHS.

NHS Trafford faces a £23m deficit in funding over the next two years and spends over £2million a year on these medicines alone. Removing these medications from prescription will release money which could be better spent on reducing health inequalities, to treat conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and respiratory disease as well as helping to maintain financial balance in the health economy for the benefit of the wider population.

NHS Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in line with NHS England guidance will no longer fund the prescribing of medication for minor short-term health problems. Patients are therefore advised to access advice and purchase such self-care remedies as they and their family need rather than being prescribed by their GP, NMP or other clinicians.

Patients are expected, where possible, to try to alter their diet and lifestyle if it is probable that this is the cause of a minor health problem.

Many of these products are readily available, along with advice, from local pharmacies. Some are also available from local shops and supermarkets.

This guidance will provide everyone in Trafford with the same expectation of what will be provided from their GP practice or other prescriber.

The principles of this document apply equally to any provider delivering NHS Commissioned Care.

SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The Self-Care Policy sets out the Clinical Commissioning Group's approach to ensure that:

Prescribing of medicines and treatments that are available to purchase over-the-counter will be stopped if one of the following criteria is met:

- 1. The condition for which the medication or treatment is prescribed is considered to be self-limiting;**
- 2. The condition for which the medication or treatment is prescribed is considered suitable for self-care;**

3. The medication or treatment prescribed has insufficient evidence of benefit.

Prescribers will supported in actioning and implementing these decisions in practice.

This guidance applies to all services contracted by or delivered by the NHS across Trafford, including:

- a) GP Practices – GPs and NMPs
- b) Out of hours and extended hours primary care providers
- c) Acute Hospitals
- d) Out-Patient Clinics
- e) NHS Community Providers
- f) Independent providers
- g) Community pharmacies
- h) Opticians
- i) Dentists

This guidance covers the provision of prescriptions to a patient registered on the list of a general medical practitioner, or a temporary resident.

Implementation of the policy will be monitored via ePACT2 and IMPACT data.

MEDICINES AVAILABLE OVER-THE-COUNTER, USED FOR SELF-LIMITING CONDITIONS OR CONDITIONS SUITABLE FOR SELF-CARE

Most minor ailments are either self-limiting or suitable for self-care. Products aimed at treating the symptoms of many of these ailments may not offer value for money and should not normally be prescribed at NHS expense.

Patients with minor, self-limiting conditions and conditions suitable for self-care will be signposted to community pharmacies, or other outlets such as supermarkets and local shops, to purchase over-the-counter treatments.

Community pharmacists have a wealth of experience and training, and are well placed to contribute to the management of minor ailments and common conditions. No appointments are needed and community pharmacies are often open for longer hours than GP Practices and are also open at weekends.

Secondary Care and other providers will support self-care interventions and signpost patients to the community pharmacy if appropriate, particularly where patients have presented inappropriately to A&E, urgent care centres or out of hours services.

People will be encouraged to be responsible for their own health and well-being, by all healthcare professionals.

Patient information leaflets are available for specific conditions, either via sources such as NHS Choices or via the GP Practice prescribing system, to ensure that people are made aware of warning signs or symptoms that would require them to see their GP. Patient education during appointments may help to reduce repeat consultations for similar conditions whilst ensuring appropriate safety-netting is in place.

PRODUCTS WITH INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF BENEFIT

Many of the products in this category are not licensed drugs under the Medicines Act. This means that they have not undergone the stringent testing laid down by the regulatory authorities to confirm their safety, quality and efficacy. There is no summary of product

characteristics (SPC) for prescribers to consult and hence no indemnity for prescribers should the treatment cause harm.

Many of these products are classed as 'food substitutes' and do not appear in the current British National Formulary (BNF) or the Drug Tariff. They are often not manufactured to the same high pharmaceutical standards used for licensed medicines; hence there is no guarantee of consistency in formulation and potency. These treatments will not have undergone rigorous clinical trials to demonstrate that they are effective.

General exceptions to the policy:

- Patients prescribed an OTC treatment for a long term condition (e.g. regular pain relief for chronic arthritis or treatments for irritable bowel disease).
- 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 (i.e. those with red flag symptoms for example indigestion with very bad pain.)
- Treatment for complex patients (e.g. immunosuppressed patients).
- Patients on prescription only treatments where OTC products would not be suitable.
- Patients prescribed OTC products to treat an adverse effect or symptom of a more complex illness and/or prescription only medications should continue to have these products prescribed on the NHS (e.g. Dry eyes due to Sjögren's syndrome).
- 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. Community Pharmacists will be aware of what these are and can advise accordingly.
- Patients with a minor condition suitable for self-care that has not responded sufficiently to treatment with OTC products.
- Patients where the clinician considers that the presenting symptom is due to a condition that would not be considered a minor condition.
- 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.

To note that being exempt from paying a prescription charge or by owning a prepayment certificate does not automatically warrant an exception to the guidance. Consideration should also be given to safeguarding issues.

Examples of exceptional circumstances may include the following:

- A homeless person who needs pain killers for a short term ailment but who has no means of paying for over the counter medications;
- A young unemployed person attends their GP practice and is given the option to buy medications themselves but the GP or NMP doesn't believe they have the money available to do so at this time;
- A patient goes to see their GP or NMP and is given the option to buy medications themselves but the GP or NMP doesn't believe they have the money available to do so at this time;

- A patient goes to see their GP or NMP with indigestion problems. As this is the first occasion they should be advised to buy an indigestion remedy over the counter. However, if the problem persists the issue will be investigated further and medication can be prescribed. Patients with long-term indigestion problems will not be affected;
- If the GP or NMP believes that their patient who has a learning disability needs some vitamins but that they don't fully understand the option of going to purchase medication themselves.

Appendix 1: Conditions for which prescribing should be restricted

1. Probiotics
2. Vitamins and minerals
3. Acute Sore Throat
4. Infrequent Cold Sores of the lip.
5. Conjunctivitis
6. Coughs and colds and nasal congestion
7. Cradle Cap (Seborrhoeic dermatitis – infants)
8. Haemorrhoids
9. Infant Colic
10. Mild Cystitis
11. Mild Irritant Dermatitis
12. Dandruff
13. Diarrhoea (Adults)
14. Dry Eyes/Sore (tired) Eyes
15. Earwax
16. Excessive sweating (Hyperhidrosis)
17. Head Lice
18. Indigestion and Heartburn
19. Infrequent Constipation
20. Infrequent Migraine
21. Insect bites and stings
22. Mild Acne
23. Mild Dry Skin
24. Sunburn
25. Sun Protection
26. Mild to Moderate Hay fever/Seasonal Rhinitis
27. Minor burns and scalds
28. Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and/fever. (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)
29. Mouth ulcers
30. Nappy Rash
31. Oral Thrush
32. Prevention of dental caries
33. Ringworm/Athletes foot
34. Teething/Mild Toothache
35. Threadworms
36. Travel Sickness
37. Warts and Verrucae

Table 1. Examples of medicines that can be purchased over-the-counter for the treatment of self-limiting conditions and those conditions deemed suitable for self-care. (Note: this list and examples given are not exhaustive).

Self-limiting Conditions		
Condition	Example products (not exhaustive)	Specific Exceptions (for general exceptions see above)
Acute sore throat	Sore throat lozenges and sprays	
Infrequent cold sores of the lip	Aciclovir cream Zovirax® cold sore cream	Immunocompromised patients
Conjunctivitis (also see hayfever below)	Chloramphenicol eye drops or ointment	Children Patient under 2 years of age
	Sodium cromoglicate eye drops Otrivine-antistin® eye drops	
Coughs, colds and nasal congestion	Simple linctus, pholcodine linctus Pseudoephedrine nasal sprays and oral preparations Xylometazoline and ephedrine nasal sprays and drops	
Cradle cap	Olive oil, cradle cap shampoos	If causing distress to the infant and not improving
Haemorrhoids	Anusol® cream, ointment or suppositories	
	Anusol HC® cream, ointment, suppositories	Patient less than 18 years of age
Infant colic	Simeticone liquid Dimeticone liquid	
	Colief® liquid	Confirmed lactose intolerance only
Mild cystitis	Potassium citrate mixture or sachets Cranberry products	

Minor conditions suitable for self-care		
Condition	Example products (not exhaustive)	Specific Exceptions (for general exceptions see above)
Mild irritant dermatitis	Emollient creams and lotions	
	Mild corticosteroid creams (e.g. hydrocortisone)	Exceptions for hydrocortisone cream: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 10 years • Pregnant women • When required for use on the face, anogenital region, broken or infected skin (including cold sores, acne, and athlete's foot).

Dandruff (mild scaling of the scalp without itching)	Shampoos including antifungal, antiseptic, selenium and coal tar	
Diarrhoea (adults)	Loperamide Oral rehydration sachets	Children
Dry eyes/sore tired eyes	Hypromellose eye drops, Carbomer 980 gel	
Earwax	Olive Oil, sodium bicarbonate ear drops	
Excessive sweating (hyperhidrosis)	Aluminium chloride 20% solutions (e.g. Driclor®, Anhydrol Forte®)	
Head lice	Dimeticone, Malathion, Cyclomethicone, Permethrin shampoos and liquids	Children under 6 months of age
Indigestion and heartburn	Peptac®, Gaviscon®	
Infrequent constipation	Senna, lactulose, Macrogol sachets	Children where dietary and lifestyle changes have not been sufficient
Infrequent migraine	Analgesics, Migraleve®, Triptans	Patients with severe or recurrent migraines.
Insect bites and stings	Antihistamine oral and topical preparations, calamine lotion	
	Topical corticosteroids	Exceptions for hydrocortisone cream: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children under 10 years • Pregnant women • When required for use on the face, anogenital region, broken or infected skin (including cold sores, acne, and athlete's foot).
Mild Acne	Benzoyl peroxide creams and gels	
Mild dry skin	Emollient creams and lotions	
Sunburn due to excessive sun exposure	Emollients, oral and topical antihistamines, analgesics	
Sun protection	Sun creams such as Uvistat®, Sensense®, etc.	ACBS approved indication of protection from UV radiation in abnormal cutaneous photosensitivity. (i.e. where skin protection should be prescribed)
Mild to moderate hayfever/seasonal rhinitis	Antihistamines, nasal sprays, eye drops	

Minor burns and scalds	Antiseptic creams, analgesics	More serious burns always require professional medical attention. Burns requiring hospital A&E treatment include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all chemical and electrical burns;• large or deep burns;• burns that cause white or charred skin;• burns on the face, hands, arms, feet, legs or genitals that cause blisters.
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Minor conditions associated with pain, discomfort and/or fever (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)	Analgesics, NSAIDs, topical anti-inflammatory preparations	
Mouth ulcers	Local anaesthetic gels, hydrocortisone buccal tablets	Exceptions for hydrocortisone buccal tablets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children under 12 years of age
Nappy rash	Barrier preparations such as Sudocrem®, Metanium®	
Oral thrush	Daktarin® oral gel, Nystatin® oral suspension	Infants less than 4 months old (Note that Daktarin® oral gel is only licensed for 4 months and older. Nystatin® is POM so will need a prescription if required.)
Dental products	Mouthwashes Toothpaste	
Ringworm/athlete's foot	Topical preparations containing miconazole, clotrimazole etc.	Lymphoedema or history of lower limb cellulitis
Teething/mild toothache	Teething gels, paracetamol, ibuprofen	
Threadworms	Mebendazole	Children under 2 years of age. Not licensed for OTC sale.
Travel sickness	Cinnarizine, Hyoscine	
Warts and verrucae	Salicylic acid containing products, glutaraldehyde	Treatment of anogenital warts

Table 2. Examples of medicines that have little evidence of benefit (Note: this list and examples given is not exhaustive)

Product category	Example products (not exhaustive)	Specific Exceptions (for general exceptions see above)
Probiotics	VSL#3, lactobacillus, acidophilus	VSL#3 for use under the supervision of a physician for the maintenance of antibiotic induced remission of ileoanal pouchitis in adults.
Vitamins and minerals	Pharmacy own brands of vitamins/ multivitamins (i.e. Boots, Lloyds, Superdrug, Valupak), Haliborange®, Sanatogen®, Fruitivits Sachets®, Spatone®, Seven Seas®, Lamb®, Vita E®, Osteocaps ®, Osteocare ®, Redoxon®, Centrum®, etc	<p>Vitamin D (high strength) for proven vitamin D deficiency. Calcium and vitamin D for osteoporosis or osteopenia. Vitamin D for patients with hyperparathyroidism, hypercalcaemia and patients receiving parenteral osteoporosis treatment. <i>NB maintenance or preventative treatment is not an exception.</i></p> <p>Thiamine and vitamin B co. strong only for alcohol related conditions & neurological complications. Vitamin B12 deficiency. Post bariatric surgery Vitamin supplements for premature and low birth weight babies as advised by hospital. <i>Patients suitable to receive Healthy Start® vitamins for pregnancy or children between the ages 6 months to their fourth birthday. (NB this is not on prescription but commissioned separately)</i></p>

The medicines referred to in this policy are all readily available from community pharmacies and in many cases from supermarkets and other outlets. The cost to the patient will vary depending on the condition being treated, treatment length and where the product is purchased. Paracetamol costs as little as 19p for 16 tablets whereas head lice treatments may cost around £5.00 for a single person treatment or as much as £12.00 for a family pack (although wet combing is inexpensive and is the preferred method of treatment).

Professional and contractual context for prescribers

During discussion with the patient, when considering what treatment and ongoing monitoring is required, prescribers are asked to be mindful of the following:

- That GPs/NMPs have clinical freedom to act in an individual patient's best interest where exceptional clinical circumstances exist that warrant deviation from this policy. Any such decisions should be recorded clearly in the patient's clinical record.
- That within their Primary Medical Services contract with NHSE, GPs/NMPs have a contractual obligation relating to patients to make available such treatment (including any prescription deemed to be appropriate after discussion with the patient) as is necessary and appropriate, and to provide advice in connection with the patient's health, including relevant health promotion advice.
- That reference to local prescribing guidelines is good professional practice.
- That consideration of GMC professional obligations to use NHS resources wisely is good professional practice.

References/resources and associated documents

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