

Communications toolkit – GP Practices

Here to help campaign

Think pharmacy first for common conditions

(V8. 10/11/23)

About this information pack

This common conditions campaign toolkit is for GP practices.

The campaign aims to encourage the public to 'think pharmacy first' for a range of minor conditions which community pharmacies can advise and treat under the common conditions scheme. This scheme is currently provided in almost all pharmacies across the North East and North Cumbria.

This pack includes information about the scheme and details of resources you can use with your patients and across your own channels to help raise awareness of the services offered by community pharmacies. The resources can be found here: [Common conditions toolkit](#)

This campaign builds on the region's wider 'here to help' campaign which aims to raise awareness of the role of community pharmacies. The 'here to help' general pharmacy campaign toolkit is also available here: [pharmacy toolkit](#)

Your support in helping us to share these messages is very much appreciated.

For further help or advice on using this toolkit, or any other of our toolkits, or if you need support to tailor assets, please contact either: Andrea Jones, andrea.jones2@nhs.net or Abbie Mulgrew, abbie.mulgrew@nhs.net



What is the 'think pharmacy first' common conditions scheme?

As you may be aware the scheme encourages people to consider seeking advice and/or medicines from a local community pharmacy for a range of common conditions before contacting their GP practice or going to another healthcare setting such as an urgent treatment centre.

Who can use the common conditions scheme?

Anyone. The service is available for all adults and children, across the North East and North Cumbria, but aims to target those who would normally access a GP, urgent care centre or accident and emergency department for certain common conditions. The service is available at most pharmacies in the region.

People who receive free prescriptions, or hold a valid medical exemption certificate, may not need to pay for some over the counter (OTC) medicines without the need to see their GP.

People can go straight to a participating pharmacy themselves (you don't need to be referred) or they may be signposted to the service by their GP practice and/or NHS 111.

What sorts of conditions does the scheme cover?

Conditions that can be treated at a local pharmacy include:

- Sinusitis (12 years +)
- Sore throat (5 years +)
- Earache in children (1-17 years)
- Infected insect bites (1 year +)
- Impetigo (1 year +)
- Shingles (18 years +)
- Uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women (16-64 years)

Specified conditions - Patients with symptoms associated with the following specified conditions may self-refer into this service and present to any participating pharmacy.

- Aches and pains, including
 - Back Pain
 - Headache
 - Migraine
 - Muscular ache
 - Period pain
 - Teething
 - Toothache
 - Allergy
 - Bites and stings
 - Hay fever
 - Skin reaction
- Colds and Flu
 - Cough
 - Congestion
 - Sore throat
 - Fever / temperature (including post-immunisation pyrexia)
- Ear care
 - Earache
 - Ear infection
 - Ear wax
- Eye care
 - Bacterial conjunctivitis
 - Styes
- Gastrointestinal care
 - Constipation
 - Diarrhoea
 - Dyspepsia
 - Haemorrhoids
 - Indigestion
 - Reflux
 - Threadworm
 - Vomiting
- Head lice
- Mouth Care
 - Cold sores
 - Oral thrush
 - Ulcers
- Skin care
 - Athletes foot
 - Chickenpox
 - Cold sores
 - Contact dermatitis / atopic eczema
 - Fungal skin infections
 - Nappy rash
 - Pruritis
 - Scabies
 - Warts and verrucae
- Vaginal Thrush

Communication resources to support people working in GP practices

Resources we have developed which you can use include:

- [Patient information leaflet](#) about the scheme, which you can give to patients or display in your surgery
- [Website information](#) which you can use on your GP practice website
- [Posters](#) for display in your surgery
- [Dedicated webpage](#) on the ICB website about the common conditions scheme, which you can link to from your own website or social media posts
- Animations for use on your social media channels, your website or digital screens.
- [Social media plan](#) which includes text you can use in posts on your social media channels - alongside visuals and animations you can download
- [Treatment recommendation pad](#) – from experience, we know that patients like to have something to take away from their appointment. If you see a patient with one of the specified common conditions, and they need to be referred to a community pharmacy, please use the treatment recommendation pad we have supplied, to support the patient in getting the right medication when they go to their community pharmacy
- [Factsheet](#) – to support administration staff to direct patients to a community pharmacy for common conditions

How you can help

Join us on social media so we can remind people that local community pharmacies are 'here to help'.

Please tag us in your social media posts:

North East and North Cumbria ICB Facebook – NorthEastandNorthCumbriaNHS

X (the new name for Twitter) – @NENC_NHS

Instagram – nenc_nhs

- [Use our social media plan](#)

You can also ...

- [Display leaflets and posters](#)
- [Add information to your website](#)
- [Use leaflets](#) to support your conversations with patients
- Use the [treatment recommendation pad](#) to support patients in buying the recommended treatment at a community pharmacy

Having conversations

Please support this "think pharmacy first" common conditions campaign by briefing all patient facing colleagues, who may be able to signpost patients towards their local community pharmacy, where appropriate.

When a patient presents with a common condition or symptoms, listed in the specified conditions above, please refer them to their local community pharmacy for further advice and/or over the counter medication.

If a patient is seen with a common condition, and can be referred to a community pharmacy, please use the treatment recommendation pad, supplied in this toolkit, to write the product name you recommend them to purchase. The patient can then hand this to the community pharmacist to assist them in purchasing the correct treatment if necessary.

Please highlight to patients the benefits of visiting a community pharmacy for advice and/or medication. For example:

- No appointment necessary
- Confidential consultation space available if needed
- Fully qualified pharmacists are health care professionals and can advise and provide medication for common conditions over the counter where appropriate
- Patients who normally receive free prescriptions or hold a valid exemption certificate, may not need to pay for some over the counter medicines

Information for websites

Got an...itch, tummy trouble, tickly cough head to your local pharmacy!

Pharmacies across the North East and North Cumbria can offer advice and treatment for many common health conditions. There's no need for a GP appointment – just head to your local pharmacy. Pharmacists are qualified experts in healthcare and can help with a wide range of common illnesses.

Who can use this service?

Anyone. The service is available for all adults and children, in participating pharmacies, across the North East and North Cumbria.

Why should I go to a pharmacy, instead of my GP practice?

Local community pharmacists are trained to treat common conditions. They offer a confidential and high-quality service designed to meet your needs. You can walk in with no appointment needed and speak in confidence. Most pharmacies have private consultation rooms available.

Which pharmacy can I go to?

Most pharmacies across the North East and North Cumbria offer the common conditions service. Ask your local pharmacy for more details.

What will the pharmacist ask me?

The pharmacist will ask you questions about:

- your symptoms
- your current medication
- history of ailments
- any other illness you have

The answers will help the pharmacist to advise and treat your condition.

Will I always get treatment for my condition?

You will be given treatment if necessary.

Your pharmacist may decide that you need further advice/treatment and can signpost you to another service or contact your GP practice directly, to book you an appointment.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION Your pharmacist will provide treatment and/or advice under the common health conditions scheme, in line with the symptoms you have described. If your symptoms persist, you should seek further advice from your GP.

How it works

Step 1 – Pop along to your local pharmacy and talk to a health care professional about your illness and they will offer advice.

Step 2 - If you need treatment, the pharmacist will check your eligibility and whether the illness is covered by the service

Step 3 - A suitable medicine may be offered to you*

Charges will apply if you normally pay for your prescriptions.

If you hold a medical exemption certificate, for example people under 16 or over 60, then you will not pay for your medicine.

What health conditions are covered as part of this service?

Under the 'Pharmacy First' scheme, pharmacists are able to prescribe NHS medications, including antibiotics and antivirals, for certain conditions, where clinically appropriate, for a range of minor health conditions, without the need to see a GP.

Conditions that can be treated at a local pharmacy include:

- Sinusitis (12 years +)
- Sore throat (5 years +)
- Earache in children (1-17 years)
- Infected insect bites (1 year +)
- Impetigo (1 year +)
- Shingles (18 years +)
- Uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women (16-64 years)

The ICB minor illness service also covers advice and treatment for:


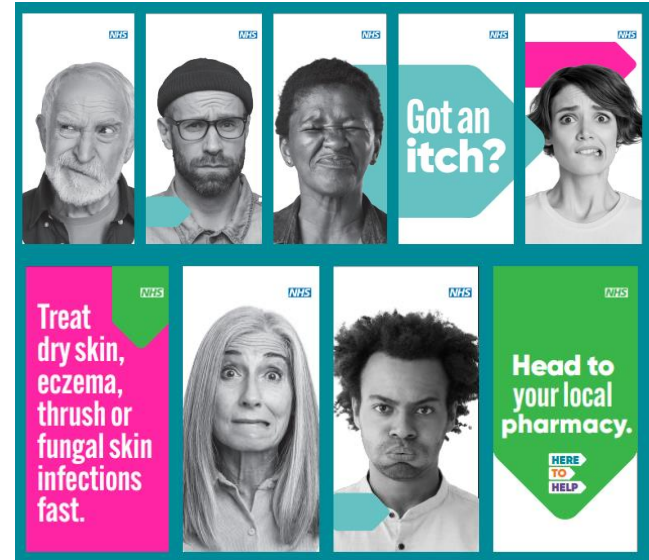
- **Aches and pains** - back pain, headache, migraine, muscle ache, period pain, teething, toothache
- **Allergies** - bites and stings, hay fever, skin reaction
- **Colds and flu** – cough, congestion, sore throat, fever / temperature (including fever following immunisation)
- **Ear care** – earache, ear infection, ear wax
- **Eye care** - bacterial conjunctivitis, styes
- **Gastrointestinal care** – diarrhoea, constipation, indigestion, haemorrhoids (piles), reflux, threadworms, sickness
- **Head lice**
- **Mouth care** - cold sores, oral thrush, ulcers
- **Skin care** - athlete's foot, chicken pox, contact dermatitis / atopic eczema, fungal skin infections, nappy rash, pruritis, scabies, warts, verrucae
- **Vaginal thrush**

Social media online toolkit

This social media plan provides text you can include in your social media posts. Animations and images can be downloaded from the toolkit here [Common conditions toolkit](#)



Hastags: #ThinkPharmacyFirst , #NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription



Handles: Facebook – NorthEastandNorthCumbriaNHS, X (the new name for Twitter) – @NENC_NHS, Instagram – nenc_nhs

	Social media message	Graphics	10 second animation
1	<p>Got an Itch?</p> <p>Dry skin, eczema, thrush, fungal skin infections</p> <p>Head straight to your local pharmacy...</p> <p>Pharmacists are qualified experts in healthcare and medicines and can give you advice and treatment for a range of common health concerns.</p> <p>Find out more here</p> <p>#NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription #Here to Help</p>		


<p>2 Gut feeling?</p> <p>Constipation, diarrhoea, haemorrhoids, period pain</p> <p>Head straight to your local pharmacy...</p> <p>Pharmacists are qualified experts in healthcare and medicines and can give you advice and treatment for a range of common health concerns.</p> <p>Find out more here</p> <p>#NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription #HeretoHelp</p>		
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<p>3 Little problems?</p> <p>Headlice, verruca, chicken pox, nappy rash</p> <p>Head straight to your local pharmacy...</p> <p>Pharmacists are qualified experts in healthcare and medicines and can give you advice and treatment for a range of common health concerns.</p> <p>Find out more here</p> <p>#NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription #HeretoHelp</p>		
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<p>4</p>	<p>Did you know, you can now see your local pharmacists for seven common health conditions without the need for a GP appointment!</p> <p>Find out more from Ewan Maule, Director of Medicines and Pharmacy for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>#NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription #HeretoHelp</p>		 <p>Ewan Maule 7 common conditions video</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Did you know, you can get blood pressure checks from your local pharmacy!</p> <p>Find out more from Ewan Maule, Director of Medicines and Pharmacy for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>#NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription #HeretoHelp</p>		 <p>Ewan Maule blood pressure video</p>

<p>6</p>	<p>Did you know, local pharmacies now offer an over-the-counter oral contraception service!</p> <p>Find out more from Ewan Maule, Director of Medicines and Pharmacy for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>#NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription #HeretoHelp</p>		 <p>Ewan Maule Director of medicines and pharmacy North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care</p> <p>and the role of community pharmacies expanded,</p> <p>Ewan Maule contraception video</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Did you know, local pharmacies offer advice and treatment for urinary tract infections (UTIs) to women aged 16- 64 without the need for a GP appointment?</p> <p>Find out more from Ewan Maule, Director of Medicines and Pharmacy for the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>#NotJustAPlaceToPickUpAPrescription #HeretoHelp</p>		 <p>Ewan Maule Director of medicines and pharmacy North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board</p> <p>in keeping our communities healthy and well,</p> <p>Ewan Maule UTI video</p>

Additional communications assets

Leaflet	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/common-conditions/
Posters	 <p>https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/common-conditions/</p>
Animations	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/common-conditions/
Webpage link	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/think-pharmacy-first/common-conditions/
Treatment recommendation pad	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/common-conditions/