

Briefing: 040/23: Initial briefing for pharmacy teams – the Pharmacy First service

This Briefing provides initial information for pharmacy teams on the Pharmacy First service which will be commissioned from **31st January 2024** (subject to the required IT systems being in place). Further information for pharmacy teams will be published nearer the launch date of the service.

Brief overview of the service

- This is a free NHS service.
- There are **three parts** to the service:
 1. Minor illness consultations with a pharmacist;
 2. Supply of urgent medicines (and appliances); and
 3. Clinical pathway consultations.

Parts 1 and 2: Minor illness consultations and Supply of urgent medicines (and appliances)

- The **first two parts** of the service are those from the [Community Pharmacist Consultation Service](#) (CPCS); this service is currently provided by most pharmacies across the country.
- These two parts of the service are and will continue to be (when the Pharmacy First service starts) provided by a pharmacist following a referral from NHS 111, general practices and other authorised healthcare providers. General practices can only refer for Minor illness consultations; they cannot refer patients for Supply of urgent medicines (and appliances).
- Under CPCS, patients cannot walk-in and access these parts of the service (self-refer); there needs to be a referral from an authorised healthcare provider. This will continue to be the case when they transfer into the Pharmacy First service.
- From the end of 30th January 2024, CPCS will cease to exist, but patients can still access the service when they are appropriately referred, under the Pharmacy First service instead.
- These two parts of the service can be delivered face-to-face in the consultation room or remotely (either by telephone or video consultation).

Part 3: Clinical pathway consultations

- The third part of the Pharmacy First service (the new part), is called **clinical pathway consultations**. This involves pharmacists providing advice and NHS-funded treatment, where clinically appropriate, for seven common conditions: Sinusitis; Sore throat; Acute otitis media (earache); Infected insect bite; Impetigo; Shingles; and Uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women.

- This part of the service can be provided to patients referred by NHS 111, general practices and others. It can also be considered for patients who present to the pharmacy and ask for the service or those who come into the pharmacy for advice on symptoms, which are suggestive of one of the above conditions. Pharmacy team members can refer the patient to the pharmacist who will decide if the patient is eligible to access the service.
- There is a clinical pathway for each of the seven conditions, which show when a patient can be treated under the clinical pathway consultation part of the Pharmacy First service and when they should be referred to another healthcare professional; this is what the pharmacist will use to decide if the patient is eligible for the service.
These are available on the [NHS England website](#); it may be useful to have a look at these and discuss them with your pharmacist to help understand the signs and symptoms that a patient may present with, that would make them eligible for this part of the service.
- In the clinical pathway consultation with a pharmacist, people with symptoms suggestive of the seven conditions will be provided with advice and will be supplied, where clinically necessary, with a prescription-only treatment under a Patient Group Direction (PGD) or in one pathway, an over-the-counter medicine, all at NHS expense.
- This part of the service can be provided face-to-face in the consultation room or remotely by video consultation (distance selling pharmacies can only provide clinical pathways consultations remotely, via video consultation). The only exception is for Acute otitis media consultations, which must be provided face-to-face in the consultation room due to the pharmacist needing to use an otoscope as part of the patient examination.
- Pharmacies must provide all parts of the service (the only exception is that distance selling pharmacies cannot provide the Acute otitis media pathway of the clinical pathway consultations part of the service).
- Pharmacy owners must have a standard operating procedure (SOP) in place for this service and all pharmacy staff involved in the provision of the service must be familiar with and adhere to the SOP.

What role can I play in the service?

The whole pharmacy team can be involved in promoting this service and can help identify potentially eligible patients for clinical pathway consultations. Discuss the role you can play in this with your pharmacist.



Further information on the Pharmacy First service can be found at cpe.org.uk/pharmacyfirst.

If you have any queries or require more information, please email: services.team@cpe.org.uk