

FAQs about Health First Pharmacy; the revised minor ailments service

What is the name of the new service and when does it start?

- The new service is called **Health First Pharmacy**
- It commences on 14th September 2020
- Pharmacy First will stop the day before Health First Pharmacy starts

Why is there a change?

- NHSE decommissioned all the minor ailments services across London on 31st March 2020.
- C&H have commissioned Pharmacy First in the interim whilst the work on the new service has been completed
- Pharmacy First was not considered to be aligned to the NHSE OTC guidance (1). Health First Pharmacy has been designed to support practices in reducing prescribing of OTC medicines in line with the national guidance.

How does the new service fit in with the guidance to reduce prescribing of OTC medicines?

- Health First Pharmacy has been designed to be a safety net for patients who may be unable to afford to self-care.
- The OTC guidance includes an exemption category for people considered to be socially vulnerable and this service is aimed at them.
- Conditions considered to be self-limiting (i.e. they are considered to heal on their own accord) have been removed from the revised service.

What are the main differences between Pharmacy First and the new Health First Pharmacy?

Pharmacy First	Health First Pharmacy
All patients registered with a C&H practice eligible for the service (although >99% service users exempt from R charges)	Service now only available for those considered, 'socially vulnerable.' This is mainly people who are exempt from R charges in income related categories (see next question)
Patient had to collect a registration voucher from their GP practice to confirm they are a C&H patient	No registration vouchers are needed for this scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP practices can refer by email to the patients community pharmacy (CP) of choice • OR patients can self-refer to the CP of their choice as long as they have identification and evidence to prove eligibility. IT system will confirm whether patient is registered with a CH practice
27 conditions included in the scheme	Now only covers 19 conditions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 considered to be self-limiting have been removed • 2 identified as priority for self-care

Unlimited number of consultations	Each eligible patient can only have x 4 consultations in a 6 month period, irrespective of the condition.
Patients could not be referred from another urgent care provider e.g. HUHFT A&E	HUHFT A&E will be able to refer patients
Minimal contract management	Stronger contract management

Who is eligible for Health First Pharmacy?

This service is aimed at the socially vulnerable people who are unlikely to be able to afford self-care. Therefore it is mainly for people who are eligible for free prescriptions in categories related to income; a full list is given below and further details on prescription charge exemption can be found <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/help-with-health-costs/get-help-with-prescription-costs/>

Patients can check their eligibility for free prescriptions using the online calculator, <https://www.gov.uk/help-nhs-costs>

GP practice staff do not need to check the evidence for patient eligibility but they must be able to signpost patients appropriately. CPs will have to check the evidence when the patient initially registers for this service, a patient signature is sufficient for subsequent consultations.

Prescription charge exemption categories that give eligibility for Health First Pharmacy i.e. people in the following categories are defined as being socially vulnerable	Prescription charge exemption categories that <u>DO NOT</u> give eligibility for Health First Pharmacy unless patients also fit into one of the socially vulnerable categories
Patients or their partners (including civil partner) receive, or patients under the age of 20 and are the dependant of someone receiving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit and whose income is at a level where they are eligible for free prescriptions. • Patients receiving any other benefits which give them eligibility for free prescriptions including: income support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit Guarantee Credit 	Current medical exemption certificate
Patients (including any partner and/or young person(s) included in the claim) receiving tax credits, who have been sent an 'NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate' by Prescription Services.	Current maternity exemption certificate
NHS low income scheme	Age categories of either under 16 or over 60 (N.B. Patients under 16 are eligible for the service if at least one parent is eligible)
Prescription Exemption Certificate issued by the Ministry of	

Defence	
Young people aged 16, 17 or 18 and in full-time education (this is the only age related category and was included after feedback about this group often not getting much financial support from parents)	
Patients under 16 who have at least one parent who is eligible for the service	

What conditions are included in Health First Pharmacy?

Athletes Foot	Nappy Rash
Back pain	Primary Dysmenorrhoea (Period Pain)
Constipation	Ringworm
Contact dermatitis	Soft tissue injury
Diarrhoea	Teething
Fever (pyrexia)	Threadworm
Hay fever	Toothache
Headache	Vaginal thrush
Headlice	Warts and Verrucae
Indigestion/heartburn	

There were 27 conditions in Pharmacy First; Health First Pharmacy only has 19 listed in the table above.

Six conditions considered to be self-limiting under the OTC guidance (1) have been removed; these are sore throats, colds, coughs, infective conjunctivitis, haemorrhoids and cold sores. Two conditions have been removed as local consultation has identified these as being priorities to be suitable for self-care; these are mouth ulcers and insect bites/stings.

How can the GP practice refer to Health First Pharmacy?

- Referral vouchers are no longer needed
 - The GP practice can email the community pharmacy chosen by the patient with the patient details to refer them (GP practices will have lists of the provider CPs with nhs.net addresses)
- OR**
- The patient can attend the CP directly as long as they have both identification and proof of eligibility for the service. The Health First Pharmacy IT system will identify those patients registered with a C&H practice.

Can a patient use different community pharmacies?

Each patient should only normally use one CP but they are able to access the service from other CPs if one of the following applies:

- 1) Their normal CP is closed
- 2) They wish to transfer to a different community pharmacy.

Patients should not regularly switch between different CPs and The Health First Pharmacy IT system records all recent consultations and will flag those patients that have accessed the service more than 4 times in the last 6 months.

Will the community pharmacy refer patients back to the GP practice?

- CPs will refer patients back to GP practices if there are clinical concerns or patients fall outside of the treatment protocols.
- For non-urgent concerns patients will be asked to make an appointment with the GP practice. If the referral is considered to be more urgent the CP will refer the patient to the practice either by email or phone. Practices are requested to prioritise these patients.
- As there is a limit of each patient having no more than 4 consultations in 6 months then this may result in patients being referred back to the practice.
- CPs should support the self-care agenda and so should not refer pts with self-limiting conditions outside of the scope of the service unless there is evidence that the patient cannot afford self-care.

How do I find out more about Health First Pharmacy?

Further information about the service is on the GP intranet [here](#). This includes:

- A condensed version of these FAQs aimed at reception staff having a 2 page summary of patient eligibility, conditions covered and referral details
- The formulary of medicines available in Health First Pharmacy
- The treatment protocols
- A webinar for practice admin staff in practices which explains the main aspects of Health First pharmacy

If you have queries which cannot be answered from the intranet please contact MMT on CAHCCG.CityandHackneyMedicines@nhs.net

References

- 1) Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs – NHS clinical commissioners and NHSE 2018 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/otc-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>