

Ref: FOI/00318/CMICB
04 May 2023

Dear

**Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000
Restricting Pharmacy Prescription Ordering**

Thank you for your information request indicated in bold below, which has now been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB). I am able to provide you with the following information and responses.

Your Request:

Referring to this article from August 2016:

<https://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/CD008287/CCGs-stop-pharmacy-repeat-prescription-orders-to-save-cash>

In which it states: “Three clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) in the north west of England and East Anglia have implemented schemes to stop pharmacies from reordering prescriptions, to save around £10 million a year in wasted medicines.” ... “In Merseyside, NHS Southport and Formby CCG, and NHS South Sefton CCG, are piloting the new system. They estimate it will save the local NHS £2m a year in “wasted medicines”, and will “improve the safety of repeat prescriptions”.”

These CCGs have since transitioned into your ICB. Could you tell me:

1) How many GP surgeries in your ICB area currently restrict pharmacies from ordering prescriptions on behalf of patients?

2) What was the evidence base for this decision?

3) How much money has been saved for the local NHS as a direct result of this policy, since implementation, and/or per financial year? Please give evidence for this.

4) How many complaints have been received about the policy? Including those from patients, pharmacies, and others.

5) Please provide any evidence of how the policy has improved patient safety.

6) Please provide any evidence of how the policy has reduced medicines wastage.

Our Response:

Please find listed below the information held regarding restricting pharmacy prescription ordering in each of the former CCG areas that now make up NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB:

Cheshire

1) No formal policy implemented, or evidence base held. Information is not held on the number of GP practices who have implemented 'Patient led ordering'. The former NHS Cheshire CCG was committed to improving the overall management of repeat prescribing systems in primary care, particularly focusing on improving patient safety, empowering patients in managing their conditions and medication, as well as reducing medication waste. As part of this, the former NHS Cheshire CCG recommended that third party ordering of prescriptions was limited to vulnerable patients and those identified as needing support. All other patients were encouraged to take responsibility for ordering their own repeat medication directly with their GP practice. The CCG developed guidance and tools to support those GP practices who took the decision to implement 'Patient led ordering'.

2 - 6) Not applicable as no formal policy in place.

Halton & Warrington

1) No formal policy implemented, or evidence base held. Information not held on the number of GP Practices that restrict pharmacies from ordering prescriptions on behalf of patients. Please note it is up to individual GP Practices who they allow to order prescriptions on behalf of patients. However, guidance provided to support GP Practices as part of a pilot and with other GP Practices over a longer period of time to make changes to the way repeat prescriptions are ordered.

2 - 6) Not applicable as no formal policy in place.

Knowsley

1) No formal policy implemented, or evidence base held, apart from ad hoc reports from patients have suggested incidences of receiving medication they have not ordered that the community pharmacist has ordered on their behalf without checking if it is needed. Information not held on the number of GP Practices that restrict pharmacies from ordering prescriptions on behalf of patients. Please note it is up to individual GP Practices who they allow to order prescriptions on behalf of patients. However, all member GP Practices will allow community pharmacies to order prescriptions on a patient's behalf, in particular vulnerable patients and those using blister packs. No formal policy implemented, or evidence base held, apart from ad hoc reports from patients have suggested incidences of receiving medication they have not ordered that the community pharmacist has ordered on their behalf without checking if it is needed.

2 - 6) Not applicable as no formal policy in place.

Liverpool

1) No formal policy implemented, or evidence base held. Information not held on the number of GP Practices that restrict pharmacies from ordering prescriptions on behalf of patients. However, NHS Liverpool CCG's Medicines Optimisation Committee supported plans to engage with practices across the rest of Liverpool CCG around roll out of 'Direct Patient Ordering' schemes based on the similar work carried out in the former NHS Luton CCG.

2 - 6) Not applicable as no formal policy in place.

South Sefton/Southport & Formby

1 - 6) Please find below a link to the former NHS South Sefton/NHS Southport & Formby CCG website, which details the information held regarding the repeat prescription ordering scheme which all member GP Practices are signed up to, along with the evidence base for this scheme and the evaluations undertaken:

<http://www.southseftonccg.nhs.uk/your-health-and-services/ordering-repeat-prescriptions/>. From the Repeat Prescription Ordering Service Final Evaluation Paper Outcomes and Findings September 2016 - October 2017, 158 complaints were received by the former NHS South Sefton/NHS Southport & Formby CCG.

St Helens

1) No formal policy implemented, or evidence base held. Information not held on the number of GP Practices that restrict pharmacies from ordering prescriptions on behalf of patients. Please note it is up to individual GP Practices who they allow to order prescriptions on behalf of patients. The former NHS St Helens CCG was committed to improving the overall management of repeat prescribing systems in primary care, particularly focusing on improving patient safety, empowering patients in managing their conditions and medication and reducing medication waste. It was recommended by the CCG that third party ordering was restricted to vulnerable patients and for those patients able to self-manage ordering their medication then they should be encouraged to do so. However, this was not a policy but a recommendation.

2 - 6) Not applicable as no formal policy in place.

Warrington

1) No formal policy implemented, or evidence base held. Information not held on the number of GP Practices that restrict pharmacies from ordering prescriptions on behalf of patients. Please note it is up to individual GP Practices who they allow to order prescriptions on behalf of patients. However, guidance provided to support GP Practices as part of a pilot and with other GP Practices over a longer period of time to make changes to the way repeat prescriptions are ordered.

2 - 6) Not applicable as no formal policy in place.

Wirral

1) No formal policy implemented, or evidence base held. Information not held on the number of GP Practices that restrict pharmacies from ordering prescriptions on behalf of patients.

2 - 6) Not applicable as no formal policy in place.

Should you require any further information or clarification regarding this response or do not feel that your request has been answered as you would expect, please contact us to discuss.

We also wish to take this opportunity to inform you that, where you are not satisfied with the response to your request for information, a formal complaints and internal review process is available.

This can be formally requested by emailing foi@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk and must be done within a reasonable time period (3 calendar months) from the date this response was issued.

Where you remain dissatisfied with our review under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) for a review of your appeal decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our complaints procedure.

The ICO can be contacted at;

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
www.ico.gov.uk