

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE</b>			
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> August 2017</b>			
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>Findings from a consultation on NHS prescribing of readily available over the counter products for minor ailments</b>			
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT:</b>	This report provides members with the key findings of the consultation undertaken to elicit views from the public regarding the NHS prescribing of readily available over the counter products for minor ailments.			
<b>REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS:</b>	<p>Members are requested to consider and note the findings.</p> <p>On the basis of the findings from this consultation, members are asked to support the establishment and implementation of guidance to GPs to recommend the discontinuation of NHS prescribing of over the counter products for minor conditions and ailments.</p>			
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:</b>	None.			
<b>REPORT CATEGORY:</b>		<b>Tick</b>		
	Formally Receipt	Y		
	Action the recommendations outlined in the report.	x		
	Debate the content of the report	x		
	Receive the report for information	x		
<b>AUTHOR:</b>	David Rogers, Head of Communication and Engagement			
	Report supported & approved by your Senior Lead	Y/N		
<b>PRESENTED BY:</b>	David Rogers, Head of Communication and Engagement			
<b>OTHER COMMITTEES/ GROUPS CONSULTED:</b>				
<b>EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS (EIA) :</b>	Has an EIA been completed in respect of this report?	<b>Y</b>		
	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">If yes, please attach Available on request from 2006 consultation</td> <td style="width: 50%;">If no, please provide reason below</td> </tr> </table>	If yes, please attach Available on request from 2006 consultation	If no, please provide reason below	
If yes, please attach Available on request from 2006 consultation	If no, please provide reason below			
<b>RISKS:</b>	Have any risks been identified / assessed?	<b>N</b>		
<b>CONFLICT OF INTEREST:</b>	Is there a conflict of interest associated with this report?	<b>N</b>		
<b>CLINICAL ENGAGEMENT:</b>	Has any clinical engagement/involvement taken place as part of the proposal being presented.	<b>Y</b>		
<b>PATIENT ENGAGEMENT:</b>	Has there been any patient engagement associated with this report?	<b>Y</b>		
<b>PRIVACY STATUS OF THE REPORT:</b>	Can the document be shared?	<b>Y</b>		
<b>Which Strategic Objective does the report relate to</b>		<b>Tick</b>		
<b>1</b>	Commission the right services for patients to be seen at the right time, in the right place, by the right professional.			
<b>2</b>	Optimise appropriate use of resources and remove inefficiencies.			
<b>3</b>	Improve access, quality and choice of service provision within Primary Care			
<b>4</b>	Work with colleagues from Secondary Care and Local Authorities to develop seamless care pathways			

**NHS EL CCG Governing Body / Sub Committee  
14<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

**Findings from a consultation on NHS prescribing of readily available over the counter products for minor ailments**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides members with the key findings of the consultation undertaken to elicit views from the public regarding the NHS prescribing of readily available over the counter products for minor ailments.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Earlier this year, Blackburn with Darwen CCG undertook a consultation to elicit the views of the public to establish if there was an appetite for cessation of NHS prescribing of readily available over the counter medicine for minor conditions and ailments.
- 2.2 The presumption behind this is that for minor conditions, where medicines are available over the counter, the cessation of NHS prescribing would save the NHS money as NHS prescriptions are significantly higher than their over the counter equivalent medicines; and equally could reduce the workload for GPs.
- 2.3 There was overwhelming support for this approach to be adopted by the respondents to the BwD CCG consultation, and this has led to advisory guidance being issued to GPs within the BwD area to consider their prescribing in these instances, rather signposting patients to purchase over the counter medication from local pharmacies.
- 2.4 In other areas of Lancashire, and indeed, nationally, CCGs have adopted a similar approach, having gauged public opinion through engagement and consultation.
- 2.5 NHS England has indicated that in the Autumn, it will also conduct a consultation about this matter, noting that this shouldn't impact on decisions that have been made locally and are being implemented following local engagement and consultation.

**3. East Lancashire's approach**

- 3.1 East Lancashire CCG launched a formal consultation on this issue on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017. It was agreed that this would be a formal consultation with the maximum duration of twelve weeks (3 months) to promote the issue and elicit views from the public.
- 3.2 The consultation was launched as an online survey with supporting information. It was promoted in traditional as well as social media, and information was circulated to PPGs and patient groups. Through Facebook we boosted the posts to reach the public using East Lancashire postcodes. We reached over 15,000 individuals and elicited many comments, while encouraging individuals to complete the online survey.
- 3.3 During the course of the consultation, both local government elections (Lancashire County Council) and national elections were announced. As a result, the consultation was kept live, but due to purdah we did not actively promote the consultation. Following

the election on June 9<sup>th</sup>, and the subsequent announcement of the Government, purdah was lifted; and we agreed to extend the consultation to the end of July. This report provides the key findings from this consultation.

## **4. Key Findings**

### **4.1 Response**

- A total of 824 individuals responded.
- Eighty four percent of the respondents were women, while 15% were men.
- In terms of age range, 9% of respondents were aged 18-30, 44% aged 31-50, 30% aged 51-64 and 17% aged 65 and over.
- Ninety-one percent were white British, while 9% were from BME groups.
- Eighteen percent had a registered disability.
- Sixty-six percent were employed, 6% unemployed, 25% retired, and 2% were students.
- Fifteen percent of respondents described themselves as carers.
- A total of 92% were registered with a GP, and 60% indicated that they paid for prescriptions, while 40% indicated that they did not pay for prescriptions.

### **4.2 Should the CCG continue to support NHS prescriptions for these over the counter products?**

Having provided respondents with information regarding the products available over the counter, we asked respondents whether the CCG should continue to support the NHS prescribing of those over the counter products. We indicated that we were focusing only on those patients with minor ailments and conditions, and not patients with long term conditions or whose condition required a prescription. Throughout the consultation we clarified this point with respondents.

The list of over the counter medication that we sought opinions on, along with the percentage of those who disagreed with continuing to promote NHS prescribing is shown at Appendix 1.

There is broad disagreement with the NHS continuing with the NHS prescribing of these over the counter remedies. On average 73% of respondents disagreed with continuing with NHS funding of these products.

### **4.3 Key themes arising from comments received.**

The following are the key themes arising from the survey and are mirrored in online comments.

- Concern for those on low incomes/unemployed/with extreme circumstances
- Concern for vulnerable groups, people with learning disabilities, children and those with long term conditions and life limiting or threatening conditions
- The need to be clear about what is and what is not a minor ailment or condition
- Pharmacies should be engaged and shouldn't use this as an excuse to raise their prices for these items
- Recognition of the impact of unnecessary prescribing on GP workload, time and NHS costs

- The importance of promoting self-care, personal responsibility and helping people to adopt this change through information and support

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 From this consultation response, there is broad support for discontinuing the prescribing of these over the counter products for minor conditions. However there is concern for those who face economic and financial hardship, are vulnerable or have particularly serious or severe illnesses that warrant prescriptions for these products. If the decision is made to discontinue the NHS prescribing of over the counter products ; the implementation of such a policy or guidance, needs to be carefully managed and support in the form of information and advice needs to be readily available. In addition, along with engagement with pharmacies as well as GP practices, patient engagement and communication needs to be carefully managed.

## **4. Recommendations**

- 4.1 Members are requested to consider and note the findings.
- 4.2 On the basis of the findings from this consultation, members are asked to support the establishment and implementation of guidance to GPs to recommend the discontinuation of NHS prescribing of over the counter products for minor conditions and ailments.

**David Rogers**  
**Head of Communication and Engagement**