



Wandsworth
Clinical Commissioning Group

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Dear Colleagues,

Prescribing of over the counter medicines is changing

I am writing to ask you for your support in implementing new NHS England guidance on prescribing over the counter medicines for your patients.

In March 2018, NHS England issued new guidance on conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care. You will be aware that this follows NHS England's public consultation earlier this year.

We have locally agreed a position statement describing the NHS England guidance and exceptions relating to conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care. Please take a moment to [read this position statement here](#) and attached.

We are writing to ask you to adopt this guidance and advise your patients, when appropriate, that they should purchase over the counter medicines themselves instead of receiving a prescription. This approach will also help to encourage self-care and reduce pressure on general practices. The new guidance will of course continue to rely on your clinical judgement for each individual patient as there are a number of exceptions that would need to be considered. These are listed in full in the position statement and are attached in a separate document for your reference. You will also be mindful of your contractual obligations to consider, where appropriate, the offer of a NHS prescription for medication deemed to be necessary for treatment of the presenting condition, and to use NHS resources wisely by supporting patients to self-care in line with NHSE guidance on the use of over the counter medicines.

To **support you in conversations with your patients**, we will be sending your practice manager a pack of printed materials including:

- 100 leaflets
- Two posters
- 'No prescription required' pads that you can give to patients to explain they can buy medication over the counter for their condition

There are also some electronic resources that you might find useful:

- 'No prescription required' printable information form
- Information for your GP website about self care
- **Self care factsheets**

The self care forum has produced factsheets on 14 conditions that can be treated by over the counter medicines. You may find it helpful to use these to print out to your patients www.selfcareforum.org/fact-sheets

To **support you in this change to your prescribing**, you can find self-care briefings on each condition including information on licensing, alternative products and over the counter prices on the South West London Medicines Optimisation website at www.swlmcg.nhs.uk

An exceptions sheet that can be printed and kept in your consultation rooms.

You can access free online training from the RCGP about self-care. The module takes about three hours to complete and can be done any time. We encourage all staff within your practice to take this training www.selfcareforum.org/resources/rcgp-e-learning-course/

As more resources become available we will share them with you.

To support consistent advice to patients by prescribers, we are also engaging with community pharmacists, local hospitals, community services, dentists and opticians to make sure we all understand our roles and have a consistent approach across Wandsworth.

NHS Wandsworth CCG medicines optimisation team will be able to discuss your prescribing trends with you through Nick Beavon, Chief Pharmacist at nick.beavon@swlondon.nhs.uk

If you have any questions or if you would like more printed materials, please contact Gary Bradley, Prescribing Support Technician, gary.bradley@swlondon.nhs.uk

As with all concerns, we hope that patients can be reassured at a practice level. However, we recognise that there may be some patients who wish to raise this with the CCG in which case the PALS team can be contacted on 0203 922 1450 or at waccg.customercare@nhs.net



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Chair, Wandsworth CCG