

NHS Proposals

You
said...

We did:



Protecting high
quality healthcare
services for the
long term

January 2018

Over the Counter (OTC) Medicines

What changes were we proposing?

The CCG is proposing to promote self-care to patients with minor illnesses and encourage them to seek advice and support from pharmacists and buy medicines themselves rather than through GP prescriptions. This would be done through a new set of GP guidelines that would list a range of conditions which would be better directed to self-care rather than NHS prescribed medicines.

Why were we proposing these changes?

The CCG proposed these changes as part of a wider review to improve how services are delivered to the local community while at the same time making savings to secure the long term future of healthcare in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. These particular changes would free up GP time

and save an estimated £700,000 per year in prescription costs which could then be used for other treatments and services for patients.

Who was consulted and involved?

Over a six week period between mid-July and the end of August, we involved a range of stakeholders, patients and members of the public.

How were stakeholders consulted?

We carried out two online surveys, one for GP practice staff and one for other stakeholders and members of the public. We also sent emails and letters direct to stakeholders, inviting feedback on the proposals.

The consultation was promoted, with additional information, through the local media, the CCG websites and social media.

What did they say and how have we responded?

We received 337 responses from the public and 100 from GP surveys. All the results have been included in the analysis.

Ninety percent of the public responses thought that money being spent on prescribing OTC medicines could be better spent on other NHS treatments and services. Over 85% of the public responses thought the local NHS should reduce the number of OTC medicines available on prescription.

see over for details

What did you say and how have we responded? (continued)

Over 70% of responses from GP practices thought the proposal would free up GP time while 90% of the responses thought the proposal would promote better self-care. Over 90% thought the proposal would reduce NHS spend on medicines that could easily be bought over the counter.

You said	Our response
Between 90% and 70% of public and GP respondents supported the key areas of the new guideline proposals.	The new policies will be introduced January 2018 and in response to feedback we will also provide information to the public and help promote community pharmacies.
The list of medicines recommended for self-care should be reviewed.	This has been done and the guidance for prescribers has been refined to reflect the feedback that was received.
The guidelines need to take account of people with long term conditions, with disabilities and mobility issues, on low incomes, those who normally don't pay for their prescriptions and leave the final decision with prescribers.	We are implementing written guidelines for GP practices on treating minor ailments that will take these issues into account as well as ensuring prescribers are clear about their professional responsibilities under the GMC and BMA regulations.
Some over the counter medicines may interact with other medicines or mask a more serious condition.	Patients going to a pharmacy will still be using products under the supervision of a healthcare professional, the pharmacist. They will have access to advice, not only about the new medicine they wish to buy, but also how suitable this product is for them.
The NHS should be doing more to promote self-care and highlight which medicines can be purchased over the counter.	The CCGs are promoting the value and expertise of the community pharmacists and how self-care can benefit individuals and the NHS as a whole.
GPs and prescribers need support from the CCG before this proposal should be implemented.	We are developing and implementing written guidelines and support tools for GP practices on treating minor ailments that will take these issues into account .

You said:

We overwhelmingly support this proposal to change the policies regarding over the counter medicines.

We did:

The new policies were approved by the Governing Body of the three local CCGs in October 2017. They will take effect from January 2018.

Further information and a more detailed report can be found at:
www.bristolccg.nhs.uk
www.northsomersetccg.nhs.uk
www.southgloucestershire.nhs.uk