

Information for Healthcare Professionals (June 2018)

## **Repeat Medication Prescribing. Reducing Waste and Improving Safety.**

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The aim is for every patient who can request their own medication directly from their GP practice to do so either online or by taking the repeat prescription request slip to the GP practice. Third party ordering of repeat medication by community pharmacies, online pharmacies and appliance contractors will be stopped for the majority of patients. The exception will be patients\* who are unable to order their medication by any of the recommended routes.

\*Exceptions are: patients who have dementia or are housebound and do not have a carer, or any other means of ordering their medication.

*'Nobody knows which medicines a patient is running out of better than the patient or their carer and we want to empower patients to take more control over managing their health.'*

**Dr Raj Bajwa. Clinical Chair. Buckinghamshire CCG.**

### **Why are we doing this?**

At a national level, this initiative has already been implemented by a number of CCGs. Luton CCG, who carried out the initial pilot estimated that implementation of this initiative saved approximately £2 million over two years. A number of safety concerns were also identified and resolved e.g. stopping the supply of medication that had been discontinued.

At a local level, prescribers, district nurses and practice pharmacists have all highlighted the significant waste and safety issues related to current repeat ordering systems. At a recent stakeholder workshop, one of the recommended next steps was to limit third party ordering of repeat medication. Implementing this initiative in Bucks has the potential to save approximately £660,000 per year. With the current financial pressures on the NHS and the CCG, initiatives that clearly reduce waste need to be progressed.

### **When should this be implemented?**

From 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018

### **What resources are being developing to support GP practices to implement this?**

- Best Practice Guidance on repeat medication ordering for GP practices
- Information for healthcare professionals
- A flowchart of the process
- A leaflet for patients
- A video to support patients with online ordering of repeat prescriptions
- A standard letter for patients
- A standard letter for appliance contractors
- Standard text that can be used on GP practice websites

## What are the next steps?

Prescribers and practice managers please:

- Review your practice repeat prescribing system in line with CCG Best Practice Guidance (to follow)
- Encourage as many patients as possible to request their own repeat prescriptions. For those who can use a computer or smartphone, online ordering is likely to be the easiest way. For those who can't use this method, the repeat prescription request slip can be used
- Ask patients to make sure that they get the repeat prescription request slip from the pharmacy when their medicines are next dispensed
- For patients who cannot request their own repeat prescriptions either online or by using the repeat prescription request slip, and don't have a carer who can request the prescription for them agree alternative methods. Community pharmacists may be able to help identify this group of patients  
Alternative methods can include:
  - Allowing telephone requests (if this is offered by the GP practice)
  - The practice pharmacist managing generation of the patient's repeat prescriptions
  - For this individual, the patient's community pharmacy requesting the prescription
- Let any community pharmacists and appliance contractors linked to the GP practice know about the change. This communication will also be done by the CCG
- After 1<sup>st</sup> August, stop accepting repeat prescription requests from community pharmacists or appliance contractors, except for:
  - Patients that have been identified that cannot request their own repeat medicines
  - Disabled patients for whom asking their community pharmacy to request their prescription is a 'reasonable adjustment' under the Equality Act 2010

**The Medicines Management Team would like to thank all member practices for their support and for the high quality and safety of their prescribing in Buckinghamshire.**