

- **Minor Ailments** – in summary many people with minor ailments are visiting A&E, OOH services, walk-in centres or their GPs taking up appointment which are needed for patients with more serious conditions. It is estimated that 8% of A&E attendances involve minor ailments and 18 -20% of GP workload is associated with the treatment of minor ailments. Minor ailments are common, self-limiting or uncomplicated conditions which can be easily treated by self-care or over the counter medicine obtained by a pharmacy without prescription.

People who cannot afford to pay for over the counter medicines to treat minor ailments may seek treatment via a prescription from their GP or OOH provider. By commissioning a minor ailment scheme and the NHS paying for the medication, patients that are exempt from prescription charge can be diverted from using their GP surgeries and OOH services to obtain their treatments, in turn freeing up appointment slots for those patients which require medical intervention. Commissioning a minor ailment scheme during the winter period will help reduce pressure on already stretched capacity to deal with winter ailments.

Under a commissioned minor ailment scheme, the pharmacy will provide advice and support to people on the management of minor ailments, including where necessary, the supply of over the counter medicines free of charge for the treatment of minor ailments, for those people who may have otherwise gone to their GP or other healthcare provider for a prescription.

The aims of this pilot will be to improve access and choice for people with minor ailments who are seeking advice and treatment by –

- Promoting self-care through community pharmacies, including the provision of advice and where appropriate OTC medication without the need to visit the GP practice.
- Operating a referral system from local medical practices or other healthcare providers to community pharmacy; and
- Supplying appropriate OTC medicines at NHS expense.

By providing the above, the pilot will aim to improve primary, urgent and emergency care capacity by reducing the workload of these providers in the winter months. GP Practices, OOH Services and Walk-In Centres are encouraged to support this scheme, and refer patients as appropriate if they present with one of the minor ailments listed. Guidance is included in Appendix 5 of the attached service specification.

Minor ailment schemes have been successfully commissioned by former PCTs and now Area Teams. Locally for example there are two existing commissioned schemes, one in south Staffordshire the other in Stoke-on-Trent. Both these schemes have limited numbers of

conditions; a third scheme is currently being piloted in Leek with a more comprehensive range of minor ailments.

The winter pressure minor ailment pilot will be implemented across the whole Area Team. In areas where there is an existing minor ailment scheme, the winter pilot will run alongside it to extend the range of conditions.

The full service specification is attached for your information.