

Service Specification No.	
Service	Minor Ailment Scheme
Commissioner Lead	Teresa Middleton
Provider Lead	Community Pharmacists within Gloucestershire
Period	1 st April 2019 to 31 st March 2020
Date of Review	Annual review by end of December each year to support future planning
1. Population Needs	
1.1 National/local context and evidence base	
<p>Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG) has implemented the NHS England Guidance Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care¹. This recommends that minor ailments/conditions, listed within it, are suitable for self-care or may be managed by purchasing over the counter (OTC) medicines from pharmacies or supermarket pharmacies. The guidance is applicable to all of the population of Gloucestershire including those who would normally be exempt from paying NHS prescription charges.</p> <p>The purpose of this “Minor Ailment Scheme” (MAS) Local Enhanced Service is to facilitate treatment for eligible people with minor short term conditions, via their community pharmacy without cost to the patient and without needing to see a prescriber.</p> <p>It is intended that any treatments supplied under the MAS service will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of a patient/pharmacist discussion and the final decision as to whether the patient purchases the treatment OTC or is supplied via this Minor Ailments Scheme will be a professional one by the supplying pharmacist, based on the eligibility of the person concerned as described below. This is also applicable when patients are referred to the scheme from a GP surgery or other healthcare provider organisations such as NHS 111. • For a current/active condition only (not for medicine cupboard stock) • From the recommended list of treatments available under the MAS service • Subject to usual NHS prescription fees for each item supplied under the MAS service to people who are not exempt from charges. (The MAS service is open to everyone, but because the NHS E OTC Guidance is also applicable to everyone it is expected, that in the majority of cases, people supplied with treatment under the MAS service will usually be exempt from NHS prescription charges. This is primarily because most of the treatments available under the scheme may be purchased OTC at a lower cost.) • Very rarely be supplied to people who attend the pharmacy ‘requesting’ a medicine by name via this service, because it is for the supplying pharmacist to assess the most appropriate treatment, and whether this should be purchased OTC or available within eligibility criteria under the scheme. <p>Eligibility Criteria; All must apply in order to provide treatment under MAS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>The person is registered with a GP surgery in Gloucestershire (if in doubt this must be confirmed by the surgery or Summary Care Records)</u> 	

2. Declaration with regard to NHS prescription charges

The person/carer/parent in receipt of medication under the MAS scheme must sign a declaration with regard to prescription charge exemption or payment similar to the back of an NHS prescription. It is likely that in most cases the medicine supplied under this scheme will be to a person who is exempt from paying NHS prescription charges. However, in order for this service to be consistent with the NHS England OTC guidance¹ (referenced above), being exempt from NHS prescription charges is not sufficient criteria alone to access the MAS Service. Criteria 2 - 4 must also apply.

3. Professional judgment of genuine need

Within the NHS E guidance¹ document there are a number of general exceptions, which enable over the counter (OTC) items that should not routinely be prescribed to be supplied on the NHS without charge to the patient.

The exception that is applicable to the eligibility of patients under this MAS scheme is:

Individual patients where the clinician (in this case community pharmacist providing MAS service) considers that their ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability to the extent that their health and/or wellbeing could be adversely affected, if reliant on self-care. To note that being exempt from paying a prescription charge does not automatically warrant an exception to the guidance. Consideration should also be given to safeguarding issues.

It is not appropriate for the supplying pharmacist to require proof from the patient of their medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability to provide treatment, but will be a professional decision around appropriateness of supply.

This should be based on an understanding of the patient's situation as a result of a discussion of the minor ailment.

This scheme must not be used to divert the sale of OTC medicines.

4. At the discretion of the supplying pharmacist

It is a requirement that the person requesting a supply of treatment under the MAS is asked about how they were informed of the service. Where a GP practice has made the referral, a professional decision will be required to determine eligibility and suitability as outlined in point 2 above.

People referred to the pharmacy by relatives, friends or via social media, and who ask for the treatment by name, must be advised that this scheme is not available 'on request' and requires a medical discussion with the supplying pharmacist to ascertain eligibility and suitability of supply within the criteria. This scheme must not be used to divert the sale of OTC medicines.

In most cases as outlined in the NHS England OTC guidance¹ it is expected that people will purchase OTC medicines for minor conditions.

NOTE: Community Pharmacies are not permitted to actively promote or advertise this MAS service in any way. It is aimed at providing treatment at the discretion of the Community Pharmacist following a discussion about a current minor ailment to eligible patients only.

Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group reserves the right to withdraw this enhanced service from any Community Pharmacy found to be actively promoting it to the public.

2. Outcomes

2.1 NHS Outcomes Framework Domains & Indicators

Domain 1	Preventing people from dying prematurely	
Domain 2	Enhancing quality of life for people with long-term conditions	
Domain 3	Helping people to recover from episodes of ill-health or following injury	
Domain 4	Ensuring people have a positive experience of care	
Domain 5	Treating and caring for people in safe environment and protecting them from avoidable harm	

2.2 Local defined outcomes

PharmOutcomes

It is a requirement of the service that all consultations resulting in a medicines supply are recorded on PharmOutcomes for invoicing and audit purposes. This information must be recorded at the time of the consultation.

All pharmacies contracted to provide the service will require individual logins to access the Minor Ailments Scheme Service Part A (patient registration) and Part B (consultation), and these are provided separately by PharmOutcomes team.

Payments will be made at the end of the month following that to which the quarterly payment relates.

3. Scope

3.1 Aims and objectives of service

Community Pharmacies are accessible locations from which to seek advice and treatment around minor ailments. The scheme, in addition, aims to provide a framework eligible people to obtain some over the counter (OTC) medicines at NHS expense.

Following the NHS England OTC Guidance¹, it is no longer appropriate for GP surgery, NHS 111, Out of Hours (OOH) Providers, Walk In Centers or Emergency Departments (ED) to issue prescriptions for such medicines as a matter of routine.

In summary –

- The scheme from Community Pharmacies will support patient access to advice and appropriate treatment for minor ailments, *where the pharmacist considers that the person's ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability to the extent that their health and/or wellbeing could be adversely affected, if reliant on self-care. To note that being exempt from paying a prescription charge does not automatically warrant an exception to the guidance. Consideration should also be given to safeguarding issues.*
- The scheme will support the implementation of the NHS England OTC Guidance¹ by helping reduce GP surgery, Out of Hours and Emergency Department workload for minor ailments, therefore increasing capacity for greater focus to be delivered on more complex and urgent medical conditions.
- Promote the role of the Community Pharmacy and self-care
- Further develop good working relationships between GP surgeries and Community Pharmacists within Gloucestershire.

The service is only available from Pharmacies who have signed up to deliver the service shown on the [CCG Minor Ailment Service Live List](#) (on CCG LIVE; Appendix 1), and only for the minor ailments listed in Appendix 2. Only medicines specified in the protocols and formulary (Appendix 3 and 4 respectively) may be supplied for the minor ailments listed. For ease, Appendix 6 lists the products by minor ailment group. There is also an "Age Limitation" list available on the LPC website.

In accordance with the NHS England OTC Guidance¹ it is expected that in the majority of cases people will purchase treatments for minor ailments OTC. People eligible under the MAS service may choose to refuse participation in this service and purchase treatments or continue to access treatments in the same way as they have done previously. The scheme aims to facilitate the provision of medicines available over the counter where criteria 1-4 above apply, promote patient choice and encourage them to Choose Well.

3.2 Service description/care pathway

Who can provide the service?

This service may be provided by an accredited Community Pharmacy within Gloucestershire (as shown on the MAS Live List) subject to the following –

- 1.0 All Pharmacists working at the participating pharmacies can provide this enhanced service if they

are clinically competent in the treatment of minor ailments as demonstrated by **CPPE Declaration of Competence (DoC)** – Minor Ailments (see Appendix 5). An electronic copy of each participating pharmacist's DoC must be provided to the CCG prior to delivering the service, or within two weeks of the date of their MAS provision.

- 2.0 All Pharmacists working at the participating pharmacies and providing the scheme should ensure that they continue, via continuing professional development (CPD), to keep up to date with guidance issued relating to the treatment of minor ailments and over the counter (OTC) medicines and have Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Kwango Level 2 or CPPE accreditation. Declaration of Competence must be completed prior to service delivery.
- 3.0 The Pharmacy must meet, or be able to provide evidence that they are working towards meeting the requirements for all essential services in the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework.
- 4.0 The Pharmacy must have an accredited consultation area which has been approved for delivery of enhanced services for the consultations to take place. **All consultations must take place in a confidential environment.**
- 5.0 The Pharmacy must have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) or Sale of Medicines Protocol as per the requirements of Essential Service 6 of the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework – Support for Self-Care.
- 6.0 The Pharmacy contractor must participate in all parts of the service as detailed in this document in addition to any subsequent amendments as agreed jointly between Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG) and Gloucestershire Local Pharmaceutical Committee (GLPC) This agreement will be in writing and signed by the Pharmacist in Charge and be considered a local commissioned service.

Consultation Record

Consultations for the scheme will be recorded on PharmOutcomes. This is a national web based system in use for the management and invoicing of locally commissioned pharmacy services. **Data entry must be completed at the time of consultation for clinical and fraud prevention purposes.**

Access to the system is via usernames and passwords previously sent to all Community Pharmacies.

Patients who receive medication under this scheme are those who fulfil the criteria and who the pharmacist *considers their ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability to the extent that their health and/or wellbeing could be adversely affected, if reliant on self-care.* It is anticipated that such patients will usually be exempt from prescription charges, and will be asked for evidence of this and requested to sign the exemption declaration form including an audit section (Appendix 7). This data will be recorded on the electronic proforma. Where an NHS prescription fee is appropriate (see above) one fee is chargeable per treatment supplied.

Please note that consultations are paid only when medication has been supplied.

Consultation fees cannot be claimed where medication has not been supplied as the provision of healthcare advice is an Essential Service under the Pharmacy Contract.

Urgent referral to GP or other service

In a situation where a patient presents with symptom(s) that need urgent referral to a GP surgery, an Urgent Referral Form from Community Pharmacy (Appendix 8) can be completed. If the patient consents, the GP practice may be contacted to alert staff that an emergency appointment is required and if indicated then details of when this may occur can be conveyed to patient.

If the practice is closed and / or symptoms are sufficiently severe to warrant a referral to a doctor, the patient should be advised to contact NHS 111 or attend a Minor Injury Unit or Emergency Department service. In these circumstances it is not necessary to complete an 'Urgent Referral Form', although it may be useful to describe why the patient has been referred if a patient will attend the alternative service in person.

Evaluation

Pharmacies participating in the scheme will be expected to facilitate the evaluation of the scheme by

participating in patient satisfaction surveys or audit which together with PharmOutcomes data will enable GCCG to evaluate the efficacy of the scheme.

Community Pharmacies will be expected to follow a complaints procedure (both internal to the pharmacy and NHS) if issues arise so that improvements can be made following significant events or errors.

Community Pharmacies should also note that by agreeing to participation in the scheme GCCG and patient forums have the right of inspection in line with NHS guidance.

Incident Reporting

All incidents should be recorded as part of the pharmacy's clinical governance procedures see Essential Service 8 – Clinical Governance, Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework.

Duties of the Commissioners

Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG) will be responsible for all appropriate advertising, promotion and ongoing support to pharmacies where required.

Note as outlined above; Community Pharmacies are not permitted to advertise MAS service to patients or the general public.

GCCG will be responsible for ensuring timely quarterly payments to Community Pharmacies participating in the scheme as well as responding to operational and payment based queries.

GCCG will also be responsible for evaluation of the scheme, which includes monthly monitoring of the number of consultations that are being conducted each month, audit of frequent users of the scheme, tracking of costs of the scheme and collection of data about the origins of referral.

3.3 Population covered

The MAS scheme is available to any patient who is registered with a GP practice in Gloucestershire and fulfils the other eligibility criteria, whether exempt from NHS prescription charges or not (in which case the NHS prescription charge for each item will apply (currently £8.80 per item from 1st April 2018)). However, it may be cheaper for the patient to purchase the treatment over the counter than pay the current NHS prescription fee

3.4 Any acceptance and exclusion criteria and thresholds

Patients will be asked by the pharmacy to confirm they are registered with a GP Practice within Gloucestershire CCG before any supply is made, and where there is doubt and with patient consent, the pharmacist may check the registration with the GP practice (see 5.1)

Patients **not registered** with a GP practice in Gloucestershire may choose to purchase Over The Counter (OTC) medication and should be managed in accordance with Essential Service 6 – Support for Self-Care or if appropriate Essential Service 5 – Signposting.

It is anticipated that patients who will make use of the Minor Ailments Scheme will access it through the pharmacy where they currently get their prescriptions dispensed and the need to contact surgeries to confirm registration will be minimal.

Prescription Exemptions

Patients accessing the scheme that are entitled to free NHS prescriptions will receive the medicine without charge to the patient. The patient will be asked to sign a declaration of exemption which will be recorded electronically on the consultation pro-forma. Non-exempt patients, who choose to be treated under this scheme rather than purchase the item(s) OTC will be charged the standard NHS prescription fee per item issued, as if it was on prescription, and PharmOutcomes completed accordingly. The prescription fees collected will be deducted from the scheme payments (just like on FP10)

Checking of GP Registration

Before proceeding to supply the treatment under the scheme, the patient **MUST** be asked to confirm they are registered with a GP practice in Gloucestershire.

This may be done by:

- knowing the patient to be registered with the GP practice
- checking the patient's PMR if the patient is already collecting medication from that pharmacy
- asking the patient for their repeat prescription slip
- medical card

Confirmation of the patient's registration at an eligible GP practice is required if the above documentation is not available, or it is felt that a patient may be attempting to fraudulently use the scheme. Staff may telephone the patient's GP surgery for confirmation of the patient's registration with the consent of the patient, and should offer the patient's details i.e. name, date of birth and postcode or address and merely ask the GP surgery to confirm 'yes' or 'no' whether the patient is registered with the practice. The pharmacy should not expect the GP surgery to offer any other patient information as they should already be in receipt of this from the patient.

When to sell an OTC treatment and when to supply under Minor Ailment Scheme

Treatment can be supplied if appropriate, provided that the patient is:

- Registered with a GP practice in Gloucestershire.
- Suffering from a minor ailment listed in Appendix 2 and who the pharmacist considers that their ability to self-manage is compromised as a consequence of medical, mental health or significant social vulnerability to the extent that their health and/or wellbeing could be adversely affected, if reliant on self-care.

In the following circumstances treatment should **NOT** be supplied under the Minor Ailment Scheme:

➤ **When a patient requests the medicine by name**

The decision whether or not to supply treatment will be as a result of a patient/pharmacist discussion and the final decision as to whether the patient purchases the treatment OTC or is supplied via this Minor Ailments Scheme will be a professional one by the supplying pharmacist, based on the eligibility of the person concerned as described within this document. This scheme must not be used to divert the sale of OTC medicines.

➤ **A prescriber cannot refer patients for named medicines**

If the GP consultation resulted in a medication recommendation then a prescription for that medication should be issued, or the person purchase's it over the counter.

➤ **To pharmacy staff and/or their immediate family**

This scheme must not be used to divert the sale of OTC medicines. As detailed in the Medicines Act 1968 and in Professional Code of Conduct this group must be signposted to alternative pharmaceutical or healthcare services where appropriate.

➤ **In lieu of regular repeat prescribed medication**

Patients must not use the scheme in lieu of regular repeat prescribed medication such as paracetamol for chronic pain.

➤ **Loss of medication already supplied under the Minor Ailment Scheme.**

➤ **Where a non-exempt patient could purchase the product for lower than the NHS prescription charges applicable.**

Supporting and Referring into the Scheme

The scheme should benefit GP surgeries and other providers, by resulting in a decreased demand for consultation appointments for acute minor ailments, thereby allowing patients with more serious needs to receive an appointment sooner.

Following the local implementation of the NHS OTC Guidance¹, most people will be asked to purchase the treatment for minor ailments from their community pharmacy or supermarket. However, GP practices will

also refer patients verbally to the scheme where it is deemed appropriate. This can be done by reception staff who book appointments. Prescribers and other healthcare professionals can also refer during their consultations for **future need** where it is felt that the patient would be better served by the scheme rather than using an appointment.

GP practices may also encounter patients who have been referred back to them by a Community Pharmacy following a consultation under the scheme via a referral form (see Appendix 8). The Pharmacists will be using their professional skills to make a referral based upon the patient's symptoms – this information will be the basis of the urgency of the referral. Pharmacists will recommend patients to make an appointment the same or following day or to ask for the next available routine appointment. If urgent the Pharmacist may telephone the surgery with patient consent. Practices are asked to accommodate all reasonable appointment requests.

3.5 Interdependence with other services/providers

Referral into the Scheme

Patients can be introduced to the scheme in a number of ways:

- 1- **Referred by an Emergency Department-** where the patient presents during the pharmacy's usual working hours with one of the minor ailments listed in Appendix 2 may be advised of the scheme and how to access it through a local participating pharmacy.
- 2- **Referred by GP surgery to a participating pharmacy** – patients presenting at a GP practice with one of the minor ailments listed in Appendix 2 may be advised of the scheme and how to access it through a local participating pharmacy.
- 3- **Referred by non-participating community pharmacy or other community healthcare professional** – where they feel it to be appropriate.
Self-Referral into the scheme at a participating pharmacy – patients who are aware of the scheme, whether through friends, relatives or social media may self-refer into the scheme. However, they must be advised that this scheme is not available 'on request' and requires a medical discussion with the supplying pharmacist to ascertain eligibility and suitability of supply under the MAS scheme. This scheme must not be used to divert the sale of OTC medicines.
- 4- **Referred by OOH Service Provider or NHS 111** – patient may be referred where telephone triage identifies a minor ailment which can be treated as part of this scheme.

4. Applicable Service Standards

4.1 Applicable national standards (e.g. NICE)

4.2 Applicable standards set out in Guidance and/or issued by a competent body (eg Royal Colleges)

Confidentiality

Both parties shall adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1988 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Information Governance

Level 2 information governance is required. Records held locally that hold Patient Identifiable Data must be stored safely and securely in line with requirements.

4.3 Applicable local standards

Consultation

The Pharmacist must ensure that the professional consultation is carried out with reference to Minor

Ailment Scheme protocols (Appendix 3) which involve:

- Patient assessment
- Provision of advice
- Completion of PharmOutcomes proforma
- Supply of appropriate medication from the agreed formulary (Appendix 4)

The patient should attend the pharmacy in person in order to receive a consultation and if appropriate a supply of medication. In the same way they would be required to attend at the surgery to see the GP and then obtain a prescription. Exemptions to this requirement include threadworm and head lice – in such cases representation by a parent or carer is allowed.

For patients under the age of 16 the parent/guardian can accept transfer into the scheme on behalf of the patient. These patients must be accompanied by a parent/guardian when they visit a participating pharmacy. NB. Parent/guardian MUST always bring the child with them to the pharmacy in order for a full assessment to be carried out. Young people between the ages of 16-18 can receive a consultation without a parent/guardian as the Pharmacist will have appropriate Safeguarding accreditation and a chaperone may be appropriate.

The Minor Ailment Protocols (Appendix 3) should be available for reference during the consultation. These detail which conditions can be treated under the scheme and the medicines that can be supplied for each condition. It is recognised that Pharmacists will use their clinical/professional judgement when deciding the best treatment for individual patients. Reference to the most current BNF should be made during all consultations as appropriate with regard to dosage instructions of medicines and age ranges covered by the scheme. Conditions outside the scheme must not be treated under the service and only the medicines detailed in the Minor Ailments Protocols must be supplied as appropriate.

During the consultation the Pharmacist will make an assessment of the patient and provide suitable advice as detailed in the Minor Ailment Protocols. If it is deemed appropriate a medication from the list in Appendix 4 may be supplied as an original pack, with a product information leaflet and instructions for use. The decision to provide a medicine for treatment or to refer will be based on symptom and treatment history.

Professional Judgement

Medication can only be supplied by Pharmacists who have completed a Declaration of Competence – Minor Ailments Scheme from CPPE (see Appendix 5) for the listed conditions to patients presenting in person at the pharmacy with the exception of head lice and threadworms.

In exceptional circumstances professional judgement can be applied to situations such as supplying an oral rehydration product for a patient with acute diarrhoea unable to attend the pharmacy in person due to the obvious inconvenience. In these situations Pharmacists must be satisfied that the supply of medicines to a third party does not put patients at risk and it is in the patient's best interest.

Professional judgement may also be used to exclude a patient from receiving treatment under the Minor Ailments Scheme when signs and symptoms suggest that a GP referral or urgent referral is needed even though these signs and symptoms are not listed in the ailment protocol.

Record Keeping

In addition to the consultation data recorded on PharmOutcomes, a separate record of any medication supplied through the Minor Ailment Scheme should be documented in the Patient Medication Record (PMR) on the pharmacy IT system.

Each pharmacist participating in supply must have a completed Declaration of Competence from the CPPE (DoC) and have submitted an electronic copy to the CCG via email. This is a one off process for each pharmacist using the scheme. Send the DoC email to sue.freeman7@nhs.net

Clinical Governance

Pharmacies providing the service will comply with the national clinical governance requirements as described in the National Health Service Pharmacy Regulations. This covers such areas as:

- Patient, public involvement
- Clinical audit; risk management
- Staffing and staff management - education
- Training and personal development
- The use of information to support healthcare delivery
- Critical incident reporting and risk reduction
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) will be put in place to support this service

Information Governance

Level 2 information governance is required. Records held locally that hold Patient Identifiable Data must be stored safely and securely in line with requirements.

Minimising Inappropriate Use of the Scheme

Where necessary, GP practices should co-operate with participating community pharmacies in confirming a patient's registration over the telephone upon provision of suitable information by the pharmacy. It should be noted that this method of registration confirmation is the last resort for the pharmacies and will only be used where they have concerns about fraudulent attempts to misuse the scheme. If GP surgery staff have concerns about the authenticity of the call then surgery staff should offer to call back the Pharmacist with the required confirmation of registration, sourcing the pharmacy contact number from an independent provider e.g. directory listing. If it is deemed necessary to call the pharmacy back, ideally this call should be made immediately as the patient is likely to be waiting in the pharmacy.

5. Applicable quality requirements and CQUIN goals

5.1 Applicable Quality Requirements (See Schedule 4 Parts [A-D])

5.2 Applicable CQUIN goals (See Schedule 4 Part [E])

6. Location of Provider Premises

The Provider's Premises are located at:

Patients can access the scheme at any participating pharmacy (As shown on the MAS Live List at the time of accessing the service). GP practices, OOH service and ED depts. will be given a list of participating pharmacies in their area and appropriate advertising of the scheme will be undertaken by GCCG.

7. Individual Service User Placement

Not Applicable

References

- 1- Conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care: Guidance for CCGs. March 2018
Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines/conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-routinely-be-prescribed/> accessed 4.11.18