

The new medicine service – a guide for GPs and other healthcare professionals

October 2011

A new service to support patients

- Since 2005, pharmacists have offered medicines use reviews (MURs) to help people understand and get the most from their medicines.
- Now the NHS is funding pharmacists to offer a new medicine service (NMS), to support people who are started on certain new medicines, from 1 October 2011.
- NMS aims to support people who are **newly prescribed** medicines for:
 - asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
 - type 2 diabetes
 - hypertension
 - anticoagulant/antiplatelet therapy.

Importance of adherence

- Between 30 percent and 50 percent of these medicines are not taken as recommended, leading to inadequate management of long-term conditions (LTCs) and costs to the patient, the NHS and society.¹
- Increasing adherence is likely to have a far greater impact on health than any improvement in medical treatments.
- Failure of adherence is often hidden by patients and unrecognised by prescribers.¹
- People make decisions about them very soon after being prescribed new medicines.
- Research has shown that pharmacists can successfully intervene when a medicine is newly prescribed for an LTC, with repeated follow-up in the short term, to increase effective adherence.^{2,3}

1. Barber N, Parsons J, Clifford S, Darracott R, Horne R. Patients' problems with new medication for chronic conditions. *Quality and Safety in Health Care* 2004;13(3): 172-175.

2. Clifford S, Barber N, Elliott R, Hartley E, Horne R. Patient-centred advice is effective in improving adherence to medicines. *Pharmacy World and Science* 2006;28(3): 165-170.

3. Elliott R, Barber N, Clifford S, Horne R, Hartley E. The cost-effectiveness of a telephone-based advisory service to improve adherence to newly prescribed medicines. *Pharmacy World and Science* 2008;30(1): 17-23.

Benefits of the new medicine service

For patients

- Gives patients knowledge to make informed decisions about their care.
- Improves patient adherence, leading to better health outcomes.
- Increases patient engagement with their LTC and medicines.

For GPs and other healthcare providers

- Supplements and reinforces information provided by the prescriber and practice staff to help patients make informed choices about their care.
- Promotes multidisciplinary working between the pharmacy and the patient's GP practice.

For the wider NHS

- Reduces medicines wastage.
- Reduces hospital admissions due to adverse events from medicines.
- Increases yellow card reporting by pharmacists and patients, supporting improved pharmacovigilance.

- Contributes to the Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) agenda.
- Promotes better local working between healthcare providers.

For pharmacists

- Gives pharmacists a lead role in improving medicines adherence.
- Shows patients that pharmacists care with this 'after-sales service'.
- Provides opportunities to support and integrate with services for LTCs from other providers.
- Links the use of newly prescribed medicines to lifestyle changes and other non-drug interventions to promote health in people with LTCs.
- Produces measurable outcomes and provides an evidence base for continuing pharmacy services.
- Improves patient loyalty to the pharmacy.

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