

To:  
General Practitioners  
Out-of-hours (OOH) Medical Services

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30<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Dear Colleague

## **PHARMACY FIRST SERVICE FOR SORE THROATS, COLDS & FLU-LIKE ILLNESS**

The purpose of this letter is to advise you of a new Pharmacy First service for sore throats, colds and flu-like illness, which will be available from participating community pharmacies from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019\*. The service enables patients to consult with their community pharmacist first for advice and treatment for sore throats, colds and flu-like illness.

*\* Please note, if level of activity suggests potential overspend the service may be withdrawn prior to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.*

The aim of this service is to displace activity, including consultations, advice and generating prescriptions for these common conditions, from general practice and out-of-hours medical services to a community pharmacy based service, a brief description of the service is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Background**

“Delivering Together”<sup>1</sup> describes the need for enhanced support for primary care. Community Pharmacy is recognised as an important part of primary care which can help to reduce pressure on other parts of the HSC. In line with this strategic direction the Department of Health has made funding available, through Transformation funding streams, to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/health-and-wellbeing-2026-delivering-together.pdf>

enable this initiative to be available in community pharmacies to help address winter pressures on the health service.

## **Service outline**

- Referral to the service

In order for the service to be as effective as possible it will be important that practices and OOH medical services promote the service and refer patients to the service where appropriate.

- Consultation with the community pharmacist

The patient will be advised of the nature of the ailment, the symptoms to expect, the expected duration of the ailment, any requirement for follow up and any steps that can be taken to alleviate the symptoms, including how they might care for themselves should the ailment recur. Outcome of the patient consultation might involve the provision of advice and reassurance alone, or the provision of advice and reassurance alongside medicines which alleviate symptoms. Patients will not be charged for any medicines that are supplied from the agreed formulary for this service, see Appendix 2

- Referral from community pharmacists

Where a pharmacist decides that an individual's symptoms are such that referral to the GP is indicated this will be done by sending the yellow copy of the patient consultation form to the GP. A copy of the consultation form is provided in Appendix 3.

## **Patient eligibility**

All patients registered with a GP in Northern Ireland are eligible to avail of this service, with the exception of temporary residents and patients living in nursing or residential homes.

## **Action for GP practices**

- Inform all relevant practice staff and practice based pharmacists of the availability of this service.
- Practice should promote the service using the resources available
- A list of local pharmacies offering this service should be maintained in the practice (pharmacists have been advised to inform GP practices if they are offering this service locally). An up-to-date list of participating pharmacists is available on the [Primary Care Intranet](#).

- Practices should consider referral mechanisms for displacing activity for sore throats, colds and flu-like illnesses to community pharmacies.
- Practices should agree in advance with local participating community pharmacies the mechanism for referral of patients requiring GP review
- Practice should nominate a member of staff who will manage referrals from community pharmacies.

We trust that your support for this service will help displace activity for these common conditions, from general practice and out-of-hours medical services to this community pharmacy based service.

Yours sincerely,



**Joe Brogan**  
**Assistant Director of Integrated Care**  
**Head of Pharmacy and Medicines**  
**Management**

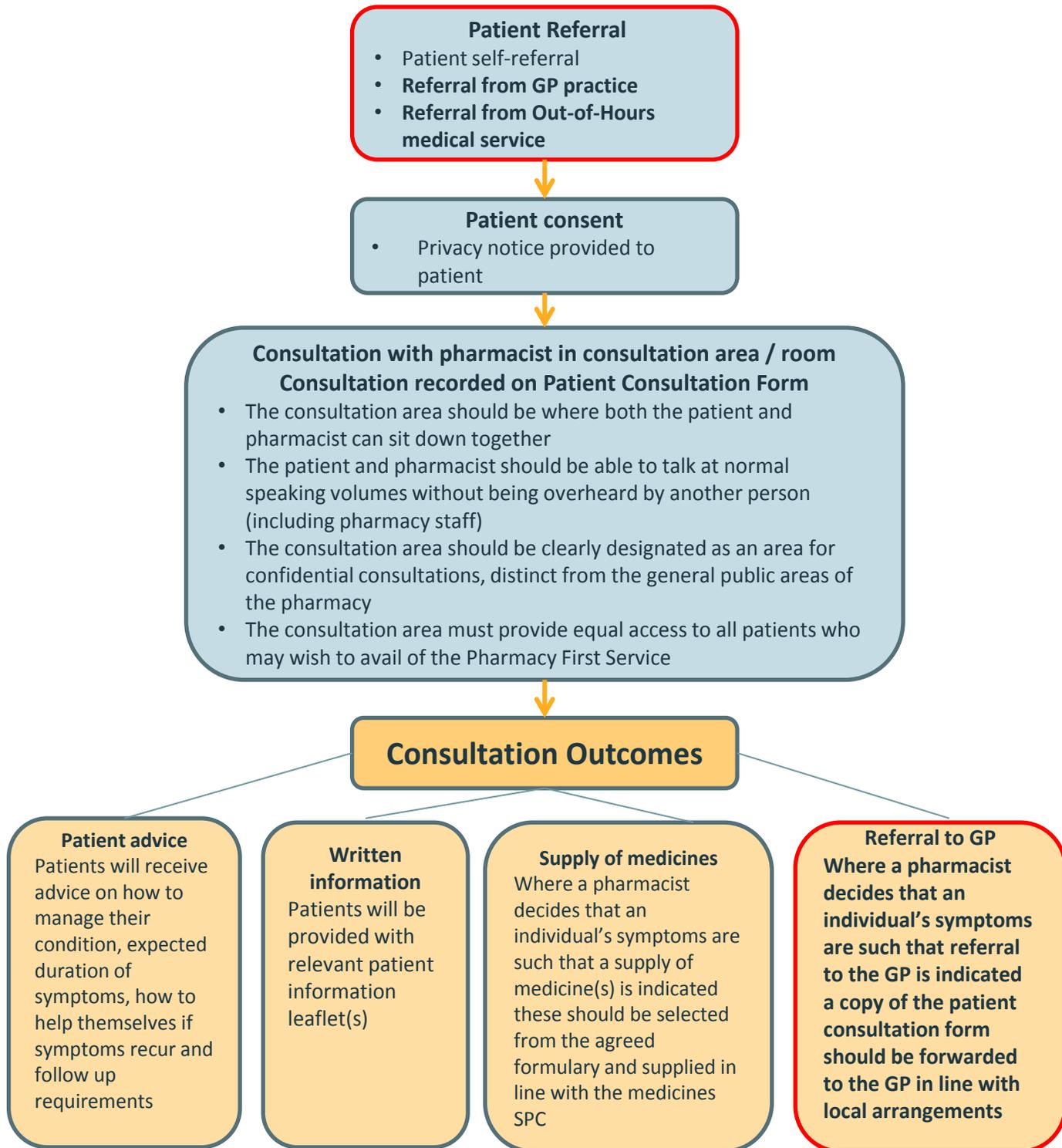


**Dr Margaret O'Brien**  
**Assistant Director of Integrated Care**  
**Head of GMS**

Encs.

# Pharmacy First Service for Sore Throats, Colds and Flu-Like illness

## Service Outline



### Patient Consultation Form (triplicate form)

#### BSO Pharmacy

Top copy (white) sent with 2nd prescription submission (service payment & evaluation)

#### GP practice

Yellow copy sent securely to GP practice where referral necessary

#### Pharmacy

Pink copy retained in pharmacy

## Appendix 2 Pharmacy First Formulary

The Pharmacy First Formulary for sore throat, colds and flu-like illness includes and is limited to:

Paracetamol 120mg in 5ml sugar-free suspension x <b>100ml</b>
Paracetamol 250mg in 5ml sugar-free suspension x <b>200ml</b>
Paracetamol 500mg tablets x <b>32</b>
Ibuprofen 100mg in 5ml sugar-free suspension x <b>100ml</b>
Ibuprofen 200 mg tablets x <b>24</b>
Ibuprofen 400 mg tablets x <b>24</b>
Pseudoephedrine 30mg/5ml linctus x <b>100ml</b>
Pseudoephedrine 60mg tablets x <b>12</b>
Sodium chloride 0.9% nasal drops x <b>10ml</b>

Where an individual patient expresses a preference for a product which is not included in the agreed formulary and the pharmacist considers that such a supply is appropriate the pharmacist is able to sell the patient that product and the consultation shall still be considered to be within the terms of the pharmacy first service.