

Service Specification No.	N/A
Service	Care at the Chemist
Commissioner Lead	Jennifer Johnson
Provider Lead	Community Pharmacy Contractor
Period	1 st April 2026 – 31 st March 2027
Date of Review	

1. Population Needs

- 1.1. Self-care provides people with the ability to take greater control of their health and wellbeing. It also helps the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton) ensure they only offer treatments through the local NHS that are clinically effective and that provide a clear health benefit to patients.
- 1.2. Many self-limiting conditions or minor illnesses presenting to general practice and other urgent care settings (e.g., out of hours, urgent care center, Accident and Emergency departments (A&E)) can be managed safely in a community pharmacy setting.
- 1.3. Community pharmacies are ideally placed to offer advice and treatment for minor and/or self-limiting conditions to the population of Sefton.

2. Outcomes

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

- An increase in people able to self-manage minor ailments by accessing timely advice and over the counter (OTC) medicines available from the community pharmacy.
- A reduction in demand for appointments in other health care settings: General Practice, NHS 111, A&E.

3. Scope

3.1. Aims and objectives of service

- The minor ailment service aims to promote self-care by encouraging people with minor ailments to access advice and treatment for minor ailments from a community pharmacy. This will release capacity in other health care setting such General Practice, NHS 111 and A&E.

3.2. Service description

- Patients are at liberty to refuse this service.
- Any minor ailment may be treated using the service provided there is an appropriately licensed product available in the formulary as specified on PharmOutcomes.
- Patients must be present in the pharmacy to use this service except where the patient is housebound due to disability / infirmity or resident in a care home. In such cases the pharmacist must determine whether it is appropriate to supply any medication without a face-to-face consultation.
- It is the pharmacist's responsibility to determine the appropriateness of a particular formulary item for a particular patient given their age, pre-existing conditions, etc.
- The Care at the Chemist service and any minor ailment conditions that can be treated under this service can be promoted to the public however details of any medicines that can be supplied under this service specification must not be included as part of any promotion of the service.
- All patients presenting with identified symptoms at the GP surgery will be offered transfer into this service.
- To be able to access the service all patients, either presenting at the pharmacy or referred by other agencies, must be able to fulfil the criteria specified in "Care at the Chemist: Identification and Registration and Eligibility (Appendix 1).
- If confirmation of registration is not available, the patient will not be eligible for this scheme at that time. They will be advised to access medical care through the normal channels.
- All patients must be registered to utilise this service.

- Registration may be undertaken only when the pharmacy has confirmed the eligibility of the patient and has searched the system to ensure they are not already registered.
- Patients are free to register at any Sefton pharmacy of their choice.
- Patients may access the service at any participating pharmacy regardless of where they have registered.
- All participating pharmacists shall provide a professional consultation service for patients who are registered with a GP in the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton) when presenting with a minor ailment.
- The Pharmacist or appropriate member of staff will assess the patient's condition. The consultation will consist of
 - Patient assessment
 - Provision of advice
 - Provision of a medication from the agreed formulary appropriate to the patient's ailment if required
 - Appropriate entry on PharmOutcomes
- Normal rules of patient confidentiality apply.
- The pharmacist should ensure that the patient has completed and signed the declaration of exemption of prescription charges available to download from the PharmOutcomes website. If the patient is exempt from prescription charges due to their age, then a declaration does not need to be completed.
- All declarations should be retained in the pharmacy for a minimum of 2 years from the date of consultation.
- If in the opinion of the pharmacist, the patient requires immediate or urgent treatment, then the patient should be referred to their GP, A&E or other appropriate organisation.
- To reduce inappropriate treatment through the service, the maximum number of consultations per patient per year is limited to 15. PharmOutcomes will alert pharmacy staff if a patient has had 15 consultations within the current year. The formulary will be reviewed annually, this will include a review of the annual limit.
- A maximum of 3 minor ailment conditions can be treated per consultation.
- PharmOutcomes is set up to restrict consultations to one consultation per patient in a 24-hour period.
- If the system prohibits supply to a particular patient then the reason for such refusal should be explained. The pharmacy may issue the "Supply Refusal" form (appendix 2) in such circumstances if deemed appropriate.

3.3. Equality and Diversity

- The service provider must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will not treat one group of people less favorably than others because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity.

3.4. Payment

- Claims for payment for this service should be made using PharmOutcomes.
- The Pharmacy will be paid according to the following schedule for providing the service:
 - Where a supply is made a consultation fee of £2.08 will be paid per consultation regardless of the number of minor ailments treated or items supplied. Any uplifts agreed in accordance with national guidance will be adjusted following ICB approval.
 - The pharmacy contractor will be reimbursed for any medication supplied under the scheme at the Drug Tariff price (or price concession price where applicable), Chemist and Druggist cost price or manufacturer's list price. VAT will be added at the current rate.
- At the end of each month an invoice will be generated electronically by PharmOutcomes and sent to Shared Business Services for payment by the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton).
- Payment will be made to the pharmacy directly into the pharmacy's bank account.

3.5. Population covered

- This service is available to all patients registered with any GP practice in NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton).

3.6. Any exclusion criteria and thresholds

- Any patients registered with a GP practice outside of NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton).
- Any patient who has had 15 consultations within the current year as highlighted by PharmOutcomes.

4. Applicable Service Standards

4.1. Applicable national standards (e.g., NICE)

- Records created during the delivery of the Care at the Chemist Service should be managed according to the NHS Code of Practice.

4.2. Applicable standards set out in Guidance and/or issued by a competent body (e.g., Royal Colleges)

- General Pharmaceutical Council Standards for Pharmacy Professionals

4.3. Applicable Local Standards

- Prior to the provision of the service, the pharmacy contractors must be satisfied that all pharmacy staff involved in the provision of the service are competent to do so, including any locum staff.
- The service provider must have a complaints procedure that complies with Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service complaints (England) Regulations 2009.
- Complaints directly linked to the quality of this service must be reported to the commissioner as set out in the NHS standard contract.
- Never Events and Serious Incidents occurring as part of the provision of this service must be reported to [NHS England » Incident reporting system](#) in accordance with the requirements set out in the National Approved Particulars. A notification should also be sent to: CMPharmacyIncidents@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk
- Any contractual compliance issues or concerns relating to the provision of the service must be reported to: sefton.mm@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk

5. Applicable quality requirements and CQUIN goals

5.1. Applicable quality requirements

- It is expected that the service will be offered consistently throughout the opening hours of the branch including evenings, weekends, and Bank Holidays.
- It is expected that Service Providers contribute to any locally agreed NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton) led assessment of the service or service user experience.
- Pharmacists and their staff must be fully aware of their responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults and refer appropriately as per local safeguarding procedures. Pharmacies must also have internal procedures in place to deal with safeguarding concerns.
- Either party may terminate this agreement by providing written notification of their intention to do so. A notice period of 3 months shall be given.
- If, for whatever reason, the pharmacy ceases to provide the essential services under the pharmacy contractual framework then the pharmacy will become ineligible to provide this locally commissioned service.

6. Location of Provider Premises
6.1. Participating pharmacies within Sefton
7. Individual Service User Placement
7.1. N/A

Appendix 1

Care at the Chemist: Identification and Registration and Eligibility

To access the service all patients must

1) **Be registered with an NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton)GP**

a) Suitable proof of registration includes any of the following

- A prescription from a GP bearing their name issued in the last 20 weeks.
- A repeat prescription request (right hand side) from a South Sefton / Southport and Formby GP bearing their name issued in the last 20 weeks.
- A record on the pharmacy system showing the GP practice which shows a prescription has been dispensed in the last 20 weeks.
- A referral note from a GP Practice showing the surgery address or known signature of a GP.
- Verbal confirmation from the surgery that the patient is registered with them.
- A repeat part of a prescription showing a South Sefton / Southport and Formby practice address bearing their name issued in the last 20 weeks.

2) **Be able to prove your identity when registering for the service.**

a) Suitable ID includes any of the following

- A passport
- A driving license
- Recent utility bill – within 3 months
- Credit/Debit card
- Personally known to the pharmacy
- Birth certificate

3) **Be present in the pharmacy**

a) Patients / Parents/ Guardians/ Carers must attend the pharmacy to be eligible to use this service.

4) **Suitable medication is available**

- a) A suitable medication is one that is licensed for the condition being treated and there are no contraindications such as age, pre-existing conditions, number of times used etc.
- b) There are no age limits on who is eligible for this service except those imposed by the OTC license of the product.
- c) There are limits on the number consultations per patient in a year. If the limit has been reached the pharmacy will not be able to make a supply and the patient may need to be referred to their GP practice for review.

Appendix 2

Care at the Chemist

This service is available to all patients registered with a GP in NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton). To make the system work, the pharmacy must follow certain restrictions set by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB (Sefton). These are listed below.

1. Care at the Chemist is intended to improve access for patients suffering from minor ailments to the medicines they need to treat the illness without the need to see your GP. It is not intended to treat any long-term condition.
2. The number of times a supply of medicines can be made through the service is limited to ensure your safety. If the same or same type of medicine is needed too often it may be because you need to see your doctor.
3. Patients or parents/ guardians of children with minor ailments must be present in the pharmacy on each occasion before they can be treated through the service.

If the pharmacy has been unable to supply you at this time with the medicines you need, then this is because the computer will not allow a supply at this time. It is not the fault of the pharmacist or staff in the pharmacy. Please do not blame them.

If you feel you need the medicines, then you should make an appointment to see your doctor in the normal way.

If you feel the list of medicines is too restrictive then please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0800 132 996 or enquiries@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk

Version control:

Service Specification (v2)	Section 3.4	Amended the consultation fee to include a 0.73% uplift.	Dated 30.4.26	Jennifer Johnson
Service Specification (v3)	Section 4.3	Updated Reporting Requirements for Never Events and Serious Incidents.	Dated 8.7.26	Jennifer Johnson