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## **GENERAL PRACTICE – COMMUNITY PHARMACY CONSULTATION SCHEME**

### **PATIENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

#### **What is this new service about?**

From Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022, when you call the practice, you will be asked about your symptoms. If they indicate that you can best be helped by a pharmacist, you will be offered a same day private consultation with a community pharmacist. All community pharmacies across Darlington and Durham are signed up to this scheme.

Community pharmacists have already successfully seen thousands of patients for a consultation for a minor illness, following a call to NHS 111. This new way of arranging consultations with the pharmacist by a GP practice, has been successfully piloted around the county.

#### **Why are you doing this?**

Pharmacists are qualified healthcare professionals and experts in medicines. They can offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines for all sorts of minor illnesses, and a same day consultation can be arranged quickly and at a time to suit you.

This in turns frees up GP appointments for those people with more complex symptoms who really need to see a GP.

#### **What happens when I see the community pharmacist?**

We will share your personal details with the pharmacist and details of your minor illness and the pharmacist will contact you to arrange your consultation on the same day, or at a time that suits you.

You may be seen in person in a private consulting room, if the pharmacist thinks it appropriate, or your consultation may be carried out over the phone or via video. You will be asked about your medical history and symptoms and current medication, in the same way the GP would ask you about them.

Usually, the pharmacist will provide you with advice and can sell you with an over-the-counter product where needed, if you choose.

They will also send details of your consultation back to us for our records.

If the pharmacist feels you need to be seen by a GP urgently, they will call us to ask that you are seen, or they will advise you to contact the hospital Emergency Department if deemed necessary. You may also be referred back to us to arrange a non-urgent appointment or follow up.

### **What if I get free prescriptions from my GP?**

Your pharmacist will provide you with advice on how to treat your symptoms, which may include a medicine or product. Medicines that can be purchased in a pharmacy to treat minor illnesses, are usually inexpensive and would not normally be prescribed by your GP anyway. You are free to choose if you wish to make a purchase or not.

### **What happens if I don't want to see the pharmacist?**

We want to ensure that you are offered an appointment with the most appropriate qualified health care professional based on your symptoms. If you have minor illness symptoms that can be treated the same day through a consultation with a qualified community pharmacist, but do not want to accept this referral, you will be offered a routine appointment with your GP at a future date.

### **What if the patient is my child?**

Children aged over one years are eligible to use this service and can be seen by the pharmacist. Children who are able to make their own decision about their health may be seen unaccompanied.

### **Why is this a good thing for patients?**

Community pharmacies are local, open longer hours than the GP practice and can offer you the same consultation outcome at a time that is more convenient for you. If the pharmacist thinks you need to see the GP, they can help arrange an urgent appointment for you.

Patients who have already used the service liked the convenience of having a consultation on the same day, or a day that suited them, at a pharmacy of their choice. 78% of people who had a consultation with a community pharmacist were successfully helped.