New pharmacy referral service to help patients avoid hospital readmission

From July, hospitals will be able to refer patients who would benefit from extra guidance around new prescribed medicines to their community pharmacy.

Patients will be digitally referred to their pharmacy after discharge from hospital.

The NHS Discharge Medicines Service will help patients get the maximum benefits from new medicines they've been prescribed by giving them the opportunity to ask questions to pharmacists and ensuring any concerns are identified as early as possible.

This is part of the Health Secretary's 'Pharmacy First' approach to ease wider pressures on A&Es and General Practice.

A recent audit of NHS hospital discharges showed that 79% of patients were prescribed at least one new medication after being discharged from hospital.

New prescriptions can sometimes cause side effects, or interact with existing treatments, potentially leading to readmission.

Research by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) shows that people over 65 are less likely to be readmitted to hospital if they're given help with their medication after discharge.

Previous local schemes around the country have demonstrated that patients who see their community pharmacist after they've been in hospital are less likely to be readmitted and will experience a shorter stay if they are.

The NHS Discharge Medicines Service is part of a number of measures being introduced as part of the second year of the 5-year Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework.

The framework was agreed in July 2019 with NHS England and NHS Improvement and the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC). It committed almost £13 billion to community pharmacy – £2.592 billion per year – to expand the role of community pharmacy, while continuing to support the introduction of new clinical services.

The NHS Discharge Medicines Service is an example of work taking place to provide local healthcare, particularly during winter, to help people stay well in their communities and avoid unnecessary trips to hospital, freeing up beds and resources.

Another example is the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, which referred over 176,000 patients with minor illnesses or urgent medication needs to a pharmacist for a booked consultation through NHS111 in its first 16 weeks.

The new service will help meet the World Health Organization's (WHO) goal to reduce severe avoidable harm from medicines by 50% by 2022.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

> I want all patients to get the right care close to home, and to avoid any unnecessary visits to hospital. To help do that I've begun the Pharmacy First programme, asking pharmacies to do more to support people in the community, as they do in other countries like France. It's good for patients and great for the NHS because it reduces pressure on GPs and hospitals.
>
> These new services will help strengthen what community pharmacists can do, helping interrelation with General Practice and hospitals, and help them deliver safer, more efficient patient care right across the NHS.
>
> This new contract bolsters the enhanced role highly-skilled pharmacists are playing in preventing ill health and helping us to stay well in our communities.

Bruce Warner, NHS England deputy chief pharmaceutical officer, said:

> Preventing ill health is a key part of the NHS Long Term Plan and over the next year we will introduce the new Discharge Medicines Service to help people most in need of support with their medication, as well as begin to test a variety of new measures to identify people with undiagnosed conditions.
>
> This will make even better use of the valuable and extensive clinical skills of community pharmacists so that people can 'walk in' and get the health advice and help they need, providing an excellent foundation on which we can build for the future.

[Diamond Princess evacuation flight lands in the UK: Foreign Secretary statement](#)

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

"We have brought 32 British and European citizens safely home from Japan. The FCO worked hard to get them back to the UK securely.

"Our number one priority has consistently been the health and safety of UK nationals."

Further information

Published 22 February 2020

[Iconic blue passports return next month](#)

Britons will be able to travel with a blue passport when the traditional colour returns for the first time in almost 30 years.

The distinctive blue cover will be re-introduced now the UK has left the EU, and will replace burgundy passports which were gradually rolled out from 1988.

The first new passports will be issued and delivered early next month. Full introduction will be phased in and from mid-2020 all new passports will be blue.

The colour is not the only change, in a first for the British passport, the back cover will also carry its own symbolic design – the floral emblems of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales embossed.

The blue passport will also be the greenest British passport ever. The carbon footprint produced through manufacture will be reduced to net zero, through

projects such as planting trees.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

> Leaving the European Union gave us a unique opportunity to restore our national identity and forge a new path in the world.
>
> By returning to the iconic blue and gold design, the British passport will once again be entwined with our national identity and I cannot wait to travel on one.

The new passport will also be the most technologically advanced British passport ever, with a raft of new and updated security features, including a hard-wearing, super-strength polycarbonate data page, which contains innovative technologies embedded into the document, to keep personal data secure.

It also includes the latest and most secure printing and design techniques, which means it offers better protection against identity theft and fraud and will be even harder to forge.

The blue cover is a return to the original appearance of the British passport, with the colour first used in 1921.

It remained the colour of choice until the UK joined the EU when a change to burgundy was agreed and adopted.

All British passports will continue to be personalised with the holder's personal details and photograph in the United Kingdom, ensuring no personal data leaves the country.

Standard passports will continue to contain 34 pages. Frequent traveller 'Jumbo' passports will now contain 54 pages.

Those with valid, burgundy passports can continue to use their passport for travel until it expires.

[Blue passports video](#)

UN Open-Ended Working Group on developments in ICTs in the context of

[international security: Commonwealth statement](#)

The UK — in its capacity as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth — delivers this statement on behalf of its 54 equal and independent member states.

The Commonwealth welcomes the commencement of the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security.

In April 2018, the Heads of Government of all 53 Commonwealth nations agreed for the first time a common vision for improving national levels of cyber security competence and increased co-operation. They chose to adopt a [Commonwealth Cyber Declaration](#) that reflects Commonwealth values, and sets out a common commitment to a free, open, inclusive and secure cyberspace.

That Declaration is directly relevant to the work we are undertaking here at the UN today and in support of the realisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The 3 pillars of the Declaration: 'A cyberspace that supports economic and social development and rights online'; 'Build the foundations of an effective national cyber security response'; and, particularly, 'Promote stability in cyberspace through international co-operation' serve to guide the approach of all Commonwealth Member States in the field of Information and Communication Technologies in the context of international security.

But more than that, the Declaration supports the notion progressed here in the OEWG that we can still find commonality in our diversity and reach agreement despite our differences. The Declaration underlines that cyberspace provides a common space, within which the diversity and richness of Commonwealth identities can be expressed; and builds on the principles expressed in the 2014 Commonwealth Cyber Governance Model and our shared commitment to Commonwealth values.

Based on those values, and in line with existing international law, despite our diversity as States, all Commonwealth Heads of Government committed to some key tenets that stand us in good stead in this discussion. The most relevant to discussion at the OEWG include:

- recognising the threats to stability in cyberspace and integrity of the critical infrastructure and affirming our shared commitment to fully abide by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations to mitigate these risks

- underscoring our shared interest in protecting the security of our networks, security of data, the people that use them, and the services that run on them

- affirming that the same rights that citizens have offline must also be protected online

- noting the importance and involvement of all stakeholders within their respective roles and responsibilities in the good governance of cyberspace

- committing to exploring options to deepen co-operation on cybersecurity incidents and responses between Commonwealth member countries, including through the sharing of information about threats, breaches, vulnerabilities, and mitigation measures

- committing to take steps towards expanding digital access and digital inclusion for all communities without discrimination and regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, geographic location or language

- noting with concern the challenges faced by Commonwealth developing member countries particularly less developed countries and small island developing states and committing to invest in cybersecurity capacity building, including through the transfer of knowledge and technology on mutually agreed terms, the development of skills and training, the promotion of education and research, awareness raising, and access to good practice

- committing to promote frameworks for cyberspace, including the applicability of international law, agreed voluntary norms of responsible state behaviour, and the development and implementation of confidence building measures to encourage trust, co-operation and transparency, consistent with the 2015 Report of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International security (UNGGE)

- committing to move forward discussions on how existing international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and applicable international humanitarian law, applies in cyberspace in all its aspects

Since 2018, every Commonwealth member has taken steps to improve their cyber security competence and capability, and build capacity. A range of pan Commonwealth, regional and national-level activities have resulted in stronger networks to exchange knowledge and expertise, enhanced sharing of threat intelligence and understanding of risks, and a more informed and engaging civil society. Forty Commonwealth Nations have completed a national cybersecurity capacity review to inform areas of capacity in which their governments might strategically invest in order to become more cyber secure. There are many more examples where countries can demonstrate implementation

of the Commonwealth Declaration.

In June 2020, Commonwealth States will meet again at the Heads of Government Meeting in Rwanda and consider how we continue to move forward on this agenda. Our commitment to strengthening the use of information and communication technologies, while enhancing their security, for the purpose of the sustainable development of our societies remains a priority.

All Commonwealth countries are committed to advancing inclusive dialogue in the field of Information and Communication Technologies in the context of international security throughout the upcoming Rwandan period as Chair-in-Office and pledge our full support to these crucial discussions.

[Leading UK security companies to visit Guatemala and explore opportunities](#)

The companies will meet with local businessmen, government authorities and will share their experiences at a public event. The forum, entitled "Safe Cities" will showcase examples of integral security and the application of the latest technology in risk analysis and prevention. The companies visiting Guatemala are:

- Rapiscan Systems (non-intrusive security)
- G4S (security systems)
- Inmarsat (satellite and mobile communications)
- Buddi (monitoring bracelets)
- Indigo Vision (visual solutions for security needs)
- Marble Aereo (border surveillance)
- Leonardo (aerospace)
- Hensoldt (naval security)

The visit also aims to better understand the Guatemalan authorities' plans for improving security at national and municipal levels, and assess the country's business environment in light of potential deals or partnerships as a result of the mission.

The British Embassy in Guatemala and the British Chamber of Commerce are promoting the visit as a mechanism for strengthening the economic and bilateral relationship following the UK's departure from the European Union. The visit is also a chance to explore opportunities within the recently ratified UK – Central America Association Agreement, which is due to be implemented in 2021, after the implementation period.

Nick Whittingham, British Ambassador to Guatemala, said:

This visit is a wonderful opportunity to showcase some of the leading UK technology and security companies and provide them with a platform to develop key partnerships in Guatemala. The UK is a global leader in these sectors, and the delegation will share innovative solutions that are useful to create smart and safe cities that lead economic and social development.

For more details about the trade mission's agenda please visit [UK in Guatemala](#)