

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Health Scrutiny Committee

Date: 24/01/2019

Report of: Rebecca Demaine – Associate Director of Primary Care

Report Title

Medicines Optimisation and Prescribing

Summary

This report provides an update on the work Trafford CCG is undertaking to ensure the cost effective and safe use of medicines across Trafford, in line with local and national guidance. Two simultaneous programmes of work are ongoing as detailed below;

Medicines optimisation: Holistic review of patient's medication to improve patient safety and quality ensuring the best outcomes for patients related to the medicines prescribed alongside reducing medicines waste.

Prescribing: Implementing cost saving initiatives - including decommissioning the prescribing of medicines included within the Greater Manchester Do Not Prescribe list, gluten free foods and certain over the counter (OTC) medicines for a number of self-limiting conditions, whilst implementing a self-care campaign.

Both projects are in the implementation stage and are supported by change and communication plans. It is essential that the holistic change in behaviour required for the programmes to succeed is sustained.

Recommendation(s)

The Health scrutiny committee is requested to note the content of the report and to support the implementation and sustainability of the prescribing changes within the community. Health scrutiny is asked to direct on any actions required to the support the above.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers:

- Equality impact assessment for Ceasing Over the Counter Prescribing – on request
- Commissioning policy for self care/over the counter prescribing - <https://www.traffordccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Policy-for-the-treatment-of-Self-Care-in-Trafford-FINAL.pdf>
- Patient leaflet for self care/over the counter prescribing – on request
- Equality impact assessment for Ceasing Gluten Free Food Prescribing
- Commissioning policy for Gluten Free Food - <https://www.traffordccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Gluten-Free-Prescribing-Policy-Trafford-CCG.pdf>
- Patient leaflet for gluten free food - <https://www.traffordccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Gluten-Free-Patient-Information-Sheet.pdf>
- Over the Counter Guidance for CCGs - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/otc-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>
- Prescribing Gluten Free Food in Primary Care Guidance for CCGs - <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/prescribing-gluten-free-foods-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>

Background

1. Medicines Optimisation work is on-going and has delivered significant quality and financial improvements to date. In the main this is being done via practice based medicines optimisation personnel, carrying out reviews of individual patient's medications/repeat prescriptions to ensure that the patient is prescribed the optimum drug both from a clinical quality perspective and cost efficiency.
2. More recently a team of care home pharmacists have been employed to ensure that the quality and value work being carried out in practices is also replicated in care homes.
3. The Medicines Optimisation team is also an essential conduit for advising on appropriate use of medicines in any pathways redesign that the CCG and Council undertakes.
4. The Medicines review work involves a number of facets, but the key outcomes are to ensure that patients are in receipt of the most appropriate medication both from a clinical quality/financial perspective with removal of drugs that are no longer required (Do Not Prescribe List), causing side effects/problems and/or should not be prescribed in line with guidance from the Greater Manchester Medicines Management Group.
5. The work being undertaken is not just carried out once, as working practice is amended by ensuring that practices are engaged in the change and where possible the systems and business processes are amended in order to sustain these changes longer term.
6. The Medicines Optimisation team are also working with practices to ensure the optimum use of the repeat ordering process with the intention to remove waste and unnecessary dispensing of drugs that are not required.

Large Scale Changes – Using NHS Resources Wisely

7. During November/December 2017, Trafford CCG commenced conversations with key stakeholders [Healthwatch Advisory Panel, Health Scrutiny, Trafford Health Inequalities Group and Public Reference and Advisory Panel] to discuss the approaches to best engage with people about plans to use NHS money wisely.
8. Building on these discussions, during early 2018 a series of targeted focus groups were undertaken to discuss the financial challenges facing Trafford CCG; to share plans on our suggestions to address the challenges and ask people for ideas on how to best use NHS money wisely.
9. People welcomed the opportunity to have an open and honest conversation regarding how best to use NHS resources wisely and learn more about Trafford's plans to transform health and social care. Many were already aware of the challenges facing the NHS as there had been recent media coverage of the NHS England consultation on over the counter medicines. There was acknowledgement that the NHS should look at ways to work more efficiently and effectively if it was to succeed in helping people to stay healthy. Most participants felt that the NHS and its partners could not solve all the challenges alone – they suggested that public and patients should take more responsibility for their own health and not waste NHS resources.
10. Following on from NHS England guidance, looking at areas of spend where items are available to purchase at a more cost effective price than if delivered via prescription, alongside findings from the engagement outlined in point 8 and from conversations with GP's, Trafford CCG's Governing Body made a policy based decision to discontinue funding the provision of 'Gluten Free' products to patients via prescription. Data on GP clinical systems indicates that there are currently 879 patients diagnosed and coded with coeliac disease. This is 0.36% of the Trafford GP resident population of 243,869. The change is currently underway with patients being signposted to supermarkets and pharmacies where the Gluten Free products are widely available in addition to "healthy eating" advice for their condition. A communications and engagement plan was developed to support the implementation of this change.
11. Following implementation, we have been contacted by a number [7] of patients, Coeliac UK and a GP unhappy about the change. Issues raised include:
 - a. Impact on those who are on low income
 - b. Impact on children with special needs who will only eat certain foods
 - c. Perception that NHS England guidance on gluten free prescribing is in conflict with Trafford CCG policy.
12. It should be noted that NHS England advises in its recent guidance "CCGs can restrict further by selecting bread only, mixes only or can choose to end prescribing of all GF foods if they feel this is appropriate for their population, whilst taking account of their legal duties to advance equality and have regard to reducing health inequalities." The CCG is currently liaising with a selection of supermarkets, food

banks, dietetics services and Coeliac Society to look at ways to support those patients who may be affected by the changes.

13. Following on from NHS England guidance to make local prescribing practices more cost effective linked to a number of self-limiting conditions and to encourage patients to “self-care”, Trafford CCG like many other CCG’s has also approved a commissioning policy that restricts the prescribing of over the counter (OTC) products for a number of self-limiting conditions (minor ailments); these are products that are readily available from pharmacies and most supermarkets. These are:

Acute sore throat	Sun protection
Minor burns and scalds	Infrequent constipation
Conjunctivitis	Teething / mild toothache
Mild cystitis	Infrequent migraine
Coughs, colds and Nasal congestion	Threadworms
Mild dry skin	Insect bites and stings
Cradle cap	Travel sickness
Mild irritant dermatitis	Mild acne
Dandruff	Warts and verrucae
Mild to moderate hay fever	Haemorrhoids
Diarrhoea (adults)	Oral thrush
Dry eyes / sore tired eyes	Head lice
Mouth ulcers	Prevention of tooth decay
Earwax	Indigestion and heartburn
Nappy rash	Ringworm / athletes foot
Excessive sweating	Minor pain, discomfort and fever (e.g. aches and sprains, headache, period pain, back pain)
Infant colic	
Infrequent cold sores of the lip	
Sunburn	

14. GPs, nurses or pharmacists will also generally no longer prescribe probiotics and some vitamins and minerals.
15. The OTC products policy is supported by a ‘Self-Care’ campaign for public and all stakeholders in primary, secondary and community provision. Information will be readily available to encourage and signpost patients to their local community pharmacy for advice and treatment where appropriate.
16. Both national and local media campaigns have already started to create awareness for this initiative with the Trafford campaign planned to commence in February supporting the messages coming through from the national campaigns.
17. There are exceptions to the self-care policy for example for long term and chronic conditions, or vulnerable patients. GP’s will be responsible for ensuring compliance to the policy exceptions.

18. Both the Gluten Free and OTC policies have been through appropriate CCG governance and Equality Impact Assessments before they moved into the implementation stage.
19. The financial savings planned through the implementation of the work being carried out by the Medicines Optimisation team are currently being tracked and managed by the Programme Management Office with regular progress reports to the Financial Recovery Board.
20. To date these schemes are projected to deliver savings in excess of £2M

Conclusion and Recommendations

21. The successful implementation of the OTC and Gluten Free policy and the self-care campaign is heavily reliant on behavioural change by the public, clinical staff and all community providers. The scale of change required is significant and where possible all partner outlets will be utilised to ensure the key messages are disseminated.
22. The Health scrutiny committee is requested to note the content of the report and to support the implementation and sustainability of the prescribing changes within the community. Health scrutiny is asked to direct on any actions required to support the above.