

TOP TIPS FOR LAUNCHING THE COMMON AILMENTS SERVICE



1. Ensure all accreditation and PGDs are completed and signed prior to launch.
2. Encourage your locums or relief colleagues to accredit and deliver the service. If there are periods when you know that the service will not be available from your pharmacy due to un-accredited colleagues then please inform your local surgeries of this
3. Speak to the local surgery and their triage teams (if they have them) about the conditions you can treat and the scope of the service. This is to ensure that suitable patients are referred and minimise the number of patients you would have to send back as inappropriate. The feedback is that the service works particularly well where the local surgery has a robust triage process or the reception teams are well briefed and aware of the appropriate referral process.
4. It may also be good practice to establish a clear referral name whereby patients referred are asked to present for example for the 'Common ailments service' and patients are not saying at the end of a transaction 'but the surgery said it would be free'
5. Be aware of the 'Advice only' conditions. These are the conditions for which there is no treatment under the PGDs only advice. This is to ensure that the patients are aware prior to the consultation that it is advice only and if they wish to receive a treatment they would have to pay for it.
6. If the service has been running for a few months with a low number of interventions, keep talking to your local surgeries as we have seen pharmacies where they have been having 2-3 consultations for the first few months dropping to zero after 4 or 5 months which results in lost income.
7. If you are just starting the service you may wish to focus on a few of the conditions for the first few months and expand the number of conditions for referral once you are comfortable with the workload and how the service runs in your pharmacy
8. Ensure that your colleagues are fully aware of the service, including part-time and Saturday staff. We have seen patients being referred from surgeries to the Common ailments service and being turned away by pharmacy staff who were unaware of what the patients were requesting.
9. If you are experiencing any issue with the Choose Pharmacy platform, please inform the NWIS helpdesk, do not leave it to others as the priority for fixing issues increases with each report of an issue.
10. Ensure that pharmacy counter assistants are aware of situations where they have a feeling that members of the public may be being put off purchasing over the counter treatments for a common condition as a result of the cost of treatment and bring this to the attention of the pharmacist.
12. Make sure that your local optometrists know that the service has gone live. The service fits in well with the Welsh Eyecare Service (WECS) and patients can be referred easily between them
11. Ensure that all of the show material promoting the Common Ailments Service is highly visible in your pharmacy and in your local GP surgery.