

Healthwatch Lincolnshire

Statement regarding:	Changes to patient repeat prescriptions
Statement prepared:	1 March 2018
Statement circulation:	Escalation paper sent to South and South West Lincolnshire CCG

Why is Healthwatch Lincolnshire bringing this to your attention?

The action from 1 February 2018 by South and South West Lincolnshire CCGs for patients who have previously used a community pharmacy to order repeat medicines but are now required to order repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice, appears to be causing a great deal of concerns to patients and carers.

Whilst we recognise the National and local directive to reduce the overall cost of prescribed medication and its subsequent wastage, Healthwatch Lincolnshire does not believe patients fully understand the options available to them, nor the reasons why the CCG has made the change.

Example of the type of concerns raised include:

- A carer who is looking after a loved one who has cancer living in the Long Sutton area of Lincolnshire, was very concerned as they did not know how they were now expected to deal with collecting repeat medication for their cared for as their surgery did not have a phone-in option for repeat prescriptions and they personally did not drive, so was having real difficulties arranging repeat prescriptions. *Healthwatch on this occasion suggested the carer phoned the surgery to explain the problem as we felt once the surgery was aware they would put in place support needed.*
- A patient told us “The Lloyds pharmacy in Spalding have advised that they can no longer order my prescription for me. In future I will have to take the prescription to my surgery or order online. This is inconvenient for people without transport or access to a computer. I've been told that it affects Lincolnshire and would be interested to know the reason for this change. I am not making a complaint against Lloyds in Spalding. They have always been helpful and obliging”.
- “A well established and much appreciated system where local pharmacies ordered requirements in repeat prescriptions for patients/customers has been withdrawn at short notice by the CCG. This is causing confusion and disruption for patients/customers alike. The previous system appeared to be working well and I am extremely doubtful that the new system will save any significant sums nor be beneficial for the customers/patients.
- Were you advised or consulted on this change and are you aware of the concern and disruption arising from this change?” - *this statement was raised by a member of the medical profession.*
- Some patients are telling us they are not aware of the changes until it is too late ie their prescription is urgent and they are not able to book a GP appointment.

Questions to South and South West CCG

Healthwatch Lincolnshire requires responses to the following questions (within 20 working days from receipt):

1. Communication messages - we are aware of statements regarding changes to repeat prescriptions on the CCGs websites, press releases and newspaper articles circulated which inform patients of the changes, as well as one A4 poster which has been placed in GP surgeries but are not aware of any other communication methods used. It appears the lack of robust communication with patients is causing misunderstandings and at times stress for patients. **Could the CCGs confirm whether you intend to provide any other communication to patients eg via PPG newsletters, community pharmacies, fliers placed in bags with collected prescriptions?**
2. Inequalities for patients at GP surgery - according to patient feedback it appears that not all GP Surgeries have a range of options for patients in which they can deal with repeat prescriptions. Communication from your CCGs is suggesting repeats can be completed on-line, via dedicated telephone option, or in person. **Can the CCGs confirm that all GP surgeries have all of these options available? In addition, has the CCGs taken into account that many people in Lincolnshire do not have access to on-line services?**
3. Community pharmacies - we believe more information needs to be shared as to the reasons why this change has been implemented, both with community pharmacy staff and patients who previously received repeat prescriptions via community pharmacy. Community pharmacy staff are not helping patients understanding of the change, merely blaming others for this which is not helpful to patients. Many patients believe they are not able to change the regularity of their repeat prescriptions with their preferred community pharmacy and if they did so it would result in the medication being stopped, which is one of the reasons why stockpiling in large quantities was occurring. **Could the CCG explain what work they are doing with the community pharmacies on this issue?**
4. We are concerned by the experiences relayed to us by some of the most vulnerable patients and carers such as the one quoted in this escalation paper. **Can the CCG please inform us what measures are being taken by GP practices to proactively communicate with the most vulnerable patient population and assurance that where patients do require a different method of prescribing, that this is being addressed in accordance with patient and carer need?**

We look forward to hearing from you in due course. Please also do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything further Healthwatch Lincolnshire can help with on this issue.

This statement has been prepared on behalf of Healthwatch Lincolnshire Public Experience Committee by:

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