



South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group
Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group

Out of Hours Pharmacy

Litherland Town Hall Health Centre

Changes to the Out of Hours Pharmacy and overview results of
a review and public consultation of this service

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Introduction

From 1 April 2015 the Out of Hours Pharmacy will be replaced with a new system, so people will still be able to get all the urgent medicines they need after seeing a doctor from the GP Out of Hours service.

It follows a thorough review of this relatively small and restricted service, along with a public consultation. You will find an overview of the results in this document.

You can also read about why NHS South Sefton CCG and NHS Southport and Formby CCG have agreed to close the service, along with the measures they've put in place in response to people's comments during the consultation.

About the Out of Hours Pharmacy

The Out of Hours Pharmacy at Litherland Town Hall Health Centre was set up in 2004 primarily to provide urgent medicines to patients from the Sefton wide GP Out of Hours (OOH) service based in the same building. As the service is restricted to patients from the GP OOH service, this pharmacy has much shorter opening hours than regular high street chemists.

Originally, this service also supplied stocks of medicines to the GP OOH service and OOH district nurses. Since then, these two services have changed the way they operate and there is no longer the need for them to be serviced by the Out of Hours Pharmacy. So, the function of the Out of Hours Pharmacy has greatly reduced.

What is going to change?

In January 2015 NHS South Sefton CCG and NHS Southport and Formby CCG agreed that the Out of Hours Pharmacy should close. They also agreed that it should be replaced with a different system to ensure people can still get any urgent medicines they need after seeing a doctor from the GP OOH service.

From 1 April 2015, when the service closes, GP OOH patients will be able to take their prescriptions to a nearby chemist - their doctor from the GP OOH service will give them details of which ones close by are open late and weekends.

In addition:

- When these alternative chemists are closed – the doctor will give patients any medicines they need during their consultation, mainly late night at weekends and bank holidays
- Anyone who can't travel – the doctor will supply any medicines they need at all times during the out of hours period

Why is this happening?

These days there are plenty of chemists nearby that closely match the opening times of the Out of Hours Pharmacy late at night and at weekends. So now, there's little or no need for such a small and restricted service. This change will also help us to invest in and improve other priority health services that are used by more people.

The following pages explain how we made our decision to close this service.

What our review revealed

In July 2014 we carefully examined the service offered by the Out of Hours Pharmacy. As part of this, we also spoke to patients who use the service to find out their views and experiences.

We found:

- It dispenses relatively small amounts of medicines, fewer than 1% of all medicines dispensed across Sefton
- Around 99% of Sefton residents do not use the Out of Hours Pharmacy
- Around 3,600 people attend the GP OOH service each year and not all of these people will need urgent medicines as a result of their visit
- There are many more nearby chemists open longer in the evenings and at weekends than when the Out of Hours Pharmacy was set up
- Whilst patients told us they valued the service and found it convenient, they did not always view it as an emergency service

What we did next

We considered three options as a result of this review:

- Do nothing - this was discounted as it is difficult to justify the cost of keeping such an underused service open
- Open only late at night - this would bring the cost down but we would still be paying a high cost for an underused service
- Close the service - this was our preferred option as local chemists are open and accessible for most of the time, and we would put in place a new 'wraparound' GP prescribing and supply service during those times when nearby alternatives were closed

We agreed:

To carry out a Sefton wide consultation to see what people thought of our preferred option and in particular the proposed wraparound GP prescribing and supply service (where doctors from the GP OOH service supply urgent medicines directly to patients when nearby chemists are closed during the out of hours period).

Public consultation

This took place during December 2014 and January 2015 seeking the views of Sefton residents around two points - whether the proposal to close the service would make better use of NHS resources, and whether the proposed alternative would be accessible and meet the needs of patients, particularly those who might have issues travelling to other chemists.

We went into the Out of Hours Pharmacy to speak directly with patients. In addition, we invited a wide range of patients, carers and public from across the borough to complete a survey, gaining the following results:

- 151 people completed the survey - 101 of these surveys were from people who use the service or their carers
- The majority (75%) of the respondents were from the L20 Bootle, L21 Litherland, L22/23, Waterloo/Crosby and L30 Netherton i.e. those postcodes in the immediate vicinity of the service
- Nearly 80% of respondents wanted the NHS to try and save money on underused services and to redesign services to improve efficiency
- Over 60% of people thought closing the service would cause them little or no inconvenience if they had to travel to another chemist
- Over 30% said it would be difficult for them to travel due to issues including transport and caring responsibilities

Equality assessment

The data collected through the consultation helped us to carry out an equality assessment to determine whether closing the Out of Hours Pharmacy would unreasonably disadvantage any of our residents.

How we have responded

As a result of the public consultation and the equality assessment, we have extended the proposed wraparound GP prescribing and supply service. This means that anyone who would find it difficult to travel to a nearby chemist will be eligible to have their urgent medicines dispensed directly by the doctor from the GP OOH service throughout the entire out of hours period.

What happens now?

The following changes come into effect on 1 April 2015:

- GP OOH patients will be able to take their prescription to a nearby chemist to get their medicines
- When nearby chemists are closed, doctors from the GP OOH service will supply medications directly to patients during their consultation
- This already happens when people attending the GP OOH service need medicines after 11pm when the Out of Hours Pharmacy is closed
- Anyone who finds it difficult to travel will be given their medicines directly from the GP Out of Hours doctor, so they are not disadvantaged by this decision

We will regularly review these new arrangements, in particular the wraparound GP prescribing and supply service, to ensure patients continue to get their urgent medicines when they need them during the out of hours period.

For more information about this change call 0800 218 2333 or visit:
www.southseftonccg.nhs.uk or www.southportandformbyccg.nhs.uk