

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Views Needed On Prescriptions for Minor Ailments

In an ongoing effort to reduce unnecessary spending, Blackpool doctors are asking residents for their opinion of the local Minor Ailments Scheme.

It was revealed in August that prescriptions from GPs for medications to treat minor ailments cost the local NHS an estimated £800,000 per year. These items, such as, simple painkillers like paracetamol, cough/cold remedies and cold sore treatments are all readily available over the counter in many high street outlets and local pharmacies at relatively cheap prices compared to that incurred by the NHS when obtained via a prescription.

Earlier this year treatments for head lice were withdrawn from the scheme following National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance which favoured the use of wet combing over other treatments. The move has already made a saving and was met with approval from many people the CCG spoke to before implementing.

Now, as the NHS is under continuing pressure, with the demand for services increasing but only limited resources available to cope with this, NHS Blackpool CCG is proposing to withdraw some more of the treatments from the Minor Ailments Scheme.

The scheme which is available to all of the approximate 172,000 people registered with a Blackpool GP, allows individuals to obtain medication for minor and common ailments via a prescription from a pharmacist without the need to see a GP. The ailments covered by the scheme are:

- Allergies (hayfever, bites or stings)
- Cold sores
- Colds/flu and/or nasal congestion
- Conjunctivitis
- Constipation
- Cystitis
- Diarrhoea
- Heartburn indigestion
- Common and minor headaches
- Mouth ulcers
- Oral thrush
- Short-term pain relief (for example, resulting from a significant bump, bruise, sprain or strain)
- Sore throat
- Teething pain
- Temperatures
- Threadworm
- Vaginal thrush

However, in the last year the scheme has been used just 17,000 times, which equates to a cost of £161,000. With this cost and limited usage in mind, the CCG is now looking to gather feedback on potentially withdrawing more treatments from the scheme.

Dr Amanda Doyle, a Blackpool GP and Chief Clinical Officer at NHS Blackpool CCG, said: “We have to make sure every penny is spent wisely and in the most beneficial way for everybody across Blackpool. In order to continue paying for quality services that provide essential health care we have to look at ways to reduce inefficiencies and costs for things which are not clinically necessary.

“More and more people are becoming aware of how to treat minor ailments such as coughs or colds and we know from previous conversations with the public that they are happy to purchase those treatments cheaply over the counter. We want to actively encourage that.”

The CCG is encouraging local people to complete a short survey which can be accessed online at:

[www.blackpoolccg.nhs.uk/yourvoice/polls-and-surveys](http://www.blackpoolccg.nhs.uk/yourvoice/polls-and-surveys). The survey will close on Thursday 10 November 2016.

Alternatively, paper copies of this survey can be obtained by emailing [ccgcomments@blackpool.nhs.uk](mailto:ccgcomments@blackpool.nhs.uk) or calling 01253 951349.

The survey will also be available to complete at one of the CCG’s ‘Your Voice’ drop-in sessions being held during October as follows:

- Tuesday 25 October 2016, 10am - 12noon, Central Library, Queen Street, FY1 1PX.
- Tuesday 1 November, 11am - 1pm, City Learning Centre, Bathurst Avenue, FY3 7RW
- Tuesday 8 November 11am - 1pm, Moor Park Library, Bristol Avenue FY2 OJG

A member of the CCG’s engagement team will be present at the above sessions for anybody wishing to provide additional comments.