



South West
Academic Health
Science Network



Medicine Support Service



**The Medicine Support Service;
a referral to community
pharmacy scheme.**

Utilising existing services in community pharmacy to support patients with their medicines following discharge from hospital.

Improving the transfer of care to help patients better understand their medicines, improve patient outcomes, increase adherence, reduce re-admissions and reduce medicines waste.

Challenge identified and actions taken:

- Around 50% of medicines are not taken as intended by the prescriber
- 5-8% of unplanned admissions to hospital are due to medication issues
- £300 million of medicines are wasted each year
- Most patients leave hospital with new medicines, doses changed, or medicines stopped - their understanding for the reasons is often incomplete
- Around 87% of patients have an unintended discrepancy in their medicines discharge information
- Medicines-related problems after hospital discharge are associated with potential and actual adverse health consequences, many of which are preventable

An opportunity to improve this pathway is to utilise the expert advice that community pharmacies provide. Community Pharmacies already offer existing services such as Medicines Use Reviews and New Medicines Service that are free and convenient to patients. With consent, patients' discharge information is sent to their community pharmacy, securely and electronically.

The pharmacist then contacts the patient to arrange a review.

The SW AHSN is working with Yeovil Hospital and Somerset Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) on the implementation of their scheme; we are funding them to help develop an implementation package that can be shared across the South West, and funding the initial costs around IT licenses.

The SW AHSN is also supporting The Royal Cornwall Hospital and Cornwall LPC; they have a system in place where discharge medicines are faxed to community pharmacies, and we are supporting them in a move to electronic referrals.

There are some IT barriers that are currently preventing implementation, adoption and spread. These are being addressed in conjunction with PharmOutcomes who provide the web platform for the electronic referrals.

Licence fees and set-up costs also need to be addressed. The SW AHSN are contributing to cover some of these costs.

Impacts/Outcomes

- Our Scoping Exercise proved valuable in gaining information on existing projects around the country, to then share with stakeholders across the South West.
- Funding Yeovil Hospital and Somerset LPC to develop an implementation package will facilitate and accelerate implementation of the scheme, spreading learning and best practice in other parts of the South West.
- IT barriers are slowing further implementation in Yeovil and Truro preventing the identification of impact and outcomes.

The few concerns raised will be addressed in several ways, including the development of new patient and staff information materials.

"Without your input, this service most definitely wouldn't have been as dynamic as it now is, and goes far beyond what I had anticipated at the start of this journey" – Matt Harvey, Chief Officer, Somerset LPC

Plans for the future

- Encourage and support implementation of the project across other parts of the South West.
- Identify further barriers to implementation and work to overcome these.

Tips for adoption

- Share knowledge and learning to reduce duplication of work.
- Collaborate with other AHSNs to identify barriers and share resources.

Patients and the Public

We carried out a survey to gain views from the public which was promoted by the six HealthWatch organisations in the SW region. The feedback was extremely positive in favour of the project.

Which national clinical or policy priorities does this example address?

- Health & Wellbeing • Care & Quality • Patient Safety • Medicines Optimisation
- Reducing re-admissions to hospital • Reducing A&E attendances • Improving medicines adherence • Reducing medicines waste • Promoting better transfer of care across organisations • Increasing the use of Community Pharmacy services
- Reducing the workload for GPs

For more information call 01392 247903 or email info@swahsn.com