

Effective Prescribing

Summary Document

Background

In the Autumn of 2014 a Guiding Coalition was established comprising NHS Board Chairs and Chief Executives and including Scottish Government, to consider the key strategic challenges facing health in Scotland to ensure the desired outcomes stated within the NHS 2020 Vision can be achieved, whilst addressing pressing current and emerging demands on the system as well as the growing financial challenge. Seven workstreams were identified as being essential to delivering quality clinical services which are both safe and financially sustainable. One of these was Effective Prescribing.

There are significant medicine cost-pressures for NHS Scotland in both primary and secondary care with the annual spend on medicines being £1.2Billion. There has been a large amount of work completed over the past years to ensure we are maximizing the efficient use of medicines but there is an expectation that this spend will continue to grow. Reasons include an aging population on multiple medicines, the use of high cost medicines / technologies to treat long term conditions and the current policy position of an increased access to new medicines, all delivered within an environment of continual financial challenge.

Aims of the Programme

The Effective Prescribing Programme aims to achieve more effective prescribing within NHS Scotland in order to improve patient outcomes, deliver savings where possible, and contain increasing costs.

Breakdown of the programme

Key stakeholders and Medical/Pharmacy leads were engaged to establish a number of strategic priorities in this area, ensuring that this work connects with the broader medicines policy context and national efficiency initiatives. Based on these, the programme has been broken down into a number of initiatives, summarised below. For most of these projects there is already some work going on in at least some parts of NHS Scotland. This programme is therefore focusing on:

1. Adding pace to achieving the benefits.
2. Ensuring the benefits are realized across all parts of NHS Scotland

Work is being clinically led by the Scottish Association of Medical Directors and the NHS Scotland Directors of Pharmacy with the support of the Pharmacy and Medicine Division in the Healthcare Quality and Strategy Directorate of Scottish Government

The work to date has focused mainly on scoping the work, identifying the opportunities and starting to quantify the financial and health benefits. Formal governance and programme management is now being put in place which will develop business cases for the workstreams.

The projects are summarized below.

Project	Outline	Medical Lead	Pharmacy Lead	Opportunity
Effective prescribing and reducing medicines waste				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Polypharmacy 	Medications review to optimise medicines for frail patients and patents with multiple health problems	██████ ██████	██████ ██████	24% of the Scottish population are on 4 or more medicines - Audit Scotland Report.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of IT tools in General Practice 	To avoid waste such as duplication of orders and ordering too soon, and to support medication reviews	██████ ██████	██████	70% of all prescriptions are repeat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowering Patients to value Medicines 	Reducing prescribing of drugs where appropriate and reducing amounts of discarded unused medications.	██████ ██████	██████ ██████	33%-50% of all medicines prescribed for long term conditions are not taken as recommended.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of National Prescribing Strategies 	To ensure effective implementation of the diabetes and respiratory strategies that have been produced by SG.	TBC	██████	The purpose of the diabetic strategy is to ensure person-centred, quality safe and cost-effective prescribing for people living with type-2 diabetes. NHS Scotland currently spends £73million on antidiabetic medicines. The respiratory strategy has been designed to highlight areas where patient safety and care can be optimised. The total spend on respiratory medicines in 2012/13 was £125 million in NHS Scotland.
Support of the safe, effective and consistent use of biosimilar medicines	Initiatives to support the safe, effective and consistent use of biosimilar medicines in NHSScotland.	██████ ██████	██████ ██████	Current Scottish expenditure on biological medicines that are expected to face biosimilar competition within 5 years is approximately £100m/annum. Discounts of 30-40% are expected for biosimilar medicines.
Implementation of agreed medicines protocols on a regional/national basis	To provide guidance for practitioners to enable successful development and implementation of regional or national prescribing protocols. This will use the Hep C treatments as a test case and will also build on experience from cancer medications.	██████ ██████	██████ ██████	Consistency of clinical care across Scotland – reduction in variation and opportunity to explore efficiencies.
The use of very high cost medicines	Ensuring suitable clinical and financial governance is in place for these patients and these very costly medicines. This includes the monitoring of patient's initial and continued response to ensure the investment is producing a suitable outcome. Also ensuring patients fall within strict therapy initiation and stopping parameters.	██████ ██████	██████ ██████	Currently these arrangements cover approximately 61 metabolic disease patients, around 470 bleeding disorder patients and around 16 learning disability patients across NHS Scotland.

Initial focus is on these four projects but additional proposals for more effective prescribing will be considered as required.