



Croydon Health Scrutiny and Social Care sub-committee

Update from Matthew Kershaw, Chief Executive at
Croydon Health Services NHS Trust and Place-
Based Leader for Health in Croydon

March 2024

NHS



Pharmacy First

Since January 2024, Pharmacy First has been supporting community pharmacists to work alongside primary care teams to accept referrals for common conditions and reduce pressure on GP services.

- Aims to **free up 10 million GP appointments a year** across England and Wales by next winter for more complex diagnosis.
- **66 community pharmacies in Croydon signed up** to provide Pharmacy First, with a total of **270 pharmacies registered across South West London**; 95% of all community pharmacies in the region.
- Local people can **access care directly or can be referred by their GP**, with **video and face to face consultations** available.
- Public messaging promoting the service started on 19 February and will run to 31 March.

Managing demand

A **phased roll-out** is in place, to support a soft launch. Capacity is being created by developing trained and competent pharmacy staff to deliver services such as blood pressure checks, **allowing highly qualified pharmacists to focus on offering clinical advice and appropriate prescribing**, making Pharmacy First a core part of their delivery model.

Digital solutions

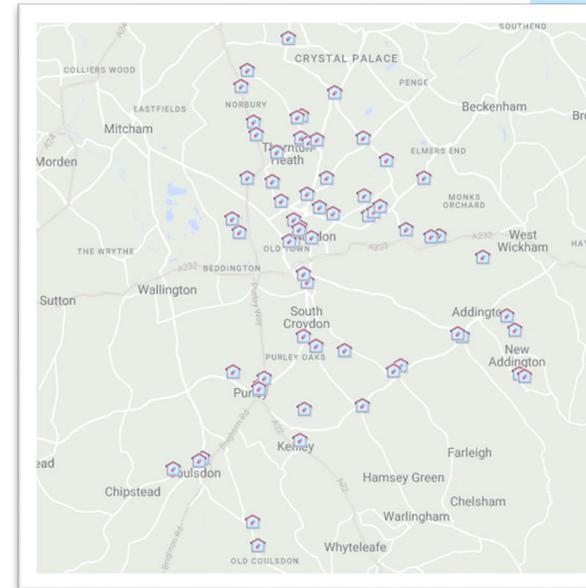
Working with ICB to **ensure a consistent approach to referrals, minimising the risk of duplication**. GP triage tools are being updated to identify patients who would benefit from referral.

Training and education

Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) are **supporting pharmacists through the changes** with learning days, events and upskilling through multi-disciplinary meetings. Training hubs running **sessions for GPs to support primary care referrals** and increase understanding of the clinical pathways.

Connecting care records

Pharmacies will continue to use the National Care Records Service (NCRS) and **established processes to access clinical information to manage patients safely**. Within a few weeks of launch, it is expected that **pharmacies will have enhanced access to GP records** through GP Connect Access Record.



Improving access to care

Pharmacies in Croydon will now be able to treat and prescribe antibiotics for seven common conditions:

- Sinusitis
- Sore throats
- Earache
- Infected insect bite
- Impetigo
- Shingles
- Uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women



Usual prescription charges will apply for the seven common conditions. Patients that were already exempt from prescription charges will still be exempt.

Update on CPCS referrals

Pharmacy First will replace the Community Pharmacy Consultation Service (CPCS) but there will be no changes. GPs can continue to refer patients with a minor illness to community pharmacies through EMIS Local Services relieving pressure on primary care and urgent care facilities.

