

NHS West Lancashire  
CCG  
Low Priority and  
Gluten Free  
Prescribing - FAQs



**With you.  
For you.**



## What are you proposing?

West Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is proposing to make some changes in an area called 'low priority prescribing'. This is in line with many other NHS organisations in Lancashire and nationally.

Across Lancashire, CCGs have reviewed the money spent on prescribing certain medicines, treatments, products and food items. These items are either:

1. Widely available over the counter (in pharmacies or shops) at a price cheaper (in some cases) than an NHS prescription
2. Prescribed for conditions that have no clinical need of treatment
3. Supported by insufficient evidence of clinical benefit or cost effectiveness.

We are therefore proposing to stop prescribing in West Lancashire the following items:

1. Treatments and medicines for short-term, minor conditions/ailments or where there is insufficient evidence of clinical benefit or cost effectiveness
2. Gluten free products

## What do you mean by low priority prescribing?

For some of the products there is not much clinical evidence that they are effective in treating minor illnesses or their symptoms, and for all of the products they are readily available in shops and supermarkets, and include:

- Treatments for minor ailments, including medicines like paracetamol, ibuprofen, head lice lotion and indigestion tablets.
- Treatments where there is little evidence that they have a real clinical benefit, including cough syrups, nasal congestion sprays, sore throat products and vitamin supplements.

***A full list of all items being considered are available in our document 'What we should prescribe in West Lancashire', under annex 1, 2, 3 and 4. This document is available on our website.***

## How will I know if this affects me?

If you are currently receiving any of the items listed in the consultation, free of charge, by prescription please talk to your GP.

## Is anyone exempt from this?

Your GP will use the proposed policy to determine if you are exempt or not. The

exemptions depend on the individual product or type of medication, but there are some exemptions for the following people:

- People with long-term conditions and pain management needs
- Where the item is only available on prescription
- Babies
- Children (up to the age of 16)
- Pregnant women
- Breastfeeding mothers
- Patients being cared for at the end of their life

### **Why is this happening in West Lancashire?**

To make sure that the limited NHS resources available are used appropriately, we need to consider what is a priority for our wider population and therefore we want to gather the thoughts of our population as to whether they agree that these items should no longer be available on prescription.

In developing commissioning policies, the CCG adheres to the following principles:

- Appropriateness
- Effectiveness
- Cost-effectiveness
- Ethics
- Affordability

### **Is this just about saving money?**

As a local clinical commissioning group, we have a responsibility to our population to use public resources in an efficient way, that is 'value for money' for the tax payer, and it is expected that the local NHS will be able to save around £460,000 a year by making these proposed changes.

This money could instead be used to pay for...

- 496 cataract operations
- 89 hip replacements
- 12,777 GP appointments

### **How much is the CCG in West Lancashire Currently spending on these items?**

The CCG is currently spending a total of **£460,798** per year on these items. This is broken down as follows:

- Minor Ailments £142,891

- Where there may be insufficient evidence £51,500
- Where there may not be a clinical reason £195,407
- Gluten Free Products £71,000

### **How much is the CCG looking to save?**

A reduction of 50 per cent of the prescribing of these medicines could generate almost a quarter of a million pound in savings per year, which is a significant amount of money which could be redirected into other services in West Lancashire.

### **How can I have my say?**

The CCG is now in a consultation stage with our local population and you can let us know whether you agree with our proposed plans by completing our online survey, which can be found here: <http://po.st/LowGluten>

Alternatively, this electronic survey is available in a paper version and you can request this by contacting the CCG by email [myview@westlancashireccg.nhs.uk](mailto:myview@westlancashireccg.nhs.uk) or calling 01695 588 203.

The consultation will remain open until Friday 24 March 2017.