17th January 2024

**RE: New Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) Service for Meir PCN patients**

Dear colleague,

As you are aware, community pharmacy is facing increasing workload pressures with the introduction of new services such as Pharmacy First. To reduce this workload, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB are introducing a new Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service that will be piloted in Practices based in Meir Primary Care Network (PCN). Initially Adderley Green Surgery and Willow Bank Surgery are the two practices that have been selected for the pilot phase that will run until the end of March 24. If successful, this service will gradually be extended across the whole ICB.

The POD service will be a new way for patients to order their repeat prescriptions. Patients can contact the POD on 01782 432469, between 9am–4pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays). Practices will be issuing leaflets to patients and displaying posters and digital communications in their waiting rooms. In addition, practices will be issuing messages and letters to their patients informing them of the change.

Upon calling the POD, patients must consent for the POD call handler team to access their medical records. Medicines can only be requested when patients have 10 days’ supply left and patients will be encouraged to check their remaining supplies before ordering. The POD may synchronise quantities of patient’s medicines and therefore Community Pharmacies may receive scripts for irregular medicine quantities. Once a call is completed, it will take the GP 2-3 days to approve the prescription before it is sent to the patient’s nominated pharmacy for dispensing. Patients will be advised to allow time for the pharmacy to assemble their prescription (and deliver it if appropriate).

Patients will be able to continue ordering their repeat prescriptions through existing methods such as the NHS App, or by logging into their account on the NHS website, other online services such as Patient Access and/or handing in their paper repeats at their surgery.

As of the 29th of January 2024, patients will be encouraged to order their repeat prescriptions from the POD. There will be a grace period of one month for community pharmacies to adopt this new process. From the 29th of January 2024, Community Pharmacies are requested not to accept any further repeat prescription requests from patients and to start returning any repeat slips they may hold. However, where a patient is classed as exempt, for example where they lack cognitive ability or a speech impairment or where the patient requires their medication to be supplied in a MDS tray, Community Pharmacies will be able to continue to order repeat prescriptions on behalf of these patients. Pharmacies must complete and submit the attached patient exemption form on their patients' behalf to the surgery e-mail address. Practices will be required to inform the Community Pharmacy of the outcomes of these exemptions.

To keep the phone line clear for patients, Pharmacies will be able to request medication for their agreed vulnerable/MDS patients by calling the POD. Please do not continue to email the surgery directly. In recognition of the extra time taken with MDS assembly, you can order medication earlier than 10 days before they are needed.

Kind Regards

Gurjinder Samra



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