

Medicines Management

1. Introduction

Medicines Management is a system of processes and behaviours that determines how medicines are best utilised by both the NHS and patients. It aims to enable people to not only make the best possible use of medicines, but also to secure the handling of medicines in the most safe, clinical and cost-effective means.

2. Strategic Leadership and Collaboration

2.1 *The Medicines Management Team*

The Medicines Management Team (MMT) is part of the Hounslow GP Commissioning team. The team consists of five pharmacists that work closely with the 55 GP Practices in Hounslow, supporting clinical and cost-effective quality prescribing. The team includes a senior commissioning medicines adviser, two prescribing advisers and two practice pharmacists.

The main aims of the MMT are to:

- Improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of prescribing within primary care in Hounslow;
- Facilitate and improve communication between GPs and secondary care (hospitals);
- Endeavour to keep community prescribing costs within the designated prescribing budget; and
- Promote links and better understanding between all members of the primary health care team and Local Authority.

The MMT works closely with the Great West Commissioning Consortia (GWCC). There is a GWCC Medicines Management Prescribing and Medicines Management Group that meets monthly to support medicines management within the Borough of Hounslow. This group includes three GP leads (including the Chair), the NHS Hounslow's MMT and secondary care representatives.

2.1.1 *Areas of focus for the Medicines Management Team*

- Oral Nutritional Supplements (ONS) – NHS Hounslow has the highest spend in London in the prescribing of ONS. To ensure this is appropriate, NHS Hounslow has commissioned dieticians to review patients using ONS. Patients are invited to a clinic (or visited at home if housebound) to establish whether it is still necessary for the patient to be taking ONS. The patient's GP is sent an assessment of the review.
- The use of Specially Formulated Medication (specials) – A 'special' is an unlicensed formulated medicine which may be required, for example, when a liquid form is needed and only tablets are available. However, there may be a licensed product available as an alternative, and the MMT is working closely with GPs and community pharmacists to establish the use of specials, in terms of alternative licensed products and suppliers of specials.



- Care homes – NHS Hounslow is looking to support Hounslow’s care homes with additional medicines management support. Care homes tend to require advice on medication issues, especially in areas such as waste, dressings and the use of ‘specials’, and medicines management support will address these areas.
- Working closely with secondary care (hospitals) in relation to prescribing of drugs.

2.2 Working with mentoring cells

Within NHS Hounslow, GP practices are working together in peer groups of six practices known as ‘mentoring cells’. Each mentoring cell is supported by a pharmacist from the MMT who attends cell meetings and undertakes at least practice visit annually with each GP practice. The aim of this visit is to discuss the practice’s prescribing issues highlighting any updated clinical evidence, prescribing patterns and medicines management aspects of the GP contract.

Within Hounslow there is a drug budget of approximately £31 million and this is a delegated GP budget to the local GP Commissioning Group, Great West Commissioning Consortium (GWCC). One of the main aims of the team is to help ensure GP practices remain within their allocated prescribing budget whilst ensuring high quality standards and adherence to evidence-based guidelines.

In 2011, the MMT is utilising the [Quality and Outcomes Framework](#) of the GP contract to support key identified QIPP areas. The MMT is undertaking both targeted support and practice visits, where practices have challenging targets. A reporting mechanism allows regular feedback both to GWCC and practices, to ensure regular feedback on targets and performance against budgets.

2.3 Medicines and public health

An important role for the Medicines Management Team is to support delivering preventative models of public health, for example smoking cessation. An effective pharmaceutical public health policy can avoid or reduce problems associated with inappropriate over-use of some medicines, e.g. antibiotics in primary care or antipsychotics in care homes. Identifying and addressing under-use of medicines that could otherwise improve health is another key component of pharmaceutical public health.

3. The Local Picture

3.1 Cost of prescribing

In 2010/11, £30.8 million was spent on prescribing in Hounslow. The majority of that budget was spent on prescribing in four disease groups (as categorised as British National Formulary [BNF] chapters) – Central Nervous System (£5.6 million; 18.1%), Cardiovascular System (£5.3 million, 17.1%), Endocrine System (£4.5 million; 14.7) and Respiratory System (£3.2 million, 10.4%).

Benchmarking data shows that in three of these four BNF chapters, spend per head of PCT population is in the lowest 25% nationally, but not greatly different from the average spend per head across London (which shares demographic and disease prevalence characteristics with Hounslow). ([Table 1](#)) For Central Nervous System prescribing, the per capita cost of £22.88 is significantly lower than the median expenditure in England of £33.16. Cardiovascular spend per capita was £22.60 in Hounslow, compared with the country’s



median spend of £26.24. Prescribing expenditure for respiratory disease was £13.70 per head of Hounslow population, compared with the national median spend of £18.75.

In Hounslow, the spend per capita is below the median value for England for the majority of British National Formulary (BNF) chapters, with the key exceptions of Nutrition and Blood (£10.42 [£2.4 million total spend] in Hounslow compared to £8.67), Skin (£6 [£1.4 million total spend] in Hounslow compared to £4.81) and Immunological Products and Vaccines (£2.48 [£0.6 million total spend] in Hounslow compared to £2.18).

4. Priorities

In 2011/12, Medicines Management will:

- Work closely with GWCC to maintain quality prescribing, including GP-focused support from the medicines management team; and
- Develop a North West London medicines management formulary.

5. Summary of Need

The table summarising the needs in Medicines Management has not been completed as it is not considered appropriate to this area of health and social care.