

Halesfield 6  
Telford  
Shropshire  
TF7 4BF

Tele: 01952 580434  
07855 474965  
Fax: 01952 580303

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To: All Telford and Wrekin GPs, Practice Managers, Practice Nurses, Community Pharmacists, Locum GPs and Shropdoc.

Dear Colleague,

**Position statement: Prescribing of medicines that are available to purchase over the counter**

Due to increasing pressures on NHS budgets and following a number of public engagement events, held between October 2016 and February 2017, the CCG has approved the restriction of prescribing of over the counter medicines used for short-term, self-limiting conditions.

From the patient's perspective this means that over the counter products like paracetamol and antihistamines will no longer be prescribed for short-term, self-limiting conditions – in these instances patients should be encouraged to buy their own medicines from their local pharmacy or supermarket.

Where there is a clinical need for these medicines and products to be prescribed on a longer term basis (e.g. where a patient takes paracetamol for the management of a long term condition like osteoarthritis), prescribing at NHS expense is still supported.

Although it is not possible to put an exact figure on the savings that we hope to make from this change in practice, we anticipate savings in the region of £100,000 per annum across Telford.

I have enclosed a copy of the position statement and it can also be accessed from the CCG's website: <http://www.telfordccg.nhs.uk/your-health/medicines-management/prescribing-guidelines/over-the-counter-medicines>. This position statement will come into effect from Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017.

The CCG is working closely with NHS England and local pharmacy contractors to maximise access to the Pharmacy First Scheme. You will be aware that the Pharmacy First Scheme provides access to a range of OTC medicines, free of charge for patients who do not normally pay for NHS prescriptions and present with a minor ailment covered by the scheme. Further information about the [Pharmacy First Scheme](#) can be accessed from the CCG's website. [A list of pharmacies](#) that have signed up to provide this service can also be accessed from the CCG's website.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Yours sincerely



**Jacqui Seaton**  
**Head of Medicines Management**