



# Community Pharmacies

Information on your  
Community Pharmacy

*January 2024*

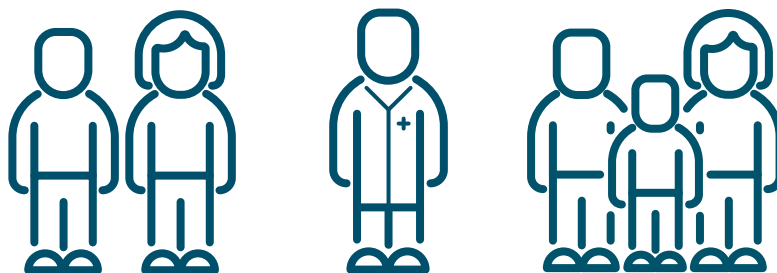
**healthwatch**  
Middlesbrough

  
Community Pharmacy  
Tees Valley

**healthwatch**  
Redcar and Cleveland

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## Introduction

Members of the public visit their Community Pharmacy for many reasons. This document will explain more about how this service works and answer some of your questions.

We have worked in collaboration with Community Pharmacy Tees Valley to produce this resource.

Relevant QR codes and links are provided for you to access additional information about your chosen subject.

### How to scan a QR code

1. Open the camera on your smart device e.g. phone or tablet.
2. Focus the camera on the QR code.
3. Gently tap the yellow box that appears on your screen.
4. This will take you to the relevant website for more information.



## Your Community Pharmacy

### What is a Community Pharmacy?

Community Pharmacies are NHS funded organisations that you find in many high streets, supermarkets or can be attached to a GP surgery. They can be part of a national chain or be independent.

They offer a range of services by trained medical professionals who can provide clinical advice on healthy living, minor ailments and over the counter medications.

A GP, Nurse Practitioner, Dentist or Pharmacist must first assess you then prescribe the medication and give instructions on how to use it before it is dispensed (this is your prescription). They may also offer many other NHS and private services.



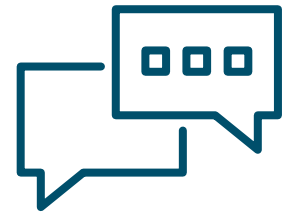
**Scan or click this QR code to find a community pharmacy and opening times near you.**

## Different Job Roles

- **Pharmacists** are registered healthcare professionals who specialise in the safe and effective use of medicines.
- **Pharmacy Technicians** are also registered and manage the supply of medicines and devices in a pharmacy and assist pharmacists with advisory services.
- **Dispenser** is someone who helps a registered pharmacist with the preparation and dispensing of prescription medications.
- **Assistant** works with patients every day and helps with their prescriptions, medications and wellness.
- **Delivery Driver** is someone who drops your prescription off as arranged with the pharmacy, they have limited clinical or medicines knowledge.

## Different Services your pharmacy offers.

- Dispensing of NHS Prescriptions.
- Non-prescription medication like paracetamol.
- Disposal of unwanted or out-of-date medication.
- Advice on treating minor health concerns and healthy living.
- Inhaler techniques.
- How to take a medicine safely.
- Helping you understand the correct dose of a new medicine and how often you need to take it.
- Blood pressure checks.
- Contraceptive services – including contraceptive pill without a prescription or a supply of emergency contraception.
- Flu Vaccinations.
- Covid Vaccinations.
- Stopping smoking.



## Pharmacy First Service (PFS)

This service is for minor illness consultations with a pharmacist and the supply of urgent medicines following a referral from NHS 111. This new Advanced service involves pharmacists providing advice and NHS-funded treatment, where clinically appropriate, for seven common conditions:

- sinusitis, 12yrs+
- sore throat, 5yrs+
- middle ear Infection, 1-17yrs only
- infected insect bite, 1yr+
- impetigo, 1yr+
- shingles, 18yrs+
- uncomplicated urinary tract infections in women, 16-64yrs only



Consultations for these seven clinical pathways can be provided to patients presenting to the pharmacy as well as those referred by NHS 111, GP Practices and others.

## Why is a Community Pharmacy sometimes closed?

A pharmacy may need to close temporarily if:

- They are unable to access the premises safely e.g. flood, break-in or power cut.
- A pharmacist is not on the premises. Without a responsible pharmacist the pharmacy team cannot legally operate, this means dispensing medication, handing out medications or providing services.
- A pharmacy may close temporarily during staff lunch breaks. This allows the pharmacist and team to take their allocated lunch break. You may find that since the pandemic started more pharmacies close over a lunchtime, this is often because there is not enough staff to cover all breaks at staggered intervals.

All pharmacies have set hours that they are contracted to open with NHS England that they must adhere to at all times. Opening hours must be kept updated so the public are aware of this either in the store window or on the internet.

# Prescriptions

## What is the best way to order prescriptions?

Repeat prescriptions can be ordered via the NHS App, NHS Account, via email requests or your surgery website. However, if you do not have access to the internet then some surgeries have a dedicated prescription telephone line. Many practices also have a prescription request box in their reception areas. Some pharmacies may also have an app you can download on your phone to order your medication.

Repeat prescriptions are regularly reviewed and your surgery will discuss this if it affects you. If you have any queries about what you have been prescribed, you must take this up with your surgery as your community pharmacy is unable to make any changes to prescriptions.

Order your medication a week before you need it. This will allow enough time for your GP to process your request and for the pharmacy to order your medication if required. It ensures you get your medication when you need it, so you do not run out. You do not normally need an appointment unless advised otherwise.

## Why is my prescription not ready for collection?

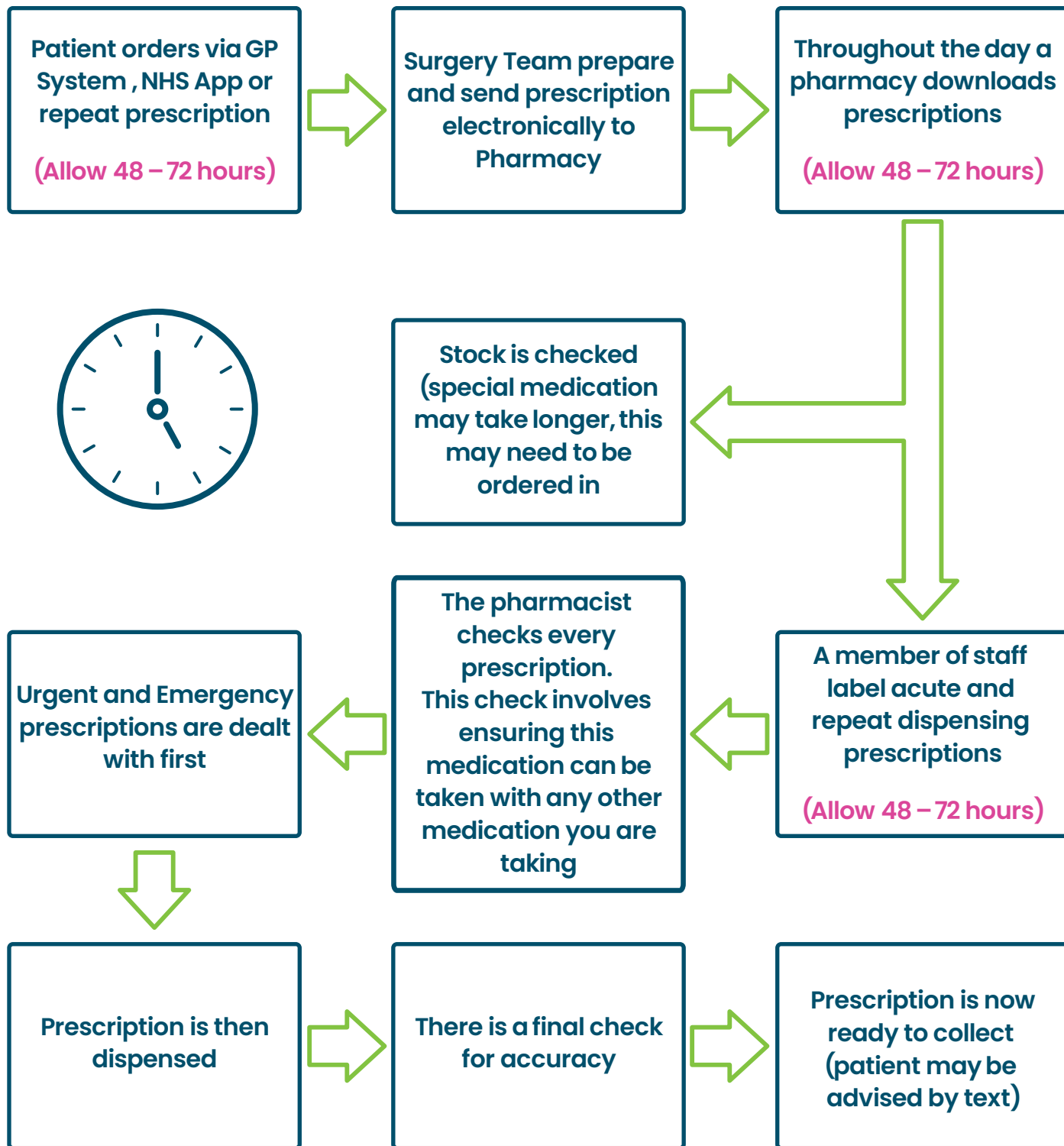
If your prescription is not ready for collection when you arrive at the pharmacy, it may be for a number of reasons including;

- The GP team has not electronically signed and sent the prescription to the pharmacy.
- There may be a query with the prescription and the pharmacy is awaiting a response.
- The prescription is sitting on the NHS digital system waiting for the pharmacy to 'download' which is done at intervals throughout the day.
- The medication you require needs to be ordered by the pharmacy as it is not routinely kept in stock.
- You need to request your next prescription if your pharmacy holds your batch of electronic repeat dispensing.
- A pharmacy does not know how many patients they will see in a day, they do not run appointments therefore capacity can be reached if there is an influx of acute (needed urgently) prescriptions.
- There is a virtual queue as they mostly dispense prescriptions electronically - you cannot see the queue but it is there!
- There has been an issue with staffing or IT systems. To ensure your medicines are safely provided to you they must be checked by more than one member of the team to ensure it is correct as per your prescription.



# A Prescription Journey

It can take up to 7 days for the whole process.



## Responding to Your Queries

The following sections are in response to what the public regularly ask us:

### **“I care for someone who takes a lot of medication... I need some help to make sure everything is in order!”**

Managing medicines for someone can be a challenge, particularly if they're taking several different types. A pharmacist and their support team can help with the medicine management to ensure patient safety.



Scan or click this QR code for Medicines: tips for carers.

### **“How much will my prescription cost, how will I find out other ways to pay or if I am exempt from paying?”**

In England there is a standard cost per NHS prescription. You may qualify for financial help with this and other NHS costs depending on whether you:

- get certain benefits
- are pregnant or recently had a baby
- are aged 60 and over
- are aged 19 and under
- get a War Pension
- have a certain medical condition



Scan or click this QR code to find out if you are exempt from paying for prescriptions.

A Prescription Prepayment Certificate could save you money if you pay for your NHS prescriptions. The certificate covers all your NHS prescriptions for a set price. You will save money if you need more than 3 items in 3 months, or 11 items in 12 months.



Scan or click this QR code for information about the cost of prescriptions and how to get a **Prescription Prepayment Certificate**.

If you get prescriptions for hormone replacement therapy (HRT), you may save more with the Hormone Replacement Therapy Prescription Prepayment Certificate (HRT PPC).



Scan or click this QR code for information about Prescription Prepayment Certificates for **Hormone Replacement Therapies**.



If you have any questions or prefer to speak to someone directly, please call one of the following:

- NHS Help with Health Costs helpline: 0300 330 1343
- Prescription services helpline: 0300 330 1349
- Queries about medical exemption certificates: 0300 330 1341
- Queries about Prescription Prepayment Certificates (PPCs): 0300 330 1341
- Queries about tax credit certificates: 0300 330 1347

## How do I get the medications or medical aids I need with an NHS prescription?

Most prescriptions are sent electronically from your GP Practice to a community pharmacy. You can nominate where to collect your prescriptions from. There may be an occasion when a paper prescription is still issued, for example, in an out of hours centre, accident and emergency or minor injury centre.



Scan or click this QR code to find out how you can nominate a specific community pharmacy.

**Some medications or suitable alternatives may be cheaper when bought over the counter so do discuss this at your community pharmacy.**

## NHS App

This system is available to all patients who can sign up to the App without having to request this through the GP Practice. This gives the patient access to their healthcare records, management of appointments and medication and provides helpful information and advice.



Scan or click the QR code for more information about the range of digital services.

You will need access to a computer, tablet, or Smart Phone for digital healthcare access. You can also contact your local Healthwatch for information (contact details are at the back of this resource).

## Healthwatch South Tees

### Information & Signposting

The information provided in this document is in response to queries received from the public across Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland over the past year.

If you are a member of the public and have any queries about any aspect of health and care across South Tees area, please contact our Information & Signposting service #JustAsk.



### Contact us

**Freephone: 0800 118 1691**

*(automated voicemail that we respond to regularly throughout each day)*

**Text Only service: 07451 288 789**

**Email: [healthwatchsouthtees@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchsouthtees@pcp.uk.net)**

Our service is covered weekdays between 9am and 5pm.

Visit our websites, by scanning or clicking these QR codes, for more information:



**[www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchmiddlesbrough.co.uk)**



**[www.healthwatchredcarandcleveland.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchredcarandcleveland.co.uk)**

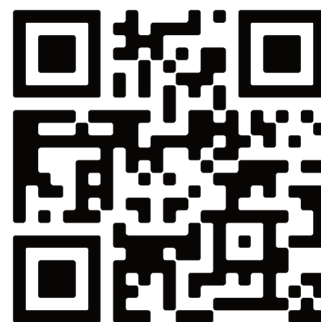


Scan or click this QR code and sign up to our monthly Ebulletin to:

- find out more about our work;
- receive updates about local health and care services;
- join in with local consultations;
- hear about local community activities.

## Feedback

Let us know if this document has increased your knowledge of Community Pharmacies and if you would like to give any other feedback by clicking or scanning this QR code.



## Acknowledgements

Community Pharmacy Tees Valley



**"I need to see a doctor!"**

Top Tips for Accessing Your GP Practice

**healthwatch**  
Middlesbrough

**healthwatch**  
Redcar and Cleveland

**Scan the QR code to access our "Top Tips for Accessing Your GP Practice" resource**



# You can also get involved with us

## Community Champions

You can be our vital link to all communities across South Tees. Through your professional role, you understand the needs of the people you support so why not share their experiences of local health and social care services with us. It will help us to identify gaps in service or highlight factors in our area that are contributing to poor health and wellbeing that we will share with those that make decisions about these services in our area. To find out more scan or click this QR code or click the link here.



## Volunteering

You can help your local community get health and care services in a way that they need them? Build confidence, meet people and learn new skills. We have a range of flexible volunteering opportunities from home or in the community for people of all ages and backgrounds. To find out more scan or click this QR code or click the link here



**Freephone: 0800 118 1691**

**Text Only service: 07451 288 789**

**Email: [healthwatchsouthtees@pcp.uk.net](mailto:healthwatchsouthtees@pcp.uk.net)**



**Healthwatch have been amazing at helping me understand who to speak to and how to deal with problems I have been having. It has made a huge difference knowing that someone really wants to know about my experience and for the first time it feels like something is actually getting done, I would have been completely in the dark, now I'm aware of what the problems are I know where to start tackling them. Healthwatch has helped open the door to people who wouldn't have listened otherwise.**



**healthwatch**