

Pharmacy First

Introduction

In Scotland, minor ailments comprise an estimated 5% and 13% of consultations at accident and emergency departments and general practice respectively, at an annual cost of £1.1 billion¹. NHS Pharmacy First Scotland (PFS) is an NHS service provided free of charge by local community pharmacies, for anyone registered with a GP practice in Scotland and other groups that meet the eligibility criteria described later in this module. The aim is for people to use the pharmacy to seek advice and treatment, if appropriate, for minor illnesses. Consultations can be provided for conditions including allergies, cough, eczema, headaches, indigestion, pain, thrush and urinary tract infections (a full list can be found on the link below). A referral to another healthcare professional may be needed, for example, the GP practice, dentist, optometrist or A and E.

A recent report found that 35% of the population used the service at least once in the last reported year and there has been a 60% increase in demand in the last three reported years². This makes understanding between services vitally important to make sure the right people consult the right service at the right time.

There is a useful guide to the service, which could be advertised/linked through practice websites to inform patients and educate staff about the service and the ailments covered. [NHS Pharmacy First Scotland | NHS inform](#). This link contains a patient information document which could be texted or given to patients here [NHS Pharmacy First Scotland: information for patients - gov.scot](#). The list of conditions pharmacist can give advice and treatment for is in this leaflet. A growing number of pharmacists are independent prescribers and can offer a wider range of consultations depending on the individual skills and expertise. By 2026 all qualifying pharmacists will be independent prescribers.

Module aims:

- To improve knowledge of the clinical conditions and treatments offered through Pharmacy First.
- To support appropriate direction of patients to Pharmacy First and understand the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the service.
- To explore how Pharmacy First works practically, the documentation involved and the methods of communication between pharmacies and GP surgeries.
- To explore practicalities of consulting in community pharmacies, overcoming communication difficulties and helping those who have challenges accessing services.
- To consider how to build/ensure good patient journeys in partnership with the community pharmacy.