



*Yorkshire
& Humber*
AHSN

**Transforming Lives
Through Innovation**



**Working together to help
cardiology patients**

Background

The Yorkshire & Humber AHSN has been working closely with Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust to implement the Refer to Pharmacy programme across the city, enabling patients to receive support with their medicines after discharge from hospital.

Medicines are the most common intervention used in the NHS and a vital part of delivering modern healthcare. Estimated total NHS spending on medicines in England has grown from 13 billion in 2010 to 18 billion in 2018, an average growth of 5% per year.

Evidence suggests that when patients move from one care service to another, 30% to 70% of patients have an error or unintentional change to their medicines. This situation is largely owing to a delay in communication between care providers.

In some cases, following a review and upon discharge from hospital, the patient is prescribed between one-or two-weeks' dosage of a new prescription. However, this may run out before the system catches up to change what is automatically generated by their GP surgery, or already dispensed in community pharmacy. This contributes to the 237 million errors which occur in England each year, costing the NHS over £2.5 billion per year which could be preventable.

Maintaining safer care as patients move across health and care services has become a national priority within the [NHS Long Term Plan](#). NHS England has commissioned all AHSN's to roll out the Transfer of Care Around Medicines (TCAM) programme that aims to support patients discharged from hospital and who may need extra help taking their prescribed medicines. This may be because they've had medicines stopped, started or changed during their admission. The Transfer of Care Around Medicines (TCAM) programme is known locally in Hull as Refer to Pharmacy.

The initiative has shown that patients who see their community pharmacist after they've been in hospital, are less likely to be readmitted and, if they are, will have a shorter length of stay.

The challenge identified

Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust operate from two main hospital sites: Hull Royal Infirmary and Castle Hill Hospital. Hull Royal Infirmary is a cardiology tertiary centre and received 4,830 admissions for heart disease in 2018-2019.





Refer to Pharmacy was established as a commissioned service in 2016. This service involves the referral of patients admitted to the cardiology ward who fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Patients taking five or more medicines, where risk of harm and drug interactions is increased.
- Patients taking new medicines or high-risk ones Ticagrelor, Aspirin, anticoagulants i.e. warfarin, apixaban, edoxaban and rivaroxaban and High dose statin therapy. All of which can cause several side effects.
- Patients who had their medicines changed
- Patients who have experienced a heart attack, due to medicines prescribed
- Patients who appear to be confused about their medicines
- Patients who have family members/carers to administer their medicines
- Patients who are prescribed medicines which require follow up, for example blood monitoring, dose increase or dose reduction.
- Patients prescribed medicines where doses will either increase or decrease over a period of time, for example opioids.

It also links with the Humber Coast and Vale's [Healthy Hearts Programme](#), which aims to help reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke for people at greatest risk.

"This service has been helpful in going the extra mile for patients and being there for them in optimising their medication regimen, especially understanding the new ones after recent hospital discharge."

Anonymous

Community Pharmacist, Hull

Working together

Yorkshire & Humber AHSN has been working closely with Community Pharmacy Humber and Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust to provide advice and support on how to embed Refer to Pharmacy across hospital teams and ensure that referrals are made on a regular basis.



Engagement Event

In June 2019, Yorkshire & Humber AHSN funded and supported an event at the Village Hotel in Hull. It brought together hospital pharmacy teams and community pharmacists to share their ideas on how the Refer to Pharmacy programme could be improved to increase the referrals made to community pharmacists and enable more patients to receive support on discharge from hospital. Following the success of the event, the trust has seen a 50% increase in the number of cardiology patients referred through this service.

Huddles with the Hospital Pharmacy Team

The Trust has recently expanded the use of Refer to Pharmacy to Hull Royal Infirmary, which involves sending admission notifications and discharge summaries to community pharmacists for patients discharged from several therapeutic areas.

In November 2019, the Yorkshire & Humber AHSN hosted a huddle session at Hull Royal Infirmary. It raised awareness of the service, the benefits to patients and the wider organisation. It also provided advice on how to identify patients in the hospital who would benefit from receiving a referral. More than 30 hospital pharmacists were in attendance, many of whom made a commitment to refer at least one patient per day.

Outcomes

Between November 2018 and November 2019, 132 Cardiology patients received medicines support from community pharmacists.

Evidence from academic studies undertaken by the Medicines Optimisation Research Team at Bradford University suggests that this could have helped to avoid 29 re-admissions to the hospital, reduce bed days by 742 and £270k savings for the CCG and Trust.

Because of this, Refer to Pharmacy forms part of Hulls Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention programme (QIPP). Yvonne Holloway is the Senior Principal Pharmacist Cardiology Lead and Medicines Optimisation at Castle Hill Hospital. She provides regular reports to the Pharmacy Clinical Governance meeting to demonstrate how Refer to Pharmacy is helping the trust to meet its QIPP targets around patient safety and readmissions.

“Our key priorities are reducing medication errors and re-admission rates and improving the long-term health of our local patient population”.

Yvonne Holloway

Senior Principal Pharmacist Cardiology Lead and Medicines Optimisation
Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust



Next steps

It's important for hospital staff and community pharmacists to see how their contribution to this service is benefiting patients, the team and the wider organisation. The Yorkshire & Humber AHSN has provided funding for an editable poster to enable Hull to share the results of Refer to Pharmacy with hospital staff and community pharmacists to boost morale and maintain momentum.

The Yorkshire & Humber AHSN will be working closely with Yvonne to embed Refer to Pharmacy into job descriptions for hospital staff and standard operating procedures to ensure that Refer to Pharmacy remains sustainable for the future care of patients.

Top Tips:

Julie Kirke is a Medicines Management Assistant at Castle Hill Hospital with responsibilities for the identification and referral of cardiology patients for Refer to Pharmacy.

"As a trust we face many pressures, but patient care is paramount, even during the busiest times. I care for family members and am aware that many vulnerable patients live on their own – this service provides me with assurance that these patients will receive the support they need to help them take their medicine to stay well when they are discharged from our ward".

Julie Kirke

Medicines Management Assistant
Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

Julie has shared her top tips.

- Review – check the date that the medication was prescribed to gain insight into patient behaviours around medicines adherence.
- Use the [Hello...my name is](#) a campaign for more compassionate care when introducing yourself to a patient.
- Always use a friendly and sensitive approach to gain consent from patients when referring them to the Refer to Pharmacy service
- Check if the patient has a carer/family member who looks after their medicines and encourage them to attend the consultation with the pharmacist as well.
- Prior to discharge, explain the NHS prescription Prepayment Certification Scheme and how to apply for it to the patient.

For further information please contact: Khalida Rahman, Programme Manager:
Khalida.rahman@yhahsn.com



