**Medicines access for Asylum Seekers IN BNSSG**

Dear Colleagues,

Due to the limited funds available to asylum seekers, they are often unable to purchase over-the-counter (OTC) treatment for minor ailments and are at risk of undertreating minor conditions which could lead to more serious presentations later or using NHS services inappropriately such as NHS 111 or 999.

Due to the limited funds available to asylum seekers, they often struggle to buy over-the-counter (OTC) medications for minor illness. This puts them at risk of using NHS services such as NHS 111 or 999 inappropriately. Undertreating minor conditions can also contribute to more serious presentations at a later date.

ICB and pharmacy teams have collaborated with The Haven to provide pharmacy solutions for asylum seekers experiencing barriers in access to medications.

1. **Stamped Prescription Scheme**

Asylum seekers and refugees receiving certain benefits are eligible for an [HC2 certificate](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme/hc2-certificates-full-help-health-costs), which entitles them to free NHS prescriptions, dental treatment and eye tests.

In asylum seeker hotel settings, staff help residents to apply for their HC2 when they first move in. A HC2 certificate takes time to arrive and in the meantime individuals face a fine if they claim free prescriptions during this time. It should also be noted that HC2 certificates expire and without support some asylum seekers struggle to renew their certificates leaving them again unable to access prescription medications without sufficient funds.

**If the Haven or a nominated GP practice (appendix 1) sees an asylum seeker that requires a prescription and does not have a valid HC2 certificate, they should stamp the top of the prescription using a Haven stamp to identify that this is a patient who does not have the money to pay their prescription charge.**

**The nominated community pharmacy (appendix 2) will then be able to dispense the prescription as normal with funding supported by the ICB.**

If an asylum seeker is seen by a GP and an over-the-counter medication is required then this should be prescribed, if indicated due to limited funds, to allow them to access the medication via this scheme.

A prescription should only be marked/stamped once it is established that the person does not have a valid HC2 certificate. Every effort should then be made to support the individual to acquire an up-to-date HC2 certificate ([complete an HC1 application form online](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-low-income-scheme/hc2-certificates-full-help-health-costs) or contact the individual’s accommodation team to support). Use of the stamped prescription scheme where a HC2 is available will result in an unnecessary cost to the ICB and will impact the sustainability of the scheme.

Unfortunately, it is not possible currently to offer this scheme for medications sent via EPS.

1. **OTC Medicines Voucher Scheme**

To reduce the pressure on local NHS services including GP practices, 111 and 999, we have introduced a scheme to improve access to over-the-counter (OTC) medication the asylum seeker population residing in initial accommodation hotels across BNSSG.

This scheme is to enable hotel residents to use a pharmacy first approach to self-manage minor illness and ailments. The ICB has an agreed list of OTC medicines that an individual can have access (appendix 3).

**If an OTC medicine is required, patients should present to their hotel support staff where a single use voucher will be supplied for use at the community pharmacy. The voucher will entitle the patient to a consultation with the healthcare assistant or community pharmacist and drug costs of medicines supplied within the agreed list.**

**All Pharmacies have access to language and translation services for the consultations.**

Some asylum seekers are housed in accommodation that is more remote and require funded transport to access their GP surgery or other healthcare appointments. These accommodation settings are equally distant from their nearest nominated pharmacy. If a patient seen in such a healthcare setting requires over the counter medication for an immediate problem, this should be provided by prescription in the first instance rather than directing individuals back to their accommodation to collect a voucher. Education can then be given on accessing the voucher scheme first in future.

**If you are a nominated GP surgery and would like further information about these schemes, or require access to a Haven Stamp, please contact:**

The Haven, Asylum and Refugee Health Service

Montpelier Health Centre, Bath Buildings, Bristol, BS6 5PT

Email: the.haven@nhs.net

Phone: 0117 9703887

**Appendix 1: Nominated GP Surgeries**

|  |
| --- |
| **GP Surgeries** |
| 168 Medical |
| Bradley Stoke Surgery |
| Bridge View Medical Centre |
| Broadmead Health centre |
| Charlotte Keel Medical Practice |
| Concorde Medical Centre |
| Coniston Medical Centre |
| Mendip Vale Medical Group – Pudding Pie Lane |
| Montpelier Health Centre |
| Stoke Gifford Medical Centre |

**Appendix 2: Nominated Pharmacies**

|  |
| --- |
| **Pharmacies** |
| Asda Bedminster BS3 4JY  |
| Asda Pharmacy, Patchway BS34 5TL |
| Bedminster Pharmacy BS3 1BN |
| Boots Broadmead BS1 3EA |
| Bradley Stoke Pharmacy BS32 9DS |
| Chew Pharmacy BS40 8SH |
| Cohens (Long Ashton Pharmacy) BS41 9AA |
| Cohens Pharmacy, Yatton BS49 4ER |
| Day Lewis Congresbury BS49 5DG  |
| Jays Pharmacy Waterloo Street Weston Super Mare BS23 1LA |
| Jhoots Patchway BS34 5PG  |
| Jhoots, Stoke Gifford Medical Centre BS34 7DA |
| Lloyds Coniston Medical practice BS34 5TF |
| Jhoots Montpelier BS6 5PT |
| Lloyds Pharmacy Church Rd BS13 8JZ  |
| Lloyds pharmacy Whitecross Road Weston Super Mare BS23 1EN |
| Lloyds Pharmacy Yatton BS49 4EG |
| Lloyds Regent Road, Bedminster BS3 4AT |
| Superdrug Broadmead BS1 3EU |
| Tesco Pharmacy Weston Super Mare BS23 1XG |
| Tesco Pharmacy, Bradley Stoke BS32 8EF |
| Wrington Pharmacy BS40 5QE |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Medicines**  | **Indication**  |
| Paracetamol 500mg tablets/caplets (pack size 32) / soluble tablets (pack size 24)  | Headache, mild pain, cold symptoms, general muscle aches and pains, temperature Soluble tablets only if unable to swallow tablet/caplet formulation  |
| Paracetamol oral liquid 120mg/5ml (pack size 100ml)  | Headache, mild pain, cold symptoms, general muscle aches and pains, temperature For children only if unable to swallow tablet formulation.  |
| Paracetamol oral liquid 250mg/5ml (pack size 80ml)  | Headache, mild pain, cold symptoms, general muscle aches and pains, temperature For children only if unable to swallow tablet formulation.  |
| Ibuprofen tablets 200mg (pack size 24) /400mg (pack size 24)  | Pain and inflammation  |
| Ibuprofen liquid 100mg/5ml (pack size 100ml)  | Pain and inflammation For children only if unable to swallow tablet formulation  |
| Oral rehydration sachets (pack size 6 sachets blackcurrant flavour)  | Diarrhoea  |
| Senna 7.5mg tablets (pack size 20)  | Constipation in adults only  |
| Senna liquid (Senokot) 7.5mg/5ml liquid (pack size 150ml)  | Constipation in adults only If unable to swallow tablet formulation  |
| Chlorphenamine 4mg tablets (pack size 28)  | Symptoms of allergic reaction, hay fever, itching  |
| Chlorphenamine 2mg/5mL oral solution (150mL)  | Symptoms of allergic reaction, hay fever, itching For children only if unable to swallow tablet formulation  |
| Loratadine 10mg tablets (pack size 30)  | Symptoms of allergic reaction, hay fever, itching  |
| Loratadine 5mg/5ml oral solution (100ml)  | Symptoms of allergic reaction, hay fever, itching For children only if unable to swallow tablet formulation  |
| Chlorhexidine 0.2% mouthwash (pack size 300ml)  | For bleeding gums, irritated gums and mouth ulcers  |
| Vitamin D ColeDose D3 800 unit tablets (suitable for vegans) (pack size 30) Or Colekal-D3 800 unit tablets (suitable for vegetarians not vegans) (pack size 30)  | Adults only. To regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body. It helps to keep bones, teeth, and muscles healthy. Used to prevent vitamin D deficiency and as such may be provided to all asylum seekers that present with a valid voucher.  |

**Appendix 3: OTC Medicines List**