Minor Ailment Scheme
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The Minor Ailments Scheme (MAS) will enable eligible patients to obtain treatment and advice from a designated community pharmacy, for a defined range of conditions.

A minor ailment can be defined as a self limiting acute illness.
The MAS will allow patients to receive self help advice, patient education and where appropriate, the supply of a short course of medication to treat or relieve the patient’s symptoms.

Although there has been an increased movement toward self care patient demand on general practice continues to grow. General Practice currently manages a significant number of minor self-limiting conditions, which impacts heavily on their workload.

Community pharmacy already has a well established role in the management of minor ailments. The MAS will further utilise community pharmacy as an integrated part of the primary health care team and recognise their ability to help meet local health needs. The evidence base suggests that MAS is particularly successful in socially deprived areas, where patients may otherwise present at their GP surgery for the management of minor ailments. The MAS will help reduce the workload pressure on GP practices and improve access to advice and treatment for self limiting acute illness.

Minor ailment schemes are already operating throughout England, and a Minor Ailments National Scheme, delivered by pharmacists, has been launched to cover the whole of Scotland (Modernising NHS Community Pharmacy in Scotland)

The implementation of a MAS will assist in achieving improved patient choice and ensure patients receive appropriate and timely treatment or referral.

Expected outcomes of the service include a reduction in the number of inappropriate GP referrals, improved access for patients, promotion of self-care, and improved use of the pharmacist’s professional skills.

Community pharmacists will provide a MAS to work in synergy with GP’s and their staff. Our pharmacies are uniquely situated, often in the heart of the community where pharmacists and their staff have daily contact with their local population, with large numbers of individuals seeking help and advice on a wide range of health topics. Community pharmacy offers the ideal environment to provide advice and the supply of medicines for minor ailments where appropriate.

Community pharmacists have a great wealth of knowledge in counselling and advising patients on the treatment of minor ailments, supply of ‘over the counter’ medicines and signposting or referring patients to their GP or an appropriate healthcare professional when necessary.
Deregulation of prescription only medicines (POM) to pharmacy (P) medicines will offer further opportunity to utilise community pharmacy in the management of minor ailments.

The Government has endorsed the development of minor ailment schemes in the Pharmacy White Paper ‘Pharmacy in England: building on strengths - delivering the future’.

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MAS – NHS Telford and Wrekin
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Service description

To provide advice and support to people on the management of minor ailments, including where appropriate, the supply of medicines for the treatment of the minor ailment, for those people who would have otherwise gone to their GP for a prescription.

The MAS will enable eligible patients (any patient registered with a participating GP practice within NHS Telford and Wrekin) to obtain treatment from a community pharmacy for a defined range of conditions and medicines from a limited formulary without cost to themselves, if they are exempt from paying prescription charges.

The MA service will operate as a triage system, accepting referrals into the service as well as self-referral and referral to other health and social care professionals, where appropriate.

Aims and objectives

- Improve access and choice for people with minor ailments by:
  - Promoting self care through the pharmacy, including provision of advice and where appropriate medicines without the need to visit the GP practice;
  - Operating a referral system from local medical practices or other primary care providers (community pharmacy); and
  - Supplying appropriate medicines only when necessary at NHS expense.
- Improve primary care capacity by reducing general practice workload related to minor ailments.
- Utilise the expertise and accessibility of community pharmacies
- Discourage unnecessary and inappropriate use of medicines for minor ailments.
- Encourage patients to visit community pharmacy for the management of minor ailments.
- To integrate community pharmacy into the local care pathways as an integral provider of care within the community.

Proposed Benefits of the scheme

- Access to advice and/or treatment for minor ailments is improved especially in our most deprived communities
- Patients are provided with expert advice in the pharmacy without having to make a GP appointment.
- Utilisation of extended hours opening of our community pharmacies
• The role and accessibility of community pharmacy for provision of advice and medication is promoted to the public.
• GP consultations for minor ailments are reduced.

Service outline

Services must comply with the current version of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain’s Medicines, Ethics & Practice. General Guidance to Good Practice in Counter Prescribing can be obtained from RPSGB.

Patient Eligibility

• Patients must be registered with a participating GP practice in NHS Telford and Wrekin
• All patients **exempt** from prescription charge will be eligible for the MAS
• Patients must have a MAS registration / record to receive advice and treatment
• Patients must be present in the pharmacy at the time of the consultation.
• Patients under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
• Only patients presenting with a MA specified within the MAS service specification can be treated. NO other minor ailments may be treated under this scheme.
• Patients are at liberty to refuse the service

Patient Registration

Patients may register for the service at a participating medical practice or they may self-refer directly to a participating pharmacy to register for the MAS. The participating pharmacy would need to confirm the patient is registered at a participating medical practice.

Patients must complete the registration form, giving consent to take part in the service, including agreement to be contacted by NHS personnel for satisfaction survey, and their exemption status in relation to NHS prescription charges.

Patients will be given a MAS record booklet (each intervention needs to be recorded in their booklet – Date, presenting complaint, advice given, medicine supplied, whether GP referral is advised)

The pharmacy should ensure the MA intervention is recorded on the Patients pharmacy medical record.

The pharmacist must be reasonably satisfied that the patient is registered with a participating NHS Telford and Wrekin GP practice. This may be achieved by:

• Being known to the pharmacy
- Pharmacy PMR record
- Presenting a current repeat prescribing list (no more than 6 months old)
- Presenting an NHS medical card
- Completed registration form
- Registration/ Record booklet

Patients referred into the service should be advised to take their evidence of registration to their pharmacy.

In the absence of any registration identification confirmation of registration could be obtained from:

- Pharmacy PMR for a prescription dispensed within the last 6 months
- Telephoning the practice

(In either of these two cases the patient should show evidence of their identity – documentation showing name and address)

Completed registration forms should be sent to the patients GP practice. The community pharmacy should keep a record of registrations completed at the pharmacy.

The GP practice should inform the PCT if a patient registers at multiple MA community pharmacies

**If the pharmacy is unable to confirm that the patient is registered with a participating GP practice the patient will not be eligible to use the scheme at that time and should be advised on alternative methods of accessing care.**

**Referral into the scheme**

Patients requesting an appointment at a participating GP practice for one of the minor ailments listed in the service specification may be advised of the scheme and offered to transfer into it.

Patients may self-refer to a participating pharmacy.

Parents or guardians of patients under 16 years of age may accept transfer into the scheme on behalf of the patient.

**Responsibilities of Participating Community Pharmacies**

**The MAS Process**

**Named Professional Lead – Community Pharmacy**

Each pharmacy should nominate a person who will act as Professional Lead on the scheme (usually the pharmacist in charge). A service agreement must be signed by the lead pharmacist for each pharmacy site.
The lead pharmacist should hold a CPPE Record of Achievement for a relevant Minor Ailments Learning Pack and have attended/received PCT led training on the local MAS – For the Pilot we would encourage all participants to request CPPE Minor ailments training pack

Evidence of certificate of completion, including the assessment needs to be submitted to the PCT together with a signed service level agreement.

**Liaison with GP Practices**

The pharmacy should liaise with participating practices to ensure that the service operates smoothly and that patients are appropriately referred, both to the pharmacy and to the practice.

Practices should display official posters and leaflets provided by the PCT.

Patients should only be offered the Minor ailments service if the community pharmacy can confirm their identity and has reasonable proof of registration with a participating NHS Telford and Wrekin GP practice.

All staff (including locum pharmacists and relief staff) must have a clear understanding of the service and must be aware their responsibilities. (The lead pharmacist must ensure all locum pharmacists are briefed on the MAS)

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) must be in place and followed. NHS Telford and Wrekin reserves the right to ask to see these SOPs if necessary.

The lead pharmacist must ensure all staff participating in the scheme are competent to do so.

All participating pharmacies will provide a professional consultation service for patients registered with participating GPs who present with one of the specified conditions. Patients MUST be exempt from NHS prescription charges.

(Consultations should be based on the WWHAM (Who is the medication for? What are the symptoms? How long have you had the symptoms? Action already taken? Is patient taking any other Medication?) method or equivalent.)

**The consultation Process**

The consultation process should be as private as possible. (A consultation room should be available if necessary).

The pharmacy contractor must ensure that pharmacists and other staff involved in the provision of the service have relevant knowledge and are appropriately and continually trained in the operation of the service, and that pharmacists are accredited to provide this service.

The pharmacy contractor must ensure that pharmacists and staff involved in the provision of the service are aware of and operate within the MAS protocols.

The pharmacy must maintain appropriate records of the consultation and any medicine/s provided to ensure effective ongoing service delivery and audit.

The minor ailment formulary and treatment algorithms must be used at all times.
The pharmacy will:

- Assess the patient’s condition
- provide advice on the management of the ailment, or;
- provide advice and a medicine from the local formulary, supported by counselling on its use, or;
- provide advice on the management of the ailment plus a referral to an appropriate health care professional or;
- provide advice on the management of the ailment (and a medicine from the local formulary if needed, supported by counselling on its use) plus a referral to an appropriate health care professional.

It is essential that all patients receive appropriate advice about symptom management, self care and are advised to return if their condition deteriorates.

**If a patient has been referred into the MAS by a participating GP practice but during the consultation it is considered that they are unsuitable for the MAS they should be referred back to the GP practice using the GP referral form. The patient should be given a clear explanation of why they have been referred back to the GP practice.**

Consultations on minor ailments should be undertaken in accordance with the pharmacy’s standard operating procedure. The consultation can be carried out by the pharmacist or appropriately trained member of staff (healthcare assistant or dispenser). Members of staff must be certified pharmacy protocol trained (NPA Interact, Buttercup or equivalent). A copy of staff members qualifications must be submitted along with the signed SLA and pharmacist’s CPPE certificate. MAS algorithms must be followed. A pharmacist must supervise the consultation and may ask more questions to ensure the advice given / treatment suggested is suitable.

Each pharmacy must have an accredited lead pharmacist who is responsible for ensuring all staff and locums know about the service and how it works. New staff must read the pharmacy SOP and operate the scheme according to the service specification.

The consultation will consist of:

- Patient assessment (exclusions to treatment must be assessed)
- Provision of the advice set out in the relevant minor ailment protocol
- Provision of medication (under supervision of a pharmacist), only if necessary, from the formulary, appropriate to the patient’s condition, with instructions for its use.
- Completion of referral form to GP Practice if necessary
- Completion of patient MAS record form and confirmation of exemption status or charge for medication supplied
- Completion of MAS consultation form
- Entry of medication provided onto patient’s PMS record

Only licensed GSL or P packs should be supplied. Under no circumstances should a POM pack be supplied. Medicines must not be packed down from bulk.
The Pharmacy MAS consultation Form should be completed for each consultation, regardless of whether medication is supplied. It is not necessary to complete a separate form for each item supplied.

The pharmacist in charge at the time of the consultation must sign the MAS record form at the time of the consultation.

The pharmacist must ensure the patient has been given appropriate health promotion and self care advice.

**Supply of treatment**

Treatment must be provided in the original pack as received from the manufacturer, including the patient information leaflet (PIL) where available.

Following the patient consultation – treatment choice **must** be based on cost effective treatment options from the MAS formulary. Patients should only be given treatment for a single episode of illness. Treatment choices should focus on first line management options. Treatment choice will be monitored.

The MAS formulary will be continuously reviewed.

Maximum of TWO medications may be supplied per consultation.

A MAS record form must be completed for each consultation according to the pharmacy SOP.

The pharmacy must ask for and the patient must provide evidence of exemption from prescription charges to qualify for free treatment under the MAS.

If the patient would normally pay for their prescriptions they would not be eligible for treatment under the MAS.

If supply difficulties occur with a product on the formulary, the pharmacy may NOT break bulk from dispensing packs to issue. NHS Telford and Wrekin may, in certain circumstances, arrange for an alternative product to be issued on a short-term basis to cover availability difficulties.

Further supplies of this medication following a subsequent professional consultation should only be given if, in the opinion of the pharmacist, it is appropriate and is within the protocol.

If a pharmacist has any doubt over the appropriateness of the supply of a formulary medicine, the supply should be withheld and the patient referred to their GP.

If an Adverse Drug Reaction is noted, a ‘Yellow Card’ must be completed if appropriate and the GP advised accordingly.

Any drug incidents, events and errors identified in connection with this scheme must be recorded and NHS Telford and Wrekin notified using an incident form. The patients GP should also be notified if necessary.
Any complaints about the service should be documented by the pharmacist and a copy sent to:
Heather Weaver
Medicines Management Team Secretary
NHS Telford and Wrekin
Halesfield 6
Telford
Shropshire
TF7 4BF

If the pharmacy suspects that the patient or carer is abusing the scheme they should alert NHS Telford and Wrekin (Hitesh Patel : (01952) 580435 or 07854849913)

**Referral to other medical services**

On some occasions the pharmacist may consider that the patient needs to be seen by another health professional. This may be a GP, Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Practice Nurse.

The urgency of the referral will depend upon the presenting symptoms.

**Process for referral to other medical services**

Complete a *GP/ Other Practitioner referral form*

Give the form to the patient (or responsible adult if the patient is under 16)

For non-urgent referrals - advise the patient to make an appointment with their GP practice.

If the pharmacist considers an urgent appointment necessary – fax, e-mail or telephone the practice in addition to advising the patient to make an appointment. Telephone is preferable in these circumstances.

If the pharmacist considers the patient’s symptoms to be sufficiently life threatening they should be advised to go to A&E. (arrangements should be made if necessary)

**Service promotion**

NHS Telford and Wrekin will be responsible for the local promotion of the service to healthcare professionals and the public. This includes the development of publicity materials, which GP surgeries and pharmacies can use to promote the service to the public.

Pharmacies should display minor ailments scheme posters and patient information leaflets promoting the service.

Participating GP practices should display minor ailments scheme posters and patient information leaflets promoting the service.

We would encourage communication between you and your local GP practices to ensure the smooth operation of the MAS.

No personal, private or individual advertising of the scheme is permitted.
No mail shots or similar direct advertising of this service by individual pharmacies/pharmacists to patients or the public is permitted.

**Service funding and payment mechanism**

Reimbursements and Fees:

- Consultation fee - £3
- Drug Cost Reimbursed (Drug Tariff or C&D cost price + VAT)

**Each consultation is for an individual patient only.**

A Consultation fee is paid to the service provider for each MAS record form completed, irrespective of whether a specific treatment has been supplied.

Community pharmacies will be required to complete a **monthly** return for NHS Telford and Wrekin as follows:

- MAS consultation record forms (these should be filed in GP order as is normal for PPA returns)
- One monthly MAS return form should be completed (detailing medication issued and consultations completed)

All MAS returns should be sent to: Heather Weaver, Medicines Management Team, NHS Telford and Wrekin

If details of the symptoms/condition/s is/are not listed on the MAS record form, the form is not completed correctly, or inappropriate treatment is supplied, NHS Telford and Wrekin reserves the right to withhold payment for that form.

Payments will be made to the participating pharmacy by BACS at the end of every month. Pharmacists are advised to retain a copy of their monthly MAS return.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

Primary care commissioners in conjunction with the LPC and Medicines Management team are responsible for an annual review of the service.

Service providers will be expected to participate in monitoring and evaluation of the service.

Service providers will be expected to continuously evaluate their SOPs and referral procedures.

The service will be evaluated annually to determine continued need and suitability. Treatment choices will be monitored to ensure cost effective treatment options are chosen and the MAS formulary is continuously reviewed. Any changes to the formulary will communicated to all participating community pharmacies.

Pharmacy MAS returns, Referral records and Patient/staff (GP practice and Pharmacy) questionnaires will be used to evaluate the MAS.
Patient questionnaires will help to evaluate if patients value a MAS.

GP practices and Pharmacies will also be asked if they feel the service has helped in the management of minor illness.

The provider should ensure availability of evidence that can demonstrate that pharmacists and staff involved in the provision of the service have undertaken CPD relevant to this service.

(NHS Telford and Wrekin will supply each pharmacy with patient satisfaction forms - The pharmacy is required to ask patients to complete the forms and return the completed forms to NHS Telford and Wrekin for analysis)

The minor ailments scheme will be a fixed term pilot which will be evaluated at the end of March 2010. After which a recommendation will be made to NHS Telford and Wrekin based on the success of the pilot. Continuation of the MAS will depend upon availability of funding.

NHS Telford and Wrekin GP practices

- The practice should nominate a lead for the MAS (they should ensure all reception staff are briefed on the MAS service and appropriate referral criteria)

- To support the scheme by displaying a NHS Telford and Wrekin poster (where available) in the practice and having NHS Telford and Wrekin MAS patient leaflets available.

- To make available to patients the list of conditions covered under the scheme and the list of participating pharmacies.

- Refer patients to a participating community pharmacy if appropriate. (Patients should be given a list of participating pharmacies – they should not be directed to a specific pharmacy unless they request the details of a specific pharmacy)

- To act appropriately on any referrals received from pharmacists.

- To co-operate and liaise with Community Pharmacists to discuss any concerns relating to treatment choices or concerns raised by patients.

- Where possible ensure patients are not referred to community pharmacy under the MAS if their condition is not covered in the MAS list of minor ailments that can be treated. It will be the pharmacies responsibility to ensure the patient can be treated by the MAS – if a patient is referred to a pharmacy and they are unable to treat them they will be referred back to the GP practice)

- To record registrations on clinical systems and ensure the NHS Telford and Wrekin is notified of patients who register at multiple pharmacies.

- To work with NHS Telford and Wrekin to resolve any issues of service abuse by registered patients
NHS Telford and Wrekin Primary Care Trust

- Support the scheme by providing publicity materials
- Provide training for MAS accreditation
- Check that MAS consultation records have been completed satisfactorily and advise contractors about incomplete or disallowed claims.
- Authorise claims for payment via the finance department.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the MAS.
- Manage concerns raised by participating community pharmacies / GP practices / Patients
- Evaluate the scheme through activity, cost savings, patient satisfaction and clinical engagement review.
- Review conditions managed under the MAS
- Review treatment choices from the MAS formulary
The pharmacist is to ensure that the consultation record is completed as follows:

The consultation can be carried out by a qualified assistant but must be overseen by the pharmacist in charge who will be required to sign the consultation form.

- Pharmacy staff to confirm patient is registered with a participating GP practice within NHS Telford and Wrekin. Suitable evidence includes: known to the pharmacy, medical card, copy of repeat prescription or PMR.
- Pharmacy staff to enter name of GP and/or practice and patient details (initials of patient, post code and date of birth only).
- Pharmacy staff to complete presenting symptoms (under supervision of the pharmacist) or refer to pharmacist in charge if necessary.
- If medication is warranted, then pharmacy to record medication supplied and quantity. Treatment choice to be based on cost effective treatment options (From MAS formulary / treatment protocol).
- Not all MAS consultations will result in the supply of medication.
- Only medicines listed in the MAS formulary may be supplied and will be reimbursed at prices stated on the monthly return form.
- Pharmacist in charge to ensure quantity of treatment supplied is appropriate for the presenting minor ailment (ensure medication is not wasted through the MAS).
- Pharmacist / Pharmacy staff must refer to the MAS protocols for clinical guidance on symptoms reported by the patient.
- Maximum of two related conditions may be treated per consultation.
- Maximum of two medications may be supplied per consultation.
- Pharmacy staff to complete “Action taken” as appropriate i.e. consultation only, advice & medication or GP referral.
- Pharmacy staff to indicate if evidence of exemption from prescription payment has been provided. (Exemption must be checked at each MA consultation)
- Pharmacist in charge must sign and date-stamp the MAS record
- Patient to complete declaration for exemption from MAS charges.
- Pharmacies to report to the PCT any suspicion of abuse of the scheme through repeat usage by patients.