

Press Release

Date: 19 January 2015

Major project sets out to tackle money wasted on medicines in Stafford and Surrounds

Health bosses in Stafford and Surrounds are launching a campaign to help reduce the £1.5million of medicines wasted every year across the local area.

Stafford and Surrounds and Cannock Chase Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are urging the public to join them in the campaign aimed at preventing money being wasted on unused or unnecessary medicines. This money could be reinvested in vital, local healthcare services.

Posters, leaflets and stickers on prescription bags will go out to pharmacies and GP surgeries across Stafford and Cannock areas from 19th January, urging patients to think carefully about the costs and to help manage their medicines better.

Dr Anne-Marie Houlder, Chair of Stafford and Surrounds CCG, said:

“The amount of money that goes to waste every year on medicines that are prescribed but do not get used always shocks people. Quite often, these medicines just end up in the back of the cupboard gathering dust.

“£1.5 million is a huge amount of waste,” she said. “That amount of money could be used to fund over 250 hip operations or treat over 5,500 cancer patients to receive chemotherapy.”

“It is everyone’s responsibility to keep the level of waste down and patients can play a crucial role by ensuring they only order what they need,” said Dr Johnny McMahon, Chair of Cannock Chase CCG.

“We are also working closely with pharmacists and GPs across the area to get them to check more rigorously what people need before issuing or dispensing prescriptions.

He added: “Medicines cost the NHS money whether a patient pays a prescription charge or not, so it’s vital we all do our bit to help keep prescribing costs down by taking steps to reduce waste.”

Ends

Key Messages

- Only order what you need - check what supplies you have at home before ordering your repeat prescription and only order the items you require.
- Waste medicines cannot be re-used or re-prescribed. (Check your items before you leave the pharmacy. Even if they are not opened, once medications leave the pharmacy they can NOT be reused or recycled for safety reasons. If you receive an item you do not need tell the pharmacist before leaving the pharmacy.)
- You do not need to order medication which is only used when required every month. Items will only be removed if they have not been ordered for at least six months.
- Let your GP or pharmacist know if you are not taking any of your medications or are not taking them in the way is says on your prescription - changing the quantity on your prescription can reduce the risk of unnecessary waste.
- If you feel your medication is not helping your condition or you have any questions please speak to your GP or pharmacist.
- Should you ever run out of your medications speak to your pharmacist.
- Take all your medicines with you when you go into hospital.
- Should you have any unwanted medications – return these to a pharmacy for safe disposal. Do not flush them down the toilet or place in normal household rubbish as this is an environmental hazard.
- Return your unwanted medicines to your pharmacy for safe disposal - unused medications kept at home can be a safety risk – especially to children.
- Your medications are only safe for you – do not share them with anyone else.
- If you need prescription items before their due date (i.e. due to holidays) please add a note to this effect on your repeat prescription.
- Health professionals such as pharmacists and GPs have a part to play in this by monitoring prescriptions and challenging whether some treatments are still needed.

Attachments

- Major project sets out to tackle money wasted on [Major project sets out to tackle money wasted on](#)

For more information contact

Richard Caddy
Communications and Press Manager
Tel: 01782 298 167
Email: richard.caddy@staffordshirecss.nhs.uk

Robin Scott
Press and PR Officer
Tel: 01782 401048
Email: robin.scott@staffordshirecss.nhs.uk