

Dear Colleague

IMPLEMENTATION OF NHS NEAR ME IN COMMUNITY PHARMACY

Purpose

1. This circular informs NHS Boards and community pharmacy contractors of NHS Near Me and provides important information in preparation for the roll out of NHS Near Me to community pharmacy in the near future.

Background

2. NHS Near Me is a video consultation platform that is being implemented in community pharmacy to increase accessibility to services for patients by enabling video consultations, where appropriate.

3. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 the use of this platform has greatly increased across the NHS and in particular in GP practices in primary care and hospital outpatient clinics.

4. Near Me is a tool for healthcare professionals and it is for them to exercise their professional judgement to decide how and when to use it. It can be used in providing NHS services including medicines advice, medication reviews, minor ailment consultations (shortly to move to Pharmacy First), smoking cessation services and independent prescribing consultations.

5. For both pharmacists and patients a Near Me video consultation will reduce potential exposure to COVID-19 by avoiding the need for a person to come into a pharmacy. Even when a medicine supply is needed, the time spent in the pharmacy can be minimised if the consultation has been provided, in advance, by video.

5 June 2020

Addresses

For action

Directors of Pharmacy NHS
Boards
Community Pharmacy
Contractors

For Information

Chief Executives

Enquiries to:

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Detail

6. Near Me is powered by Attend Anywhere technology. It is already used in primary care, secondary care and some community teams. More information about Near Me can be found at www.nearme.scot.

7. All Health Boards are being asked to roll out the use of NHS Near Me to community pharmacy in the coming weeks. There are a number of steps to enabling the technology to allow all community pharmacists to opt into using Near Me for their normal patient population. Guidance is currently being developed to support this. The guidance will cover both the technical set-up, processes for use and appropriate clinical use of Near Me within community pharmacy.

8. Near Me is licensed for the provision of NHS services and must not be used for the purposes of commercial activities or profitable gain. In addition, there must be no incentives or inducements offered to the public to use Near Me in the delivery of NHS services.

9. Test locations have been agreed for community pharmacies in NHS Highland, NHS Forth Valley, NHS Tayside and NHS Dumfries and Galloway. These test sites will commence in the first two weeks of June with 44 community pharmacies taking part in total.

10. The purpose of the tests of change is to understand the opportunities of using Near Me in community pharmacies such as:

- the types of services that can be delivered effectively
- how to manage Near Me alongside current workload and workflow
- patient acceptability in community pharmacy
- opportunities for development

11. The aim of this testing is to refine the clinical aspects of the guidance for pharmacies using the outcomes of the tests of change, before making Near Me available to all community pharmacies in Scotland from mid-June.

12. In the meantime community pharmacies should start to prepare for Near Me by assessing their technical readiness and undertaking training. Details on how to check readiness for Near Me and the preparations that should be made can be found in Annex A.

13. NES are providing a webinar on Near Me on Tuesday 9th June at 7 pm. The direct link to book onto the webinar is available here: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3367291051246305805>.

14. The Scottish Government is working with Community Pharmacy Scotland and senior Health Board stakeholders nationally to support the roll-out and communicate progress. Local pharmacy networks will be working with Health Boards to capture learnings and move at pace to support the rollout.

15. Community Pharmacy Scotland has been consulted on the contents of this circular

Action

16. NHS Boards are asked to note the contents of this circular and to copy to all community pharmacy contractors and the Area Pharmaceutical Committee for information.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rose Marie Parr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rose Marie Parr

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer and Deputy Director,
Pharmacy and Medicines Division

Preparations for Near Me	
1	Internet connection Check internet connection at all locations pharmacists/pharmacy staff will consult from – including any remote use away from the pharmacy (eg, at home): • A reliable internet connection is in place: Near Me does not require an NHS connection. • A wired broadband/WiFi connection is preferred. The alternative is a mobile data connection (4G or 5G sim). <i>Note there is a cost of using mobile data so sufficient data allowance must be in place.</i> • Ensure any internet firewall or proxy is configured to allow access to Near Me websites and protocols. If required, firewalls settings can be found at: https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/rc/Content/D_Articles/Network_MediaPathways.htm (account required for access) • Check connectivity at: https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/webtctest • If you have connection problems, check internet connection speed. Use a site to check, such as: www.speedtest.net or www.broadbandspeedchecker.co.uk Minimum requirement: download 1.1Mbps, upload 0.7 Mbps, ping under 150ms If unable to reach minimum requirements, contact eHealth department at NHS board/HSCP and/or pharmacy's own eHealth/IT team.
2	Video calling devices Put in place video consulting equipment for pharmacists/staff: • Set up consulting room computers with webcams and speakers or add integrated screens. Consider whether to do the same for dispensary computers. • In some situations, a moveable device may be more useful: laptops, tablets or mobile phones. • Be pragmatic about using equipment you already have during a coronavirus outbreak (as supplies of webcams are limited worldwide). Information governance approval to enable use of own devices (eg, smartphones) is available at: https://www.informationgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/covid-19-information-governance-advice/ • If adding any new equipment to existing computers, ensure computer settings are correct for default microphone and speaker, and compatible with other devices in use.

3	Hardware on video calling devices Check hardware meets the following requirements for all devices pharmacists/staff will use for video consulting: • Computer operating Windows 7 or later, or Mac OS 10.11 or later • Tablet or mobile phone operating Android 5.1 or later, or iOS 11.4 or later, or iPadOS 13 or later • Chrome browser (version 71 or later) on computers/Android devices or Safari browser (version 11.4 or later) on Apple products (Attend Anywhere only works in these browsers). • If any are missing, consult your board/HSCP eHealth/IT department. Updated technical specifications available at: https://nhs.attendanywhere.com/callers/Content/D_Articles/What%20you%20need%20to%20make%20a%20video%20call.htm
4	Training Ensure all pharmacy staff receive training on how to use Near Me's underlying video consulting platform (Attend Anywhere) so they can use it themselves and/or explain it to a patient: • Make a test call as a patient at: www.nearme.scot • See the resources on Near Me video consulting available from NES on the Turas platform at: https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/28943/coronavirus-covid-19/remote-consulting [Note: the Near Me section is below the telephone consulting section] • For pharmacy staff who will provide Near Me consultations, complete the video consulting skills training available on the Turas link above
5	Apply for a Near Me waiting area Near Me is licensed for use in NHS Scotland. Any NHS contractor who wishes to use Near Me to provide NHS services should apply for a Near Me waiting area at: http://www.vc.scot.nhs.uk/near-me/scottish-contractor-groups/ Applications can be made from 05/6/20 onwards, although Community Pharmacy waiting areas will not be made live until mid-June when the test phase is complete.