

Review of the Enhance medication prompt pilot

November 2023



Introduction

Neighbourhood Teams (NTs) asked if Enhance third sector delivery partners (DPs) could support participants with medication prompts. This received a mixed response with some DPs concerned about risks and insurance implications.

This led to Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF) agreeing to facilitate a pilot piece of work with 2 DPs covering 3 NT areas:-

- Health For All - Beeston and Middleton NTs
- Garforth NET - Kippax NT

The pilot was set to run for 3 months with monthly reviews bringing Leeds Community Healthcare (LCH), LOPF and DPs together to check progress.

What does "medication prompt" mean?

It is

- Reminding people to take prescribed medication
- It can be either face-to-face or on the telephone

It is NOT:

- Giving medication (administration)
- Mixing sachets
- Opening blister packs
- Checking medication doses

At each review it was reported that there had been no referrals for med prompts at all and so awareness raising of the offer was increased and the pilot was extended to 6 months.

It became apparent the demand from NTs to provide medication prompts had been dramatically reduced as LCH's self management team started a successful piece of work to promote independent health management. This had a knock-on effect and reduced the demand for DP support around med prompts.

At the final review it was agreed that the pilot would be ended.

Other learning identified as part of the exercise is shared in this briefing.

Dosette boxes

This is a service regularly required to support older people who may have a complicated medicine regime with different pills taken at different times of the day. A dosette box can help people to manage their medication independently.

Dosette boxes are not always available for free on the NHS and they are not suitable for every type of medicine and the service is dependent on the pharmacist's capacity.

Some Leeds pharmacists provide a service where dosette boxes are filled as per the GP's instructions and then delivered to the home. Some pharmacists will provide the service but charge a fee.

Not all people manage better with a dosette box. They can be fiddly and some people struggle. If DPs are not sure they need to speak to their NT partner as there may be other ways to support a person's independence.

LCH has a pharmacy technician team who have provided Enhance Delivery Partners with a form to complete that can be sent to the pharmacy technician team for a dosette box service to be established. (LOPF have shared this with all DPs but if DPs need another copy they can get that from LOPF)

LCH does not share a list of pharmacists who provide the dosette box service as the list changes frequently. So if a pharmacist has said yes or no to DPs before, this may not be a consistent response.

Alarm box or Smart pill Box

This is a pill organiser and dispenser that has a built in alarm. These can be set to sound an alarm that prompts people to take their medication at the required time. When the alarm sounds the device will dispense the correct medication and dose for that time of day, reducing the risk of taking a repeated dose. Once the pill has been removed from the dispenser, the alarm stops. They can be provided by Telecare or purchased individually if the participant prefers to do that. Some pharmacists will fill alarm boxes but not all.

DPs need to discuss with their local pharmacist and if none can be found they can contact LCH pharmacy technicians at pharmacytechnicians@nhs.net
To find out more about the support on offer from Telecare email TelecareReferrals@leeds.gov.uk or call the team on 0113 378 2991.

Managing medication supply and storage

Hoarding

Enhance DPs tell us that often when visiting the homes of Enhance participants they find that there is a surplus of medication building up.

There might be a number of reasons for this:-

- A particular medication has been stopped by the GP but not been cancelled from the prescription
- The delivery of medication is out of synch with the person's instructions to take them
- The person is ordering ahead of need
- Overordering
- A person may not want to take the medication that they have been prescribed but are afraid to tell their GP - (Patients' rights - People do have a right to refuse but GPs do need to be aware as they are making clinical decisions for their patients based on medication being taken)

If a DP feels that medication hoarding or storing is a cause for concern they should speak to a pharmacy technician at pharmacytechnicians@nhs.net

Medication Reviews

Often people cannot remember why they take the medication that they do. There ought to be an annual prescription review. If DPs think a review is needed they can refer to the person's GP.

Disposal of medication

If DPs support people to reduce the levels of stored and unwanted medication they can:-

- Drop off at local pharmacist and request a form to be completed that acknowledges what has been dropped off
- Request that pharmacist arrange collection
- Request that a family member drops the medication at pharmacist

Handling and delivery of medication

Often DPs are asked to support Enhance participants by collecting prescribed medication from a pharmacist and delivering it to the person at home.

Some DPs have voiced some concerns about this task and those concerns have been shared with the pharmacy technicians for guidance:

- Only **prescribed** medication can be collected and delivered
- When collecting and delivering DPs should check that the label on the package has the correct details of the person's name and address
- Packages from pharmacists are sealed and should remain so until delivered to the person named on the package
- Some medication requires refrigeration. DPs should check whether this is the case. Delivery of medication that does need refrigeration needs to be scheduled so that it can be delivered immediately after collection and not be kept in the DP's possession. Medication that requires refrigeration will have a sticker on the packaging that states that clearly
- LCH advice is that prescribed medication collected from a pharmacist can be treated like click and collect from a supermarket

LOPF will work with LCH to develop a policy for medication handling and delivery and will share that with all Enhance DPs.

Summary

When DPs first meet an Enhance participant, as part of the assessment, medication, ongoing treatments and health needs, are always discussed. Supporting people to better manage their health is a key element of the Enhance programme and any support that DPs can provide will be discussed with the person during these conversations. Enhance project staff will draw attention to any concerns they may have with the Neighborhood Team so that enquiries can be quickly addressed or clarified.

Whilst DPs do not formally provide medication prompts many tell us that they are able to help people manage their medication through phone alarms, digital clocks, calendars, dosette boxes and to support them with strategies to self-manage their medication. DPs also check in on people and ask how they are coping independently. DPs notice for example, duplicate medication opened or dosette boxes not opened for the correct days etc. This leads to discussion with the individual and information sharing with the NT where appropriate.

Whilst the pilot led us to appreciate that there is currently very little demand for DPs to support NTs with medication prompts, it was a useful exercise as it connected organisations with LCH's pharmacy technicians and those connections will continue to be useful when any guidance is required. The pharmacy technicians are open to communication from DPs and welcome any questions

The LCH Self Management Facilitators have clearly developed a very successful process for supporting independence which has taken an enormous pressure off the NTs meaning that DPs will rarely be asked to support with prompts.

