

NHS Scotland Pharmacy First and Pharmacy First Plus sound very similar, but are different. Here are the basics that staff in practices need to know.

PHARMACY FIRST

- Click [here](#) for more information. Essentially Pharmacy First is the rebranded version of what **was** called the Minor Ailments Service (MAS).
- All pharmacies across Scotland provide this service.
- The idea is that anyone can walk-in to the community pharmacy or be referred there by another health or care service for treatment and/or advice for common minor conditions.
- Common minor conditions that can easily be treated under Pharmacy First can be found in this [aide-memoire](#). You may want to print these off, share with colleagues and have handy at reception. You can also bookmark this resource on your reception PC.
- **N.B.** It is important that you tell patients that the outcome of a referral will not always result in the supply of medication. The pharmacist will decide whether to provide:
 - **Advice**
 - **Advice and Medication/Treatment**
 - **A referral to a more appropriate health professional (e.g. Optometrist or GP)**
- Like doctors and nurses, pharmacists must follow a formulary of what they can and cannot supply on the NHS, if the medicine is not on the list, the person could perhaps purchase the medication.
- There are 5 national Patient Group Directives (PGDs) which allow the pharmacist to supply prescription only medicines (POMs) in low risk scenarios. The PGDs cover conditions like UTIs (in women only), uncomplicated cellulitis, impetigo and shingles. A list of the national PGDs and a reminder of who **CANNOT** be treated on them (exclusion criteria) can be found [here](#).

PHARMACY FIRST +

- Click [here](#) for more information. Essentially, Pharmacy First Plus is **where the community pharmacy has a pharmacist who is an independent prescriber**. You may also hear it called the **Clinical Common Conditions service (CCC)**.
- **Not all pharmacies in Scotland can provide this service**, so it is best to check first before referring anyone. Also, some pharmacies will only be able to provide this service during certain times in order to manage numbers.
- Pharmacy First Plus is new to NHS Fife - **we currently have only 11 community pharmacies that can provide this service**. Over the next few years, there are plans to train more pharmacists as independent prescribers.
- Pharmacists must undertake additional training and require another qualified prescriber to supervise them during this. If this is a doctor, they are called a **Designated Medical Practitioner (DMP)**. This is one of the main barriers to developing the future workforce; that in turn will take some pressure away from the demands on general practice. The pandemic has made this especially difficult.
- Pharmacists may therefore approach the practice and ask for support from you and your team to help them achieve this new qualification.
- It may be useful to discuss as a practice how and who may be able to help before receiving an enquiry.
- Talk to your local pharmacy or health board pharmacy champion to find out what's happening in your area.

Wording for Text Message Services



Some practices have said they are confused between the “Pharmacy First” service and the “Pharmacy First PLUS” service.



Consequently some patients have received conflicting information from various sources.

In order to promote standard and consistent messaging across Fife, consider using the text examples below in any text/messaging services you use.

You can now visit a community **‘PHARMACY FIRST’** for all minor illnesses and common clinical conditions. **All pharmacists in Scotland will be able to assess your symptoms** and either -

- a) provide appropriate advice
- b) supply a treatment on the NHS (or to buy)
- c) refer you to the most appropriate medical professional

This may even be your GP but by using the **‘PHARMACY FIRST’** service **you will get the most appropriate care in the quickest time possible.**

Visit <https://www.gov.scot/publications/nhs-pharmacy-first-scotland-information-patients/> for examples of what can now be treated.

Our local community pharmacies include ...

Look out for the next issue of the Pharmacy First Practice Update for more useful information.

