

Repeat Prescription services in Sefton

Meeting held – June 2017

This mini report details the experiences, which People First Merseyside members have shared with Healthwatch Sefton on accessing repeat prescription services in Sefton both via their GP surgeries and chemists. All of the feedback shared with us has been added to the Healthwatch Sefton Feedback Centre. [www.healthwatchsefton.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchsefton.co.uk) This web based tool helps members of the public to rate the services they use and provides Healthwatch Sefton with real time experiences which help to identify trends and issues which we can act on.

Healthwatch Sefton

Healthwatch Sefton exists to make health and social care services work for the people who live in Sefton or use services based in Sefton. Everything we say and do is informed by our connections to local people. Our sole focus is on understanding the needs, experiences and concerns of people of all ages who use services, and to speak out on their behalf.

Our role is to ensure that local decision makers and health and social care services put the experiences of local people at the heart of their work. We believe that asking people more about their experiences can identify issues that, if addressed, will make services better. Healthwatch Sefton is set up as a private company limited by guarantee, a subsidiary company of Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (Sefton CVS). There is a small staff team and a large team of volunteers who work together to ensure the organisation works towards its strategic and local priorities.

We are uniquely placed as we have a national body, Healthwatch England. Both organisations have significant statutory powers to ensure that the voice of people who want to have a say about health and social care services is strengthened and heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate health and social care services.

Healthwatch Sefton works with Healthwatch England to ensure the voice of Sefton residents is represented at a national level. Healthwatch England picks up national issues and works with Healthwatch Sefton to help provide a national picture. We also work as part of a regional North West Healthwatch Network.

### Healthwatch Sefton Community Champion networks

Healthwatch Sefton has set up, developed and co-ordinate 2 Community Champion networks in Sefton. The South and Central Community Champion network and the Southport & Formby Community Champion network. Both networks are made up of local Voluntary, Community & Faith (VCF) sector organisations along with libraries children's centres and health centres. Both networks meet on a bi-monthly basis.

The Community Champion network members work together to:

- Raise any emerging health and social care issues within their localities. A decision is then made if further evidence is required or if the matter is to be referred to the Healthwatch Steering group for consideration and further action.
- Ensure a two way flow of information between commissioners, providers and local people. This includes having regular attendance at the meetings from the 2 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) in Sefton.
- Network members request providers of services to attend the network meetings to clarify any health or social care issues

raised or for a provider to provide regular updates on their services.

- Network members ensure all staff and volunteers within their organisations and centres understand the work of Healthwatch Sefton and the role of the Community Champion network.

Our Community Champion members are vital in the community to feed in any emerging health or social care themes that come through from their groups and members that they represent to Healthwatch Sefton.

Both networks are unique to Healthwatch Sefton and have in the past been acknowledged by Healthwatch England for being an effective model of engagement.

### Who are People First Merseyside?

People First Merseyside are a membership organisation led by and for people with a learning disability. Our mission is to help people with learning disabilities to speak out, be respected and live active, healthy and happy lives.

Anyone with a learning disability who lives on Merseyside can join us. We have two offices, one in Liverpool and one in Bootle. Our members do activities and learn things together. And, we speak up on behalf of other people with learning disabilities at meetings.

<https://www.peoplefirstmerseyside.co.uk/> 21/06/2017

People First Merseyside is a member of both the Healthwatch Sefton South & Central Community Champion network and the Southport and Formby Community Champion network. It was during the South & Central network meeting that People First Merseyside members raised concerns over the ordering of repeat prescriptions. It was agreed for Healthwatch Sefton to attend a meeting at People First Merseyside on

7<sup>th</sup> June 2017 to chat with 12 members regarding their experiences accessing repeat prescription services.

Main areas highlighted by People First Merseyside members

- Members felt the new system for ordering repeat prescriptions was more difficult for people with learning disabilities and that it took away their independence.
- Members reported that they sometimes end up with no medication as they did not understand when they needed to re-order.
- 1 member stated the new system now resulted in them having to make an appointment to order their repeat prescription, therefore taking up GP appointment time.
- 2 members stated they felt they managed to order their repeat prescription themselves.
- 3 members stated they struggled to order their repeat prescription on their own.
- 6 members stated they needed help to order their repeat prescription.

Feedback from People First Merseyside members

12 members of People First Merseyside shared their feedback on accessing repeat prescription services.

The meeting was held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017 following issues raised at the Healthwatch Sefton South & Central Community Champion network meeting.

Their experiences are detailed below:

- “The chemist used to order my prescriptions for me. They used to tick the items I needed. Now I have to do it myself but I can’t read or write to tick what I need. I now have to make an appointment and see my doctor each month to get my prescription”.
- “My chemist used to order my prescription for me. I now have to go to the doctors. I don’t like it”.
- “I used to be able to ring the chemist for my prescription. Now everything is not on the same system. I can read and write but when the doctor asks me what tablets I want I can’t remember”.
- “I went to the doctors for my medication. I had to tick off what I needed. The chemist used to do this for me and then deliver to me. I now get my prescription when I go in the doctors and I take to the chemist then I have to wait 48 hours”.
- “Doctor told me to fill in a form and I have to wait 24 hours for my prescription. I said I had no tablets. The doctor told me to ask the pharmacy to lend me some. I then went all the way to my chemist and asked them and they said no”.
- “My dad had no medication. Was told to get some from the pharmacist. My mum had to go and get him some from the chemist because he was unwell”.
- “I used to be able to do my own prescriptions myself with the chemist. But it has changed now. My sister now has to do it for me as I would forget. I can’t do it myself anymore”.
- “For 2 days the chemist did not have my inhalers in”.

- “My doctor says my prescription will be ready in 48 hours. It would make it easier if someone could tell me how long that is. I don’t know how long 48 hours is. I don’t know when to order my prescription before it runs out”.
- “I don’t know when my inhaler runs out. There are no numbers on it. I keep telling my doctor. I don’t know when it is empty. I can’t hear it when shaking as I am hard of hearing. People with learning disabilities need inhalers with numbers. I have asked over and over. I am so anxious and stressed”. (The inhaler the member was given was with a spacer and was told there was no inhaler compatible with numbers).
- “To order your own prescription you need to be able to read or you have to give up being able to order yourself or make an appointment”.
  - General comment in group – “We could end up with no medication”. One member shared that she had no medication and her mum would not let her leave the house in case she got sick so she had to miss out on her day. Another member stated she was diabetic and had ended up with no medication as she does not know how to order. Members also commented that the writing / labelling on the packages was too small for them to read / understand and they could get mixed up with other medicines.

Questions asked by members of People First Merseyside

- Do GP practices have good practice in place for patients with learning disabilities re: ordering prescriptions? How do they tell us about this if they do?
- Can blister packs indicate to a patient 2 days before the last medication is taken to re-order?

Recommendations

In addition to the questions above, Healthwatch Sefton would like both NHS South Sefton CCG & Southport & Formby CCG to work together with local GP surgeries to consider the following recommendations:

- Training for all staff to help them support patients with learning disabilities. If this is already in place can details be shared with Healthwatch Sefton on training delivered including which surgeries have received this and when?
- To ensure safe practice is in place for people with learning disabilities to ensure they are not left without medication.
- The use of 48 hours for repeat prescriptions was a barrier for members as they did not understand this term. Staff to be aware.
- Can labelling on medication be made in a larger font for people with learning disabilities?

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Sefton would like to thank People First Merseyside members for taking part and sharing their experiences on accessing repeat prescription services. We would also like to thank Joanne English for co-ordinating and chairing the meeting.