

Case for Change

Review and Future Direction of the Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) Service

NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (NHS STW) has reviewed the Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) Service - a telephone and email-based repeat prescription system that has been operating since 2016/17.

The POD Service is currently used by 70% of GP practices in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

While the service initially helped reduce medicines waste, a recent review shows that it no longer offers value for money, has access issues, and duplicates services already available through GP practices and the NHS App.

Staffing challenges and rising costs, now exceeding £1 million annually, have also made the current model unsustainable.

In line with national NHS priorities to improve digital access, NHS STW is working phase out the POD service over the coming months. Our priority is to support patients in using the NHS App or other digital tools to manage their prescriptions, whilst also maintaining non-digital options for those who need them - such as the ability to contact GP practices directly.

Key actions will include:

- Promoting the NHS App and offering support to patients who are most likely to be impacted.
- Working with GP practices to ensure alternative ways to order repeat prescriptions (online, phone, or in-person).
- Encouraging the use of electronic repeat dispensing for eligible patients.
- Engaging with patients, carers, and community partners to ensure a smooth and inclusive transition, as well as digital support options (i.e. workshops to learn more about using the NHS App).

Although this process will mark a change for our patients, we would like to reassure that the transition will be carefully managed to ensure continued access to prescriptions.

A public information campaign will be launched to explain the changes, available options, and the support on offer.

More details on this change can be found at: www.shropshiretelfordandwrekin.nhs.uk/changes-to-prescription-ordering-in-shropshire-telford-and-wrekin