

# West Norfolk CCG Patient and Stakeholder

# Newsletter

Issue 9 June 2016

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## Patients urged to "open the bag" as new campaign launches

People in Norfolk and Waveney are being urged to 'open the bag' to help reduce medicines waste and save money for the NHS.



The call is being made as part of a new campaign to tackle wasted medicines which costs about £4.7m<sup>1</sup> in Norfolk and Waveney each year. In weight, these add up to around 176<sup>2</sup> tonnes – the same as 176 elephants.

Called 'Your Medicines, Your NHS', the year-long, four-phase campaign has been organised by Norfolk and Waveney's five clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) – West Norfolk, Great Yarmouth and Waveney, North Norfolk, Norwich and South Norfolk.

Patients are being urged to do their bit to help the NHS by cutting down unnecessary waste, in turn saving money for reinvestment in health services elsewhere.

The easiest way people can do this is by opening the bag at the pharmacy counter when they receive their medicines and handing anything they no longer need back to the pharmacist. They should also make sure they only order the medicines they will use, as any medicine returned to a pharmacy must be destroyed, even if it has not been opened.

**Michael Dennis, a medicines management expert with the CCGs, said:** "Your medicines, your NHS is an important new campaign which aims to save the NHS thousands of pounds by encouraging everyone in Norfolk and Waveney to do their bit to cut back on waste.

"NHS medicines are funded by the taxpayer. That means that if the medicine isn't used, it's the taxpayer who misses out.

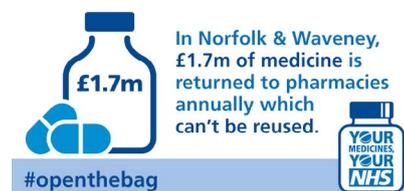
"There are some really easy things which everyone can do to help prevent waste and make the most of scarce NHS resources. Our messages are simple – don't order any medicine you don't need, open the bag and give anything you don't require back to the pharmacist or delivery driver and always tell your GP, pharmacist or nurse if you can't take a medicine."



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Of the £4.7m of medicines wasted each year, estimates show that:

- £1.69m is being returned to pharmacies because it's not needed
- £1.41m is kept in the home and is out of date
- £0.78m is disposed of in care homes



Audits show that around half the medication returned to pharmacies has not been opened, which means people are ordering it but don't even start to use it. Although pharmacies can accept unused medicines back from patients, Department of Health regulations state these cannot be reissued and must be safely disposed of.

**Ian Small, also a medicines management expert for the CCGs said:** "People often ask us how they can help reduce costs for the NHS. This is an easy way to do just that, and will make a significant difference.



"Drugs can only be used by the patient they are prescribed for, and cannot be sent abroad to help in other countries. As a result, any drugs which leave the pharmacy and aren't used end up being wasted – which is why we're asking people to take action as soon as they pick up their prescription by opening the bag there and then."

You can find out more by visiting <http://tiny.cc/YourMedicines>YourNHS> or following the campaign on Twitter @YourMED\_YourNHS and using the hashtags #openthebag and #yourmedicines. Alternatively, visit <https://youtu.be/uXeR0estXhE> to watch a short film explaining more.

1. This figure is based on Department of Health figures for the whole of the UK. This excludes the costs of prescribing medicine which could be bought cheaply over the counter and the unnecessary costs of prescribing branded medicines over non-branded.
2. This estimate is based on 2015 figures provided by Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust across all five CCGs covering Norfolk and Waveney.

## Annual Report and CCG finances

West Norfolk CCG's Annual Report has been published on our website here: <http://www.westnorfolkccg.nhs.uk/about-us/publications>

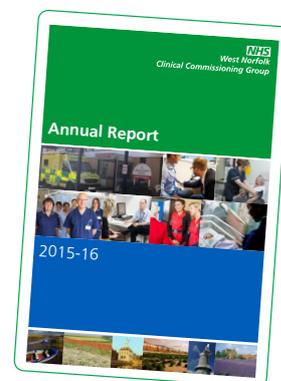
There's a lot to read about what the CCG has done for patients during 2015/16 and, of course, our audited financial statements.

### The headlines:

2015/16 the CCG achieved its statutory duty to break even and delivered a surplus of £1.3m (0.6%) against a target of £2.3m, (1.0%).

In 2016/17, the CCG's annual budget increases in cash terms to £240 million, up by just under 4%, representing an increase of £10 million in the CCG's programme allocation, but this money is more than taken up by increased costs:

- The prices we pay organisations such as hospitals, mental health, community services trusts etc will go up by £3 million;
- Increased activity linked to population growth/demographic factors will cost an extra £2.7 million;
- Other services such as continuing healthcare and ambulance services will cost an extra £6.9m. Efficiency savings (Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention - QIPP) are required to close the gap between our budget and increased costs.



● ● ● The CCG has estimated that it will need to make savings of around £10 million in 2016/17 to balance the books. The money we are allocated for running costs at the CCG in 2016/17 has not been increased over 2015/16.

# West Norfolk CCG's AGM **Save the date!**

**Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday, July 21 2016.**  
Please save the date!

The purpose of the AGM is for the CCG, stakeholders and local people to come together and reflect on the CCG's progress over the previous year, and to highlight achievements made, key challenges faced, and plans and priorities for the coming year.



●●● The event will take place at King's Lynn Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn, from 9.30am. The CCG's Governing Body meeting, which is held in public, will follow afterwards.

## If it's not a 999 emergency, but you need medical help – Call NHS 111

NHS 111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It is free to use and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Choose Me  
**NOT A&E**



Our local NHS 111 service is provided by Integrated Care 24 Ltd (IC24), who operate from their base in Norwich. IC24 are a membership based 'not for profit' social enterprise gold mark holder which means they have no shareholders and all surplus goes back into their frontline services. IC24 have been providing primary care services for over 20 years and also run the NHS 111 services in Great Yarmouth and Waveney, North Essex and South Essex.

If you need to call NHS 111 you will speak to a trained call handler, always supported by clinicians and coaches. You will be asked a series of questions to assess your symptoms and based on these answers you will be taken through to the most appropriate, local treatment for you. This may be your nearest walk in centre, minor injury unit, pharmacy, out of hours GP, or to one of the clinicians within NHS 111. If your condition is life threatening, NHS 111 can even dispatch an ambulance to you straight away.

The NHS 111 team are made up of a mixture of call handlers, clinicians and coaches from a variety of backgrounds. **Craig Shorten – 111 Norfolk & Wisbech Clinical Lead for IC24 says:** "Here at IC24 we recognise the value of clinical support for our call handlers. Nationally NHS England and the CCGs like to see 1 clinician for every 6 call handlers, however at IC24 we operate on a 1 clinician to every 4.5 call handler ratio. Training to become an NHS 111 call handler takes 10-12 weeks in total and includes intensive classroom sessions, independent learning and supported time working with coaches. Training doesn't finish when the course ends; it is continuous throughout the service and calls are audited monthly. Call handlers are local people who strive to provide the best care for the people and community of Norfolk and Wisbech. **An NHS Pathways Trainer adds:** "Training is an intense process, similar to that of 999 call handlers which provides our call handlers with the essential skills and knowledge to provide a good service for our patients. Training includes mental health, basic life support as well and how to use the NHS pathways system."



Look out for the CCG's Choose Me Not A&E campaign which will be running again this summer. The campaign aims to help reduce pressure on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn by promoting other healthcare options in the West Norfolk area such as local pharmacies, GPs and the NHS 111 service. To find out more visit [www.choosemenotaande.co.uk](http://www.choosemenotaande.co.uk)

●●● For more information visit: <http://www.ic24.org.uk/> Follow us on twitter: @ic24uk

If you would like more information about any of the topics in this newsletter or would like to provide feedback or get involved please contact:

# Get Involved!

Emily Arbon, Communications Manager at West Norfolk CCG via 01553 666925 or email [e.arbon@nhs.net](mailto:e.arbon@nhs.net)