

Locally Commissioned Service Specification 2021-22

Assessment and Prescribing of Influenza Antivirals for Prophylaxis to Patients Living in Care Homes (During and Outside the Flu Season)

Background

During the flu season (i.e. when the Chief Medical Officer has confirmed that flu is actively circulating), GPs are allowed to prescribe antivirals on FP10 both for treatment of patients and as a prophylactic for those that do not have symptoms. Outside the flu season, GPs may prescribe under a Patient Specific Direction (PSD) if commissioned to do so by a CCG. Public Health England are keen to ensure that antivirals are issued to all exposed patients where flu outbreaks occur in residential settings with vulnerable patients, such as care homes, subject to individual patients being assessed as suitable to receive antivirals and, consent being sought.

Use of antivirals to alleviate symptoms of flu is covered under the GMS contract, however it has been confirmed that prescribing for prophylaxis is not. This locally commissioned service is intended to ensure that practices who have capacity to provide this service are able to do so by being fully reimbursed at a rate which has been confirmed to be acceptable to the LMC. Our current arrangements are therefore as follows.

1. Scope of service

- Public Health England will alert the CCG to an outbreak or suspected outbreak of influenza in a care home. They may also contact practices with symptomatic patients at the same time to provide clinical advice on treatment, vaccination and infection control.
- Should TVPHE confirm an outbreak, they will make a recommendation to the CCG as to whether antivirals should be offered to asymptomatic residents to prevent the spread of infection.
- OCCG will contact any practice with patients in a home to discuss the assessment of patient suitability for antiviral prophylaxis. It should be noted that participation in managing outbreaks through prescribing antivirals for prophylaxis is entirely at the discretion of the practice.

- Antivirals should be issued within 48 hours of onset of symptoms in the last case (36 hours if zanamivir is used) and practices will need to take this into account when considering whether they have the capacity to carry out the service.
- If the practice does not wish to participate in prescribing antivirals for non-symptomatic patients or does not have the capacity to do so within the required timescales, the CCG will discuss with alternative service providers and will inform the practice of any arrangements made to provide antivirals for prophylaxis.

2. Clinical Governance

Practices prescribing antivirals for prophylaxis should refer to the Public Health England guidance on use of antiviral agents for the treatment and prophylaxis of seasonal influenza <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-treatment-and-prophylaxis-using-anti-viral-agents>

3. Supply of antiviral drugs

In the event that a large quantity of medication is required at short notice, certain pharmacies will keep stock available. These pharmacies will be located in Oxford City and in the North and South of the County. OCCG will inform all practices of the locations and contact details of participating pharmacies once agreed.

4. Payment

If the practice has the capacity to manage the outbreak and wishes to do so, the CCG will make funding available to cover the cost of diverting clinical resources to do this. **The payment will be £30 per patient assessed for suitability for prescribing antivirals for prophylaxis.** This is intended to cover:

- review of each patient's records by a GP or other appropriately qualified prescribing clinician, to ensure there are no contraindications to antivirals;
- assessment of the patient in the home and consenting for treatment;
- prescribing on **FP10** (*in flu season*) or under a **Patient Specific Direction** (*outside the flu season*);
- recording on the patient record;
- arranging for administration of antivirals in the home.

Payment will be made for each patient fully assessed, regardless of whether antivirals are ultimately prescribed as it is understood that some asymptomatic patients may not be suitable for antivirals and others may not consent to treatment.

Payment will be made on receipt of an invoice, which should include the name of the home concerned, the number of patients assessed and the number of these who were prescribed antivirals and the date of administration.

5. Monitoring

No formal monitoring is required for this service, however practices must ensure that detail of the numbers of patients assessed and of prescribed antivirals is included on the invoice for payment.

6. Out of hours cover

This service will cover the flu season and also any outbreaks occurring outside the flu season. Practices are not expected to provide the service outside of core hours. In exceptional cases, and following discussion with practices, the CCG may seek support from alternative providers to ensure that patients can be provided with antivirals in the out of hours period to ensure that the recommended 48 and 36 hour recommended timescales are met.

7. Contacts for queries

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