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Stress Awareness Month – small ways to make a big difference from the Devon Wellbeing Hub

April is [Stress Awareness Month](#) and the theme for this year is ‘little by little’. Little steps and changes can go a long way in helping us to manage stress and lead to significant improvements in our wellbeing overtime. These small commitments to ourselves can also make the difference between thriving and coping.

The [Devon Wellbeing Hub](#) have put together suggestions of some small actions that can make a big difference:

- **Adapt healthier habits:** Making small, healthy lifestyle changes can help us manage stress. It can be tempting to eat ‘comfort food’ when we’re overwhelmed, but [what we eat can have a huge impact on our mood](#). Try making a wholesome lunch rather than buying something packaged on the go and opt for healthy snacks. Being physically active can be very effective in relieving stress and gives our brains something to focus on. Think about your commute - perhaps there’s an option to walk or cycle instead of drive? If you work from home, try and go for a short walk or jog during your lunch break, or before/after work. Not only does this help improve your work-life balance, but [spending time outside](#) also helps reduce stress and improve wellbeing. Additionally, think about healthy sleep habits - try to cut out screens an hour or more before bed, and if you can, vow not to pick up your phone for the first hour of the day.
- **Make time for self-care:** Things can feel overwhelming when we’re stressed, but it’s important to have ‘me time’, especially when we’re busy. Set aside some time for socialising, relaxation or exercise – anything you really enjoy and allows you to unwind.
- **Write a ‘ta-da’ list:** Alongside our to-do lists, writing a ‘ta-da’ list with everything you’ve done that day (no matter how big or small) can help you reflect on how much you’ve achieved, rather than always focusing on what still needs to be done.
- **Keep things organised and tidy:** [Research](#) has shown cluttered spaces can have negative effects on our stress and anxiety levels, as well as our ability to focus, our eating choices, and even our sleep. Having a tidy home or workspace can give us a sense of order and control. It’s not always easy to keep top of domestic duties, but start small and try dedicating 15 minutes a day - you’ll be surprised the difference it can make.
- **Give yourself permission ‘not’ to commit:** In a world where so many demands are placed upon us, some days it is ok to realise that we’re doing the best we can. When you wake up each day, take a moment to recognise what you are doing well. Even if that is simply going to work, or just managing to get out of bed. Focus on what you can control, take a deep breath, and remember that if you need to take a break from ‘doing’ then that is fine.

You can find more useful tips on how to manage stress on the [Stress Management Society website](#) and the [NHS website](#).

Get in touch: If you work in healthcare, social care or the police in Devon and are struggling with any aspect of your wellbeing, or you lead a team who would benefit from support, the Hub can help you today.

Please get in touch by emailing dpt.devonwellbeing@nhs.net or by calling 0300 303 5455. You can also fill out the simple referral form on the [Devon Wellbeing Hub website](#).

Devon Teach and Treat Call for Expressions of Interest

Appropriate access to, and capacity of, supervision to support pharmacists to become independent prescribers is a challenge across the workforce, and particularly within community pharmacy. The Devon Integrated Care System is supporting a Teach and Treat Pilot. This pilot is led by an experienced non-medical prescriber, using a cross-sector, multi-professional model to identify appropriate supervision and clinical environment for trainee prescribers. The Teach and Treat lead will provide some DPP capacity directly, coordinate supervision for all T&T trainees and provide clinical skills examination sessions to complement the prescribing course.

Expressions of Interest from community pharmacists are invited who wish to undertake their independent prescribing qualification, next year, with the support of the Devon Teach and Treat pilot. You can complete your EOI [here](#). Closing date: 31st May 2024 17:00 pm
Notification to successful applicants: week beginning 17th June 2024
Email: plh-tr.devonteachandtreat@nhs.net if you would like further information.

Early cancer diagnosis and community pharmacies in deprived areas (CoPECaD): an online survey

As Community Pharmacy Devon, we are supporting University of Exeter Medical School researchers in inviting **all customer-facing staff at your community pharmacy** to take part in a short online survey (takes 5 to 10 minutes to complete). The research team are keen to learn about the usual practice of customer-facing pharmacy staff regarding their experiences of asking patients about their symptoms when they seek over-the-counter treatment for symptoms which may be potentially related to cancer.

We would like to encourage you and your pharmacy team to support this important research by forwarding this email to all customer-facing staff at the pharmacy. By doing this, we believe we will be helping inform the whole issue of the early diagnosis of cancer.



To head straight to the survey and participant information sheet, please follow the link or QR code :https://exe.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5yzh38bGUReklx8

The “Not Normal for You?” Scheme

The ‘Not Normal for You?’ (NNFY) scheme, which enables pharmacists to refer patients showing potential cancer symptoms to their GPs, will be available to pharmacies across the UK following Alliance Healthcare’s decision to expand the scheme to all pharmacies.

As part of the rollout, Alliance Healthcare will provide pharmacies with marketing materials - including leaflets and referral cards, free-of-charge, as part of their standard delivery.

The scheme, pioneered by Alphega Pharmacy member - Jackie Lewis, owner of Lewis Pharmacy in Exmouth, was rolled out across the [Alphega Pharmacy](#) network of more than 1,000 pharmacies in the UK in October 2023.

Through the scheme, pharmacy teams are trained to spot potential early symptoms of cancers and other illnesses. All pharmacy staff, from counter assistants to pharmacists, will be trained to look for ‘red flag’ symptoms and behaviour, which may be indicative of certain cancers.

Following the identification of symptoms, a pharmacist can discuss the issue with the individual and encourage them to visit their GP if appropriate. Symptoms are written on the back of an eye-catching ‘Not Normal for You?’ orange referral card which can be presented to a GP in-order to confirm symptoms. Although the NNFY card does not enable a faster GP visit, it acts as a mode of validation of symptoms which makes it quicker for a GP to give a referral.

The brightly coloured referral card often acts as a prompt for patients to book an appointment with their GP, further increasing the likelihood of diagnosis after potential symptoms have been identified by pharmacy staff.

Jackie Lewis has also developed a free online training programme called: ‘Let’s communicate cancer’ which aims to teach pharmacy teams about cancer symptoms using videos and quizzes. The resource is hosted on the British Oncology Pharmacy Association [website](#) and the NPA’s websites.

Communication to Community Pharmacies: Self-care for hay fever

NHS England guidance recommends that for minor health conditions where over the counter management is appropriate, routine prescribing should not occur in primary care.

Across Devon, GP practices are being reminded to follow this guidance and have been supported to review their current prescribing, with a focus on hay fever. People in Devon will be reminded that products prescribed for mild to moderate hay fever will not routinely be prescribed by their GP practice. Instead, they will be encouraged to self-care and purchase products over the counter, where this is appropriate to manage their symptoms. Patients may also be referred via the Pharmacy First service to community pharmacies, for advice on the management of their hay fever symptoms. The ICB is asking for your support by sharing this information across your network, so that a unified message is received across Devon. Where Pharmacy First pathways are already established, pharmacies may wish to liaise with their local GP practices to discuss referral capacity. Further information on conditions for which over the counter items should not routinely be prescribed in primary care can be found at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/policy-guidance-conditions-for-which-over-the-counter-items-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed-in-primary-care/>

What are nitazenes?

Nitazenes, which are a type of synthetic opioid, have surfaced in the UK's drug market. These substances, which come in various forms, are increasingly being detected in counterfeit medicines. They've been found in a range of forms, from powders and tablets, often as oxycodone, to contaminated heroin, and even in liquid forms such as nasal sprays and vaping products.

There is a concern that nitazenes might also be present in other drugs, such as cocaine, due to accidental cross contamination. Nitazenes have been implicated in several overdoses and fatalities in the UK. In response to their high potency and toxicity, a national patient safety alert was issued in July 2023 to help prevent further incidents. Recently the local public health teams requested that we highlight this information to community pharmacy. Here is the link to the government advice: [ACMD advice on 2-benzyl benzimidazole and piperidine benzimidazolone opioids \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and a link to an article from February 2024 in the PJ: [Everything you need to know about nitazenes - The Pharmaceutical Journal \(pharmaceutical-journal.com\)](#)

Diabetes learning and resources

Diabetes UK are working with Devon ICS to promote the following two free resources designed to help healthcare professionals achieve better outcomes for people with, and at risk of, diabetes:

This **CPD module** will provide you with an overview of diabetes and increase your knowledge and skills to effectively support people living with or at risk of diabetes: [DUK Understanding Diabetes CPD module](#)

Information Prescriptions are personalised pieces of information which are easy to read, have clear images and have individual goals to help prevent a diabetes health complication. They are designed to give people with diabetes the information that they need to understand, engage with, and improve on their health targets. Useful for your NMS and HCFS consultations: [Information Prescriptions](#)

You can signpost your patients to the **Learning Zone** for advice on what to eat and tips for managing diabetes day-to-day – all completely free and tailored to them: [Learning Zone - Discover more about your diabetes. | Learning Zone](#)

Asthma-Friendly Schools Project

Devon is actively taking part in an initiative aimed at promoting asthma-friendly schools. This project encourages schools to keep salbutamol inhalers and spacers on hand for emergency use, should a student not have their personal inhaler available. There are several exemptions that allow POMs to be sold without a prescription, the supply of salbutamol inhalers to schools is one of these. The link to the project, government guidance and the Medicines, Ethics and Practice section are below:

[Asthma - Devon Schools Wellbeing Partnership Guidance on the use of emergency salbutamol inhalers in schools \(publishing.service.gov.uk\) 3.3.10 Exemptions: sale and supply without a prescription \(rpharms.com\)](#)

Independent Pharmacy Awards 2024 - Calling all independent community pharmacy teams

Independent Pharmacy Awards 2024 now open for entries! The Independent Pharmacy Awards returns in September at the House of Commons to highlight and celebrate the brilliance and endurance of community pharmacy teams across the UK. Independents from all four home nations are improving the health and wellbeing of their local communities in inspiring ways and meeting every challenge head-on despite limited funding and increasing overheads. This is your opportunity to tell us why you and/or your team should be winners at this year's Awards, and about the service developments and innovations you have put in place since March 2023. The Awards take place on Friday 27th September 2024, offering a banquet lunch for all our finalists and their personal guests, where we will announce the winners. This year it could be you!

There are six categories, and no limit to the number of categories you decide to go for. Choose from: * Pharmacy Team of the Year * Pharmacy Technician of the Year * Pharmacy Innovation of the Year * Independent Prescriber of the Year * Best Supporting Local Representative Group (LPC, CP(HB) committee, LHB forum or LCG) * Independent Pharmacist of the Year.

Entries must be made online, and we recommend preparing your entry on a word document and copying it into the online entry forms which can be found here, along with the entry criteria <https://www.independentpharmacist.co.uk/awards/ipa-enter-24>

Genomics Update

With the NHS England strategy, '[Accelerating genomic medicine in the NHS](#)', there's never been a bigger focus on embedding genomics into medicines optimisation to improve patient outcomes. A [national strategic framework](#) for the education and training of the pharmacy genomics workforce sets out how we upskill our workforce to meet this challenge.

What's happening & how does it affect community pharmacy?

- The [PROGRESS project](#) is piloting pharmacogenomics in GP surgeries for TCAs, SSRI, statins and PPIs, with several SW PCNs due to participate. Community pharmacies may encounter patients enrolled on this pilot, who have received altered dosing or alternative treatment due to a pharmacogenomic variant.
- NICE are reviewing [CYP2C19 genotyping for clopidogrel](#) for new stroke/TIA patients. [Draft NICE guidance](#) suggests that patients should be able to access genotype testing at a convenient location, if they are not tested in secondary care. Community pharmacies are listed in the draft guidance as possible locations for testing - final NICE guidance is expected in July 2024.
- The [MHRA Biobank](#) yellow card initiative is researching the genomic basis of adverse drug reactions, specifically allopurinol and severe skin reactions and DOACs and severe bleeding. Community pharmacists can help to contribute to this important research by submitting [yellow card reports](#) if they encounter patients with either of these ADRs.

Pharmacogenomic testing in community pharmacies

Pharmacogenomic testing is provided by community pharmacies in North America, Canada and the Netherlands, with a private pharmacogenomics service also launched by a UK Community Pharmacy multiple in 2022.

With increasing public awareness and the availability of private pharmacogenomic testing via community pharmacies and online, community pharmacies may encounter genomics queries from patients. The [CPPE learning package on genomics consultations](#) aims to help the development of knowledge, skills and confidence to support these conversations and prepare the pharmacy workforce for more widespread use of pharmacogenomics in practice.

Find out more; CPPE Genomics Gateway [Genomics \(cppe.ac.uk\)](#)

[Pharmacogenomic testing and its future in community pharmacy - The Pharmaceutical Journal \(pharmaceutical-journal.com\)](#)
[First pharmacogenomic testing service to be launched by pharmacy multiple later in 2022 - The Pharmaceutical Journal \(pharmaceutical-journal.com\)](#)

[Co-designing a community pharmacy pharmacogenomics testing service in the UK | BMC Health Services Research | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)

Contact Rachel.palmer6@nhs.net to join the SW Pharmacy Genomics network and receive regular updates

Forthcoming Training Events

Seasonal Flu Vaccination Training

We have arranged a fantastic and competitively priced training package with ECG to enable pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to provide both the national and private flu services.

Date: Sunday 23rd June 2024 **Venue:** Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford, Exeter.

Timing: 9.00 am – 1.00 pm ([Book here](#)) or 1.30 pm to 5.00 pm. ([Book here](#)) **Cost:** £103.63 per person

Pharmacy Team Training – Get to Grips with the new pharmacy services

Join the Community Pharmacy Devon Team for an evening training session to help improve your confidence with managing the new community pharmacy services. Accessible for the whole pharmacy team. The event will cover talking to patients about the new services, practise taking blood pressures, hypertension case finding, oral contraception and Pharmacy First using case studies and offering hints and tips. Flyer attached and link [here](#)

COMMUNITY PHARMACY DEVON COMMITTEE www.devon.communitypharmacy.org.uk

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