**Pharmacy First FAQs**

**Why is Pharmacy First ending?**

The decision to end Pharmacy First is due to this service sitting outside of the national guidance around people taking responsibility for their own self-care and the NHS’s recommendations to GPs that items listed as of limited therapeutic value are no longer prescribed.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines-2/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed/>

**When does Pharmacy First end?**

NHS England (NHSE) has announced that the contract will come to an end on 31 March 2023 along with the local Emergency Supply service. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are one of only a small number of locations with a Pharmacy First scheme. Other areas have already stopped this service with the changes to NHS recommendations around prescribing of items of limited therapeutic value <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines-2/items-which-should-not-be-routinely-prescribed/>

**What is replacing Pharmacy First?**

There is no direct replacement. NHSE has suggested that the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS)is an alternative service, but CPCS is a consultation service whereas Pharmacy First is primarily about supply of an OTC medicine. People cannot access CPCS by walking into the pharmacy without a referral from a practice or 111.

**Can I get free over the counter medication from a community pharmacy?**

Over the counter medicines that might have been provided free of charge underthePharmacy First scheme will no longer be supplied free because Pharmacy First is being decommissioned after 31 March 2023. People can still purchase medicines OTC irrespective whether they’ve been referred via CPCS or walked in.

If patients consult with a GP practice or OOHs and they decide to prescribe a medicine to treat an uncomplicated minor ailment or illness, the prescription will be free of charge if they are normally entitled to free prescriptions.

**Do all community pharmacies provide the CPCS?**

Yes, the majority of community pharmacies in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire offer the CPCS.

**Where can I complain about Pharmacy First being decommissioned?**

You can complain or give feedback to NHS England:

**By post to:**

**NHS England**  
PO Box 16738  
Redditch  
B97 9PT

**By email to:** [england.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:england.contactus@nhs.net)

If you are making a complaint please state: ‘**For the attention of the complaints team**’ in the subject line.

**By telephone: 0300 311 22 33**

**NHS England opening hours are** 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday, except Wednesdays when we open at the later time of 9.30am. We are closed on bank holidays.