

Meeting: Primary Care Commissioning Committee (PCCC)			
Meeting Date	24 November 2025	Action	Receive
Item No.	6	Confidential	No
Title	Healthwatch Prescriptions Follow Up Project Report		
Presented By	Salina Callighan		
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Executive Summary
<p>In May 2024, a project exploring patient experiences with prescription processes in Bury was undertaken by Healthwatch. The project aimed to identify key issues and good practice with several recommendations for consideration.</p> <p>A follow-up to this report was conducted in July 2025. A total of 41 responses were collected through brief surveys and community conversations.</p> <p>Key findings to note include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most participants felt comfortable asking questions about their medication. • Many use the NHS app, however further awareness of the support to use digital tools is needed. • Most understand the importance of regular medication reviews, though some uncertainty remains, and further work is needed to ensure clear communication about medication changes is received.
Recommendations
<p>The Primary Care Commissioning Committee is required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive the Healthwatch Prescriptions Project follow-up report, October 2025. • Consider the collective response to the key findings and recommendations. • Support the ongoing Bury wide implementation of patient-led ordering (PLO).

OUTCOME REQUIRED (Please Indicate)	Approval <input type="checkbox"/>	Assurance <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input type="checkbox"/>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
APPROVAL ONLY; (please indicate) whether this is required from the pooled (£75) budget or non-pooled budget	Pooled Budget <input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Pooled Budget <input type="checkbox"/>		

Links to Locality Plan priorities	
Scale our work on Population Health Management - Improve population health and reduce health inequality of those in the most disadvantaged areas	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drive prevention, reducing prevalence and proactive care – supporting Demand Reduction through primary intervention, secondary preventions and tertiary prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transforming Community Care in Neighbourhoods - fully realising the benefit of neighbourhood team working with a focus on the assets of residents and communities and providing proactive care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Optimise Care in institutional settings and prioritising the key characteristics of reform.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Implications						
Are the risks already included on the Locality Risk Register?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any risks of 15 and above that need to be considered for escalation via an NHS GM Statutory Committee or Board in line with the Risk Escalation process ?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any quality, safeguarding or patient experience implications?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has any engagement (clinical, stakeholder or public/patient) been undertaken in relation to this report?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have any departments/organisations who will be affected been consulted ?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any conflicts of interest arising from the proposal or decision being requested?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any financial Implications?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is an Equality, Privacy or Quality Impact Assessment required?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, has an Equality, Privacy or Quality Impact Assessment been completed?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please give details below:						
If no, please detail below the reason for not completing an Equality, Privacy or Quality Impact Assessment:						
An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the Patient-led ordering work by NHS GM, the work is supported by the overarching GM framework.						
Are there any associated risks including Conflicts of Interest?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>

Governance and Reporting		
Meeting	Date	Outcome
N/A		

Healthwatch Prescriptions Project Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1. A project exploring patient experiences with prescription processes in Bury was undertaken by Healthwatch in May 2024.
- 1.2. The project aimed to identify key issues and good practice with several recommendations for consideration.
- 1.3. An engagement exercise was undertaken to explore early patient experience with the implementation of Patient-led ordering in the Bury North neighbourhood. A follow-up report was conducted by Healthwatch in July 2025.
- 1.4. This engagement was conducted in collaboration with Bury Integrated Care partners to support ongoing improvements in the Bury-wide implementation of PLO.

2. Background

- 2.1. Patient-led ordering (PLO) is a process by which patients, or their carers request repeat prescriptions directly from their GP practice. This aims to reduce medicines waste, improve safety & empowering patients by having more control over their medication ordering.
- 2.2. There were several recommendations from the Healthwatch report in May 2024. A collaborative response was issued by NHS Greater Manchester (GM) Bury, Bury IDC & GM LPC.
- 2.3. The table in **appendix I** demonstrates the collaborative work across the system in response to the May 2024 report recommendations.
- 2.4. The follow-up report includes several recommendations. In collaboration with NHS GM, the locality continues to adapt the implementation of PLO and make improvements to ensure patients' needs are met.

3. Key findings and recommendations

- 3.1 The NHS App allows for carers to access proxy accounts for patients, to order medication on their behalf. Strengthening messages on the NHS App features for proxy access will be included in the training and implementation during this roll-out. Currently, the NHS App requires both patient and carer to be registered at the same practice for proxy access. The recommendation regarding flexibility with linked accounts and availability to access tools has been fed back to NHS digital.

- 3.2 Processes around prescription management, including communication of medication changes is managed by individual practices and based on their workforce composition to ensure it is efficient and safe. Several methods are in place to support awareness of medication reviews e.g. helplines, text messages and community pharmacies continue to help patients with concerns around medicines. We will further explore ways in which medication reviews can be promoted and raise the awareness of their importance to patients.
- 3.3 There is a continued commitment through partnership working in Bury, in collaboration with NHS GM, to learn and adapt based on patient feedback, user experience and adopt good practice. Bury Integrated Care partners will continue to collaborate with Healthwatch Clinical Advisory Group during the remaining phases of the Bury-wide PLO rollout.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 Support the system approach and collaborative efforts to date. Support the continued roll out of Patient-led ordering in Bury.

5 Actions Required

- 5.1 The Primary Care Commissioning Committee is required to:
- Receive the Healthwatch Prescriptions Project follow-up report, October 2025.
 - Consider the collective response to the key findings and recommendations.
 - Support the ongoing Bury-wide implementation of patient-led ordering (PLO).

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November 2025

Appendix I: Local actions to support recommendations from May 2024 report.

<u>Recommendations from the “Healthwatch Prescriptions Report” for Bury in May 2024</u>		<u>Local Actions implemented to support this</u>
Improve Communication and Coordination	<p>Better Collaboration: Improve communication between GP surgeries, pharmacies, and patients to avoid delays and reduce prescription mistakes.</p>	<p>Communication and engagement have been carried out at both local and neighbourhood level to ensure messaging is being delivered effectively and consistently. Information has been shared regarding the planned rollout of PLO via the NHS App. Below are some examples of who we have collaborated with and how we have achieved this:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Pharmaceutical Council (LPC) & GM PLO Task & Finish group 2. Bury GP Webinar 3. Neighbourhood Clinical Advisory Group 4. Bury North and Prestwich PCN/ Neighbourhood meetings 5. North Neighbourhood Workshops 6. Written communication shared with Community Pharmacies and General Practices 7. Community Pharmacies and General Practices are informing patients of prescription changes 12-weeks ahead of implementation through appropriate means of communication. 8. Communication/ messaging being shared via local community groups e.g. Healthwatch. 9. Development of an NHS Tile on the Bury Directory, aimed at raising awareness and encouraging use of the NHS App, promoting self-care. 10. Wider system partners including the VCFA, Age UK, Healthwatch, Bury Carers Hub, Social Prescribers, the Older People's Network, and Digital Inclusion Team have been engaged to help shape messaging and provide support with the development of the NHS Tile. 11. Q&A learning session held for General Practice and Community Pharmacy teams in the North neighbourhood to facilitate shared learning and support the broader system rollout. 12. Monthly meetings with Healthwatch to share regular updates on improvements and to discuss any blockages/ barriers.
	<p>Regular Training: Keep staff up to date</p>	<p>The Primary Care Digital Facilitator has provided hands-on support to general</p>

	with ongoing training on the latest procedures and technologies.	practice staff, offering training on the NHS App to enable them to assist patients effectively. Additionally, a GM toolkit is available and shared to guide staff, integrated within the local Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
Upgrade Digital Systems	Modernise Tech: Update and integrate digital systems to manage prescriptions better, ensuring medicines are always available when needed.	GM toolkit is shared with Community Pharmacy colleagues to enhance the use of the NHS app prescriptions functions. Presented at a GM Community Pharmacy webinar to share learning. Improved communication methods between General Practice and Community Pharmacy to support challenges around stock availability.
	Support and Educate: Offer thorough technical support and training so patients and staff can make the most of digital tools like the NHS app.	<p>Technical support is available to staff through the Primary Care Digital Facilitator, complemented by guidance within the GM toolkit. This ensures access to tailored advice and assistance.</p> <p>To help patients, we have been collaborating with system partners to deliver and promote digital support across community settings. This support is available through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Practice • Community Pharmacies • Social Prescribing drop-in sessions, supported by Healthwatch • Digital Buddy Volunteers via “Digital for All” community sessions <p>Additionally, a dedicated “NHS App” tile has been created on the Bury Directory to help residents navigate the NHS App. It offers guidance on setup, troubleshooting, accessing online and in-person support, connecting with wider community resources, and promoting digital inclusion.</p> <p>NHS App Bury Directory</p>
Make the NHS App Easier to Use	Fix Technical Problems: Sort out any technical issues quickly so the NHS app works well across all NHS trusts.	A dedicated “NHS App” tile has been created on the Bury Directory which includes to help around account recovery should patients experience any problems. Alternatively general practice and community pharmacy may be able to support or direct you to local community groups and offer Re: digital support.
	Promote the Benefits: Highlight the app’s advantages and provide clear instructions to encourage more patients to use it	The benefits of the NHS App are actively promoted through ongoing communications circulated across the borough for staff. In addition, wider system partners including the VCFA, Age UK, Healthwatch, Bury Carers Hub, Social Prescribers, and the Older People's Network etc. have been engaged to help shape messaging and provide support with the development of the NHS Tile on

		the Bury Directory, aimed at raising awareness and encouraging use of the NHS App, promoting self-care.
Improve Patient Support	Provide Extra Help: Offer additional support for patients managing their prescriptions, including help from family or carers	General practices and community pharmacies are working together to support patients who may struggle to manage prescriptions via the NHS App due to medical conditions, sensory impairments, or lack of digital access. Alternative ordering options are available for these individuals, and the local council is helping to tackle digital exclusion by offering SIM cards and exploring ways to provide access to digital devices. Patients with support from carers or family members can also receive help through general practice, pharmacies, the Bury Directory, and community groups. Where carers are registered at the same GP practice, dual NHS App accounts can be set up to allow them to order prescriptions on the patient's behalf.
	Set Up Helplines: Signpost to or set up helplines or support centres to assist patients with any prescription-related questions or problems.	Support for the NHS App is available through the dedicated team at https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-app/ . Additionally, a Q&A section on the Bury Directory helps guide patients with common queries, while specific prescription-related concerns can be addressed by contacting community pharmacies or general practices.
Encourage Holistic Health Approaches	Suggest Non-Medication Options: Encourage GPs to recommend alternatives like exercise, social prescribing, and other holistic health practices.	Social prescribers are integrated into neighbourhood teams, with strong links to prescribers, to support non-medical options and support for patients. Social prescribing teams have also opportunistically supported with NHS App promotion and supporting patients to use the NHS App.
	Raise Awareness: Increase understanding and use of alternative prescribing methods to give patients more comprehensive support.	Electronic prescribing through the NHS App is the preferred method for ordering repeat prescriptions and is currently being implemented across the borough. To support this, proxy ordering is available, allowing carers or family members to manage prescriptions on behalf of patients via linked NHS App accounts. For individuals identified as vulnerable, general practices and community pharmacies will explore alternative ordering options to ensure their needs are met. This information is being communicated with public facing staff/ community teams.
Commit to Ongoing Improvement	Keep Monitoring: Continuously monitor and research to ensure changes are working well and address any new issues that come up.	An evaluation is planned in the North neighbourhood following 12 months of the NHS App's Prescription Ordering Line (PLO) go-live, aiming to capture key outcomes. The locality will continue to monitor uptake and usage of the NHS App.

	Gather and use Feedback: Regularly collect patient feedback to find areas for improvement and make sure the prescription process meets their needs	Collaborative work with Healthwatch has been ongoing since the initial report in May 2024, and a further request has been made for Healthwatch to conduct an additional evaluation in 2025 to assess the impact of the PLO since its implementation in the North.
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