

PHARMACY FIRST

The Minor Ailments Scheme has allowed you to get fast treatment for a wide range of common problems from a participating pharmacy for a while, but this service has now been enhanced by the introduction of **Pharmacy First**.

This is a relatively new service that enables community pharmacists to supply prescription-only medicines, including antibiotics and antivirals where clinically appropriate, to treat seven common health conditions without the need to visit a GP. These are the seven common conditions.

• Sinusitis	For ages 12 years & over
• Sore throat	For ages 5 years & over
• Earache	For ages 1 to 17 years
• Infected insect bite	For ages 1 year & over
• Impetigo (a bacterial skin infection)	For ages 1 year & over
• Shingles	For ages 18 years & over
• Urinary tract infections in women	For ages 16 to 64 years

You have the option to seek treatment for the mentioned conditions either by visiting a pharmacy in person or reaching out to them virtually. **However, it is strongly advised to complete a triage form as usual and allow the Practice clinicians to determine your appropriate course of treatment. Otherwise, there is a risk of being turned away at the pharmacy.**

If directed to a pharmacy, there's no need for alarm as pharmacists participating in the scheme possess the necessary knowledge and skills to identify and address the specified conditions, provided you meet the criteria. Consultations can be conducted privately in a designated room or by telephone/video consultation.

The initiative, Pharmacy First, aims to alleviate the burden on General Practitioner (GP) services by reducing the number of patients seeking treatment for common conditions including blood pressure checks, oral contraception etc. The goal is to free up 10 million GP appointments annually by the upcoming winter, allowing GPs to focus on patients with more complex medical needs.

While not all pharmacies offer this service, more than 10,000 pharmacies in England, including forty-nine in Tameside, have already enrolled in Pharmacy First, representing over 95 percent of all pharmacies. Standard prescription charges will apply for the seven common conditions, but patients who are already exempt from such charges will retain their exemption.

Patients retain the option to be treated by a GP if preferred. Pharmacy First provides an alternative avenue for addressing these seven conditions, and individuals are encouraged to take advantage of this service and consult the highly skilled professionals at their local pharmacy.