

Forth Valley Pharmacies Provide Swift Healthcare Advice and Treatment

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Community pharmacies across Forth Valley have provided more than 100,000 patient consultations since January 2021, helping to relieve pressure on local GP and hospital services.

By accessing healthcare advice and treatment at their local pharmacy, many people have also avoided the need to make separate healthcare appointments to treat urinary tract and skin infections.

The NHS Scotland Pharmacy First service provides free access to a consultation with an appropriately qualified member of the pharmacy team who is able to provide healthcare advice, treatment and refer people to another part of the NHS, if necessary. Pharmacists can also treat certain conditions such as urinary tract infections, shingles and impetigo without the need for a prescription or to see a doctor. This is part of a co-ordinated series of measures to improve patient care and help reduce demand on Emergency Departments.

Forth Valley Community Pharmacists have provided 114,938 consultations since January 2021 for people who would otherwise have gone to GP surgeries or the Emergency Department at Forth Valley Royal Hospital. Only a small number of people (around 4%) needed to be referred on to another healthcare professional, such as a GP, nurse or hospital-based clinician. The majority were given advice or treatment by their local pharmacy team.

Kirstin Cassells, NHS Forth Valley's Lead Pharmacist for Community Pharmacy, Public Health and Integrated Services, said: "Community pharmacists across Forth Valley are playing a fantastic role in ensuring that thousands of people with common health conditions have needs addressed quickly, without needing to go to a GP or hospital. They are a prime example of getting the right care, in the right place, at the right time and local pharmacists will play an important role in providing expert healthcare advice and treatment over the busy winter period."

Additional Background Information

The NHS Pharmacy First scheme was initially introduced in Forth Valley in 2016 and then extended to cover additional health conditions before being rolled out across the rest of Scotland in July 2020. It encourages everyone to make their local pharmacy as the first port of call for minor illnesses and many common health conditions.

These include cystitis (urine infection), conjunctivitis, skin conditions (such as eczema, dermatitis, acne, warts, verrucas and reactions to insect bites) skin infections (such as cellulitis and impetigo) and thrush. Pharmacists can also provide advice and treatment for head lice, haemorrhoids (piles), athlete's foot, hay fever, cold sores, mouth ulcers as well as common winter illnesses like coughs, colds and sore throats.

It is available to anyone registered with a GP practice in Scotland or ordinarily resident in Scotland.

For more information on local pharmacy services in Forth Valley visit www.nhsforthvalley.com/pharmacy