



Case Study: **Antimicrobial Stewardship**

In response to the Chief Medical Officer's UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy, NECS have developed a series of impactful initiatives to assist in tackling this threat locally.

The challenge

Prior to 2014 there were at least five local primary care antibiotic guidelines in circulation across the North East and Cumbria, many of which had expired or were due for review in 2014. A comprehensive review of all the guidelines found that they were all very similar which led to the concept of developing a single regional guideline.

A single guideline across the North East and Cumbria would improve consistency of antibiotic prescribing across the region. Some prescribers can work over several organisational boundaries so one primary care guideline would remove ambiguity and promote clinically appropriate antibiotic prescribing practices. The development of the single guideline was discussed at the Northern CCG forum and clinical senate where it was agreed that this was a sensible approach.



The tasks

- Set up a primary care antimicrobial stewardship group in order to put in place actions and resources required as a result of the UK Five Year Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy.
- Facilitate a group consisting of a pharmacist representative from each locality in the North East and Cumbria, and the local trust antibiotic lead pharmacist.
- Develop an action plan focusing on 4 key areas of work:
 - A regional (North East and Cumbria) antibiotic prescribing guide.
 - An antibiotic prescribing smartphone app.
 - An e-learning package on antibiotic prescribing.
 - A regional antibiotic awareness campaign for the public and health professionals.

The execution

The NECS Medicines Optimisation team created one single regional antibiotic prescribing guide for primary care prescribers across the North of England, which was consulted extensively through both primary care and secondary care prescribing committees. This was supported with an innovative antibiotic e-learning package for primary care prescribers that was made available through the NECS IT learning website. The team also sourced funding to present the guideline as a smart phone app which has further improved accessibility.

NECS successfully developed a self-care winter 'Keep Calm' campaign in 2013 and 2014 which incorporated a strong antibiotics message, 'antibiotics aren't always the answer'. The campaign included posters

displayed in GP surgeries, community pharmacies and public spaces to raise awareness amongst the public and health professionals. The group also developed an antibiotic 'non-prescription' pad for prescribers to share with patients presenting with self-limiting infections, providing information on self-care. Evidence shows this makes patients less likely to consult their GP expecting antibiotics in future.

NECS continues to refine the antibiotic awareness campaign year on year with information booklets and leaflets to raise awareness with both the general public and prescribers.

The results

The new regional antibiotic guideline created by the NECS medicines optimisation team has been well received by primary care prescribers. The innovative use of e-learning for prescribers is proving to be more time and cost effective, and feedback from users has been excellent.

The 2013 Keep Calm and Look After Yourself campaign won Healthcare Campaign of the Year at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations Pride Awards.

"I think this is a fabulous resource. I really do. I think it's great."

GP, Darlington CCG

"Brilliant and practical information – it (the e-learning) has changed my views"

GP, DDES CCG

"The mobile phone app is great." **GP**

"Very useful tool" – **GP, Cumbria CCG**

For further details of how our Medicines Optimisation team can help you please contact:
Janette Stephenson Email: janette.stephenson1@nhs.net Tel: 0191 374 4131

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call 0191 301 1300 or email necsu.enquiries@nhs.net