

Pharmacy First Service: Top Tips for Service Delivery

Here’s a concise list of 10 key tips that covers the essential aspects of ensuring a smooth and effective Pharmacy First Service

1	Prioritise knowledge & training – Use CPPE's self-assessment framework to identify competency gaps and adhere strictly to service specifications, clinical protocols, and PGDs.	6	Record keeping & follow-ups – Maintain clear, detailed patient notes, complete consultation records on the same day, and notify general practice promptly about service provision or required action.
2	Efficient referral handling - Regularly check referral platforms, alert pharmacists promptly, and ensure continuity when locum or relief pharmacists are present. Consider patient appointments to manage workload and use the pharmacy team to support.	7	Strengthen collaboration with GP practices – Identify a Pharmacy First link person, foster positive relationships through regular communication, and promote awareness using national and local promotional materials.
3	Understand service pathways – Only conduct clinical pathway consultations when a gateway point is met and utilise the minor illness service for referred patients who don’t qualify under a specific clinical pathway.	8	Support patient care – Provide clear explanations for treatment decisions, share self-care resources like TARGET leaflets, and ensure onward referrals are directly managed rather than requiring patient follow-ups. TARGET Resources for Community Pharmacy
4	Urgent medicine supply guidelines – A 111 referral is a request for consultation, not an instruction to supply. Supply limits apply for controlled drugs, with phenobarbital as an exception for epilepsy.	9	Prepare for service bundling – Get ready for phased requirements, including registration for contraception and BP check services from June 2025, with additional conditions from March 2026.
5	Patient requires onward referral - If the patient requires onward referral for any strand of Pharmacy First, the pharmacist should organise this and patients must not be asked to again call NHS111 or other healthcare settings – NHS111 Pharmacy First Actions Poster	10	Handle electronic notification issues effectively – If system failures occur, ensure paperwork is sent or emailed to general practices promptly, maintaining continuity of care.