

Y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus / Public Accounts Committee

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9th March 2017

Boots Regional Office
Boots UK Limited
36 Queen St
Cardiff
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Nick Ramsey AM
Committee Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales

Nicholas.Ramsay@assembly.wales

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter dated 7th March regarding the concerns raised at the Welsh National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee of the 6th March 2017.

We are aware of the cost to the NHS of wasted resources and our pharmacy processes are designed to minimise medicine waste at every opportunity. Therefore, I was disappointed to read Mr. McEvoy's concerns that medicines being delivered by Boots are only identified by the patient as not being required at the point of handing over the medicines. I believe this to be a misunderstanding and would like to reassure you that our processes around the delivery of medicines are robust.

In answer to your specific questions, it might be helpful to explain the process that our pharmacies are required to follow when offering our free delivery service to our vulnerable patients.

All of our pharmacy teams are required to follow a set of defined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) relating to the safe handling and dispensing of medicines and this includes specific SOPs that cover the delivery of medicines to patients. Training for these SOPs is done at individual staff level and our pharmacists are required to sign a declaration that all of the staff working in their pharmacy have read, understood and are following the processes laid out in the SOP.

In our SOP covering the delivery of medicines, our pharmacy teams are directed to contact the patient, or their representative, before attempting delivery to;

- a) Confirm that he or she will be available to receive the delivery during the specified time
- b) Inform the patient of any owing item(s) and/or any Controlled Drug (CD) items that are due for delivery

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- c) Confirm that all the prescribed items are still required and remove any items no longer required
- d) Give any relevant clinical/counselling information.

Once the medication has been dispatched by the pharmacy team, if the delivery cannot be received by the patient, it is returned to the designated Boots pharmacy until further contact can be made with the patient.

If the pharmacy team is unable to contact the patient, or his or her authorised representative, prior to the scheduled delivery, the pharmacist must make a professional decision whether to attempt to deliver. In this situation, the pharmacist will consider the needs of the patient and the urgency with which they may need their medication.

In situations where the patient refuses a delivery, or is no longer contactable (for example, is in hospital), the medicines should be put back into stock at the originating pharmacy. The corresponding prescription forms are NOT submitted to Shared Services for payment. Therefore, no cost is incurred by the NHS for the dispensing or delivery activities we have undertaken. We normally only destroy medicines when they are date-expired or when patients have returned medicines to us.

Finally, we have not assessed the cost, volume and nature of returned at the point of delivery.

Please be assured that we take the care of our delivery patients very seriously and always try to deliver the best possible service to meet their needs.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Francis
Head of Customer Experience - Wales
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