

NHS Proposals

You
said...

We did:

July 2018

Shaping better health

Gluten free prescribing in Bristol

What changes were we proposing?

The CCG was proposing to remove gluten free food from prescription for those aged 18 and over in Bristol.

Why were we proposing these changes?

The CCG proposed these changes as part of a wider piece of work to review how some services are delivered to the local community while at the same time making savings to secure the long term future of healthcare in the area.

Who was consulted and involved?

Members of the public, GPs, patients, local patient groups, community and voluntary organisations across Bristol were consulted as

well as local Coeliac UK groups and the local authority.

In addition, national organisations such as NHS England, Coeliac UK and the British Dietetic Association were also involved along with neighbouring CCGs.

How were they consulted?

Over a 12 week period during January and April 2018, we ran an online survey on the CCG website. This was promoted on the website and through numerous articles in the local press and social media.

Presentations were made to the local authority and local Coeliac UK groups by the CCG's Medicines Optimisation team.

What did they say and how have we responded?

In total, there were 100 respondents to the online survey. Forty-two percent of these were patients with coeliac disease, with an additional 12% being parents or carers of someone with coeliac disease.

The remainder of respondents were clinicians and people without a diagnosis of coeliac disease.

Just over 70% of respondents were in favour of some type of restriction on the NHS prescribing of gluten free foods.

You said

Whilst respondents agreed that the range of gluten free products in supermarkets has increased, many noted that gluten free foods are more expensive than gluten-containing equivalents and are not readily available in budget supermarkets or convenience stores.

Comments were received from people with coeliac disease which highlighted that it is a lifelong condition and 'not a choice'.

Concerns were raised that withdrawing prescriptions would mean no support for a lifelong condition which is 'not self-inflicted'.

Concerns were also raised by respondents that people might resort to gluten containing foods if they didn't have a prescription.

There were several comments requesting, in light of the outcome from the Department of Health consultation, that bread and flour mix remain available on prescription.

Suggestions were made that paediatric patients, those with learning difficulties, and those on low incomes (e.g. income support, jobseekers allowance), including pensioners were identified as groups who should be considered for preferential support & ongoing prescribing.

Some respondents, including the majority of clinicians, felt that the CCG should stop prescribing GF foods to people aged 18 years and over and that there is currently enough information and support available for people to manage their diet and condition.

You said

Overall you said you were in favour of some form of restriction on the NHS prescribing of gluten free foods but wanted the CCG to make sure that we addressed issues of support for vulnerable patients

We did

Make sure that patients and clinicians have easy access to information on the more affordable gluten free products/ranges that are available. The range of food in supermarkets continues to grow; including the 'budget supermarket' ranges.

Coeliac UK has up to date and clear information available.

Ensure patients and clinicians are aware of where they can access information on a healthy gluten free diet and are aware of the nutritional value of foods.

Patients will have a review annually, or more often if required that will ensure they have access to information in a format that is appropriate and accessible for them.

Under-18s will continue to have access to bread and flour mix on prescription.

GPs will maintain their clinical judgement to identify and support the most vulnerable patients through prescribing where necessary.

This view is reflected in the revised policy

We did:

At its June meeting, the Governing Body approved advice to local GPs that they should not routinely prescribe gluten free products to patients with coeliac disease aged 18 years and over. (The CCG agrees to reimburse patients any investments they have made in pre-payments prescription certificates in the last year).

Prescriptions for patients aged under 18 years should be limited to staple food items: bread, pasta, flour and multipurpose flour mixes