

Self Care Forum Coronavirus Innovations Award

Application Form

The Self Care Forum would like to invite you to submit examples of good practice and innovations in Self Care that have been implemented during the pandemic and which have made a difference to individuals, groups or organisations.

This invitation is open to everyone, whether you are an individual, a community champion, an employer, GP practice, Local Authority, or services organisation (public, private, or charitable).

Closing date for admissions: **31st July 2020.**

Examples of possible initiatives	If specific health-related conditions were targeted, they might include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting “Stay at home” messages • Helping people with coronavirus symptoms • Self care in care homes • Supporting people with self-treatable conditions • Supporting people with long term conditions that need monitoring • Protecting mental health during the pandemic • Promoting self care to the shielded population • Self care for the elderly or other specific groups • Self care introduced by employers • Local authority population or community initiatives • Pharmacy initiatives • GP initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-treatable conditions • Obesity • Diabetes • General health • Nutrition • Exercise • Mental Health

Please use the form below to tell us about your self care initiative.

If you are typing directly into the form, do not worry if the box extends beyond the page – it will continue onto the next one.

Title and contact details

Title of Initiative – Volunteer Prescription Delivery Scheme
Name of person/team/individual being nominated – CDHN & MEAAP
Contact name for entry – Deirdre McCloskey
Contact email for entry – deirdre.mccloskey@meaap.co.uk
Date submitted

Problem(s) and how you tackled them

What is the context of this study?

(e.g. general practice, community care, pharmacy, care home, employment)

What was the problem you were trying to tackle? (max 200 words)

By mid-March 2020, when the first lockdown due to COVID19 was implemented in Northern Ireland panic was evident in the community. Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP) were inundated with calls from older people seeking support to get their prescription medications, as they or their family had to shield. Community Pharmacies were overwhelmed with those needing to shield ordering emergency prescriptions and indeed being the only local Health Care Professional who kept their doors open throughout the pandemic to offer health advice as General Practice had moved to a telephone triage service only.

To reduce the spread of this disease, keeping footfall to a minimum was key. Discussions with several local Community Pharmacists noted that queues were substantial and for those that had delivery services operational prior to COVID-19 demand had been overwhelming and no further requests could be taken.

MEAAP were also concerned that whilst volunteers had come forward, asking a volunteer to queue for substantial periods of time to pick up one prescription was not safe, both in terms of reducing footfall to prevent the disease or without any agreed protocols in place for volunteers to delivery controlled drugs.

There had to be another solution.

Please give a brief description of your self care innovation (max 250 words)

MEAAP worked with several local Community Pharmacists to create a briefing paper which was seeking urgent permission from Department of Health and Health & Social Care Board to allow vetted volunteers to safely work with Community Pharmacies to complete mass collection and delivery services during the initial shielding period.

Further support and backing were secured from the Community Development & Health Network (CDHN) who had a wealth of experience in terms of working at scale with Community Pharmacists as part of their normal Building the Community Pharmacy Partnership initiative (they administer the BCPP Programme on behalf of the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB)). With CDHN taking the lead, permission was granted for this mass delivery of prescriptions on a temporary basis to support Community Pharmacies during this health pandemic. Resource were also offered, including a small grant of £500 to each community group supporting each Pharmacy to help cover outgoings, volunteer role descriptions and confidentiality agreements were drawn up, and most recently the use of a Delivery App has been trialed.

What challenges or barriers were you faced with?

How did you solve the problems or overcome the barriers? (max 250 words)

Did you work with other partners or organisations? If so, who were they

The main challenge faced was securing the amendments/additions to Community Pharmacies protocol to ensure liability was equally shared between the Community Pharmacist and the Community/Voluntary Group involved in the supporting role.

Such changes to protocol usually take months and yet time was off the essence in order to support Community Pharmacies who had borne the brunt of the immediate pressures felt as a result of the COVID19 lockdown.

But by working in partnership locally to design the project, and then involving regional networks including CDHN, Community Pharmacy NI (CPNI), Ulster Chemists Association (UCA), Department of Health and Health & Social Care Board (HSCB) the barriers were overcome in several weeks, with the scheme operational early April 2020.

To date, 258 of the 535 community pharmacies in Northern Ireland have registered for this scheme and have been supported by the wealth of community groups & volunteers to deliver over 44,000 prescriptions. MEAAP are just one such community group, who is now supporting 9 local community pharmacies across Ballymena, Larne & Carrickfergus.

Impact and outcomes

Who benefited from this initiative?

(e.g. users, customers, patients etc.)

Was the initiative directed at a group?

(e.g. vulnerable group, children, customers, employees etc.)

What were the benefits to the targeted group or individuals? (max 250 words)

To date 258 Community Pharmacies have registered to participate in the scheme across Northern Ireland, receiving much needed reassurance that the 122 community groups & volunteers offering their support have been verified, protocols have been established and most importantly their patients have been able to safely receive their prescriptions whilst needing to shield.

By the end of June 2020, over 44,000 prescriptions have been delivered. And as well as securing the prescriptions, many of the volunteers have went above and beyond offering a quick Doorstep Chat, checking in case they need any other support such as groceries, help with topping up electric/gas metres, or indeed just feeling lonely and isolated.

Were there benefits to you, your colleagues, your organisation or to a wider area such as the NHS? If so, what were they?

(e.g. improved job satisfaction, smoother running of pharmacy, happier service users, better use of scarce resources such as PPE, cost saving)

MEAAP are proud to have come up with the original concept and briefing paper, and knew that it could not only benefit older people 50 years and over living in our community, but indeed benefit many more community pharmacies and people/families need to shield during the COVID19 lockdown period.

It made more sense to recruit volunteers to complete mass deliveries, as not only did it help alleviate queues and reduced the spread of infection, but meant that volunteers time was more appropriately utilized and that we were doing so by way of an agreed protocol considering controlled drugs were involved. Volunteer feedback showed that having agreed days to support Community Pharmacists meant they could organize themselves better and were not receiving several phone calls daily to pick up just one prescription.

Community Pharmacies reported that they have really appreciated this assistance, with many taking to social media to thank the community groups and volunteers involved for their support. It supported the immediate pressure felt by this sector, reducing footfall and thereby the risk of infection to these Health

Care Professionals. And for those who had not offered delivery services prior to COVID-19 it meant a reduced risk of losing business going forward as patients did not have to move to an alternative provider in order to receive prescription deliveries.

For some Community Pharmacies, this was maybe the first instance that they have worked in partnership with a community/voluntary group, and doing so has meant that a great deal of trust has been built which we hope will be utilised in the future going forward as part of the recovery/rebuild programme.

The new Community Pharmacy contract announced in Northern Ireland early July 2020, has now included the provision for each Community Pharmacist to look towards establish a prescription delivery scheme in the near future, given that we recognise COVID-19 is likely to exist for months/years to come.

This Volunteer Prescription Delivery Service also became part of the offer of support from all of Council/NHSCT COVID-19 Support Hubs.

Evidence

If possible, please quantify potential benefits

(e.g. cost improvement, numbers of people helped, time saved) Please attach supporting information

Do you have formal or anecdotal evidence of success?

(e.g. qualitative, quantitative, informal feedback?) Please attach supporting information

CDHN gathered statistics regarding the number of pharmacies registered and the number of community or voluntary sector organisations registered to partner for the provision of support. CDHN developed an interactive map which provided this information on a “live” basis for local councils and health trusts. This meant that they could provide accurate information to people contacting them for support with medication delivery. The map also hosted information regarding pharmacy opening hours and weekend rotas.

In addition CDHN collated the numbers of prescriptions being delivered by volunteers – this entailed contacting each of the registered community and voluntary sector organisations and requesting their delivery numbers, these were then matched with a sample of delivery stats from community pharmacies. In July CDN carried out a survey with registered community or voluntary sector groups to ascertain the demand for the scheme on an ongoing basis and to given them an opportunity to provide any other feedback they might have. This report is currently with the HSCB for sign off.

What was the cost of this initiative in terms of time, money, or other resources?

Please be as specific as you can

CDHN administered the programme on an NI basis. They diverted the funding they would normally use to administer the BCPP Programme, so in that respect, the volunteer delivery scheme did not cost any additional funding. In total CDHN have administered £73,000 in small grants (£500 per pharmacy supported) to contribute to groups running costs.

Do you have any images, materials or weblinks to supplement your application?

Please attach supporting information or include links if necessary

<https://www.cdhn.org/community-support-community-pharmacy>

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-minister-thanks-volunteers-medicines-delivery-service>

And, finally...

Are there any lessons you learned or top tips that you would like to share? (max 200 words)

The Power of Partnership – MEAAP and CDHN are both community/voluntary organisations who have enjoyed a long-standing relationship with Community Pharmacies prior to COVID-19. So by embracing the principles of co-production and actively listening to the problems, we were able to quickly work in partnership to engage and lobby the regional health bodies to gain changes to the protocols rather quickly in order to support the crisis.

Did you use any of the Self Care Forum or other organisation's resources? If so, please specify

As previously mentioned, MEAAP utilized the resources of many in order to build an informed piece of work that was able to influence policy and practice to not only benefit people in their immediate community, but across the region of NI.

Why do you think this initiative deserves to win the award? (Max 100 words)

We strongly believe that this initiative has not only benefited our community in the immediate future but has helped establish even stronger bonds between many vital grass root community groups with their local Community Pharmacies.

MEAAP aware of our limitations, actively sought support from other partners to ensure the needs of both the community groups involved and the Community Pharmacies involved were built into the design of the project. Our lobbying for policy and practice change were stronger due to this collective, and really highlights the impact using a community development approach to tackling population health is the way for the future.

Please email completed form to:

selfcare@selfcareforum.org

We look forward to hearing from you.