

Accelerate



How a pharmacist led, high quality cost focused medicines optimisation service saved £800,000 over 12 weeks, whilst maintaining the safety and effectiveness of all prescribed medications for patients.

Background

As prescribing costs continue to rise and systems struggle to keep their formulary reflective of market prices and drug tariff changes, there is pressure within a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to manage this effectively. This is even more apparent now, with COVID-19 planning and vaccination programmes consuming scarce resources. Optum® worked alongside a CCG in 2019 to implement a rapid shared saving scheme; Optum Accelerate. Optum provided the CCG with a team of expert resources at no up-front cost – deployed both locally and remotely – to deliver a targeted cost saving service and deliver immediate and recurrent savings. This resulted in a total of £800,000 of savings over 12 weeks.

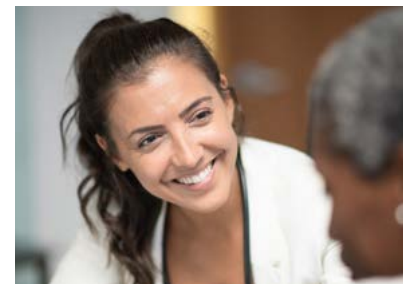
Optum are well placed for delivering this type of initiative based on its 12 years of experience of delivering ScriptSwitch®, Optum's prescribing decision support solution. ScriptSwitch provided over 25 million prescribing recommendations in 2019-2020.

Goals

The project required integrated programs across one CCG covering 30 GP practices. Optum provided the operational planning, policies, standard operating procedures and analytics.

We deployed a team of Pharmacists, alongside light touch support from the CCG. The goal of the programme was to:

- Reduce expenditure and deliver cash releasing savings: Service must be able to generate real savings over a relatively short period of time (4 months)
- Improve medication safety: Deliver a medication safety component to ensure that the service delivers quality for the prescribers and patients
- Implement a targeted Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) savings initiative: deliver a programme of lower cost drug alternatives, providing practical support to achieve QIPP prescribing savings
- Measure customer engagement: Record outcomes and satisfaction to ensure programs are effective, contributing to a continuous cycle of improvement.



Identifying savings

115 types of replacement products were identified as potential switches.

This was circa £1.15m savings across 30 GP practices if 100% of these switches were made.

Solution

Optum's clinical pharmacists, positioned as an extension to the CCG Medicines Optimisation Team, worked collaboratively with clinicians and other staff in GP practices across the CCG. Practice staff were fully briefed and engaged prior to commencement of the project, which helped with a smooth transition. An up-front, 'risk, reward' funding model was used, in which the CCG and Optum shared an agreed percentage of evidenced savings delivered, captured through a bespoke savings diagnostic tool.

The 12-week programme included:

- An outcomes-based contract, agreed with CCG
- The use of analytics to identify savings, customised by local priority areas
- A team of pharmacists deployed in a rolling programme to GP practices
- Switches identified, implemented and signed off by the CCG, patients informed
- A service underpinned by governance framework to minimise impact on CCG, practice and clinical staff time, which was Information Governance (IG) compliant with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and NHS Standards
- Weekly performance review meetings, to track changes and monitor trends.

Results

A collaborative approach delivered a seamless service that delivered significant savings across the CCG, with no up-front costs and a fixed Return On Investment (ROI) established. This ensured success from the outset, including:

- 8,000+ patient reviews, resulting in 6,500 medication switches to more cost-effective alternatives
- Delivery of immediate savings, recurrent savings and a reduction in lost unrecoverable savings:
 - Validated savings of £123 per patient switched (approximately £3.10 savings per registered patients)
 - £800,000 savings over the total 12-week project, resulting in a 4.8 ROI for the CCG
- A 90% satisfaction score from GP practices responding to the Post Project Survey
- Feedback from most practices suggesting the project had no impact on the practice in terms of workload or issues

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we have now moved to a fully remote way of working and offer a COVID-19 recovery service to stabilise prescribing spend.



*A specific estimated savings figure can be provided by Optum for your CCG upon request.



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