

FOI – 2513

1st August 2024

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

1) Why do service users in Newry & Mourne collect bi-monthly when other areas collect monthly?

Response:

The decision whether some stores are accessible on a bi-monthly basis versus monthly is based on a number of factors including; the size and capacity of the store, number of service users collecting products, flow of traffic, parking, capacity of staff manning the collection points and the opening hours.

The larger, busier stores have bi-monthly collections, where 50% of the service users collect two months' supply the first month and the other 50% collect their two-month supply in the second month.

2) Why is home delivery available to some service users and what is the criteria for this service?

Response:

Home delivery is currently only available within the Armagh and Dungannon locality for Adult Learning Disability (ALD) clients. This is a historical arrangement that has been in place for several years. The same criteria is applied for assessment and provision of continence products as all other localities. The delivery service has been available for several years and was agreed previously given the high number of ALD Service users in this locality requiring this product.

3) Who decided that bi-monthly collections must be collected in the first month or forfeited?

Response:

As outlined in response 1, 50% of the service users collect two months' supply the first month and the other 50% collect their two-month supply in the second month. The service user is asked to collect their supply over the first month (of the 2-month period) as the monthly stock within the store is based on the prescriptions for that month. If they do not come until the second month, they run into the allocation for the second batch of prescriptions and the stores don't always have capacity to hold over stock.

If there are occasions when this is not possible for the service user to collect within the first month, ie unable to make the opening times of their allocated store, or they have been ill then we encourage them to contact their key worker or the continence team to arrange a one-off change of collection time/venue. We will work with all service users to ensure they have a suitable supply of products, however we encourage users to follow the process as this helps us to manage

stock within the stores, ensuring that we have suitable stock for all service users and allows us to monitor product collections. If the service user finds they are consistently unable to attend their allocated store, then their prescription can be allocated to a more convenient store.

If the service user does not collect within the month and does not inform their key worker or the continence team this will be noted as a non-collection and if this occurs on a number of occasions, despite investigation for a valid reason their prescription could be placed on hold and further stopped.

4) Were service users informed that products would be forfeited if not collected in the first month?

Response:

When a new product prescription is opened or updated a letter is generated and sent to the service user to inform them of the collection store, the opening times and when this is available to collect.

If they are unable to collect during these times, they are encouraged to contact their key worker or the continence team to arrange a one-off change of collection time or if required a change of store. We will work with all service users to ensure they have a suitable supply of products, however we encourage users to follow the process as this helps us manage stock within the stores, ensuring that we have suitable stock for all service users and it allows us to monitor product collections.

5) Why do depots for collection not display contact details for queries, compliments or complaints?

Response:

Staff at the distribution clinics will be able to point service users to the correct avenue for queries, compliments or complaints. Depending on the nature of the query there are different contact numbers or email addresses which service users should use. The staff at the clinics would be best placed to advise the service user. Key workers can also point service users to the correct area to deal with any concerns or questions.

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