

Transforming Medication Safety in Northern Ireland NEWS

This newsletter provides updates about the ongoing work that is transforming medication safety in Northern Ireland.

Issue 1
May 2024

Transforming Medication Safety in Northern Ireland strategy (TMSNI) was launched by the Health Minister in September 2020 in response to the World Health Organization's (WHO) third Global Patient Safety Challenge 'Medication without Harm'.

The goal of the third Global Patient Safety Challenge on Medication Safety is to gain worldwide commitment and action to reduce severe, avoidable medication-related harm by 50%, specifically by addressing harm resulting from errors or unsafe practices due to weaknesses in health systems.



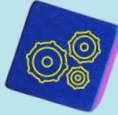
In this issue

Read more about Transforming Medication Safety NI:

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- Programme Achievements
- Future NHS



The TMSNI strategy sets out the key aims and commitments aligned to the **four domains of**



the WHO Challenge; Patients and Public, Health and Social



Care workers, Systems and Practice and Medicines.



The Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for the overall implementation of the Strategy and a DOH Medication Safety Oversight Board provides strategic oversight and accountability for the delivery of the TMSNI Programme.

Programme Delivery



To ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the TMSNI Programme, a Programme infrastructure has been put in place by SPPG to support the Department of Health's Medication Safety Oversight Board comprising of:

a

a TMSNI operational delivery group (TMSNI Programme Hub), which is responsible for establishing and maintaining the required project infrastructure and enabling and overseeing the delivery of the TMSNI Programme.

b

a TMSNI Advisory Group, which will provide expert advice and support to the Programme Hub and programme workstreams, through the chair, to enable it to deliver the 3-year TMSNI Implementation Plan.

Programme Hub

The Programme Hub comprises staff from the Strategic Planning and Partnership Group (SPPG), the Department of Health (DoH) and Health and Social Care Quality Improvement (HSCQI) who have been specifically tasked within their roles to implement, operationalise, and support the overall TMSNI Implementation Plan.



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Medicines Management and Governance, SPPG



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Regional Senior Improvement Advisor, HSCQI



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Helen Quinn
Pharmacy Adviser, SPPG



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Fionnuala Walsh
Programme Support Officer, SPPG



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Fiona Kirkpatrick
Senior Principal Pharmaceutical Officer, DoH

Programme Achievements



- ! Know
- ✓ Check
- ? Ask

In September 2022 the Minister of Health launched the **Know Check Ask Campaign** across health and social care in Northern Ireland, promoting the WHO Know, Check, Ask message as below.



Before you take it



3

steps to keep you safe when taking medicines

At some point in our lives, most of us will take medication to prevent or treat illness. However, medicines can sometimes cause serious harm if taken incorrectly. The 'KCA' campaign aims to help increase awareness of the importance of using medication safely.

Everyone has a role to play to ensure safe and effective use of medicines, so let's remember to **Know, Check, Ask**.

To support this campaign a **'My Medication List'** has been produced so that service users can keep a list of all their medicines and supplements.

We are encouraging everyone who takes regular medicines to keep an up-to-date list of their current medication, especially as patient held lists have been shown to be a useful memory aid, and can assist with communication to healthcare staff.

Before you give it...

- ! Know your medications
- ✓ Check you have the right:
 - Patient
 - Medicine
 - Route
 - Dose
 - Time
- ? Ask
 - your patient if they understand
 - your colleagues when you are unsure

Everyone has a role to play

scan me

<https://online.hscni.net/know-check-ask>

Before you take it...

- ! Know your medicines and keep an up-to-date list
- ✓ Check that you are using your medicines in the right way
- ? Ask your healthcare professional if you're not sure

For more information about the My Medicines List scan the QR code

scan me

To Scan the QR code
On your mobile phone open the camera.
Point the camera at the QR code.
Tap the pop up banner that appears.

<https://online.hscni.net/know-check-ask>

Information for people who take medicines and their families

My Medicines List

scan me

<https://online.hscni.net/know-check-ask>



Programme Achievements

HSCQI Medication Safety Opioid Improvement Collaborative Programme



HSCQI medication safety opioid improvement collaborative programme team hosted a stakeholder engagement workshop in 2023. Representatives from Primary and Secondary Care, which included multi-disciplinary colleagues from General Practice, Health and Social Care Trusts, Community Pharmacy, SPPG, Public Health Agency, Department of Health, Queen's University Belfast and the community and voluntary sector came together to engage, learn and share.

The improvement collaborative is a joint partnership between HSCQI and TMSNI Programme Team.

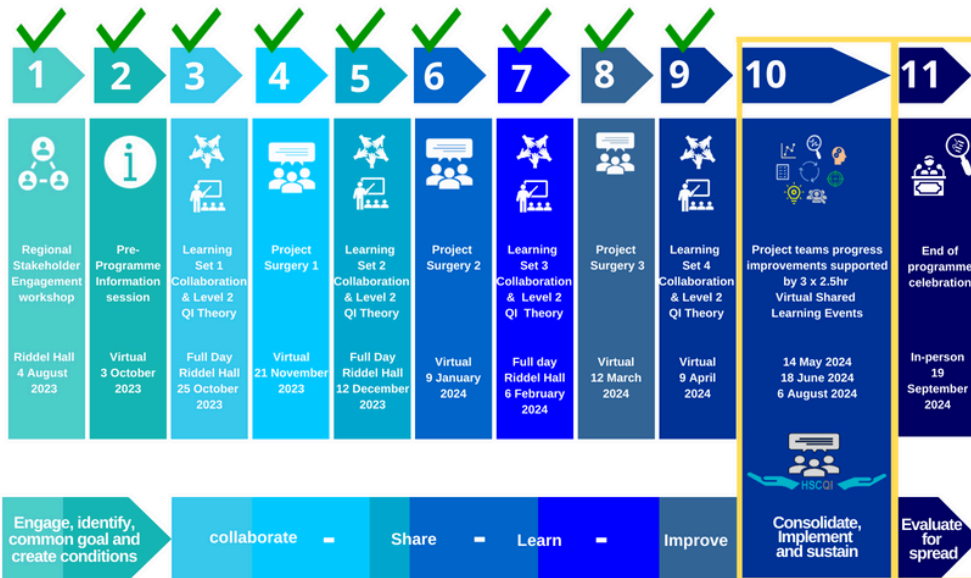
High level programme aim statement

By October 2024 the HSCQI opioid improvement collaborative programme will have supported 9 project teams from Primary and Secondary Care to focus improvements on opioid prescribing for the management of non-malignant pain.

Programme Output

The development of a suite of interventions to improve opioid prescribing in Primary and Secondary Care, participants will also receive Level 2 QI Qualification.

HSCQI Medication Safety Opioid Improvement Programme Timeline



Programme Achievements

Our lives, our meds, our health: Exploring medication safety through a social lens



Final Report
June 2023

Our Lives, Our Meds, Our Health

Exploring medication safety
through a social lens

Helen McNamee, Caoimhe Shields, Joanne Vance



In 2021, the Department of Health commissioned cross-sectoral, collaborative research with people in communities to examine the social determinants that impact on medication safety.

The research led by the Community Development and Health Network (CDHN), aimed to: Discover the social circumstances behind unsafe medication practices and avoidable medication-related harm to inform the implementation of the TMSNI plan, using community-based participatory research approach. This exploratory study is the first of its kind in NI which successfully collected people's lived experiences of medication use and raised awareness of the social determinants of health and medication safety. The research findings are summarised in the report '[Our Lives, Our Meds, Our Health: Exploring Medication Safety through a Social Lens](#)'. The research identifies that medication safety is a health inequalities issue and that social factors impact people's ability to take their medication safely and provides recommendations for TMSNI and the wider HSC, one of which includes the need to co-produce, deliver and evaluate a cascading community health literacy programme focused on medication safety.

At the [research report launch event in June 2023](#) Professor Cathy Harrison, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer said: "In Northern Ireland we are fortunate to benefit from effective systems for the safe prescribing, dispensing and administration of medicines. However, we know that errors can still occur, in any walk of life, and we are committed to supporting improvements that aim to reduce or prevent the risk of harm to patients. The evidence in this research provides the opportunity to learn about how people's everyday lives and social circumstances can impact on their ability to take medication as prescribed and inspire us to drive improvements in medication safety. The report recommendations will further inform the implementation of the strategy 'Transforming Medication Safety in Northern Ireland' to improve safe practices with medicines and support a medication safety culture within our population."



Programme Achievements

Launch of Yellow Card Centre Northern Ireland



To encourage reporting of medication safety issues and concerns, DoH in partnership with Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and the MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) have recently established and launched the Northern Ireland Yellow Card centre. This is a patient safety initiative to promote reporting of suspected safety concerns with healthcare products, like a side effect with a medicine or a vaccine, or an adverse medical device incident, to the MHRAs Yellow Card scheme.

[Read more . . .](#)

The multidisciplinary team at the Yellow Card centre aim to increase awareness, educate and promote reporting of suspected adverse events by patients and health professionals in Northern Ireland to help further improve the safety of healthcare products in the UK.

Reports to the Yellow Card scheme


Visit <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/>

Yellow Card app (available from Apple App or Google Play Store)

For more information on the Yellow Card centre Northern Ireland

Tel: 028 9504 0558 (Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm)

Email: medicineinfo@belfasttrust.hscni.net

 **Yellow Card** | Making medicines and medical devices safer

Programme Achievements

Communication

TMSNI continue to work with HSC colleagues to promote Medication Safety, with representation at the following recent events:



- London Health Care Roadshow's Patient Safety theatre as a keynote speaker.
- All-Ireland Pharmacy Conference presented our work to date.



NICON23 conference with promotion of the Know Check Ask campaign and Yellow Card reporting

FutureNHS

TMSNI has also launched their space within Future NHS, Health and Social Care Northern Ireland workspace.

For all updates and further information on our work please visit [Transforming Medication Safety in Northern Ireland \(TMSNI\) Workspace](#)

CONTACT US

If you would like to find out more about the work of Transforming Medication Safety in Northern Ireland or if you would like to contribute to this newsletter please email: medicine.safety@hscni.net



All Island Medication Safety Conference

29 November 2024 in Dublin Castle

For more info please email: Medicine.safety@hscni.net