

This is the third in an occasional update to interested parties in the journey of [Refer-to-Pharmacy](#).

Firstly, a quick update of referral numbers to date. From go-live last October to the beginning of this week **1473** people have been referred from East Lancashire Hospitals to their local community pharmacy for post-discharge support with their medicines. This is made up of:

Blister Pack medicine changes	639
MUR	343
NMS	262
Information only	125
Care Home medicine changes	104

The [CPPE](#) has now facilitated two training events at the Royal Blackburn Hospital for local community pharmacists. Both went well and there was great enthusiasm in the room to find out more about R2P, discharge letters and improving consultation skills.

As a result of February's update e-mail I was contacted by the Community Pharmacy team at the Department of Health, which resulted in two groups of their pharmacy staff visiting to see Refer-to-Pharmacy in action. The hospital pharmacists taking part in our dedicated ward pharmacy pilot also took the opportunity to show them what difference having intensive pharmacy support on a ward makes. [Click here and scroll down to see the Trust's news article on the visit.](#)

Last time's newsletter also resulted in an invite to the [UK e-Health Week](#) where I'll be speaking at the Focus on Pharmacy: Future Vision section of the main conference at Olympia (20th April, Theatre 3, 14:00-14:45 if you visiting). Wi-Fi permitting this will include a live demo of Refer-to-Pharmacy.

It's a busy week next week as I'm also speaking the [Pharmacy Clinical Congress](#) at the Excel in London on Friday 22nd April (its the Innovation & Technology forum, 10:45-11:15) where again a live demo is in the offing internet connection permitting (oh the irony if there is no connection in either of these places!).

In other news Refer-to-Pharmacy has made the shortlist for an [HSJ Value in Healthcare](#) award for "The use of Information Technology to drive value in clinical services" category". I'm off to London today to be interviewed by a panel ahead of the actual awards night on May 24th. My Trust is up for two other awards too – fingers crossed!

There are now a number of sites around the country getting close to going live with Refer-to-Pharmacy. The software developers ([Webstar Health](#)) are planning two waves of go-live this year; one in the early summer and one towards the end of the year. There should be more news on this next time.

And finally, a research team at Manchester University School of Pharmacy is currently trawling through a ton of data as part of their service evaluation of Refer-to-Pharmacy. It will be a little while before there is anything to publish. However I have one tantalizing statistic, which I happened upon during part of the evaluation of our dedicated ward pharmacy project...

...there is published evidence from NHS Wales' [Discharge Medication Review](#) scheme that community pharmacists helping people get the best from their medicines post-hospital discharge reduce hospital admissions. Now there are a load of caveats to the end of this sentence (it's only for medical wards at the Royal Blackburn Hospital, there are some changes in demographics to these wards, there are other projects on-going to reduce hospital readmissions etc. etc.) but when comparing the 28-day readmissions rate *for the same diagnosis* the first 3 months of 2016 to the same period of 2015 the rate has dropped from 3.8% to 2.1%. This equates to around 68 *less* people readmitted in January to March this year. It's an early, possible [Wow! signal](#). I'll keep you posted.

Many thanks,



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