

Optum

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

Case study



The problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on primary care, not least the way in which patients were seen, prescriptions were issued, and medicines collected. A number of measures were adopted to ensure that patients were still receiving the same level of care and new ways of working were adopted at both practice level and community pharmacies.

The effect of the pandemic on primary care prescribing varied according to the product type, with an increase in medications prescribed amongst those critical for health and end of life, yet prescribing of medications involving face-to-face consultations declined, whilst others observed no change¹.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde were keen to optimise and harness the potential benefits of ScriptSwitch Prescribing Clinical - Decision Support for their local economy following the pandemic, setting out to increase their return on investment (ROI) year-on-year for 2021/22.

They chose to focus on three key areas in which to increase their benefits, outlined below with data from 2020/21 to show the baseline.



Saving

- To address the reduced savings observed during the start of pandemic
- ROI in 2020/21 was approx £2.67 for every £1.00 invested



Simplicity

- To identify, review and remove ineffective / never displayed recommendations
- Acceptance rate in 2020/21 was 32%



Safety

- To implement tracking and support through local clusters and performance reports
- Savings in 2020/21 was £954,400*

*Source: ScriptSwitch Analytics Data 2020 / 2021

1. [Analysis of primary care prescription trends in England during the COVID-19 pandemic compared against a predictive model - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#). Accessed 24.05.22.

The solution

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHS GGC) were committed to capitalising on the value of ScriptSwitch Prescribing through working collectively with their local areas and the Optum account management and customer service teams. They deployed workstreams against the three focus areas to ensure a greater return on investment.

Workstream areas for NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

- Analysis of 'Never Displayed' recommendations
- Review of Vitamin-D3 switches recommendations
- Smaller reporting clusters set up in ScriptSwitch Prescribing Analytics
- Optum Customer Service health checks for low performing sites
- Introduced ambitious new switches - Dermatology and eye drops
- Reports directly issued to Health and Social Care Partnership Leads
- Regular monitoring of selected switches
- Localised NHS GGC specific information added to recommendations
- Feedback functionality for acute sector requesting non-formulary items

The medicines optimisation team committed dedicated resource to updating the ScriptSwitch Prescribing profile which was a key part of the solution and success driver for achieving their targets.

The ScriptSwitch Prescribing Analytics pack together with dedicated resource meant the team were able to identify historic information-only messages, review switches with poor acceptance levels and assess recommendations which had never been displayed.

The team could then focus on the areas that would bring the most value; removing messages which were no longer appropriate and adding local material to the justification text of existing messages. Following the review and update of the Greater Glasgow and Clyde profile, ambitious new switches were introduced based on local prescribing data, resulting in a highly efficient, manageable and lean profile.

An easy-to-maintain profile, with messages that are relevant and accepted increases ROI



Directly controlling the profile and adding local messages made it personal to Glasgow, adopting the mindset “If I was prescribing what would I want to see in this message?”



Newly identified switches not seen before in Scotland, including:

- Preservative-free Eye Drops
- Dermatology

Following the update of the local ScriptSwitch Prescribing profile, selected switches were monitored, and the team identified low performing sites across the area. Optum’s customer service team provided practice ‘Health Checks’ using data to identify practices requiring follow-up. This included working with practice managers and IT teams to review why ScriptSwitch Prescribing might not be working as well in those sites (e.g., windows installation, inactive users, IT issues, new users not added).

Supporting local cluster areas through re-organising two large data groups of 234 practices in to reporting at Health and Social Care Partnership level meant that areas were aligning to support better ways of working at cluster level. Each cluster lead received bespoke reports at practice level enabling them to focus in on areas of importance and improvement.

One specific area of improvement that has been successful is utilisation of the feedback functionality to increase use of preferred list formulary items. Prescribing teams were encouraged to complete feedback for incidences where non preferred list / formulary options were requested by clinics and hospitals. This has helped to further educate and raise awareness of preferred preparations in the acute sector – an approach that is now being considered by other Health Boards in Scotland.

“ Services such as ScriptSwitch which help us improve the way we’re able to deliver care and make quick decisions around prescriptions are playing a key role in supporting the health board as it recovers from the pandemic.”

– **Mairi-Anne McLean, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, senior prescribing advisor**

The outcomes

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have every reason to celebrate. Their hard work and areas of focus have significantly improved not only their return on investment, but their savings and acceptance rates across the locality moving from a position of 8th in Scotland to 4th within a year based on an improvement in actual cost benefit per 1,000 scripts logged across a total of 1.2 million patients.



Saving

- **24% Increase in Return on Investment**
- From £2.65 in 2020/21 to **£3.28 for financial year 2021/22**



Simplicity

- **20% Increase in Acceptance Rates**
- From 32% in 2020/21 to **38.42% for 2021/22**




Safety

- **25% Increase in savings**
- From £954,400 in 2020/21 to **£1,189,400 in 2021/22** – an increase of £235,000

As part of this review and working alongside NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Optum has identified additional areas of focus for this year ensuring prescribers are working with the new activated features for Safety Alerts and Quantity Limits, as well as addressing clinical priorities such as decarbonisation/ green inhaler prescribing.

“Congratulations to everyone involved in the programme of work last year at NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The cross-team collaboration has been exemplary and it’s great to see how some of these adjustments in practice have led to more permanent changes in local behaviour that will continue to deliver improvements in safety for patients and simpler, more useful workflows for local teams”
– **Ben Cole, Optum Pharmacist Account Manager**

To find out more about the approach adopted by NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, and how to get the most out of your ScriptSwitch Prescribing profile, speak to your pharmacist account manager today.

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