

Arrangements for Prescribing and Dispensing of antiviral medication for care home residents in Leeds

[NICE TA 168](#) and [NICE TA 158](#) recommend oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment or prophylaxis of influenza in adults and children if **all** the following circumstances apply:

- national surveillance schemes indicate that influenza virus A or B is circulating
- the person is in an 'at-risk' group
- the person presents with an influenza-like illness and can start treatment within 48 hours (or within 36 hours for zanamivir treatment in children) of the onset of symptoms as per licensed indications, or, the person has been exposed to an influenza-like illness and is able to begin prophylaxis within the timescale specified in the marketing authorisations of the individual drugs (within 36 hours of contact with an index case for zanamivir and within 48 hours of contact with an index case for oseltamivir).
- the person for prophylaxis has not been effectively protected by vaccination.

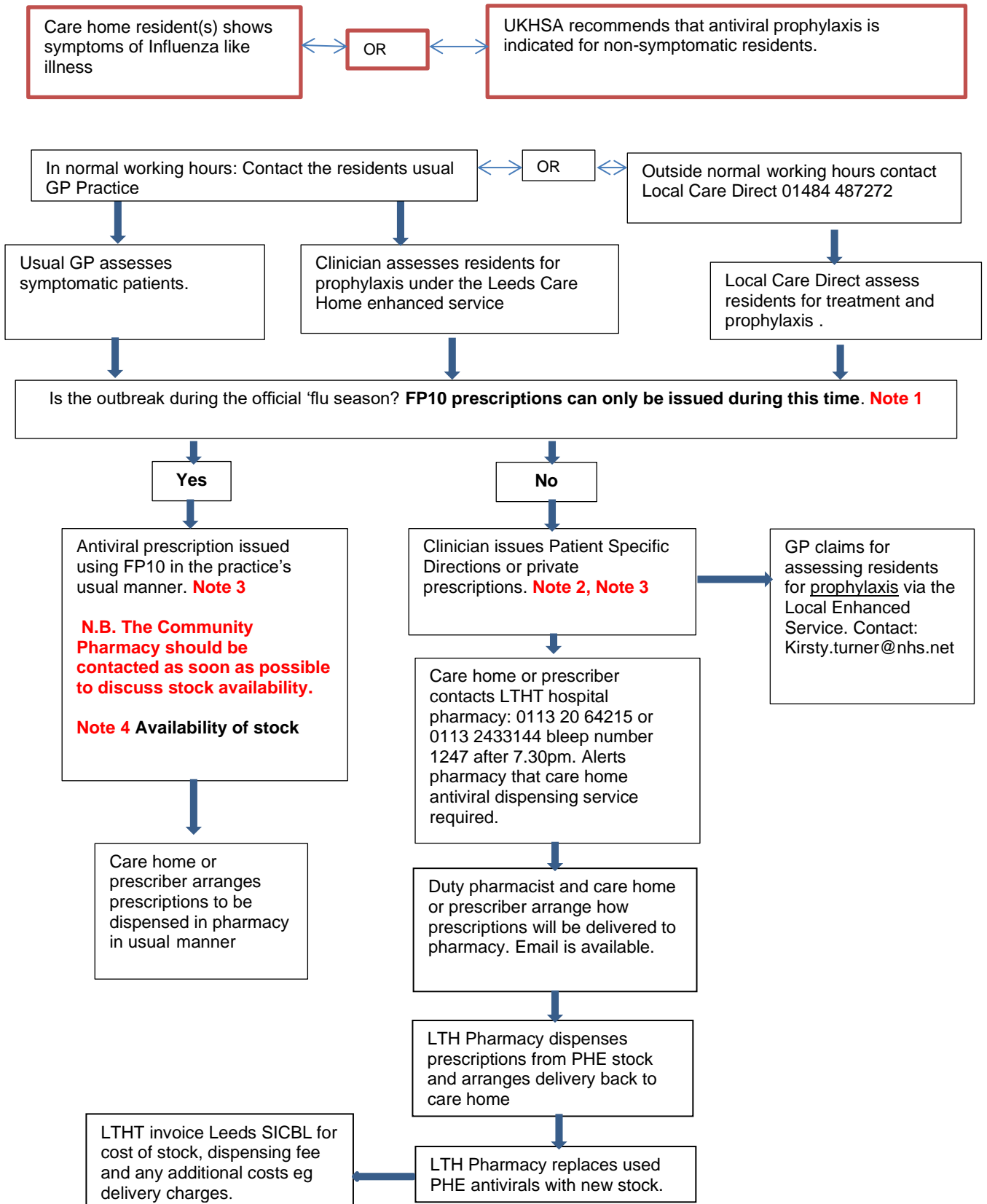
Additional recommendations are given for **residents living in care settings**: during localised outbreaks of influenza-like illness **outside** the periods when national surveillance indicates that influenza virus is circulating generally in the community, oseltamivir and zanamivir may be used for treatment and post-exposure prophylaxis in at-risk people living in long-term residential or nursing homes, whether or not they are vaccinated.

During a care home outbreak the UK Health Security Agency UKHSA will normally give recommendation to GPs if prophylaxis is required. Under the terms of their contract antivirals can only be prescribed by a GP on the NHS during the period when the Chief Medical Officer has indicated influenza is circulating. Outside this official 'flu season NHSE require ICBs / SICBLs to make arrangements for dispensing antivirals via an alternative route.

In the event of an out of season outbreak in Leeds the ICB in Leeds has contracted LTH pharmacy to dispense antiviral medication on receipt of either a Patient Specific Direction (PSD) or private prescription from a doctor or other non-medical prescriber.

NHSE have confirmed that antiviral prescribing for patients symptomatic of influenza like illness falls within the scope of GP essential medical services, but it is the responsibility of ICBs /SICBLs to commission services to respond to a UKHSA recommendation for influenza prophylaxis within a care home setting (see [NHSE guidance letter](#)). **Within Leeds this service will be supplied by the patient's usual GP via a local enhance service.**

Care Homes Antiviral flow chart



Note 1. Copies of the CMO messages regarding the prescribing antivirals can be found by searching the [CAS](#) website.

Note 2. In the event of an out of season outbreak in Leeds LTH pharmacy is contracted to dispense antiviral medication on receipt of either a Patient Specific Direction (PSD) or private prescription from a doctor or other non-medical prescriber. To aid production of the PSD the private prescription function on clinical systems may be used.

1. A Patient Specific Direction (PSD) may be provided. A PSD is a written instruction, signed by a prescriber, for medicines to be supplied and/or administered to a list of named patient after the prescriber has assessed the patients on an individual basis. There is no official format for a PSD, however it should contain the following information:
 - Name and Address of Care Home.
 - Names of patients to be treated.
 - Name, form and strength of medicine.
 - Route of administration.
 - Dose and duration of treatment.
 - Signature of prescriber, including registration details / qualifications.
 - Contact details of prescriber.
2. A private prescription may be issued, which should include wording to indicate that it is to be dispensed free of charge by LTH pharmacy under the provision of the care home contract eg: 'Care Home Antiviral prescription, only to be dispensed at LTH pharmacy'.

Note 3. Full guidance on prescribing oseltamivir and zanamivir for the treatment and prophylaxis of influenza, including dose reduction in renal disease, is available in [UKHSA Guidance on use of antiviral agents for the treatment and prophylaxis of seasonal influenza.](#)

Swallowing difficulties: Tamiflu (oseltamivir) capsules may be opened and contents mixed with a sugary liquid or sweetened food before taking to disguise bitter taste. Contents may be dispersed in water for use via enteral feeding tubes. Tamiflu suspension should be reserved for children less than 1 year of age.

The British Geriatric Society advice on antiviral prescribing recommends that, during an outbreak response, where there is no information about renal function (or lack of available routine renal function results from the past 6 months), there is a high likelihood of abnormal renal function in care home patients and recommend that a dose appropriate to that for CrCl of 31-60 ml/min would be appropriate. See: [Guidelines for PHE health protection teams on the management of outbreaks of influenza-like illness \(ILI\) in care homes](#)

Note 4. Availability of stock

During the 'flu season' care homes may send prescriptions to any Community Pharmacy and, whilst it is unlikely that a pharmacy will have stock on the shelves, most should be able to obtain stock within 1 working day from receipt of prescriptions. It is advisable that you contact your local pharmacy as soon as possible to discuss.

Asda Pharmacy at Killingbeck (see below) hold a stock of oseltamivir 75 and 30mg capsules and care homes may also direct prescriptions there to meet the requirement to start treatment within 48 hours.

Asda Pharmacy
Killingbeck Drive
Leeds LS14 6UF
Telephone 01132019510

Opening Hours:

Monday –Saturday 9.00 to 21.00hrs

Sunday 10.00 to 16.00hrs

This branch will be closed on Xmas day and New Years Day and open between 10.00 and 16.00hrs on the 26th and 27th December 2023.