

**From Interim Head of Pharmacy and Medicine
Management, SPPG
Kathryn Turner**



**By email to:
GP Practices
(FAO General Practitioners, General Practice
Pharmacists, Practice Nurses)
OOH medical services**

**Strategic Planning and Performance
Group**

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Dear Colleagues

**PHARMACY FIRST SORE THROAT SERVICE:
FURTHER EXTENSION UNTIL 31ST MARCH 2026**

The purpose of this letter is to let you know that this service will now be extended **until 31st March 2026**.

Service outline and documentation

The service facilitates the assessment and treatment of people with symptoms of sore throat aged 5 years and over in line with Northern Ireland Antimicrobial Guidelines and [NICE NG84 Sore throat \(acute\): antimicrobial prescribing](#). All resources for this service including service specification and guidance are available on the [BSO website](#).

Actions for GP practices and out-of-hours medical services

GP practices and OOH medical services are encouraged to:

- Refer suitable patients to a community pharmacy providing the service for advice and treatment for sore throat.
- To manage patient expectations:
 - Do not refer patients for a 'throat swab' – some patients will not be eligible for a throat swab (this will depend on their FeverPain score)
 - Do not refer patients for an 'antibiotic' – only patients who have a positive throat swab may be eligible to obtain an antibiotic.
- Do not refer patients with signs and symptoms suggesting alternative diagnosis such as; cough, cold, chest infection, sinusitis, or otitis media.

If you have any queries in relation to this service please contact your Pharmacy Adviser.

Yours sincerely,

Kathryn Turner

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