

## Structured Medication Reviews

This information sheet has been developed by Health Innovation Kent Surrey and Sussex (KSS) to help healthcare professionals understand the purpose of Structured Medication Reviews and why they are needed. This document also includes information about ongoing pilots with PCNs in some of the most deprived areas of England and provides links to patient materials that can be adapted and used with your patients. Should you have any questions after reading this document, please contact [jo.foulger@nhs.net](mailto:jo.foulger@nhs.net) or visit our website [Polypharmacy - Health Innovation Kent Surrey Sussex](#) for more information.

### What are Structured Medication Reviews (SMRs)?

Structured Medication Reviews (SMRs) are the best tested intervention for reducing problematic polypharmacy (1). However, studies (2) show that most patients do not understand what an SMR is. When they are invited for an SMR, patients often receive limited, if any, information to help them understand or prepare for their appointment.

People who may benefit from an SMR are individuals who are taking multiple medicines (usually for a number of long-term conditions) and may be experiencing the problems that can be associated with polypharmacy. An SMR has been shown to help to identify medicines that are no longer appropriate for such patients or that may need a change in dose.

Research has shown an increased risk of problematic polypharmacy for older patients and those from poorer backgrounds (1). A higher proportion than average of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic populations are taking eight or more medicines (1).

### Patient materials

Patient information materials have been developed by the Health Innovation Network to help patients to understand the process, empower them to get the most out of their SMR and support them with any changes to their medicines. Work to date has shown that the use of these materials is helping to remove barriers to engagement with patients in communities that traditionally may not have taken up the invitation to review their medicines.

The Health Innovation Network is now funding 25 Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in high-deprivation areas to drive the uptake of SMRs through use of the patient information materials. This project aims to support the NHS's aim to reduce healthcare inequalities across England as part of the Core20PLUS5 approach. Kent Surrey and Sussex (KSS) have two sites represented in this group.

New findings from two observed pilots with CORE20 PCNs in Greater Manchester and Nottingham indicate that the resources improved the quality of consultations and increased interventions to address problematic polypharmacy. The materials were tested with 269 patients. The participating practices included some of the most deprived 20% of the national population in England, with high levels of polypharmacy and language being a significant engagement barrier.

Patients in the pilots reported that the materials helped them to think about their medicines before their appointment, saying that they helped them feel more secure talking about their medicines issues and that they appreciated receiving the documents in their first language. In the case of Nottingham PCN, attendance rates for SMRs increased by 88% (3).

## Available resources

The resources include:



- Patient Structured Medication Review Invitation Letter
- Stopping Medicines Safely Leaflet
- Me and My Medicines Leaflet
- Are Your Medicines Working patient information Leaflet

The resources are available in 12 community languages, including easy read and audio versions. [Further information about the patient information materials and](#)

[how they can be accessed can be found here](#)

## Animations

This is the animation to help patients think about their medicines and to prepare for a Structured Medication Review:



[Download a subtitled version of the animation here to show in your GP practice.](#)

[An alternative version of the animation without sound is also available to download here.](#)

Yorkshire and Humber Health Innovation Network have worked with healthcare professionals and patients to produce videos to achieve the best outcomes from an SMR with versions for patients and clinicians

Access the videos [here](#)

## References

- (1) Lad, B. A campaign to help patients discuss their medicines nearly doubled our medication reviews. The Pharmaceutical Journal, PJ, May 2024, Vol 312, No7985;312(7985)  
<https://doi.org/10.1211/PJ.2024.1.314200>
- (2) Department of Health & Social Care: Good for you, Good for us, Good for everybody. 2021.(
- 3) Okeowo, D et al. Barriers and facilitators of implementing proactive deprescribing within primary care: a systematic review, International Journal of Pharmacy Practice, Volume 31, Issue 2, April 2023, Pages 126–152, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpp/riad>