

PHARMACY FIRST-TEAM BRIEF & GATEWAY MINDSET GUIDE

A practical support pack to help busy pharmacy teams quickly identify potential Pharmacy First patients, recognise gateway thresholds and support safe referral into pharmacist consultations.

1. HOW TO USE THIS PACK

Each section within this pack is designed to support pharmacy teams during busy workflows. The aim is to help teams identify suitable Pharmacy First patients earlier and escalate appropriately.

Tool / Resource	Who It Supports	Purpose	Key Benefits
Gateway Focus Infographic	Pharmacists / Managers	Quick reference covering gateway changes, thresholds and escalation points.	Faster assessments • Consistent escalation
Counter Team Guide	Counter Team	Supports early identification of possible Pharmacy First patients.	Earlier referrals • Better signposting
Patient Checklist	Patients + Pharmacist	Completed while waiting to support workflow and assessment.	Saves consultation time • Improves consistency

2. THE 7 CLINICAL CONDITIONS

Clinical Condition	Age Criteria
Acute Otitis Media	1–17 years
Acute Sinusitis	12+ years
Acute Sore Throat	5+ years
Impetigo	1+ year
Infected Insect Bites	1+ year
Shingles	18+ years
Uncomplicated UTI	Women 16–64 years

3. THE GATEWAY MINDSET SHIFT

The updated Pharmacy First pathways place greater emphasis on symptom duration, threshold indicators, clinical findings and appropriate escalation.

Old Thinking	New Thinking
'Maybe GP'	'Could this meet Pharmacy First gateway criteria?'
OTC request only	Has this gone beyond routine self-care?
Treat symptoms only	Check thresholds and timing first

4. KEY GATEWAY TRIGGERS

Confirm that the patient presents with the required symptoms and meets the relevant gateway criteria below.

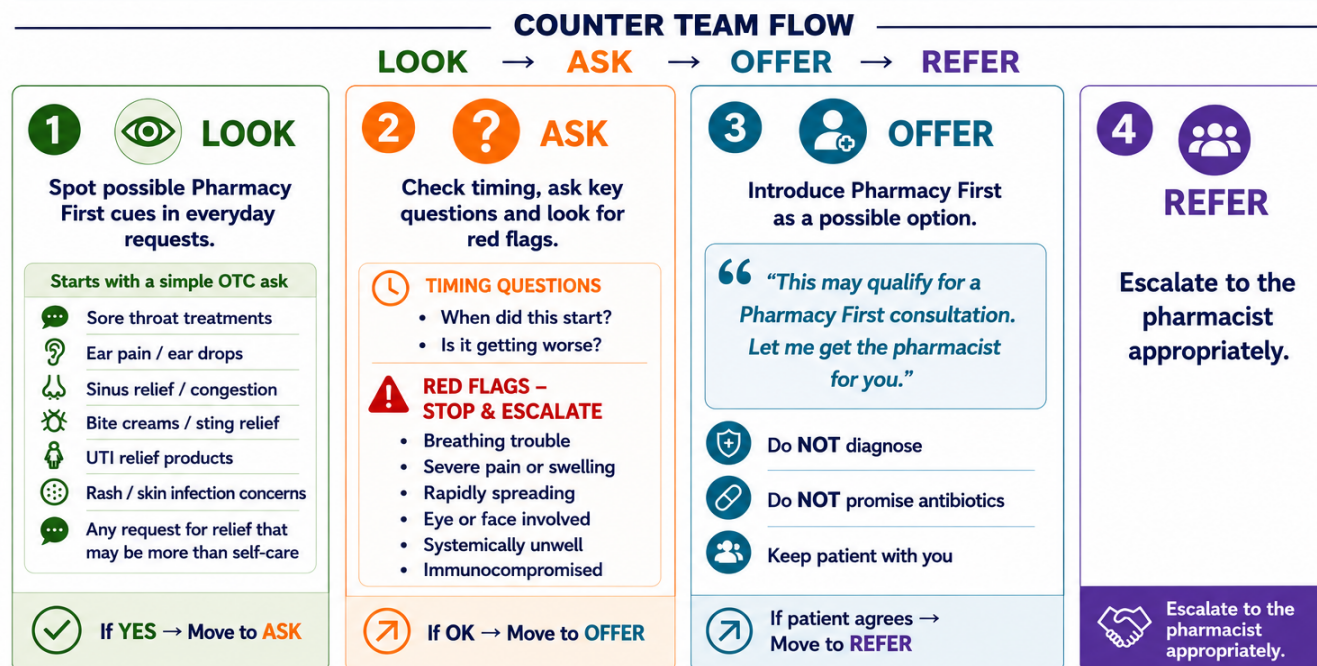
Condition	Key Gateway Trigger
Sinusitis	Symptoms <10 days
Infected Insect Bite	Infection signs AFTER 48 hours
Shingles	Ideally within 72 hours
Sore Throat	FeverPAIN / Centor criteria
Acute Otitis Media	Symptoms usually <3 days
Impetigo	Localised bacterial lesions
UTI	Uncomplicated lower urinary symptoms

5. MAKE EVERY CONVERSATION COUNT

Most Pharmacy First consultations begin with a simple OTC request or symptom enquiry.



The counter team role is to recognise potential Pharmacy First patients and escalate appropriately.



Never promise antibiotics before pharmacist assessment.

5A. DOCUMENT THE CONSULTATION

- Complete PMR record
- Capture symptoms and advice given
- Obtain patient consent where required
- Submit clinical data appropriately

Accurate documentation supports clinical safety, continuity of care and service quality.

6. RED FLAGS ALWAYS OVERRIDE PATHWAY ELIGIBILITY

Refer to the Pharmacy First Red Flags Quick Escalation Reference Guide.

7. DON'T MISS THE THRESHOLD

Many pharmacies only realise late in the month that they were only a few consultations short of the next payment threshold.

Monthly Clinical Pathway Consultations	Threshold Payment
20–29 consultations	£500
30+ consultations	£1000

Review Pharmacy First activity during Week 3 and Week 4 to identify missed opportunities early.