

Only Order What You Need

Campaign toolkit

October 2025



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Introduction

Medicines Waste – only order what you need

Introduction

The Only Order What You Need campaign is an award-winning campaign. We will be building on the work to Dorset ICB with this campaign to:

- Reduce the number of unnecessary repeat prescription orders in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
- Encourage safe disposal of prescription medicine by encouraging patients to dispose of medicines properly; by handing them in to your pharmacy and not disposing of them at home.
- Provide advice to the public about the need to reduce medicine waste, the importance of only ordering medicines that are needed and the implications of over ordering.

This communications toolkit contains a range of written, digital and printable campaign assets and resources to help local NHS Trusts, GP practices, community health teams, voluntary sector and other key partners to promote the campaign to the public.

Text message/WhatsApp copy example

Did you know you can help your local NHS to reduce medicines waste by only ordering what you need on your repeat prescription? Thank you for your support.

For more information, please visit staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need

Press release

Help reduce medication waste and support the NHS across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent

Pharmacists and GPs across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are asking people to help the local NHS by only ordering the medication they need from their repeat prescriptions.

A report by the Department of Health estimates that unused medicines cost the NHS around £300 million every year. A large amount of medicine items are wasted unnecessarily in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent each year. We need your help to reduce this.

Dr Rachel Gallyot, Interim Chief Medical Officer, said:

“We want to remind you how important it is to check what medicines you have at home before placing your repeat prescription order.

We know that a significant amount of repeat prescription medicines are not used and returned to pharmacies for destruction. With your support, we hope that we can make a difference and improve on the number of unused medicines.

NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

We have learned that ordering unnecessary medication can increase the risk of medicines shortages in pharmacies and we want to make sure essential medications are available to those who need them the most. We want people to have the right medicine and the right care, while reducing the amount of medicine waste. Thank you to the many people who already do this.”

Dr Gallyot shares some tips on how everyone can do this:

- Only order the medication if you need it - repeat items still remain on your prescription, even if you don't order them every month
- Try keeping all medication in one safe place at home, so you can see what you have left and what you need to reorder
- For each prescription, take medication from one pill packet at a time, so that you can keep a track of what you've taken and what you have left
- Make a note on your calendar 7 to 10 days before your prescription due date, to go through your medication and see what is left. Being organised in this way means that if bank holidays or weekends are coming up, you will have planned enough for these dates too
- If a friend, carer or family member orders your repeat prescription for you, make sure to tell them which medications you need and what you don't need. This will mean they aren't ordering medications that you don't yet need.

It can be challenging organising medication, particularly if you need to take a lot of medication or you support someone to take their medication, but it is safer to organise and manage medication in this way.

If you have questions about your prescription or need some support, speak to your pharmacy team. Unused or out of date medicines and inhalers should always be returned to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

Newsletter copy

Only Order What You Need

Did you know large amounts of medicines are wasted in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent each year? We need your help to reduce this.

Check what medicines you have at home before you order your repeat prescriptions. If you have enough, only request the medicines you need this time. You will still be able to order the others again in future.

Here are some tips to help you only order what you need:

- Try keeping all medication in one place at home so you can see what you have left and what you need to reorder
- For each prescription, take medication from one pill packet at a time so that you can keep a track of what you've taken and what you have left

NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

- Make a note on your calendar 7-10 days before your prescription due date to go through your medication and see what is left. Being organised in this way means that if bank holidays or weekends are coming up, you will have planned enough for these dates too.

Speak to your pharmacy team if you have any questions about how to change your prescription request.

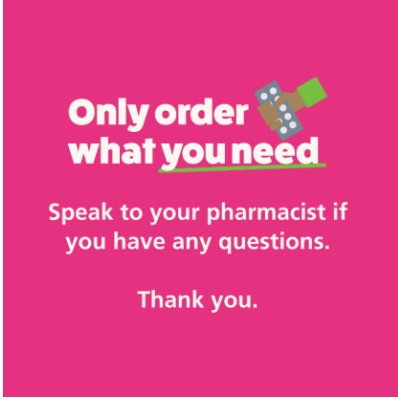
Visit the campaign webpage page on the ICB website to find out more:
staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need




Campaign materials


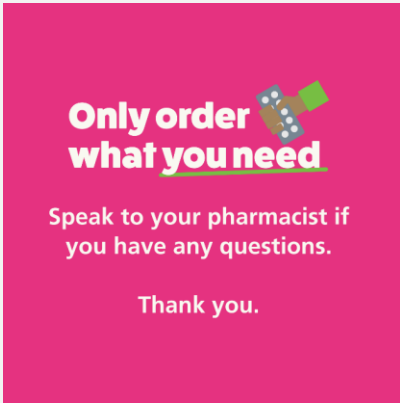

There are plenty of campaign materials that you can download and use. Check out our [Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent campaign resource centre](#) to access the full suite of materials, including:




- Waiting room digital screens (horizontal and vertical)
- Posters
- Pull-up banner graphics
- A5 tent-fold graphic (for pharmacy bags etc)
- Social media graphics

Suggested social media posts

Post Copy	Graphic
<p>A huge amount of medicines are wasted unnecessarily in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent each year. We need your help to reduce this.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The graphic is a square with a pink background. At the top, it says 'Only order what you need' in white text, with a small illustration of a pill bottle and a pill. Below that, it says 'Speak to your pharmacist if you have any questions.' and 'Thank you.' at the bottom.</p>

<p>When you dispose of medicines and inhalers properly, by handing them in to your pharmacy, you are helping to make sure that waste medicines do not pollute our rivers, seas and soil.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top. Below it, the text reads: "Only order what you need" with "what you need" underlined. A graphic of a hand holding a blister pack of pills is positioned to the right. Below the main text, it says: "Speak to your pharmacist if you have any questions. Thank you."</p>
<p>Taking your prescription medicines with you into hospital helps staff provide safe, seamless care, and avoids ordering duplicate prescriptions, and potentially wasting medicines</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top. Below it, the text reads: "Only order what you need" with "what you need" underlined. A graphic of a hand holding a blister pack of pills is positioned to the right. Below the main text, it says: "Speak to your pharmacist if you have any questions. Thank you."</p>
<p>There is a lot we can do to tackle medicines waste and stay well in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, and everyone can play a part.</p> <p>Thank you for helping your community to reduce medicine waste.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top. Below it, there is a green-bordered box containing the text "Repeat prescriptions?" followed by a checked checkbox. Below this, the text reads: "Only order what you need" with "what you need" underlined. A graphic of a hand holding a blister pack of pills is positioned to the right. At the bottom, it says: "If you have enough medicine at home, there's no need to request more - you can request more in the future".</p>

<p>Time to pick up your prescription?</p> <p>Only order what you need and check your prescription bag before leaving the pharmacy to make sure that there's nothing extra in there. If you return an item before you leave the pharmacy, the medicines can be reused.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top right. The main text reads: "Only order what you need" with "what you need" underlined. Below this, it says: "Speak to your pharmacist if you have any questions. Thank you." The background is a light yellow color with a small illustration of a pill blister pack.</p>
<p>Help your family stay safe – don't stockpile unnecessary amounts of medicines at home where they could be found by children.</p> <p>Only order what you need and return any unused items to your pharmacy for safe disposal.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster has a solid pink background. It features the NHS logo at the top right. The main text reads: "Only order what you need" with "what you need" underlined. Below this, it says: "Speak to your pharmacist if you have any questions. Thank you." There is a small illustration of a pill blister pack.</p>
<p>Prescription medicines are not safe to share with anyone else. Help your family and only order what you need.</p> <p>If you have stopped taking any of your medicines or they are no longer working for you, talk to your pharmacy team who can help.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top right. It includes an illustration of a hand holding a green envelope, a hand holding a pill blister pack, and a hand holding a yellow envelope. A yellow box with a checkmark contains the text "Stay Safe". Below this, the text reads: "Don't put others at risk of harm by sharing your repeat prescriptions." A yellow arrow points to the right at the bottom left.</p>

<p>Throwing medicines in household waste can harm the environment. Please return unused medicines to your pharmacy for safe disposal.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top right. The main text reads "Don't put unused medicines in household waste" with "household waste" underlined. Below this, a call to action says "Take them to your pharmacy" inside a rounded rectangle. The illustration shows a grey trash bin overflowing with various colorful medicine bottles and boxes, with its lid lying on the ground to the right.</p>
<p>Medicines prescribed for you may not be safe for someone else. Never share your repeat prescriptions. Stay safe, stay well.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top right. It includes a yellow box with the text "Stay Safe" and a checkmark. The main text reads "Don't put others at risk of harm by sharing your repeat prescriptions." The illustration shows two hands exchanging a blister pack of pills, with a yellow arrow pointing to the right.</p>
<p>Expired medicines may not work properly, and some can even be harmful. Always check dates and return old medicines to your pharmacy.</p> <p>Find out more information here staffsstokeics.org.uk/only-order-what-you-need</p>	 <p>The poster features the NHS logo at the top right. It includes a blue box with the text "Stay Well" and a checkmark. The main text reads "Expired medicines might not work and your health could be compromised." The illustration shows two hands exchanging a blister pack of pills, with a blue arrow pointing to the right.</p>