PURPOSE
Healthwatch Luton were asked by the Health and Social Care Review Group (a sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) to carry out an independent review of the repeat prescription process in Luton, representing the patient's voice.

HISTORY
In October 2014, the repeat prescription ordering services changed in Luton. The majority of people on repeatable prescriptions now had to order their repeat prescriptions directly from their GP surgeries. This meant that community pharmacies, dispensing appliance contractors, and homecare companies (e.g. Nutricia) would no longer be able to put in repeat prescription requests on behalf of most patients.¹

In May 2014, Healthwatch Luton began gathering evidence from the public around the changes to the Managed Pharmacy Repeat Prescription Service. Healthwatch Luton stated in their 2014/2015 Annual Report² that discussions regarding the changes to the prescription were brought to the attention of the Health and Social Care Review Group.

In 2015, the Health and Social Care Review Group asked Healthwatch Luton to run an independent review of the repeat prescription process, and report back the findings to the Group in July 2016.

OUTCOME
Healthwatch Luton hope this report will outline all findings of the independent review we undertook in March 2016. The report will mainly act to represent the patient’s voice.

METHODOLOGY
Healthwatch Luton spoke to over 344 people directly affected by the repeat prescription process. We visited over 30 GP surgeries and over 40 pharmacies. The questionnaire was inputted and shared with a range of stakeholders³. Healthwatch Luton also worked with Cambridgeshire Community Services in order to meet the seldom-heard and housebound patients who could not be reached at surgeries and pharmacies. Healthwatch Luton asked 29 questions (See Appendix 1)

This data was collected over a four week period but the data does not stipulate timings with regard to answers from patients. This is a snapshot of views.

¹ Standard Operating Procedure: Change to Repeat Prescribing Ordering Services (RPOS), Rationale and Evidence, page 4 (MOT, LCCG)
³ Michael Mullender-Francis showed to LPC, LMC, MOT, CCG, and internally.
Phil Turner - Healthwatch Luton Chair (HWL):

‘Healthwatch Luton undertook some significant changes in 2015 and this is the first of our new team’s reports. Following changes in the way in which repeat prescriptions are managed and prescribed, the following report assesses the views of the public on the repeat prescription process.

344 patients were interviewed to obtain their views and experiences of the system. These interviews were carried out at GP surgeries, pharmacies and community focus groups to obtain a cross section of the public. We also utilised local community teams to give us improved access to housebound patients or those less likely to be in GP surgeries or community pharmacies.

The report will be passed on to those organisations and groups that are involved in the repeat prescription process, and the general public to inform and aid understanding of its suitability to meet the needs of the community.’

David Foord - Director of Quality and Clinical Governance Luton Clinical Commissioning Group (LCCG):

‘Luton CCG is committed to supporting GP’s to improve their management of repeat prescriptions for the benefit of patient safety, including the introduction of a Patients’ Guide To Repeat Medicines.

These improvements have been recognised nationally with two PrescQIPP awards and have resulted in a positive impact for patients.

We are pleased that Healthwatch Luton has sought to add to our own wider evaluation of this work through seeking additional patient views on their experience of the changes and welcome any further improvements that the CCG can support GP practices to make.’

Tess Dawoud - Acting Head of LCCG Medicines Optimisation (MOT):

‘In Luton, changes to the way repeat prescriptions are ordered took place last year to improve safety and efficiency. These simple changes have reduced wasted medicines and generated in excess of £1million savings, given patients more control of their medicines and enabled GP’s to better monitor medicines usage.

This innovative project has generated national recognition and won two prestigious awards. Any evaluation needs to make sure that the user’s voices are heard and we are happy to support this Healthwatch Luton report.’
Carl Raybold - Local Medical Council (LMC):

‘The LMC is supportive of the CCG’s proposals on repeat prescribing/dispensing with the stated aim that they incorporate the following principles:

- It is safer for patients not to have a stockpile of drugs, e.g. to avoid overdoses etc;
- It is safer for patients not to have a stockpile of drugs where some drugs might be out of date and less efficacious;
- It is voluntary for practices if they want to implement the CCG’s proposals;
- Even if the CCG’s proposals are implemented for the majority of patients, there is scope to continue with a different regime for those patients whose circumstances mean that they need it.’

Bedfordshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC):

‘Bedfordshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee is keen to have an objective independent view based on patient experience of Luton CCG’s controversial guidance regarding the reordering of repeat prescriptions.

Pharmacies have reported complaints from patients about the inconvenience and in some cases distress caused by the scheme.’
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Overview: Questions 1-3

- 93% of those asked were on repeat prescriptions
- 99% of those asked lived in Luton
- 82% of those asked did not collect repeat prescriptions for someone else
- 14% of those asked lived in LU1, 28% lived in LU2, 17% lived in LU3 and 17% lived in LU4
- (24% were unknown or not recorded)
- 53% of those asked were male, 47% were female
- 30% of those asked had a disability

Overview - Ethnicity:
The questionnaire asked respondents to 'describe their ethnicity'. Out of 344 people, 267 answered their details.

See Appendix 2 for 'Other' described ethnicity.

The report did not allow respondents to 'pick' an ethnicity group, and so the findings are varied and not clear. Some people put 'Muslim' or 'Caucasian' as a ethnicity, so it is hard to determine the ethnic mix of those we spoke with.
ALL FINDINGS

Question 4: How do you order your repeat prescriptions?

- 47% dropped off their repeat prescriptions directly to their GP
- 26% ordered their repeat prescriptions online
- 10% called their GP
- 3% booked an appointment with their GP.

14% of respondents (41 people) stated they still ordered their repeat prescriptions directly through their pharmacist (under 'chemist', 'pharmacy', 'pharmacy direct')

Question 5: How long have you been on repeat prescriptions (if known)

- 87% of those asked had been on repeat prescriptions for over 1 year
- 3% responded less than 3 months, and 3% responded 6-12 months
- 2% responded 3-6 months

5% responded 'Other' (6 people), which included 'Don't know', 'All my life' and '31 years', '15 years', '20 years'. The majority of those who we talked to had been on repeat prescriptions longer than 1 year or more.

Question 6: Are there any restrictions on ordering your repeat prescription from your GP? (such as it must be in before noon etc?)

- 79% responded there were no restrictions on ordering through the GP
- 21% (59 respondents) said there were restrictions

The restrictions were listed as 'Having to come into GP', 'Can't order in advance', 'Doctor has to confirm', 'Can't get to see a Doctor', 'Doctors closed during lunch'.

Length of Time on repeat prescriptions

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The restrictions were listed as 'Having to come into GP', 'Can't order in advance', 'Doctor has to confirm', 'Can't get to see a Doctor', 'Doctors closed during lunch'.
The majority of the 59 respondents described accessing their GP as the main restriction on ordering their repeat prescription.

**Question 7: Do you find it easy to order your repeat prescription from your GP?**

- 80% said yes, it was easy to order
- 9% said no, it was not easy to order

11% said 'sometimes' and referred to 'having to come in to GP', or 'getting an appointment' had made it difficult.

**Question 8: How long do you have to wait for your prescription from your GP?**

- 49% have to wait 2 days
- 26% have to wait 3 days
- 5% wait 1 day
- 2% wait 4 days

11% stated 'other', and listed lengths of time including 1 week (5 people), 10 days, 3-5 days, and 1 person respondent nearly 3 weeks.

The report did not ask respondents when they had experienced these waiting times, so cannot clarify whether these waiting times were before or after the repeat prescription changes.

**Question 9: Is your prescription on time?**

- 81% said their prescriptions were ready on time all the time
- 17% said their prescriptions were ready on time sometimes
- 1% said their prescriptions were never on time

1% said they were unsure how to answer the question, and one comment was made that it would be easier for patients to collect their prescriptions if they were notified when their prescriptions were ready.

**Question 10: Has your repeat prescription ever been wrong?**

- 79% of respondents said their prescription had never been wrong
- 21% of respondents said their prescription had been wrong

The findings highlighted 1 in 5 people reported their repeat prescription had been wrong. The report did not ask when the prescription had been wrong, so therefore could not clarify whether this has been an affect of the changes to the process. However, the follow on question, 'If yes, do you know why?' allowed respondents to list the following reasons they understood their prescription was wrong:
Chemist's fault (4), out of date medicines (2), wrong dose (8), wrong prescription (6), lost from GP (1), not on the repeats (1), missed items (2), Hospital communications (1), discontinued medicines prescribed (1), not ordered (1), wrong address (2), someone else's prescription (1).

Question 11: Have you ever forgotten to order your repeat prescription?
- 65% had never forgotten to order their prescriptions
- 30% had forgotten at some time to order their prescriptions
- 5% were unsure.
Reasons for forgetting were highlighted as 'Dementia' (4), 'Not well' (2), and 'Just forgot' (5).

Question 12: If yes to question above, what did you do?
- 44 respondents stated their GP sorted out their prescription for them
- 16 respondents stated their pharmacy sorted it for them directly
- 4 respondents ordered them and waited for their prescriptions
- 2 respondents lived without their prescription
- 1 got no help
- 1 was admitted to hospital

Question 13: Have you heard of a medication review or an MUR (Medicines Use Review)?
- 54% had heard of a medication review or MUR
- 44% had not heard of a medication review or MUR
- 2% were unsure what was meant by a review or MUR. Once Healthwatch explained what a medication review and MUR was, respondents tended to agree they had heard of them, but it was not clear to the respondent this was what was taking place.

Question 14: Have you ever received a medication review or an MUR, or been contacted by your GP for any review?
- 46% stated they had received a review or MUR
• 38% stated they had not received a review or MUR
• 6% were unsure

We asked respondents to 'add comments', and the comments we received were:
'Received a review with my chemist', 'GP', 'Yearly I have one', 'Every 6 months', '3 months'.

**Question 15: Has your GP practice ever contacted you query a repeat prescription order?**
• 77% of respondents have never been contacted by their GP
• 16% responded they had been sometimes
• 3% said yes
• 1% the pharmacist had contacted them

3% didn't know how to answer the question.

**Question 16: How would you rate the repeat prescription service from your GP practice?**
• 41% rated the service from their GP as Good
• 37% rated the service from their GP as excellent
• 17% rated the service from their GP as OK
• 1% rated the service as poor
• 1% were unsure

**Question 17: Do you use all the medications you receive?**
• 95% of respondents stated they did use all the medications
• 3% said they did not use all the medications
• 2% said they sometimes use all the medications

The questionnaire asked if the respondent stated, 'No', to ask 'If not, why not?' and the responses were:
'Use what I need' (1), 'No instructions on the label' (1), 'Mistakes' (2), 'Given extra' (2), Reaction/side effect' (1).

**Do you use all the medications you receive?**

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

**Question 18: Do you pay for your medication?**

- 80% of respondents did not pay for their medications
- 20% of respondents did pay for their medications

**Question 19: Do you feel well informed about the changes in ordering your repeat prescription?** (Some patients will have started their repeat prescriptions after the changes were made)

- 58% of respondents felt well informed about the changes to the process
- 21% did not feel well informed about the changes
- 22% never knew that any changes took place

Healthwatch handed to most respondents the LCCG leaflet on repeat prescriptions, regardless of whether they had heard of the changes. We asked respondents to comment, and the comments included:

- 'Heard from my GP', 'Heard from my pharmacist but not my GP', and 'I heard from both'.

**Question 20: Does your local pharmacy deliver your medication to you?**

- 76% said their pharmacist did not deliver medications to them
- 22% said their pharmacist did deliver medications to them
- 2% did not know if their pharmacist delivered medications.
Question 21: Do you feel the repeat prescription process has affected your relationship with your GP and/or Pharmacist?

- 70% (196 respondents, out of 283 who answered this question) felt that the process had not affected the relationship with their GP/Pharmacist
- 30% thought that the process had affected the respondents relationship with their GP/Pharmacist

Respondents went on to say it was mainly affected by making the relationship worse with their pharmacy or GP.

Question 22: How did you order your repeat prescriptions prior to January 2015?

- 51% responded (145 out of 282) they ordered their prescriptions in the same way
- 34% responded through their GP
- 10% through their pharmacist

13% responded 'Other' which comprised of 'online', 'N/A', 'Collected', 'Phone', 'Can't remember' and 'Post'.

Question 23: Do you know who to contact to arrange emergency medication?

- 57% of respondents did not know who to contact
- 43% did know who to contact

Question 24: Have you tried to complain about any part of the repeat prescription process?

- 86% of respondents have not tried to complain about the process
- 13% have tried to complain
- 1% did not know

Question 25: Do you know how to make a complaint regarding this service?

- 49% did not know how to make a complaint
- 43% did know how to make a complaint
- 8% were unsure of how to make a complaint
Question 26: Do you have any suggestions for improving the repeat prescription process?

- 73% of respondents did not have any suggestions for improving the process
- 27% of respondents did have suggestions

Suggestions included:

- Allow to order through pharmacy (14)
- Develop relationships between GP and Pharmacist (7)
- Quicker collection times (6)
- Allow to order online (5)
- Allow to order on phone (4)
- Improve chemist (3)
- Difficult for elderly (3)
- Medicines all matched to collect at once (3)
- Allow more than one month's supply (3)
- OTHER, included 'Post', 'Shorter collection times', 'Administration needs sorting', 'Receptionist at GP's clear of repeats', 'When not well, have medications delivered', 'Receipt provided online of what ordered', 'Better GP service', 'Train all Doctor surgeries on EPS', 'Notify people when order ready', 'If doctor requests a review, to automatically book one', 'More information from GP', 'Inform people how to do online', 'Easier access'.
Discussions with the community pharmacists found that most of them hoped to have the relationship developed between themselves and the GP's. The main focus of developing the relationship between the two professional groups would be to have better communications on patient's needs being met, particularly those with recurring or long term health conditions.

There were also discussions on the EPS (electronic prescription service), and how the report should have included questions on this. Some surgeries are still not live on this service, and some claim to be live on the EPS but still do not use it.

There were some discussions on those who struggle financially, and the disabled, having to travel to their GP and then pharmacist regarding their repeat prescriptions, where before these people were able to go direct to their pharmacist. The report did not ask questions regarding this, although it did highlight 30% of those asked had some form of disability.

There was a discussion with the pharmacists on 'vulnerable patients', and how the lists from the surgeries are not clearly determined between the GP's and pharmacists. The GP's hold a list of what they class as 'vulnerable' and their criteria for them being vulnerable differs to the criteria many pharmacists use. This has led to pharmacists experiencing issues with patients who they would deem as vulnerable, but whom the GP does not recognise as vulnerable.

There were discussions with elderly patients who voiced concerns about their future mobility issues, and whether this would affect their outlook on the process in the future.

Healthwatch Luton have shown all their findings in this report, to display all the responses of those we spoke with. We hope the Health and Social Care Review Group, along with the Luton Clinical Commissioning Group, will draw their own recommendations from this report. Healthwatch Luton are aware the questions asked could have been more targeted, allowing for more qualitative data to be presented, and to really hear the respondents voice on this topic. The aims and outcomes of this report were lost through staff changes, leaving the report open and vulnerable to not achieving aims set by the Health and Social Care Review Group. We will address this when we present to the group.

The respondents were spoken to over 4 weeks in the month of March. But the questionnaire did not define when the answers were related too, so it is difficult to define whether the responses are relevant to before or after changes to the repeat prescription were made.

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4 No direct discussions took place with the GP's. Main discussions regarding GP's took place with Practice Managers.

5 Approximately 6 pharmacists discussed this with Healthwatch Luton
We would like to formally acknowledge and thank the following individuals and stakeholder representatives for all their hard work and assistance. We could not have completed this work without their support.

Champions

A huge thank you to our Champions and volunteers who spent a month with the team collecting responses. Without their dedication and support this report would not be possible. In no particular order, exceptional thanks goes to:

- Angela Andrews
- Alan Fletcher
- Ameena Amar
- Daytona Leonard
- David Allen
- Jamu Patel
- Jan Green
- Hannah Nash
- Maureen Matthews
- Mercy Njung’e
- Sobia Sami
- Stan Patterson
- Zuzanna Kwiatkowska

Cambridgeshire Community Services

We would also like to extend our thanks to the teams at Cambridgeshire Community Services, including Sarah Munroe, Augustina Williams and all the Community Pharmacy Technicians.

Other thanks to:

- Carl Raybold from LMC
- David Foord from LCCG
- Gerald Zeidman from LPC
- Diane Walsh
- Jackie Errington
- Janine Macey
- Val Sheridan
- Tess Dawoud (MOT)
- Yvonne Weldon

Learning Disability Resource Centre

Luton and Dunstable Hospital

Also a thank you to all the practice managers, staff and pharmacists for their support, assistance and willingness to work with Healthwatch Luton, and allowing us to access your premises sometimes at short notice.
Questionnaire Questions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIAL Questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you live in Luton?</td>
<td>o Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o No (If no, end survey)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Are you on repeat prescriptions?</td>
<td>o Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o No (If no, question 3).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Are you collecting a prescription for someone else?</td>
<td>o Yes (If Yes, Who?)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o No (End Survey)</td>
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4. How do you order your repeat prescription?           | o I call my GP                                 |
|                                                       | o I pop in to my GP surgery to drop it off     |
|                                                       | o I book an appointment with my GP             |
|                                                       | o I order my repeat prescription online        |
|                                                       | o Other (please state):                        |

5. How long have you been on repeat prescriptions? (If known) | o Less than 3 months                          |
|                                                           | o Between 3-6 months                          |
|                                                           | o Between 6-12 months                         |
|                                                           | o More than 1 year: (How many?):             |
|                                                           | o Don’t know                                  |

6. Are there any restrictions on ordering your repeat prescription from your GP? (such as it must be in before noon? etc) | o Yes (state what):                            |
|                                                                                                                   | o No                                           |

7. Do you find it easy to order your repeat prescription from your GP?                                           | o Yes                                          |
|                                                                                                                   | o No                                           |
|                                                                                                                   | o Sometimes                                    |

APPENDIX 1

PROFILE QUESTIONS:

MALE/FEMALE/TRANSGENDER
ETHNICITY: .................................................................
AGE: ............................................................ POSTCODE: ..........................
DISABILITY: YES/NO (State) ..................................................
<table>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
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| 8. How long do you have to wait for your prescription from your GP?     | o I don’t have to wait  
o 1 day  
o 2 days  
o 3 days  
o 4 days  
o Other  
o Can’t remember |
| 9. Is your prescription on time?                                        | o Yes all the time  
o Sometimes  
o Never on time  
o Not sure  Comments |
| 10. Has your repeat prescription ever been wrong?                       | o Yes  
o No  
o If yes, Do you know why? |
| 11. Have you ever forgotten to order your repeat prescription?          | o Yes  
If yes, is this due to a medical condition? Please comment:  
o No  
(If no, move to question 13) |
| 12. If yes to question above, what did you do?                          | Comment:.................................................................................. |
| 13. Have you heard of a medication review or a MUR (Medicines Use Review)? | o Yes  
o No  
o Don’t know |
| 14. Have you ever received a medication review or a MUR or been contacted by your GP for any review? | o Yes  
o No  
o Not sure  Please add comments: |
| 15. Has your GP practice ever contacted you to query a repeat prescription order? | o Yes all the time  
o Yes sometimes  
o No my GP never contacts me  
o I have been contacted by my Pharmacist  
o Don’t know |
| 16. How would you rate the repeat prescription service from your GP practice? | o Very poor  
o Poor  
o OK  
o Good  
o Excellent  
o N/A |
<p>| 17. Do you use all the medications you                                  | o Yes |</p>
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<th>DA</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do you pay for your medication?</td>
<td>Yes, No, Sometimes</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Do you feel well informed about the changes in ordering your repeat prescription? (Some patients will have started their repeat prescriptions after the changes were made.)</td>
<td>Yes, No, Not relevant(never knew of changes, or started repeat prescriptions post Jan 2015), Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Does your local pharmacy deliver your medication to you?</td>
<td>Yes, No, Don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | 20  | Do you feel the repeat prescription process has affected your relationship with your GP and/or Pharmacist?                                 | GP: YES (If yes, has it been affected – For the better, for the worse, For the worse)
Pharmacist: YES (If yes, has it been affected – For the better, for the worse, Don’t know) |
|   | 21  | How did you order your repeat prescriptions, prior to January 2015?                                                                        | Comments:                                                             |
|   | 22  | Do you know who to contact to arrange emergency medication?                                                                                | Yes, No                                                               |
|   | 23  | Have you tried to complain about any part of the repeat prescription process?                                                               | Yes, No, Unsure of how to                                             |
|   | 24  | Do you know how to make a complaint regarding this service?                                                                                | Yes, No, Don’t know                                                   |

NOTES:
Urgent care at Luton and Dunstable Hospital: Tel: 01582 491166
Urgent care at Town Centre GP: Tel: 01582 709290
Do you have any suggestions for improving the repeat prescription process?

- No
- Yes

(If Yes, ask what?)

In reference to 'Other' ethnicity groups described by the respondents, the list was:

- White (3)
- Scottish (1)
- English (8)
- Pakistani British (6)
- Black African (1)
- Hindu (1)
- Asian (8)
- Mixed African (1)
- Black British (5)
- Black (1)
- British West Indian (1)
- Kasmiri (1)
- Portugese (1)
- Pakistani (9)
- Black African (1)
- White Irish (6)
- British Indian (1)
- Muslim Pakistani (1)
- Swedish (1)
- Afro Carribean (2)
- Caucasian (1)
- Polish (2)
- Bengali (2)
- Muslim (4)
- British Muslim (1)
- British Bangladeshi (3)
- Black Nigerian (1)
- Signapore British (1)
- Jamaican (1)
- Mixed (1)