

# MUR Media Briefing Pack

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The re-launch of the MUR form is an ideal opportunity to use the media to promote the service. The purpose of this pack is to provide information on how best to promote this service to both the media and the general public. This document also provides some useful information available at a national level that may be of interest to journalists. However, as this campaign is more focused at a local level, journalists will certainly be interested in how advanced services will operate to benefit the local community and LPCs are ideally placed for this type of work.

## **TYPES OF COVERAGE**

There are two main types of coverage that you will be able to get. It is generally advisable to use a combination of the two if possible:

1. Coverage by placing adverts in the local media to promote advanced services
2. Coverage by inviting journalists to write articles in the local media

### ***Placing adverts in media***

First of all, you need to consider the sort of coverage you want and how much you are willing to spend. There are various outlets that you can use at a local level. Some examples include:

- Local Newspapers
- The internet
- Local Radio
- Local TV
- Local libraries and other amenities
- Local charity organisations
- Word of mouth
- Poster campaign in healthcare premises (e.g. pharmacy, general practice etc)

The advertisement that has been issued with this pack has been created and endorsed by PSNC. It is therefore a useful vehicle in promoting the service locally and will support consistency at a national level.

### ***Involving journalists***

Another method whereby you will be able to generate publicity is by getting local journalists to write or talk about the service and the benefits it brings to patients. You can either phone them up to discuss your story individually or issue a general press release (template supplied in this pack).

## **Preparation**

Before you contact them, make sure that you do your homework as you will certainly be quizzed on the topic in detail.

1. Make sure you know and understand the national statistics (provided with this briefing) and any local statistics on MURs that may be available (from the PCT).
2. Talk to your local contractors to establish who is providing the service.
3. Have there been any local examples of good practice where an exceptional MUR has been performed? – This can form the basis of a very good story.
4. Are there any GPs in the area that support the reviews and have a good thing to say about them? Getting endorsement from them can be very beneficial to your campaign.
5. Are there any local patients who are willing to go on the record to describe how beneficial the service was to them? You must, however, take patient confidentiality into account here.
6. What are the views of the local PCT and are they willing to give your campaign support?

## **How to use the press release**

### Finding your media

A useful way of finding details of your local newspapers is by going to [www.newspapersoc.org.uk](http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk) and clicking on NS databases. This website offers a geographical map with contact details of the main free and paid local newspapers that are available. In a similar fashion, for local radio contacts, you may want to visit [www.radiomaps.co.uk](http://www.radiomaps.co.uk).

### Preparing the press release

A template press release has been supplied in this pack for you to use and / or alter. If you decide to use this template, complete all the relevant fields that have been highlighted. Pay special attention to the example as this will be the key as to whether you are able to persuade the journalist that it is a story worth following up on.

### How to issue the press release

Your preparative work will have identified the local media that you want to contact. In the case of a newspaper, it is worth finding out when they “go to press” by telephoning them. It gets very frantic a few days before they go to press and this is probably not the best time to contact them. This is probably not as important for other forms of media such as radio but it is important that they get as much time as possible to prepare any coverage.

If possible, e-mail the release to a named journalist that you may have spoken to earlier. Failing this, contact the organisation concerned by telephone and ask for the best method to send them your release – this can also be a good time to give them a flavour of what the story is about!

After issuing a general press release you will normally be contacted by the media to clarify any issues or to obtain further information. This is the time to build on the press release.

## **Talking to journalists and managing the press**

Each journalist is very different and may want to take a different slant on the story.

Ideally, you would like the journalist to come and visit a pharmacist to discuss the benefits of MURs in person and to take some photographs. The other less favourable option is a telephone interview. The more support you are able to muster, the more likely the journalist is to favour your cause and devote more time to your campaign especially if you can get the support of local residents that have benefited from the service.

## **Selling points for MURs**

It is important to focus on the benefits of MURs. In addition to enlisting the support of individual or groups of patients, GPs and the PCT, some additional points could include that an MUR:

- is a free service available to all patients who may have issues taking their medication
- involves a one on one discussion with a qualified healthcare professional
- is an opportunity for the patient to ask any question relating to their medication in a private specially built consultation area
- can be arranged at a time to suit the patient
- is an NHS service

## **Potential topics of contention**

You do need to manage the media carefully as there is potential for your campaign to backfire otherwise. It is good practice to try and have back up answers to these points in case you are asked. Potential topics of contention could include issues relating to:

- The payment offered to contractors for providing the service
- Pharmacies that are not providing the service in your area i.e. issues relating to equitable access to healthcare advice
- Comments from GPs, the local PCT and particularly of patients who may have had bad experiences of the service
- Comments by individuals or groups who may think that the pharmacist is ill equipped professionally to provide MURs
- Misunderstanding relating to the function of the MUR – remember the service is a review of the USE of the medication and not intended to be a clinical review
- Issues surrounding confidentiality

## National Statistics

National Statistics for MURs can be found at:

[www.psn.org.uk/index.php?type=page&pid=72&k=3#MUR%20Statistics](http://www.psn.org.uk/index.php?type=page&pid=72&k=3#MUR%20Statistics)

The data that you are able to access is the:

- Amount that has been paid on a monthly basis for MURs in England
- Number of pharmacies in England that claimed MUR payments from the NHSBSA PPD on a monthly basis
- Number of pharmacists who successfully completed competency assessment for MURs from the main HEIs, on a monthly basis
- Average number of MURs conducted per pharmacy claiming MUR payment and the average number of MURs conducted per pharmacy in England on a monthly basis
- **A breakdown of the above information by LPC**

It is also worth noting that the data can be out by a few months as it takes time for the PPD to collate all the information together.

## Further Help

If you would like any further help or advice on the media, please contact:

Dipen Shah  
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Aylesbury  
HP20 2PJ  
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# **SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**LPC NAME AND  
ADDRESS HERE**

**INSERT DATE**

### **Pharmacists in X add area X offer free medicines check to patients**

Community pharmacists in X add area X are now offering a free medicines check to patients. The service is designed to ensure that patients get the most out of their prescription medicines and involves a one on one consultation with a pharmacist.

Commenting on the service, X enter name X , a local pharmacist, said:

“Regrettably, many patients have problems taking their medication as prescribed by the doctor. For example, they may not understand the importance of taking a particular medication in the evening or perhaps they have not been taught how to use their asthma pump properly.

The medicines check is designed to highlight any issue that the patient may have about how they take their medicine. It is hoped that this will, in turn, equip patients to better manage their own medical conditions. The consultation takes place in a private consultation room in the pharmacy so that nobody else is able to overhear any sensitive discussions and takes place at a time to suit the patient.

The service has already identified and helped many patients. X add any local examples here X.”

It is hoped that by offering this free service to the local population, community pharmacists can help to contribute to improving the overall health of X add area X.

**-- ENDS --**

**Notes for editors:**

1. The X add LPC name X Local Pharmaceutical Committee (LPC) is the body that represents pharmacy contractors in X add area X and seeks to secure the best possible terms for pharmacy services.

**For further information contact:**

XXX Name, Position, a contact telephone number (NOT the answering machine), Address XXX

Insert Website address here