



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

11 June 2021

Dear

ATISN 15160 – National Prescription Delivery Scheme

Thank you for your request to the Welsh Government for information under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) received on 21 May 2021. I have interpreted your requested information regarding the costs associated with the National Prescription Delivery Scheme as follows:

1. *The number of community pharmacies (CPs) and dispensing GPs that used the software Pro Delivery Manager to assist with delivering medicines to people shielding during March, April, May and June 2020? How much did this cost?*
2. *How were volunteers recruited by Welsh Government to support the Volunteer Delivery Scheme which was available to pharmacies and dispensing GPs from Early May 2020, was this the 1st May 2020? If any of these services started before May 2020, also include:*
 - a. *Were there any costs associated with the process of recruiting volunteers?*
 - b. *How many volunteers were recruited in total between May and June 2020? Is it possible to get a brief general description of who the volunteers were and the amount of time they volunteered for?*
 - c. *Did the volunteers recruited to support the Volunteer Delivery Scheme require any extra funding in terms of pay? If so, how much did this cost Welsh Government in total between the start of the scheme and the end of June 2020? Or were recruits redeployed from temporarily suspended roles without any extra funding?*
 - d. *Volunteers were entitled to claim expenses such as fuel costs that were required to carry out the volunteer delivery role. Can you tell me how much this cost Welsh Government between May 1st and end of June 2020?*
 - e. *What role did the British Red Cross play and was any funding given to the British Red Cross to assist with the National Prescription Delivery Scheme? If any funding, how much?*
3. *From Early April onwards CPs and GPs received 7.4p per dispensed prescription item from the re-purposed MUR funds. You understand this was not new or additional funding. Did this start from 1st of April 2020? When did it end?*

Our Response

1. The Pro Delivery Manager accounts were created for all community pharmacies and dispensing doctor sites who expressed an interest in being part of the scheme. License fees were funded for a total of 693 sites, not all of these sites went on to actively use the service. Costs for this are listed below:

| Month | Total number of CPs & GPs using PDM | Total cost: |
|------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| March 2020 | 0 | £0.00 |
| April 2020 | 138 | £3,754.68 |
| May 2020 | 321 | £29,106.00 |
| June 2020 | 375 | £29,106.00 |
| | | £61,966.68 |

Total number of CPs & GPs actively using PDM software:

Total accounts created: 693.

Total active accounts March-June: 375.

2. A pilot began on 29 April 2020. The National Volunteer Prescription Delivery Scheme was subsequently announced by the Minister on 5 May 2020. Volunteers were recruited either by i) British Red Cross or St John Ambulance Cymru on behalf of the Welsh Government; or ii) by Welsh Government officials directly through liaison with; the Pharmaceutical Industry, Optometry Wales, the Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), and various Welsh Government departments (e.g. Cadw) and other appropriately vetted individuals from public sector organisations.

I am able to confirm that these services did not start before May 2020.

- a. Recruitment and management of volunteers by the British Red Cross and St John Ambulance Cymru was agreed on a cost per site (community pharmacy/dispensing doctor premises) supported as part of the scheme. For the period March-June 2020, the total cost was £8,000.

A small number of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks were funded for volunteers who did not have appropriate vetting status and whose support was required to cover areas where recruitment of volunteers was more difficult. These costs amounted to £406.

- b. In total, 310 volunteers were recruited by 29 June 2020 (from the start of the pilot on 29 April)

From the data that were collected it is not possible to identify individual groups of volunteers but I can confirm volunteers were recruited by the following organisations;

- British Red Cross;
- St John Ambulance Cymru;
- Pharmaceutical Manufacturers;
- The DVSA (primarily driving instructors who were on furlough);
- Optometry Wales (Optometrists and their staffs working in community optometry practices who were on furlough);

- Welsh Government departments whose routine duties were reduced, for example officials working for Cadw;
 - Other individuals from public sector bodies who contacted the Welsh Government directly and who had appropriate DBS clearance.
- c. No extra funding was required. Recruits were volunteers and gave their own time to support the scheme. A number of volunteers were given permission from their employers to volunteer whilst temporarily suspended from substantive roles within their organisations. No additional funding was provided in these cases.
- d. Mileage claims were submitted by the British Red Cross for the period 1 April to 30 June 2020 totalling £4,500.
- e. The British Red Cross worked with the Welsh Government to identify suitable individuals to support the National Volunteer Prescriptions Delivery Scheme. They undertook local targeted recruitment of volunteers and matched volunteers with a community pharmacy or dispensing doctor site that had requested support over and above their own delivery arrangements. The British Red Cross were responsible for the appropriate training of such individuals as well as ensuring all volunteers had been appropriately vetted and had a clean driving license and insurance. The British Red Cross were responsible for the care of volunteers they recruited and collated submitted all travel expense claims on their behalf. The British Red Cross acted as volunteers' point of contact and raised queries with Welsh Government officials where necessary.

As referred to in answer to question 2a; £8,000 was paid to the British Red Cross for services provided between 1 April and 30 June 2020

3. The payment of 7.4 per prescription items was payable to pharmacies from 1 April 2020 and this stage it is expected to end on 31 March 2022.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ

or Email: Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,

Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely,