**NHS Castle Point and Rochford CCG**  
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July 2016

Dear Patient,

We wish to inform you that the quantity of prescribed Gluten Free food that patients living in Castle Point and Rochford can order has been reduced by 50%.

This decision has been taken by NHS Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which commissions most local NHS services. This decision will be reviewed again in 12 months’ time.

This decision has been made due to the current economic climate facing the NHS. Difficult decisions have to be made to ensure we can continue to meet the health needs of all our population. We continue to see increased demand on local health services, patients with more complex healthcare cases and an ageing population.

Gluten Free prescribing started more than 30 years ago when such products were not easily available to buy in the shops, and so the NHS offered the prescription service to help coeliac patients better manage their diet. However, due to changing diets and lifestyle choices there is now a much wider variety of foods available in the shops and supermarkets and Gluten Free alternatives are widely available too.

The CCG’s Clinical Executive Committee, a committee which includes local GPs, reviewed this service to ensure any change would be clinically safe. The CCG also carried out a public consultation which included discussions with Coeliac UK and other health professionals. The CCG’s Governing Body then unanimously approved an option to restrict quantity of prescribed food by 50% with a view to review again in 12 months. The decision was also made to take forward a review of other medicines that can be purchased over the counter.

The vast majority of raw ingredients are naturally Gluten Free and Coeliac UK (www.coeliac.org.uk) has produced a useful and comprehensive food directory which is available free to members or £10 to non-members. This lists the wide range of Gluten Free foods now available from supermarkets and other outlets.

If you have any complaints regarding this decision then please contact NHS Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG): 01268 464586. Further information can be found at: [www.castlepointandrochfordccg.nhs.uk](http://www.castlepointandrochfordccg.nhs.uk)

Yours faithfully,

Dr Kashif Siddiqui

Chair, NHS Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)