



**Castle Point and Rochford  
Clinical Commissioning Group**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Immediate release: 6 July 2016**

**Decision taken to reduce quantity of Gluten Free food available on NHS prescription**

A decision has been taken by NHS Castle Point and Rochford Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to reduce the quantity of prescribed Gluten Free food that patients can order by 50 per cent.

Following an extensive public consultation, the CCG's Clinical Executive Committee, a committee which includes local GPs, reviewed this service to ensure any change would be clinically safe. Discussions also took place with Coeliac UK and other specialist health professionals. The decision was taken by the CCG's Governing Body at its meeting held in public last week.

Dr Kashif Siddiqui, Chair for NHS Castle Point and Rochford CCG said: "We would like to thank everyone who took part in our public consultation, the findings of which we have taken very seriously. Gluten Free products can be very expensive when obtained via an NHS prescription and the products are often considerably more costly than the price of a similar Gluten Free product purchased in the supermarket. In the current economic climate tough decisions have to be made to ensure we can continue to meet the health needs of all our population. Gluten Free prescribing is not the only area we are looking at. We will be reviewing other areas and treatments that are shown to be less clinically effective, provide insufficient health benefits and those that do not represent good value for money.

Patients told us that they struggle to find the brands that they trust in their supermarket. We therefore have decided to continue to support Gluten Free prescribing in part, rather than stopping the prescribing of all items at this time."

The number of Gluten Free units recommended for each patient is different based on a number of variables including age, sex and whether pregnant. NHS Castle Point and Rochford CCG is working with Coeliac UK to agree a workable number of units.

Now that a decision has been reached, an implementation plan will be put in place, with a view to notifying GPs/pharmacies and other prescribers as soon as possible.

**ENDS**

## **Notes to Editor**

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 vast majority of raw ingredients are naturally Gluten Free and Coeliac UK ([www.coeliac.org.uk](http://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.

Across Castle Point and Rochford, there is a spend of £100,800 per annum on prescribed Gluten Free food.

A Q&A is available on the CCG's website:

[http://castlepointandrochfordccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/Gluten Free-prescribing](http://castlepointandrochfordccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/Gluten-Free-prescribing)

For more information, please email: [crouth@nhs.net](mailto:crouth@nhs.net) or [angela.wongkeet@nhs.net](mailto:angela.wongkeet@nhs.net)

For further information about Castle Point and Rochford CCG, visit their website at:

[www.castlepointandrochfordccg.nhs.uk](http://www.castlepointandrochfordccg.nhs.uk)