

Medicine Use Reviews

Medicine Use Reviews were introduced in 2005 as a service offered by pharmacists. It allows the patient to discuss their medicines. This allows the pharmacist to see if there are any overlaps, or interactions between their medicines, and to make sure that the patient is using the drugs effectively. It is also intended to reduce the wastage of drugs.

No-one could disagree with these aims.

But it is also a very nice earner for pharmacies. It is advertised to patients as a free service - and indeed there is no direct payment - but the pharmacist is paid £28 for each review by the NHS. This quickly adds up. Each pharmacist is allowed a maximum of 400 each year, which is worth £11,200 - not insignificant given that there is no cost to providing the service. For the national chains, it's a very large sum of money indeed.

	Reviews	Cost
Asda	40,649	£1,138,172
Boots	747,525	£20,930,700
Day Lewis	55,308	£1,548,624
Lloyds	321,457	£9,000,796
Rowlands	47,520	£1,330,560
Sainsbury	48,319	£1,352,932
Superdrug	22,639	£633,892
Tesco	84,657	£2,370,396
The Co-Operative	177,454	£4,968,712
Total	1,545,528	£43,274,784
National total	2,390,147	£66,924,116

There's no specific time given to a MUR, but a small survey of pharmacists indicated that it would only take between 5 and 15 minutes. Compare this to the cost of a GP - a 10 minute appointment slot costs the NHS between £5 and £10. If the pharmacist were paid £10 for this service, the saving to the NHS would be over £40 million.

It's a useful service, and it probably saves the NHS money although this is hard to quantify, but why does it cost so much?