

## Media Release

Issued 8 March 2019

**Embargoed for 00:01 11 March 2019**

### **Every year almost £2m worth of medicines go unused across mid Essex – help your NHS cut down on this waste**

NHS Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is launching a far-reaching new campaign which aims to save vital funds for health services by clamping down on wasted medicines.

Called “**Your Medicines, Your NHS**”, the year-long campaign is designed to raise awareness of the estimated £2 million worth of medicines wasted in Braintree District, Chelmsford City and Maldon District each year.

That funding, if not spent on medication that goes to waste, could pay for:

- **566** new hips; or
- **139** more chemotherapy courses for breast cancer; or
- **61** more community nurses.

The easiest way we can do this is to make sure we ‘**Open the Bag**’ when a pharmacist gives us our prescribed medicines. That allows us to hand back anything we don't need – and medicines that have not yet left a pharmacy can be reused.

We should also make sure we order only the medicines we will use, as anything we return to a pharmacy after taking it home must be destroyed – even un-opened packs.

Data shows that around half the medication returned to pharmacies has not been opened, which means patients are ordering it but don't even start to use it.

When patients keep stocks of medicines at home, there is also a safety risk. The medicines may be taken by somebody else, or by the patient without realising they are out of date or been stopped by the doctor.

Paula Wilkinson, Chief Pharmacist for Mid Essex CCG, said: “We are encouraging everyone to reduce medicines wastage. Things can change between putting in your request for repeat medicines and when you collect them. So play your part – ‘Open the Bag’ and hand back any medicines that you don't need.

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Issued by the Communications and Engagement team, Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group

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[www.midessexccg.nhs.uk](http://www.midessexccg.nhs.uk) Follow us: [@MidEssexCCG](https://twitter.com/MidEssexCCG)

“Get involved by making a pledge to support the campaign or joining the conversation on social media using the hashtags #OpenTheBag and #MedicinesWaste.”

To pledge your support for the campaign simply download a pledge from the CCG website at [www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-medicines-your-nhs](http://www.midessexccg.nhs.uk/your-medicines-your-nhs) and share across Facebook, Twitter and or Instagram tagging @MidEssexCCG and using the hashtags #OpenTheBag and #MedicinesWaste.

## Ends.

## Media opportunities:

For further information or to arrange an interview with a spokesperson contact James Sharp, Digital Media and Marketing Manager on 01245 459372 or 07393 253489. Alternatively please email [meccg.communications@nhs.net](mailto:meccg.communications@nhs.net).

## Notes to editor:

1. NHS Mid Essex CCG is the part of the NHS that plans, buys and monitors most local healthcare services for the 390,000 people of Braintree District, Chelmsford City and Maldon District. More info: <https://midessexccg.nhs.uk/about-us>.

2. Of the £2m of medicines wasted each year in mid Essex, estimates show that:

- £0.7m is being returned to pharmacies because it's not needed
- £0.6m is kept in the home and is out of date
- £0.3m is disposed of by care homes.

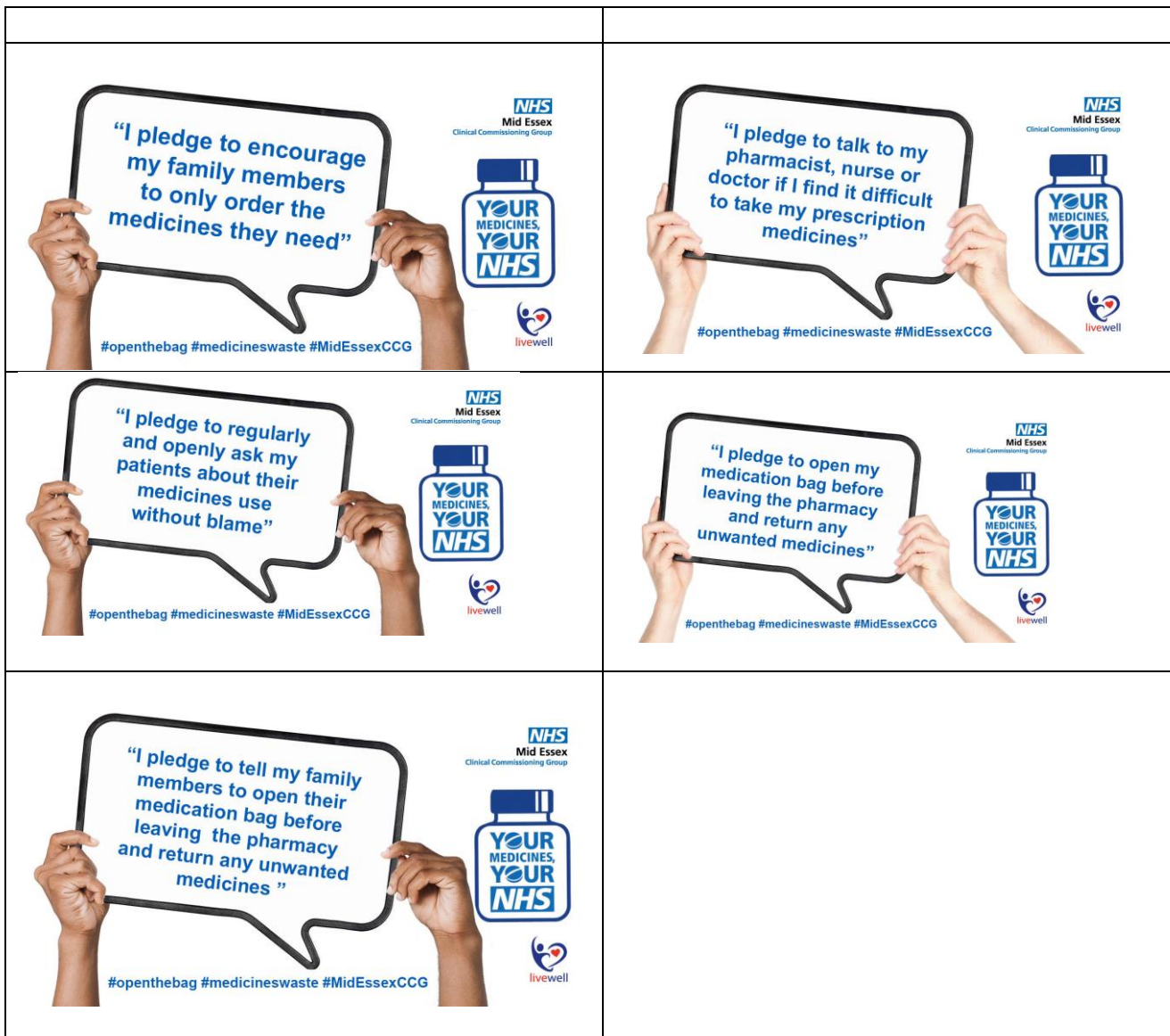
3. The pledge graphics are shown below.



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