

“Show me your meds please”

Why are we asking this question?

£300 million is wasted on medication not taken each year, and £90 million, of that is in people's homes.

This is having a huge financial and environmental impact. It also makes it harder to treat people safely if we don't know what they are taking.

Our solution to identify unused medication is simply for anyone working in the community visiting people in their homes to routinely ask to look at the medications they have stored there.

Getting to know the person

Introductions are really important: make sure you introduce yourself and your role and ask how the person would like you to address them.

Build trust and rapport, get to know the person and find out what matters to them.

Exploring and affirming someone's situation

Asking open questions is helpful for exploring someone's situation, such as *'how have you been managing your condition?'* or *'can you tell me more about ...'*

Make sure you check your understanding using active listening, such as *'it sounds like ... has been going well/been difficult for you'*, or asking *'can I just check my understanding?'* and summarise what they have told you.

Introducing the question

If you feel it is appropriate and comfortable to do so, please do ask if you can see all the medications someone has in their home; *“can you show me your meds please?”*

You may want to explain that this is to make sure that they are being treated safely and to personalise their care to be right for them.

You don't have to ask this question if it doesn't feel appropriate to do so. If you ask, and the person is reluctant to show you, please leave it there and don't push them.

Looking at the medications

You could ask *'how are you managing taking your medications?'* or *'how do you feel about your meds?'* to explore what is going well and to identify any problems.

If you have time, have a look at the expiry dates on the medications – this will allow you to identify anything that is out of date.

Following up

If there are lots of unused or out of date medications, please suggest they are returned to the chemist rather than disposed of at home. If you have concerns about the medication you have seen, please record what you have seen and refer to your team leader. Please don't take medication from anyone's home or provide advice on their prescriptions or taking medications.

Remember this quick screening question could potentially improve someone's health and wellbeing, protect NHS resources and reduce the impact on the environment.