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Planning Statement

Installation of an automated prescription collection machine

Moulton Medical Centre, High St., Moulton, Spalding PE12 6QB

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RTPI
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Plande has been appointed to submit a supporting statement for the installation of an automated prescription collection machine.

1.2 This statement has been prepared for the exclusive use of the applicant as part of their planning application and in accordance with the agreed scope of the project. The document may not be reproduced in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of Plande. The copyright in this document (including its electronic form) shall remain vested in Plande. Plande will not be liable for the contents or use of this document by any person for any purpose.

2. THE CONCEPT

2.1 The Pharmaself24 is the market-leading automated prescription-collection service allowing patients to simply and securely pick up their medicines when it is convenient for them.

2.2 Surgery staff dispense the medicines as normal and then load the dispensed bags securely into the machine using barcode technology. Please see the following video https://vimeo.com/370827744 which demonstrates the process and security.

2.3 Patients are notified that their prescription is ready and provided with a 1-time-use-only PIN number which they use to collect the medicine, which only takes a few seconds. Please see the following video https://vimeo.com/370827937 which demonstrates how simple and quick it is to collect their bags from the machine.

2.4 The benefits to the existing Surgery business is that this is more efficient, reducing queuing time and staff resources while offering more convenience to their customers. This allows pharmacies to spend more time with patients who need it and delivering new services, to the benefit of the community. In addition, the collection point also allows the Surgery to reduce the need for home deliveries which leads to a reduction in its carbon emissions.

2.5 The benefits to the customers are reduced waiting times, negating wasted journeys and allowing the convenience to collect medicines when they want (for example on their way to or from work, shift workers, carers and on Sundays etc). This is particularly useful for repeat prescriptions and working patients who are unable to collect prescriptions during opening hours.

2.6 Experience from previous installations shows that the vast majority of patients will collect from the Pharmaself24 during the Surgery's normal opening hours, but the ability to allow patients, who cannot get to the Surgery during opening hours to collect outside of these times (for example Sundays, Bank Holidays, on their way to or from work etc), means patients do not miss out taking their medicines. This has a positive impact on the local infrastructure such as reducing emergency requests for medicines at out of hours medical services and A&E.

2.7 The machines have operated in numerous premises throughout the current pandemic and have proved itself invaluable in providing a contact-free and continuous service, supporting the NHS services and providing an invaluable community benefit while negating footfall inside of buildings and reducing face-to-face meetings.

3. THE MACHINE

3.1 The Pharmaself24 is a self-contained, secure, vandal-resistant, machine, measuring approximately 2m tall and 1m wide externally, fitted securely into the elevation of the Surgery featuring the business logo, a touch screen, credit card reader and collection flap. The collection flap is automatically locked when patients are not collecting the prescriptions. The machines have a capacity of up to 180 dispensing bags. Instructional signage will be added adjacent to the machine to provide information to users.

3.2 To date, there have been over 400 such units installed in the Netherlands and approaching 80 currently in the UK, including within pharmacies, dispensing GP surgeries, hospitals and prison pharmacies. Pharmaself24s have been used in the UK for over a decade now and are listed on the General Pharmaceutical Council's website as an example of "innovative technology to support the safe and efficient collection of assembled medicines" (https://inspections.pharmacyregulation.org/knowledge-hub/notable-practice/using-pharmacy-vending-machines-to-support-access-to-medicine-213). The General Pharmaceutical Council is the government's professional regulator for pharmacies.



An example of an installed machine (NB colours shown indicatively).

4. USE AND AMOUNT

4.1 The planning application is for the provision of an automated prescription collection machine within the existing elevation of the business with surrounding DiBond (or similar) coloured aluminium panel, in place of the existing window, and associated external works including new paving in front of the machine, lighting and CCTV.

5. LAYOUT, SCALE AND MASSING & APPEARANCE

5.1 The proposed siting of the machine is intended to facilitate safe, appropriate access and is considered in relation to the surrounding context and specific site constraints and existing servicing.

5.2 The machines have been designed to have an elegant and contemporary appearance, using coloured metal and decals (to reflect the Surgery's branding), to be in keeping with modern retail. It is suggested that the machine will not materially change the premises.

5.3 It is therefore suggested that the installation of the machine into the existing building will not materially harm visual amenity.

5.4 No amendments to the existing landscaping or boundary treatments are proposed as part of the application.

6. ACCESS & PARKING

6.1 The proposed works make no alterations to the existing access, either from the main road or into the site. It is proposed that the nature of the machine and the existing use means that there will be no material increase in vehicle or pedestrian movements into and out of the site or create a negative or unacceptable impact on the existing local highway network, especially when compared to potential maximum potential for the existing use. It is therefore suggested that the proposed machine will not result in any discernible detrimental amenity impacts.

6.2 The location of the proposed machine will not hinder any device used for security and surveillance purposes and will not cause an obstruction to transport or pedestrian safety. The use of the machine will not result in hindering pedestrians use of the footway which it is suggested is sufficient to allow pedestrians to pass while customers use the machine.

7. SECURITY

7.1 The proposed location of the self-service machine will mean that users of the machine will benefit from natural surveillance, of passing motorists and pedestrians along the road.

7.2 Data illustrates that less than 10% of prescriptions are paid for, with the majority (children, elderly, low-paid and medical exemptions) receiving free prescriptions.

7.3 For the customers who need to pay for prescriptions, the machines only accept cards. Due to the cost of prescriptions (c. £9), the majority of transactions (of the small % who actually pay) are able to use secure contactless payment technology, which negates the possibility of PIN number theft. Furthermore, receipts are sent electronically so there is no paper waste as well as reducing the potential for data theft. The machine doesn't accept cash. The Ingenico credit card terminal on the machine is designed as an unattended system (for example as per Toll Roads etc) and has a secure encrypted payment gateway to prevent tampering.

7.4 Unlike a traditional pharmacy dispensary where items are arranged in alphabetical order, the dispensing bags within the machine are not ordered in any particular logical way and are not labelled with the contents. There is no consistency of the contents i.e. it could be a simple dressing or an inhaler. Compared to the medicines stored within the dispensary, there is little incentive to target the Pharmaself24 and its contents. This is reflected in the hundreds of installations across Europe with no reported attempted break-ins to-date.

7.5 The machines are replenished internally by the appropriately trained staff having undertaken a general risk assessment. The Surgery has standard operating procedures in place for all of its workflow and this will include the loading of the machine. Standard Operating Procedures are a regulatory requirement for pharmacies and so the process will be documented, and staff trained accordingly. In addition, dispensed bags in pharmacies are currently put on a shelf or handed to a delivery driver for home delivery. The Pharmaself24 adds a level of security to this process by storing bags in a locked secure unit and having a full audit trail of when bags are loaded and collected - this significantly enhances governance over the collection process.

7.6 From the data provided by Pharmaself24 on the machines previously installed, around 80% of prescriptions, collected from the machine, are collected when the Surgery is open.

7.7 The principle of the Pharmaself24 is to allow the collection of regular repeat medicines for people on long term stable conditions who are comfortable with managing their treatments. This is the majority

of patients and the Pharmaself24 empowers this process. The Pharmaself24 just automates the manual 'handing out process' and the Surgery team is still able to talk to patients as required.

7.8 The contents of the machines vary; however, the Pharmacist has to make a professional decision about what is suitable and appropriate for the machine, with face-to-face consultations still required for key patients. The machine will **not** be loaded with controlled drugs including all Schedule 2 or Schedule 3 medicines that fall under the normal safe custody requirements.

7.9 With a large proportion of machines, the value of the prescription medicines does not tally with any notional prescription charge, with items such as painkillers being worth pence and inhalers being valued at a couple of pounds.

7.10 The collection PIN numbers are provided to the customers, by SMS message, and are 1-time-use-only linked only to the dispensing bag, rather than any patient details.

7.11 External CCTV will monitor the machine and its users which will form part of the Surgery's existing CCTV system. A BSIA Accredited CCTV system will be capable of receiving high-quality colour images of evidential quality. Any footage will be recorded onto a securely located and locked hard drive to prevent tampering of the captured footage. Such footage will be retained for no longer than is necessary. CCTV signage will also be installed, to act as a further deterrent. It is intended that the installation of the CCTV system will assist with crime reduction and detection, management of the Surgery as well as staff and public safety.

7.12 The machine will be appropriately illuminated, taking into consideration existing street-lighting and other background illumination, to further help reduce the opportunity for crime as well as the fear of crime. The lighting will be compatible with the installed CCTV system.

7.13 The machine itself has a 24-inch colour touchscreen and the outer areas of hexagons on the four corners of the front panel and the central "cross" are backlit with a 10-watt LED light. There is a small light sensor fitted on the front of the PS24 which monitors the ambient light and so as dusk falls, the front screen gets less bright. During the day it emits 1,000 lumens (so people - especially the elderly can clearly see the screen in bright daylight) but by dusk, the brightness reduces to 600 lumens (which is sufficient for use on darker evenings).

7.14 The machines are installed through the existing building with an outer steel frame, which is attached and bolted (internally) directly onto the frame of the machine, which itself weighs c. 600kg. This outer frame creates a secure fit into the building with the frame, or machine, having no visible fixings on the outside. The front panel of the machine is made of steel and it is suggested that overall, it is likely easier to force entry into the building itself than the Pharmaself24 machine. Numerous machines have been installed, by the manufacturer, in this and other countries over the past decade and they are not aware of any break-ins.

7.15 The majority of the machine is located within the Surgery building and as such will be covered by the alarm of the Surgery.

7.16 It is suggested that the machines are similar to the internet retailer collections points, for example, Amazon lockers, which provide a secure environment for customers to collect items that are not readily identifiable or accessible by others.