**Wasted medicines costing the NHS in LLR £5.6m a year**

Patients are being recruited to play their part in the fight against millions of pounds worth of medicines being wasted across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) each year.

As part of an eight-week campaign which launches today Tuesday May 8, patients are being targeted through posters and leaflets on display in GP surgeries and pharmacies urging them to:

* Think before you order repeat prescriptions
* Talk to your GP or pharmacist for advice on medicines
* Return unwanted medicines to your local pharmacy for safe disposal

One of the most common causes of unnecessary wasted medicines comes from patients ordering drugs they don’t actually use or use only occasionally, which can mean they are losing out on the intended health benefits of their prescription and that their symptoms can get worse if left untreated.

Many patients may also not realise that medicines cannot be reused, even if they are unopened, and have to be destroyed.

Dr Paul Danaher, speaking on behalf of the LLR PCT Cluster, said: “This is an expensive problem which can only be solved by patients and the health community working together.

“Unused prescriptions cost the NHS in LLR an estimated £5.6 million each year and this is money that could be used to pay for other important health services locally.

“We want to encourage patients only to order repeat prescriptions if they are needed and not to stockpile medicines at home. We are also encouraging patients to have a medicines review with their GP or pharmacist to make sure they get the most out of the drugs which are prescribed for them.”

For more information on the campaign visit [www.medicinewaste.com](http://www.medicinewaste.com/) or to get advice about your prescription medicines speak to your GP or local pharmacist.

ENDS

**For interviews or more information please contact senior media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 7677 or** liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk

Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a ‘cluster’, in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving ongoing transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups.

Across LLR unused prescription medicines cost an estimated £5.6m every year. This is the equivalent of:

* 219 more nurses
* Or 5,600 more drug treatment courses for Alzheimer’s
* Or 369 more drug treatment courses for breast cancer
* Or 1,510 more hip replacements
* Or 5,833 more cataract operations