



Direct payments for healthcare: A consultation on updated policy for regulations. Royal Pharmaceutical Society Response

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) is the new professional body for every pharmacist in Great Britain. We are the only body that represents all sectors of pharmacy in Great Britain.

The RPS leads and supports the development of the pharmacy profession within the context of the public benefit. This includes the advancement of science, practice, education and knowledge in pharmacy. In addition, it promotes the profession's policies and views to a range of external stakeholders in a number of different forums.

Its functions and services include:

Leadership, representation and advocacy: promoting the status of the pharmacy profession and ensuring that pharmacy's voice is heard by governments, the media and the public.

Professional development, education and support: helping pharmacists to advance their careers through professional advancement, career advice and guidance on good practice.

Professional networking and publications: creating a series of communication channels to enable pharmacists to discuss areas of common interest.

General comments

We agree with the principle that patients should have a greater say in their treatment options and the personal healthcare budget is a means to enable this.

In the consultation it states that the personal healthcare budget would 'not **normally** pay for medication'. The RPS would be concerned if medicines were to be included as part of the personal health budget as we believe that nothing should come between a patient and the medicine that they require. Additionally it could lead to Clinical Commissioning Groups only funding the cheapest medicine available and if patients wished to have a medicine not recommended by the local formulary they would need to fund it themselves.

The intention of working towards a joint personal budget across health and social care is welcomed by the RPS as many issues, particularly those around who has responsibility for ensuring medicines are taken or administered, fall between the gap.

We welcome the new regulation that enables some public health services to be included as part of a personal health budget. Pharmacists provide a number of public health services, for example smoking cessation, weight management and sexual health services which could be provided to a patient with a personal health budget.

We have not answered the specific questions asked in this consultation but our response is relevant to all the key areas that have consultation questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shilpa Gohil". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Shilpa Gohil

Chair, English Pharmacy Board

For further information or any queries you may have on our consultation response please contact Heidi Wright at heidi.wright@rpharms.com or 0207 572 2602.