



8<sup>th</sup> of August 2016

Dear Sir / Madam

**RE: Inquiry into the sustainability of the health and social care workforce**

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) Wales welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Inquiry into the sustainability of the health and social care workforce.

**Is there a clear understanding of the Welsh Government's vision for health and care services and the workforce needed to deliver this?**

We are pleased that the Welsh Government's national plan for primary care includes using the skills and expertise of the wider primary care team, including pharmacists. Welsh Government's Efficiency Through Technology Fund investment in choose pharmacy will see Community pharmacies in Wales will be fully integrated with GPs and hospitals. We hope that this investment will be fully utilized with the development of more services through community pharmacy to better support patients with their medication and health needs including long term conditions. In order to make prudent healthcare happen in Wales it is essential that our highly-educated and skilled health professionals are used appropriately, spending time on work that cannot be undertaken by other, less expensive members of staff

There is a clear vision for a seven day health service, particularly in the managed sector. Traditionally hospital pharmacies have operated a full week day service supplemented by limited services and on-call arrangements at weekends. It is necessary to remodel pharmacy services to provide the required seven day health provision for patients, this will increase the number of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians required.

**How well-equipped is the workforce to meet future health and care needs?**

As the third largest professional group in the NHS, the pharmacy profession has a significant and unique contribution in the healthcare of the people of Wales. With the recognition and development of extended clinical roles for pharmacists and medicines management roles for pharmacy technicians and their inclusion in primary and secondary care multi-disciplinary teams (MDT) there is a need to allow these MDT teams to train and develop together and embrace and support the individual expertise that each member contributes to better patient care.

Expertise and resource is required to model the current pharmacy workforce and the future need. Such baseline data would allow a coherent workforce strategy to be developed with

other healthcare professionals to ensure that the potential role of pharmacy is maximised, and the Government's aspirations for primary care are achieved.

Medicines are the most common interventions in the NHS today. It is essential for patients that their medicines and pharmaceutical needs are overseen and coordinated at all points of the health and social care pathway to ensure they can benefit from their medicines and suffer no harm. Patients must be able to benefit from wider access to the pharmacy team in Wales, with the pharmacy profession taking greater responsibility for the outcomes of medication and working in partnership with patients to coach them to achieve their health goals at all points of their care journey.

Medicines are relevant to all healthcare journeys and patients must benefit from ease of access to pharmacy services that can provide:

- Public health advice and interventions
- Early detection of health problems, pharmaceutical interventions and referral to appropriate services
- Safe supply of medicines 7 days a week to reduce harm and improve outcomes
- Access to advice and support on medicines
- Support for patients in all care environments including their own homes

The full integration of the pharmacy team into NHS models of care will also help to:

- Improve the quality of patient care
- Improve the coordination of medicines when care is transferred
- Ensure the cost-effective and prudent use of medicines
- Reduce medicines waste

Current educational funding streams from WEDS are available only to managed sector for both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and there is no investment in up skilling the community pharmacy team to enable new professional services to be offered to patients. Educational funds currently placed within primary care clusters are not being made available to pharmacy. Consider either a directive to ring fence monies or re-allocate the funds to WEDS or similar body. There is currently no central funding for foundation programmes for community pharmacists to further develop their skills and to provide protected time to support them in offering new clinical services for patients. There is also a lack of multi-disciplinary educational funds to facilitate learning programmes across healthcare teams which we envisage would encourage multidisciplinary working.

### **What are the factors that influence recruitment and retention of staff across Wales?**

New work and services models that enable pharmacists to better utilise their clinical and consultation skills for patient benefit is essential to retain and recruit pharmacists in Wales.

As with other professions, pharmacy does face recruitment challenges, particularly in rural parts of Wales. This year, North Wales is piloting a new approach to the Pre-registration year for pharmacists which includes a split between community, hospital and primary care pharmacy in order to better equip individuals for a career in pharmacy rather than a sector specific career. We are supportive of new and innovative approaches such as this to attract high caliber future pharmacists to Wales

We consider there to be an opportunity to paint a positive picture of the opportunities for pharmacy in Wales that will encourage more pharmacy professionals to relocate to Wales, this would also help ensure we recruited the best professionals to work in Wales. This might include:

- Developing pharmacist and technician ‘stories’ which describe how pharmacy professionals are working in Wales today. These would focus not only on new roles (pharmacists in OOHs, GP practices etc) but also the extension of roles in traditional sectors (e.g. Additional community pharmacy roles such as the common ailment service and influenza vaccination).
- Describing the opportunities from Wales’ integrated NHS including examples of pharmacists with portfolio careers.
- Describing new developments such as the agreement to allow all pharmacists in all sectors and pharmacy technicians in hospitals access to the Welsh GP Record to support delivering care.
- Describing integrated pre-registration training programmes for pharmacists starting in North Wales this year.
- Subject to Ministerial agreement, describing the proposals for pharmacy pre-registration training recommended by the Modernising Pharmacy Careers Programme Board.

I trust this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Mair Davies, Director RPS Wales

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) is the professional body for pharmacists in Great Britain. We represent all sectors of pharmacy in Great Britain and we lead and support the development of the pharmacy profession including the advancement of science, practice, education and knowledge in pharmacy. In addition, we promote the profession’s policies and views to a range of external stakeholders in a number of different forums.