

Faculty of Public Health
4 St Andrews Place
London
NW1 4LB

11 September 2017

Dear Colleague

Faculty of Public Health Workforce Strategy and Standards

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) is the professional body for pharmacists 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 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.

The RPS's Professional Standards for Public Health Practice for Pharmacy were endorsed by the Faculty of Public Health and RPS welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation and has answered the questions asked by the FPH in its draft for consultation as follows:

Question 1: Does the strategy cover the key elements of workforce issues that you consider a priority?

Yes. The spectrum of the public health workforce is described from specialists to practitioners to the wider workforce. However, the RPS would draw attention to the fact that there are a number of pharmacists working as specialists and practitioners and support is required to promote these roles and support career pathways in public health including funded training opportunities. Public Health England have also set out opportunities for commissioner and provider led action at a local level to realise community pharmacy's key role in enabling a healthier nation¹.

Community pharmacy is a particularly underutilised workforce that can deliver more public health services thereby increasing public health capacity and improving population outcomes.

¹ Available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/642644/Pharmacy_a_way_for_ward_for_public_health.pdf

Community pharmacies are accessible, convenient and able to provide expert professional advice without an appointment in a confidential environment. In England, community pharmacies provide advice that supports healthy living as part of their contractual framework. In addition locally commissioned services such as smoking cessation are provided². However, it has been reported that there is variability in the commissioning of these services according to local need³. Local commissioning should be delivered according to local need and that supports local workforce development. A Healthy Living Pharmacy commissioning framework has been developed in England⁴ aimed at achieving the consistent delivery of a broad range of quality public health services, again workforce development is a key enabler. Local commissioners should consider commissioning a wider range of services from community pharmacy beyond those which are currently most commonly commissioned³ (smoking cessation, supervised consumption, emergency hormonal contraception and needle/syringe programmes.) These may include:

- *NHS health checks;*
- *Alcohol Screening;*
- *Sexual Health;*
- *Promoting an active lifestyle.*

A recent London School of Economics report⁵ has called for improved access to contraception for women. This will require enablers such as legislation (reclassification of some medicines) and training of the workforce.

In Scotland, a public health service is a core service delivered by community pharmacy contractors⁶ – there are three elements:

- *health promoting environment;*
- *sexual health service (EHC);*
- *smoking cessation service.*

The Scottish Government should be supported in its plans to deliver the public health service to its full potential through the improved and increased use of community pharmacies⁷. This includes enhancing the role of community pharmacy in public health and reviewing the current sexual health service.

² Available at: <http://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/>

³ The Pharmaceutical Journal, PJ August 2017 online, online | DOI: 10.1211/PJ.2017.20203344 Available at: <http://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/news-and-analysis/news/mosaic-of-public-health-services-offered-through-community-pharmacies-in-england-study-finds/20203344.article>

⁴ Available at: <http://psnc.org.uk/services-commissioning/locally-commissioned-services/healthy-living-pharmacies/>

⁵ Gill J & Taylor D. Improving access to contraception — extended community pharmacy services would improve quality and outcomes. London School of Economics. 4 September 2017.

⁶ Available at: <http://www.communitypharmacyscotland.org.uk/nhs-care-services/services/public-health-service/>

⁷ Achieving Excellence in Pharmaceutical Care: A Strategy for Scotland. Scottish Government. August 2017. Available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00523589.pdf>

In Wales, public health is commissioned from community pharmacy via enhanced services⁸.

This includes:

- EHC;
- National Stop Smoking Service;
- Needle and syringe exchange.

Community Pharmacy Wales also delivers public health campaigns.

The scope of public health practice across England, Scotland and Wales therefore has potential for widening and the RPS would ask that FPH within its workforce strategy promotes the enhanced role of the pharmacist in public health.

We note that within the Workforce Strategy and Standards recommendation 1.6 is: 'Implement a professional appraisal scheme for Public Health Specialists from backgrounds other than medicine'. The General Pharmaceutical Council is planning to implement revalidation for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and the RPS asks that systems across professions should align to avoid duplication.

Question 2: Is a three-year strategy period the right time-line?

A five-year strategy may be more realistic considering the current spending restrictions and uncertainties associated with Brexit.

Question 3: Do you think there are any issues missing from the strategy?

All the issues are identified. Perhaps there needs to be more emphasis on the responsibility of the wider workforce and the public's own responsibility (including local assets).

Question 4: Would you like to be kept involved via the FPH Board about implementation of the strategy?

Yes

Yours sincerely



Dr Catherine Duggan

⁸ Available at: <http://www.cpwales.org.uk/Services-and-commissioning/Enhanced-Services/Commissioned-Services-April-2017.aspx>

FRPharmS, PhD, BPharm (Hons) Director of Professional Development and Support