



A Manifesto for Pharmacy in Wales

Introduction

Pharmacists are a core part of health services in Wales. They are highly trained professionals having undertaken a 4-year masters level degree, a year of pre-registration training and mandatory further education throughout their careers.

Possessing a diverse set of skills and knowledge that incorporates both scientific and clinical expertise, pharmacists bring a unique perspective into the health system. They lead on the safe and effective use of medicines within the NHS and support patients to stay well and to be able to get the most from their medicines and the significant investment in medicines made in Wales every year.

To enable patients to benefit from the unique skills and knowledge of pharmacists, we call on the next Welsh Government to:

1

Ensure that patients continue to benefit from the skills and knowledge of pharmacists by investing in the sustainability and growth of the pharmacy workforce across all settings.

In recent years pharmacists have taken on new roles and responsibilities within NHS Wales:

- Community pharmacists are now the first point of contact for common ailments and contribute to efforts to improve public health through services such as flu vaccinations and smoking cessation. They also offer a range of new clinical services including discharge medication reviews and the sore throat test and treat service.
- In primary care, pharmacists are now an integral part of many GP practice teams, managing the care of patients with complex medicines needs and long-term conditions.
- In hospitals, pharmacists have moved beyond the dispensary to be a core part of the multidisciplinary team; specialising in areas such as mental health and palliative care, making medicines interventions on ward rounds and ensuring safe transfers of care.

Feedback from our members indicates that while the profession is embracing new increased clinical responsibilities, it is feeling stretched and under-resourced. So that patients continue to benefit from the skills of pharmacists, pharmacy services must be sufficiently resourced and developed to meet existing patient demands and those of the future. In order to continue providing the same high quality of care and support to their patients, pharmacists themselves must also receive support and commitment from the next Welsh Government.

2

Further develop pharmacist independent prescribing, including training and the roll out of services proven to benefit patients and improve capacity.

With unique clinical training and in-depth understanding of medicines, pharmacists are well placed to prescribe medicines. A pharmacist independent prescriber can prescribe autonomously for any condition within their clinical competence. They provide opportunities for new ways of working and increasing capacity and access for patients to high quality care. Currently patients are more likely to benefit from pharmacist independent prescribers based in hospitals and GP practices. This can be through prescribing on hospital wards, out-patient clinics, GP clinics, home visits and care home visits. The use of independent prescribing pharmacists in these settings must be developed and expanded so that patients and healthcare teams can continue to benefit from their skills.

Patients can also benefit from access to independent prescribers in some community pharmacies across Wales. The community pharmacy acute illness service utilises pharmacist independent prescribers to offer treatment for a wider range of conditions beyond the existing national common ailment service. This service has been well received by patients, enabling continuity of care on weekends and outside of GP practice hours. The service is not universally provided however and only available in certain community pharmacies in pockets of the country. Steps must be taken to roll out these models nationally so that communities and patients throughout Wales have improved access to treatment.

To enable patients to benefit from the unique skills and knowledge of pharmacists, we call on the next Welsh Government to:

3

Reduce the risk of medication errors and emergency hospital admissions by allowing all pharmacists to access and update a shared electronic patient record.

Hospital pharmacists have full access to patient health records, laboratory results and previous treatment documentation. Anything less than this would be considered unsafe. However, pharmacists working in community pharmacies do not routinely have access to a full patient record. Access to a patient record and accurate information would:

- Significantly improve the care patients can expect to receive.
- Enable pharmacists to make more informed clinical decisions.
- Improve medicine adherence and reduce the number of medicine related errors that contribute to unplanned hospital admissions.
- Meet patient expectations as currently most patients are surprised that their pharmacist does not know their medical history. Indeed, in a YouGov survey, 85% of respondents said they want any healthcare professional treating them to have secure electronic access to key data from the GP record¹.

Patient information is currently recorded in numerous places and is not accessible to all health professionals, representing a risk to patients. A single patient record that is accessible to all relevant health professionals would enable better communication across the multidisciplinary team. This is essential for making safer clinical decisions.

4

Improve the quality of patient care by guaranteeing protected learning and teaching time for pharmacists across all sectors.

As managing the health of patients becomes more complex due to the increasing prevalence of multiple long-term conditions and the development of new innovative medicines, the need for pharmacy input will continue to increase. The public must be assured that pharmacists can provide increasingly complex services safely. This will require them to continually build on their competence and constantly develop and advance their practise.

Pharmacists do not routinely receive protected time to undertake and teach continuous professional development. Currently, pharmacy workforce planning rarely takes into consideration the time and cost of education and training. Any training and teaching that is undertaken by pharmacy team members will put a strain on other colleagues in the team, adding to work pressures. Equity across all professions is now needed, ensuring protected and funded learning time for pharmacists is embedded within workforce planning.

¹EMIS Healthcare. 2014. Public support wider access to GP record. Available at: <https://www.emishealth.com/news-events/news/public-support-wider-access-to-gp-record/>

To enable patients to benefit from the unique skills and knowledge of pharmacists, we call on the next Welsh Government to:

5

Ensure the highest quality of care by supporting the health and wellbeing of pharmacists through access to NHS funded mental health and wellbeing support.

The challenges of meeting the growing demands placed on the health service are having a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of health professionals. The pharmacy workforce is no different with a recent RPS member survey indicating that pharmacists are routinely feeling stressed and under pressure.

While support is available for professionals employed by health boards, there is no routine NHS provision for pharmacists and other professionals who are not employed directly by health boards, working in community pharmacies and primary care settings. As lone professionals providing unscheduled care throughout a nine-hour working day, community pharmacists need access to wellbeing support. Parity of access to NHS funded wellbeing support must be made available to community and primary care pharmacists. This could include extending the Health for Health Professionals Wales Counselling Service to be available to all pharmacists.

6

Ensure that citizens have access to emerging pharmacogenomic therapies through investment in pharmacist training and services.

Pharmacogenomic therapy is an emerging field of health care that involves establishing how a person's genes will affect the way they respond to medicines. It is estimated that genetic factors could contribute to between 25% and 50% of inappropriate medicine responses. Taking into account a person's genetics has the potential to greatly improve the effectiveness of medicines by personalising care.

Pharmacists are particularly well placed to lead on pharmacogenomic therapies. They have the combined scientific and clinical knowledge and training to communicate complex drug information in a way that is understandable to patients. As accessible health professionals, pharmacists also have the potential to offer patients the opportunity to benefit from these emerging new technologies in their own communities. There are numerous international examples of services that employ pharmacists to lead on pharmacogenomics (Norway, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada and the USA)². These services allow patients who report treatments as ineffective or have experienced adverse drug reactions to be identified by their community pharmacists for a genetic diagnostic test within the pharmacy. The pharmacist will then interpret and explain the result to the patient before agreeing any action tailored to the patient's genetic makeup.

²Youssef, E. and Mostafa, S. and Wright, D. 2020. *Pharmacogenomic testing and its future in community Pharmacy*. The Pharmaceutical Journal, Vol 304, No 7933.



To provide accessible healthcare

On high streets throughout Wales, community pharmacies provide patients with quick access to healthcare advice and support from a health professional. They are a particularly valuable resource in rural areas where the nearest GP surgery may be miles away and in deprived areas as a means of reducing inequalities in health and reversing the inverse care law.



To improve clinical outcomes

As the experts in medicines and their effect on the body, pharmacists can support patients to get the most benefit from their medicines. Using their unique skills and knowledge, pharmacists ensure that medicines interact with each other effectively and safely, tailor doses appropriately and, in some instances, prescribe new medicines and deprescribe existing medicines that are of no further benefit to the patient.



To ensure value for money from medicines

With their unique knowledge of medicines, pharmacists are a vital asset to ensure that the significant annual investment in medicines is spent wisely and in a cost-effective manner. They do this by supporting appropriate prescribing and working with patients to deprescribe inappropriate and ineffective medicines.



To build capacity in primary care

Pharmacists are well placed to increase access to care for patients in primary care and community settings by taking an increased role in managing common ailments, acute conditions and long-term conditions. This can enable GPs more time and capacity for longer appointments and to focus on diagnoses and the management of more complex patients.

Why Wales needs pharmacists' expertise

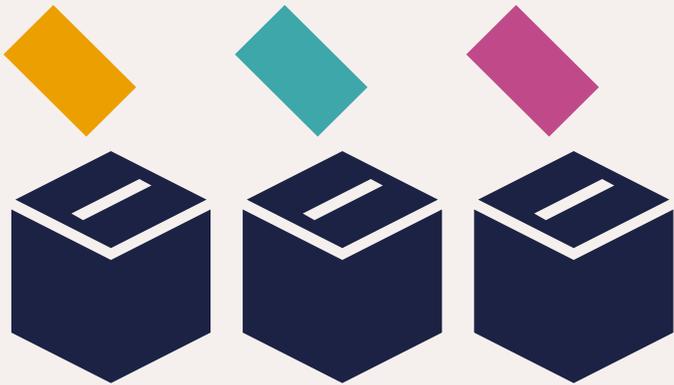


To prevent avoidable harm

When used incorrectly medicines can cause significant harm to patients. Inappropriate medicine use also introduces unforeseen challenges such as unplanned and emergency hospital admissions as the result of adverse drug reactions. Ensuring that patients and health professionals have access to pharmacists and their expert medicines knowledge is paramount to reducing these risks.

How you can help

Are you a candidate in the 2021 Welsh election?



- Visit a local pharmacist, take a photo, and hear first-hand about how pharmacists make a real difference to your constituents' health.
- Support our calls to action and tweet **#votepharmacy_Wales** to the RPS **@rpharms_wales** to show your support (you can find us on Facebook too).
- Tell your constituents about how you are supporting the pharmacy profession.

About the Royal Pharmaceutical Society

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is the professional body for pharmacists and pharmacy in Great Britain.

We lead and support the development of the pharmacy profession to improve the public's health and wellbeing, including through advancements in science, research and education.

Royal Pharmaceutical Society in Wales

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