

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Gynllun Llywodraeth Cymru i drawsnewid a moderneiddio gofal a gynlluniwyd a lleihau rhestrau aros](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on the [Welsh Government's plan for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists](#)

PCWL 01

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Fferylliaeth Gymunedol Cymru | Community Pharmacy Wales





Community Pharmacy Wales response to the Health and Social Care Committee's

Request for written evidence: Welsh Government's plan for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists

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Part 1: Introduction

Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) represents community pharmacy on NHS matters and seeks to ensure that the best possible services, provided by pharmacy contractors in Wales, are available through NHS Wales. It is the body recognised by the Welsh Government in accordance with *Sections 83 and 85 National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006* as 'representative of persons providing pharmaceutical services'.

Community Pharmacy Wales is the only organisation that represents every community pharmacy in Wales. It works with Government and its agencies, such as local Health Boards, to protect and develop high quality community pharmacy-based NHS services and to shape the community pharmacy contract and its associated regulations, in order to achieve the highest standards of public health and the best possible patient outcomes. CPW represents all 712 community pharmacies in Wales. Pharmacies are located in high streets, town centres and villages across Wales as well as in the major metropolitan centres and edge of town retail parks.

In addition to the dispensing of prescriptions, Welsh community pharmacies provide a broad range of patient services on behalf of NHS Wales. These face-to-face NHS Wales services, available from qualified pharmacists 6 and occasionally 7 days a week, include, Pharmacist Independent Prescribing Services, Emergency Contraception, Discharge Medicines Reviews, Smoking Cessation, Influenza Vaccination, Palliative Care Medicines Supply, Emergency Supply, Substance Misuse and the Common Ailments services.

CPW is supportive of the narrative and intentions within the Welsh Government's *plan for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists*. The plan is pragmatic and coordinated and takes account of the current backlog situation. CPW was heartened to see the recognition in the paper that *'The primary care workforce adapted very quickly in response to the pandemic and adopted a new clinical model at pace to support those in need of care*.

CPW is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this important consultation which is part of the committee's inquiry into the impact of the waiting times backlog on people in Wales who are waiting for diagnosis or treatment. CPW believes that the community pharmacy network can help to relieve pressure in key parts of the health service, and in doing so, to help create a degree of headroom to reduce the backlog.

Community pharmacy can help to achieve the key objective of *'increasing health service capacity by providing better access to healthcare closer to home – to*

doctors, nurses, dentists, optometrists and other healthcare professionals who work together so people receive the right care from the right professional.

CPW is also fully supportive of the statement that *'community pharmacy services will continue to be promoted as an alternative to visits to urgent care services. They will play a vital role in supporting patients who may be already on a waiting list or require onward referral'*

While CPW is pleased with the recognition of community pharmacy in the paper, CPW feel that the community pharmacy network across Wales is perfectly placed to make a more significant contribution to the delivery of the plan.

Part 2: Observations on the plan for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting times.

Within the paper there are many areas which CPW feel community pharmacies across Wales can make a significant contribution.

The key opportunities include :-

Moving some diagnostic tests into community pharmacies: CPW is fully supportive of the statement in the plan that: *diagnostic services need to be planned and delivered differently. Currently, these services are predominantly based in our main hospitals, serving urgent as well as routine planned care. The need to increase capacity provides an opportunity to deliver services in a different way, for example diagnostic hubs and community provision.* With improvements in technology many tests can be accurately undertaken using Point of Care Testing (finger prick testing). Provision of an extended range of diagnostic services through community pharmacies will be extremely convenient for patients and will release much needed capacity in diagnostic services. It would be helpful to also remove any existing barriers for example, community pharmacy cannot currently request blood tests, even when undertaking a prescribing role, and have instead have to refer to a GP.

The plan aims to *'develop regional treatment and diagnostic centres to further increase capacity. Provide local access to diagnostic procedures, with more tests undertaken at the same time'*. The community pharmacy network stands ready to take on this role.

Move some routine monitoring of stable patients into community pharmacies: The majority of patients with stable long-term conditions visit their pharmacy on a routine basis to obtain a supply of their medication. These same people, who are in regular contact with a capable healthcare professional, visit another part of the NHS and another healthcare professional for their annual monitoring and assessment. This is not good use of NHS resources and CPW would recommend that we look to move routine monitoring of people, who are

living with diabetes and respiratory conditions, into community pharmacy. This will provide headroom in GP practices to manage more complex cases and could reduce admissions due to exacerbations. The plan states that *'we will build on established self-management models as a core component of person-centred care providing information and education to support and empower people with long-term health conditions to understand and manage their own health and wellbeing effectively'*. CPW is confident that community pharmacies can take on more of this role.

Using community pharmacy to reduce health inequalities: The plan states that *'the Welsh Government is committed to reducing health inequalities. The pandemic has highlighted and worsened health inequalities and poor population health. Reducing health inequalities will enable more people to live longer, healthier and more productive lives'*. Evidence from public health Wales shows that community pharmacy is one of the areas of the NHS where the *Inverse Care Law* does not apply, in that there are a greater number of community pharmacies in areas of deprivation. CPW would suggest that this is leveraged to improve health outcomes in these areas.

Give community pharmacies a greater role in health improvement: The plan recognises that *'two of the biggest causes of avoidable ill health and death, and drivers of health inequality, are smoking and obesity. To tackle these and other health inequities, health bodies in Wales working with Public Health Wales will continue to promote healthier lifestyles including encouraging people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight'*. Community pharmacies are the most accessible part of NHS Wales and have, through their stop smoking outcomes, a proven record in change management. With over 700 pharmacies across Wales, located where people live, work and shop there is no other part of the NHS that can deliver health improvement support of the required nature at scale. Currently even the successful community pharmacy smoking cessation is subject to the vagaries of local commissioning and should be part of a suite of services available from every community pharmacy. There is also a significant opportunity to engage the network in the delivery of the *All-Wales Weight Management Pathway* and to allow community pharmacies to the National Exercise Referral Scheme and other services.

Provide more routine vaccinations in community pharmacies: Routine vaccination is a key weapon in preventing disease and demands for hospital care. Community pharmacies have clearly demonstrated their competence in vaccination through flu and Covid vaccination services and consideration should be given to expanding their vaccination role especially now that the public have shown their willingness and confidence to receive vaccinations in their local pharmacy.

Grow the Independent Prescribing role: Welsh Government has recognised the potential for community pharmacists to prescribe and have provided the

support needed to significantly grow the number of prescribers across the network. CPW would recommend that thought is now given to how we can best use this growing prescribing resource, for example to reduce demands on out of hours prescribing, to release capacity in other areas of the NHS.

Supporting hospital discharge: For the majority of patients returning home, or back into community care, following a period of time in hospital, ensuring that they receive, understand and can effectively use the medicines they were intended to receive is a key element of their continued care.

Welsh Government has previously fully recognised the importance of this part of the discharge process and the high level of errors that occur in practice. They responded pragmatically to this challenge by putting in place the Community Pharmacy Discharge Medicines Review (DMR) service following independent evidence on the value of the service. This is a home-grown service of which Welsh Government should feel justly proud however it is unfortunately a service that has not been leveraged and there remains a significant underutilisation of the service.

It is well recognised that errors occur in the hospital discharge process leading to inefficiencies and an unnecessary impact on patient care. The DMR remains a highly effective service which fully utilises the skills and expertise of community pharmacy teams and produces significant benefits to patients through the identification and resolution of medicines issues around discharge.

The current data on the performance of the service clearly shows that too many unnecessary medication errors still occur following discharge. These errors, if not spotted and addressed, could result in less-than-optimal treatment and affect the patient's condition, bringing harm to the patient and in a small number of cases resulted in the patient being readmitted into hospital. It also identifies that patients receiving the support of the DMR service were significantly less likely to have problems with their prescribed medicines following discharge than those patients that did not receive a DMR.

CPW recognise that the use of the service remains suboptimal and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. This can be improved significantly by ensuring that when patients are discharged from hospital there is an automatic notification to their community pharmacy via the Choose Pharmacy platform.

Driving work into community pharmacy: The recent Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments conducted by health boards across Wales identified that the majority of patients are not aware of many of the services offered in community pharmacies. CPW feel that lessons can be learned from the excellent and coordinated effort made each year to make people aware of the benefits of flu vaccination with a campaign of a similar nature put in place to raise awareness of community pharmacy services. This would significantly help the people of

Wales to choose the best provider in support of the *Help Us Help You* principles and reduce pressure on many parts of the NHS.

Speed up hospital discharge processes: As part of the (E – Early Discharge) element of the SAFER guidance CPW is aware of the delay to discharge that can occur while patients wait to receive their discharge medicines from the hospital. We believe, following feedback from our contractors, that this is an unnecessary delay and can be removed by allowing the medicines to be provided by the patient’s local community pharmacy and delivered to the patient’s home if required with the minimum of delay. CPW would recommend that a community pharmacy Enhanced Service is put in place to address this unnecessary delay to hospital discharge.

Addressing the long-standing issue of medicines compliance aids: Some of the patients discharged from hospital will require the support of a compliance aid such as a monitored dosage system (MDS) or a MAR Chart. As the provision of MDS or MAR Chart support for carers is not an NHS service and is provided as a gesture of goodwill by the pharmacy contractors, patients are often held up in hospital while hospital pharmacy teams ring around to try to secure the support required by the patient. This is another unnecessary delay in discharge processes that can be easily addressed. CPW feels that we should have long ago resolved this issue as this is placing unnecessary pressure on social care, community and hospital pharmacy teams and delaying discharge. CPW would recommend that a national community pharmacy Enhanced Service covering the provision of MDS or MAR Chart support following discharge, where this is required, is put in place with the minimum of delay.

Providing speedy access to key information: To ensure that all elements of the community pharmacy services offer operate as effectively as possible it is essential that any remaining restrictions to community pharmacy routine access to the GP Medical Record in Wales are removed. A community pharmacist should be able to access a GP Medical Record at any time that they feel it is appropriate.

Part 3: Conclusion

The plan is clear in its desire to ensure that *‘more care and support will be available from a wider range of local services and healthcare professionals to help you stay well and remain at home’*.

CPW is fully supportive of this aim and has laid out above several ways in which the community pharmacy network in Wales can help deliver the plan and release headroom in other parts of the service to tackle the challenge of the current waiting list.

CPW is happy to explore any of the elements touched on and will be a willing partner in instigating change.

CPW agree that the content of this response can be made public.

CPW welcomes communication in either English or Welsh.

For acknowledgement and further Contact:

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