

WP 09

Ymchwiliad i barodrwydd ar gyfer y gaeaf 2016

Inquiry into winter preparedness 2016/17

Ymateb gan: Lloyds Pharmacy

Response from: Lloyds Pharmacy

National Assembly for Wales - Health Social Care and Sport Committee

Inquiry into winter preparedness 2016/17

LloydsPharmacy's submission

Introduction

LloydsPharmacy welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Health Social Care and Sport Committee's inquiry into winter preparedness 2016/17.

Over the decades of working locally in Wales, we have seen communities evolve and families grow. LloydsPharmacy is placed in 83 pharmacies across Wales, where over 450 health-trained staff have a proven track record in delivering innovative and quality pharmacy services - located where people live, and across 7 Local Health Boards. Community pharmacies are located in the hearts of communities and span the boundaries of health and social care.

We strongly believe that community pharmacy can play a key role in supporting and furthering NHS Wales's priorities as part of an integrated strategy to combat increasing pressures on demand, such as enabling more capacity in GP surgeries or preventing people being admitted to hospital –especially during the winter months when susceptibility to illness is high and services can come under considerable strain.

Role of Community Pharmacy

Community Pharmacy in Wales is ideally placed to provide an extensive range of additional services, which can not only provide much needed support to primary care and other healthcare services, but also increase access to healthcare for communities.

Alongside GPs, the community pharmacy is often the first port of call, and is the most frequent touch point people have with NHS services. There are around 35 million visits to community pharmacy in Wales every year, providing a vast number of opportunities to offer support and engage people through health related conversations.

Part of the NHS family

It is increasingly said that there is a decline in the GP workforce numbers in Wales. Community pharmacy can support local neighbourhoods by providing essential access to NHS services as well as supporting the GP practice network.

Whilst pharmacists being located in general practice is advocated in the RCGP Wales publication [Strengthening General Practice – Actions for a brighter future for patients in Wales](#) -

Cryfhau Ymarfer Cyffredinol - Creu gwell dyfodol i gleifion yng Nghymru; the ready-made network of community pharmacists and their teams can, and already do, deliver a range of services which not only widen access but deliver outcomes for patients. We have highlighted a number of areas where this is already happening but there is scope for more.

We welcome the recent recognition by Welsh Government that independent contractors provide valuable NHS services in our communities and the window stickers which define that NHS services are available in premises such as pharmacy, dentists and optometrists clearly indicates that we are part of the NHS family in Wales.

As in our recent response to the Committee's consultation on future priorities, we would encourage the Committee to review and build on the work undertaken by the Health and Social Care Committee in the fourth Assembly through its inquiry into the contribution of community pharmacy to NHS services in Wales.

We believe it would be of interest to the Committee and the National Assembly to review the range of services currently available and explore how they can be maximised to support the plan for primary care for Wales as set out by the Welsh Government. The inquiry could also explore further initiatives which utilise community pharmacies unique position and skills to support the health of the communities in Wales and the sustainability of the NHS.

Supporting the right care in the right place at the right time

The evaluation of the pathfinder Common Ailments Service in Cynon Valley and Gwynedd demonstrated the impact, economic benefit and positive return on investment in the two pathfinder areas.

We welcome the support of the Welsh Government in the 'Choose Pharmacy' initiative which includes the investment of £750,000 to implement the community pharmacy IT platform across 400 pharmacies, which will support the extended delivery of the Common Ailments Service.

Whilst this is positive in furthering the role of community pharmacy, we encourage Welsh Government to continue their support by backing the rapid roll out of the Choose Pharmacy platform to the whole community pharmacy network in Wales. This will not only further cement the role of community pharmacy as part of the NHS in Wales, it will help to provide people with a clear route of access to the most appropriate healthcare setting for their needs.

To have the biggest impact and to support a positive change in behaviour – where people do choose pharmacy – we call on the Welsh Government and the NHS to support full coverage of the Common Ailments Scheme across the country – to make this a universally accessible service from all community pharmacies. This will require Health Boards to commit to funding with a consistent and long term outlook.

Although support for self-care and treatment for common ailments is a core element of the community pharmacy offer, our reach and capability goes far beyond, and there are a range of opportunities for other Choose Pharmacy services to alleviate system pressures. These include Emergency Hormonal Contraception service, Emergency Medication Supply and Discharge

Medication Review – all of which, when underpinned by access to the GP record can have a high impact on supporting primary care and help build capacity.

We look forward to being able to deliver the whole range of Choose Pharmacy services once the platform is available and to working with Welsh Government and our local primary care colleagues to promote the care available with a view to encouraging people to access the right service, at the right time in the right place.

Making the best use of medicines

Research shows that up to 50% of patients fail to take their medicines as prescribed, which can lead to sub-optimal treatment, potentially resulting in exacerbations of their condition, avoidable interventions or even hospital admission. It is estimated that this costs NHS Wales around £10million every year and is a contributory factor when looking at winter pressure on the NHS.

Community pharmacy services, such as Medicines Use Review are pivotal in ensuring that people understand their medications as well as identifying any potential issues with the regime.

By engaging pharmacy more in supporting medicines optimisation for patients, such as the responsibility for the NHS Repeat Dispensing Service, and eventually more independent prescribing by pharmacists in the community, we envisage better outcomes for patients and the NHS, and an increase in capacity in General Practice.

We call on Welsh Government and NHS stakeholders to support the extension of the Repeat Dispensing Service, which helps to remove administrative task from General Practice, as well as supporting regular and consistent contact between pharmacy and patients. We believe that this is the building block which supports the future development of services in pharmacy – such as supporting patients with long term conditions.

Supporting discharge from hospital

Bed blocking is a phrase which is widely used by the media especially in winter months, but which does not convey the complex needs of patients who are unable to leave hospital immediately after their treatment is concluded, potentially due to arrangements around their medication. However, through the Discharge Medication Review Service (DMR), patients can be supported through their discharge from hospital by their local community pharmacy, thus allowing safe transition from one setting to another. The service ensures that the patient receives their intended medication and that they or their carer understands how to get the best from their medicine to manage their ongoing needs. This can help to free up resources more effectively and allow people to return home at the earliest opportunity, particularly at a time of the year when the pressures on the system are at their greatest.

We would welcome the planned expansion of the Medicines Transcribing and e-Discharge (mTED) system throughout hospitals in Wales which will allow the production of the Electronic Discharge Advice Letter (eDAL) via the Choose Pharmacy platform. This will enable the community pharmacy to deliver the valuable DMR to all patients where this is appropriate when transferring between care settings.

Prevention

Community pharmacy plays a significant role in the prevention of ill health, from supporting patients diagnosed with a long term condition to manage their conditions, to providing lifestyle advice and information to avoid people developing conditions in the first place. Examples of this could be through stop smoking services, asthma inhaler technique checks, diabetes screening and blood pressure measurement services.

Recently, community pharmacy has also been commissioned to provide the NHS Flu vaccination service, which is again maximising the levels of patient access and expertise in this setting. This works best in conjunction with GP practice – where collaborative working can increase overall rates of immunisation for communities, preventing those most at risk from developing flu and helping to avoid potentially serious complications and avoidable hospital admissions.

We ask that the full roll out of the pharmacy flu vaccinations service is undertaken, to ensure that the opportunity for improving access and therefore, increasing uptake is realised. We also welcome in enhanced communication through the planned introduction of the Choose Pharmacy platform to provide a more seamless service and reduce bureaucracy.

Conclusion

We do believe it would be of interest to the Committee and the National Assembly to review the range of services currently available through community pharmacy and explore how they can be maximised to support the plan for primary care for Wales as set out by the Welsh Government.

LloydsPharmacy looks forward to being able to deliver the whole range of Choose Pharmacy services once the platform is available and would welcome the opportunity to work with Welsh Government and our local primary care colleagues to promote the care available which encourages people to access the right service, at the right time in the right place.

We call on the Welsh Government and the NHS to support full coverage of Choose Pharmacy platform and the Common Ailments Scheme – to make this a universally accessible service through community pharmacy. As we already mentioned, this will require Health Boards to fully commit to funding with a consistent and long term outlook, which will ultimately help to change behaviour around how people access NHS services.

We also believe that one of the key elements to enabling and enhancing pharmacy's role in supporting primary care to be the extension of the Repeat Dispensing Service and we welcome the opportunity to work with the Health, Social care and Sport Committee, the Welsh Government and Community Pharmacy Wales in further developing this and the role of community pharmacy to support the health of people in Wales, and the future sustainability of the NHS.