



A healthy future: a public health strategic framework for Wales – a briefing paper to support development

Mental Health and well-being

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1. Mental health issues can occur in all socio economic groups but are most commonly seen in social disadvantaged areas- there are 712 community pharmacies in Wales, many in the heart of our disadvantaged communities.
2. People living in socially disadvantaged areas are more likely to use primary care services, with twice the number of visits to their GP and Community Pharmacy. The provision of local health services is particularly important in socially disadvantaged areas.
3. The local community pharmacist is the source of healthcare advice and medicines that is readily accessible, without an appointment. They are visited by both the fit and the unwell and give ready access to people who are not in contact with any other health professional. They act as a crucial lifeline and primary point of contact with a healthcare professional for many rural and disadvantaged communities.
4. Community pharmacy has access to areas of the population that have traditionally been hard for the NHS to reach, for example men and ethnic minorities.
5. To build a sustainable pharmacy service in disadvantaged areas and rural locations it is vital to enhance current provision and not duplicate it, as this will render the existing community pharmacy service non viable.
6. The community pharmacy can provide a range of health care inputs from public health information, prevention programs, self care, medicines supply, monitoring and medicines use review. For patients on antipsychotic or antidepressant medication they can offer support, and advice on concordance.
7. Lithium monitoring and clozapine monitoring services could be delivered through community based pharmacy services. These could reduce the number of clinic appointments needed and patients do not have the anxiety of waiting several days to hear whether their treatment will be continued.
8. Pharmacist, working within mental health teams, can identify medication issues and ensure that the appropriate links are made with other healthcare workers, including community and acute hospital pharmacists, to ensure that these are addressed. They work with voluntary organisations such as HAFAL and MIND to

improve access to information about medication used to treat mental health problems.

9. The pharmaceutical health needs, once identified, will need to be monitored in a standardised and sustainable format that applies to pharmacy and other agencies.

10. Within any wider public health strategy the local pharmacy service needs to improve pharmaceutical surveillance of the health of the population and review and optimise the ability of existing pharmacy services, or wider health service, to address the issues identified.

11. Examples of possible surveillance targets include:

- i. Prescription records to monitor the therapeutic management of patients in nursing and residential homes. This could for example indicate over use of antipsychotics or sedatives.
- ii. Continuation of medication prescribed following a hospital outpatient appointment. This could identify systemic communication failures.

12. The restructuring of the NHS in Wales gives the opportunity to effectively engage all parts of the pharmacy service – community, primary care and hospital pharmacy in the public health agenda.

13. It also gives the opportunity to increase inter-professional cooperation through integrated working between services and identify clearly the pharmaceutical needs and priorities of the local population.

14. Pharmacists can offer opportunistic or targeted information and advice on health or lifestyle e.g. smoking, diet. However to optimise the impact advice and support needs to be given within a program framework, not a one off intervention.

15. Community pharmacies may also include signposting to other services and if appropriate referral to required support. They provide a readily accessible healthcare facility that can host other peripatetic health professionals as part of local strategy for addressing local public health issues.

16. The IM&T strategy for Wales incorporates access to patients individual health record. The health record needs to clearly identify an individuals health risks and actions taken. It is essential that all health professionals, including community pharmacists, can access the appropriate parts of the record as necessary to ensure patient safety and optimise health service efficiency and effectiveness.

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