

Vascular Risk Assessment in Wales

Making use of Community Pharmacy

Why Pharmacy?

- Pharmacists have a key and unique role to play in modernising the delivery of patient care across Wales. As the NHS expert in medicines they are a valuable community resource, seeing people who are generally fit and well, those who may have health risks, those who are not in touch with any other health professional, and addressing the health and wellbeing needs of people already diagnosed with minor ailments and chronic conditions
- Most adults in the UK use community pharmacies, whether in local communities, on the high street or in supermarkets, and it is estimated that there over 1.6million daily visits to UK pharmacies
- Community pharmacies are used by groups of people who may be infrequent users of other health care services such as men and women who work long hours, those aged over 35 and those with chronic conditions
- Pharmacists play a key role in improving access to health information, advice and healthcare interventions
- Working in our communities, within GP surgeries, LHBs, secondary and tertiary care, pharmacists are well placed to deliver a range of clinical patient services, manage a safe and efficient medicines supply system and provide support on safe and effective prescribing to other healthcare professionals
- Pharmacists are well placed to help identify people who may benefit from health checks, for example by targeting vulnerable and high risk groups and those presenting with potentially high risk symptoms of diseases that are undiagnosed
- Local community pharmacies are well placed to deliver significant improvements in health care provision in rural as well as more urban areas across Wales

The key roles of pharmacists in vascular health

- Contributing to illness prevention and the wider public health agenda
- Providing healthy lifestyle information and advice to the general public and to targeted patients with particular risk factors
- Providing point of care testing (i.e. analytical tests performed outside the conventional laboratory setting)
- Counselling patients on the implications of test point of care test results
- Managing chronic conditions such as CHD and diabetes
- Supporting self-care and self-management of a range of chronic conditions and minor ailments
- Overseeing medicines management and monitoring patient's conditions
- Signposting patients to other health, social care and voluntary sector services
- Referring patients requiring further investigations to their GP

Key service challenges for including community pharmacists in vascular risk assessment in Wales (See table 1)

- Integrating community pharmacists into wider programme for vascular screening
- Utilising the Community Pharmacy Contractual Agreement and ensuring appropriate remuneration for pharmacy-led services
- Utilising the skills of the pharmacy workforce more appropriately – staffing, training, education and competence
- Utilising community pharmacy premises as part of NHS hub and spoke services
- Including community pharmacy in a whole systems approach supported by secure IT and web based systems

Table 1: Key service challenges for including community pharmacists in vascular risk assessment

Key issues for Wales	Opportunities provided by community pharmacists	Recommendations
<p>Integrating community pharmacists into programmes for vascular risk assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Including community pharmacists in vascular risk assessment programmes can enhance access to care and assessment in communities across Wales ▪ Community pharmacists are able to undertake near patient testing including checking blood pressure, measuring height, weight and waist circumference measurements, as well as blood glucose and cholesterol testing. ▪ Community pharmacy interventions such as support for weight reduction, smoking cessation and the management of medications, can help to prevent, reduce and, in some cases, reverse the onset of vascular disease. ▪ Working closely with the primary care team and other appropriate health professionals in the community, pharmacists can provide individuals with advice to help reduce the risks of vascular disease, refer them to their GP for further investigation, provide GPs and other health professionals with timely information about high risk individuals, and provide advice to health professionals and individuals on medicines management issues where appropriate. ▪ By identifying individuals at risk of developing vascular disease and improving access to health assessment, advice and support, community pharmacists can contribute to the wider public health agenda and the national agenda of reducing health inequalities across Wales including socio-economic, ethnic and gender inequalities. ▪ Promoting and 'marketing' vascular risk assessment consistently in community pharmacies across Wales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early engagement of community pharmacists with GPs and other appropriate health professionals to ensure effective planning and smooth implementation of vascular risk assessment programme in the community ▪ Encouraging GPs and community pharmacists to work together to ensure robust and efficient referral processes are in place for individuals identified at high cardiovascular risk. ▪ Ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place (i.e. via IM&T systems) to exchange patient information in a secure way between community pharmacies and GP practices to improve continuity of care and improve the efficiency of healthcare services. ▪ The role of community pharmacists should be clearly identified in pathways of care for vascular disease assessment activities and interventions ▪ Systematic and integrated processes must ensure all health professionals, including community pharmacists, work to agreed service protocols to reduce duplication of effort, streamline service delivery and ensure cost effectiveness. ▪ The role of all health professionals, including community pharmacists, should be clearly articulated to the public via a coordinated information campaign.

<p>Utilising the Community Pharmacy Contractual Agreement and ensuring appropriate remuneration for pharmacy-led services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Community Pharmacy Contractual Agreement provides key opportunities to actively engage community pharmacists in the public health agenda. ▪ Through the contract, community pharmacists can provide a valuable source of healthy lifestyle support to members of the public, those with risk factors and people with diagnosed health conditions. Due to accessibility of community pharmacies across Wales, lifestyle advice can be provided in all types of communities, urban and rural, to support individuals with making important lifestyle changes to improve their health and well-being. Examples of preventative community pharmacy services include vascular risk assessment, obesity management services and smoking cessation support. ▪ Utilising the contract can ensure the integration of community pharmacists into healthcare teams and support the drive for improved access to healthcare services and quality of care delivered across the NHS. ▪ The contract can be used to engage community pharmacies in structured ways as part of local services to deliver targeted and opportunistic patient education, medicines management, improving disease control, testing and monitoring support as part of integrated patient care pathways. ▪ The contract can be used as an effective lever to encourage community pharmacists to get actively involved in opportunistic and routine diagnostic testing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure service descriptions for vascular risk assessment clearly specify the role required by community pharmacists ▪ Agree the costs of the service and negotiate the remuneration to community pharmacists, ensuring cost-effectiveness at all times. ▪ Ensure adequate funding and start-up grants for community pharmacies to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Training, educational needs and accreditation ➢ Equipment and premises adaptation requirements ➢ Record keeping requirements ➢ The degree of patient follow up required ➢ Interventions to target specific hard to reach groups ➢ The skill mix required by the community pharmacy ▪ Encourage/incentivise greater partnership working between GPs and community pharmacists to ensure continuity of care and ease of access to health services in local communities.
<p>Utilising the skills of the pharmacy workforce more appropriately: staffing, training, education and competence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community pharmacists are professionally eligible and competent to undertake a range of simple diagnostic tests in local communities across Wales. They include blood pressure checks, blood glucose checks, and cholesterol checks, all of which are key aspects in identifying vascular and related problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structured and ongoing Continuing Professional Development should be made available to pharmacists and community pharmacy staff involved in vascular assessment ▪ Encourage multidisciplinary training to all healthcare professionals involved in the vascular risk assessment programme to ensure improved partnership working

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By undertaking specific training and participating in continuing professional development, community pharmacists and their staff can deliver an effective service as part of a vascular risk assessment programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure service delivery takes a flexible approach to working, manpower and skill mix. ▪ Explore opportunities for reducing professional isolation through access to a network of more specialist advice and expertise, decision making support tools and evidence based information.
Utilising community pharmacy premises as part of NHS hub and spoke services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilising community pharmacy premises as part of an overall estates strategy will help to reduce overlap and duplication in the delivery of innovative models of vascular risk assessment ▪ Utilising community pharmacy premises as part of a whole system approach to vascular risk assessment can contribute to local strategies to provide assessment to targeted areas and in multiple locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore opportunities for bringing currently disparate services together and promoting sharing of facilities. e.g. community hospitals, community pharmacies, social services. ▪ Encourage investment in community pharmacy premises to develop them as outlets for a range of professional services in line with overall strategic models of care including vascular risk assessment in Wales. ▪ Clarify the governance arrangements that need to be put in place for using multiple locations in vascular risk assessment
Including community pharmacy in a whole systems approach supported by secure IT and web based systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Including community pharmacists as part of a multi-disciplinary team approach to vascular risk assessment will help to increase the identification of individuals with high risks and those requiring specific healthcare interventions. ▪ Effective communication between pharmacists, GPs and other health professionals will help to ensure that individuals receive the right care in the right place and at the right time. ▪ Community pharmacists undertaking opportunistic and routine diagnostic testing can record, store and transfer patient information to GPs and other relevant health professions as appropriate to help inform care planning and ensure continuity of care. ▪ Community pharmacists can utilise secure IT systems to transfer information and speed up referral times for individuals identified with high risk factors of vascular and related disease. ▪ Community pharmacists can be engaged in audit processes for vascular risk assessment in Wales through the use of IT systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore the options for ensuring quality assurance in recording and storing patient data and information in both electronic and paper forms as part of a vascular risk assessment process. ▪ Ensure secure IT systems are in place to allow the confidential transfer of patient information between community pharmacists, GPs and other healthcare professionals as appropriate. ▪ Develop clear protocols for transferring patient identifiable information and making referrals to other health professionals.

