

**Primary Care Contracting  
Pharmacy  
Paper PH/WB/B/040708**

## **Board Briefing – The Pharmacy White Paper**

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### **Introduction**

This briefing has been produced for PCT Boards to provide a summary of the contents of the Pharmacy White Paper: *Pharmacy in England – Building on strengths – delivering the future*, which was published on 3rd April 2008. The White Paper is a comprehensive document covering the main sectors of the pharmacy profession, including those working in hospitals and primary care, as well as other providers of pharmaceutical services – dispensing doctors and appliance contractors. However, the main focus of its recommendations relate to community pharmacy. The White Paper is closely aligned with the Darzi Review and the forthcoming *Primary and Community Care Strategy*. This briefing sets out the key areas for PCT Boards to note and incorporate into their local strategic planning processes.

### **Context**

The White Paper builds on the strengths of community pharmacy, developed since the publication of *A Vision for Pharmacy in the New NHS*, published in July 2003 and the implementation of the new community pharmacy contractual framework implemented in April 2005.

The White Paper sets out how the network of some 10 000 community pharmacies in England that are currently providing high quality, professional, accessible and convenient services to an estimated 1.2 million people per day can further support the delivery of a wider range of services. The Government's aims, underpinned in the White Paper, sees the potential for community pharmacy to deliver its vision, using the skills of pharmacists and their staff in delivering services with a greater emphasis on clinical services and exploiting the convenient location and opening times of pharmacies to promote greater access and choice for patients. As part of this, the longer term vision will see pharmacies;

- Become 'healthy living centres' encompassing a greater emphasis on health promotion and supporting self care.
- Become the first port of call for patients with minor ailments with community pharmacies enabled to provide a wider range of medicines (saving up to 57 million GP consultations per year).
- Provide support to patients with long term conditions, including supporting patients newly diagnosed and starting new courses of treatment.
- Increase their professional involvement in screening, vaccination and sexual health, services.

### Attributes of a first-class pharmacy service



## The Headlines

The White Paper sets out:

- The strengths and achievements of pharmacy staff in all areas of practice who provide high quality healthcare and improve the health and well being of the population.
- How services provided through community pharmacy can expand access and increase patient choice.
- The vision that pharmacies will be central providers of health advice, and make a significant impact in promoting better health and preventing illness.
- Plans to enable pharmacists to increase the services they can offer to support patients with long term conditions, and the development of services for self care.
- A commitment to launch a communications program to raise public and professional awareness of health services available through pharmacies.
- Action to foster closer working relationships between pharmacy and other healthcare professionals, notable GPs
- Proposals to support research and development into innovative pharmacy practice
- Proposals to modernise pharmacy education, training, regulation and career pathways.

## How Pharmacy can help meet Health and Social Challenges

The White Paper seeks to emphasise the wide and varied contribution community pharmacy can make to improving the health of the population, and reducing health inequalities. It sets out many examples of where community pharmacy is currently delivering innovative and effective services and can contribute further to areas such as;

- Weight management
- Stop smoking
- Sexual health
- Alcohol misuse services
- Supporting an ageing population
- Screening eg, vascular checks and chlamydia screening
- Long term conditions
- Mental health
- Reducing medicines related harm
- Drug misuse
- Immunisation & vaccination
- Supporting people in work

PCTs and commissioners can learn from these examples by better harnessing and exploiting the extensive skills within community pharmacy to meet local health needs and promote better access and choice.

## Commissioning

Key to the development of services that will underpin current and future government strategies is the requirement for improved commissioning processes by PCTs. PCTs will want to apply the world-class commissioning competencies to the commissioning of pharmaceutical services. Whilst many of the recommendations within the White Paper are proposals requiring further consultation, negotiation and research, there are steps PCTs can take now to start the implementation process. PCT Boards should be mindful of the proposals in the White Paper as part of their strategic plans in line with the Primary and Community Care Strategy and the full Darzi report when both are published.

It is important to note that it is unlikely that immediately identifiable savings will be realized from commissioning new pharmaceutical services. PCTs should focus on the longer term health gains and improved outcomes for their populations.

## Actions for PCTs.

PCTs should start to develop an action plan in order to prepare for future, planned working arrangements outlined in the White Paper.

In the immediate future:

- PCT Boards should ensure that their commissioners are maximising the services community pharmacy currently deliver via their contractual framework, such as medicine use reviews (MURs), repeat dispensing services and are geared up to deliver the electronic prescription service.
- PCTs should ensure that safe medication practices are embedded in patient care by identifying, introducing, and evaluating systems designed to reduce unintended hospital admissions related to medicines use.
- As part of successfully meeting the World Class Commissioning competencies, PCTs should apply the principles to the commissioning of pharmacy services, with medicines safety embedded in the commissioning process.

- PCTs should review and strengthen their Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and robustly link them to their Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, in order to act as a robust tool to support and strengthen the commissioning process.
- PCTs should explore the significant role that community pharmacy can play in supporting the national vascular risk assessment programme.
- PCTs should ensure pharmacy providers are included in, and consulted on, future service developments.
- PCTs should commission safe services allowing appropriate patients to receive oral cancer chemotherapy from a community pharmacy.
- PCT commissioners should ensure that pharmacy, as a key provider of urgent care and out of hours services, plays a key role in the provision of integrated and accessible services that meet the needs and wishes of local communities.

## Summary

To successfully achieve the aspirations of the White Paper, there will be a shift in emphasis from the core role of dispensing prescriptions - important as these remain - to the provision of individualised clinical services to patients.

The details of the proposals contained within the White Paper will be refined over the next few months, following consultation on some important elements, to ensure that they are in line with, and complement the, new Primary and Community Care Strategy due for publication in Summer 2008.

The full White Paper document can be found at:

[http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_083815](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationPolicyAndGuidance/DH_083815)