

Cafodd yr ymateb hwn ei gyflwyno i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

HSC PSS 98

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Cymdeithas Fferyllol Frenhinol | Royal Pharmaceutical Society in Wales

Blaenoriaethau cychwynnol a nodwyd gan y Pwyllgor Initial priorities identified by the Committee

Mae'r Pwyllgor wedi nodi nifer o flaenoriaethau posibl ar gyfer ei waith yn ystod y Chweched Senedd, gan gynnwys: iechyd y cyhoedd a gwaith ataliol; y gweithlu iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol, gan gynnwys diwylliant sefydliadol a lles staff; mynediad at wasanaethau iechyd meddwl; arloesi ar sail tystiolaeth ym maes iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol; cymorth a gwasanaethau i ofalwyr di-dâl; mynediad at wasanaethau adsefydlu i'r rhai sydd wedi cael COVID ac i eraill; a mynediad at wasanaethau ar gyfer cyflyrau cronig tymor hir, gan gynnwys cyflyrau cyhyrsgerbydol.

The Committee has identified several potential priorities for work during the Sixth Senedd, including: public health and prevention; the health and social care workforce, including organisational culture and staff wellbeing; access to mental health services; evidence-based innovation in health and social care; support and services for unpaid carers; access to COVID and non-COVID rehabilitation services; and access to services for long-term chronic conditions, including musculoskeletal conditions.

C1. Pa rai o'r materion uchod ydych chi'n credu y dylai'r Pwyllgor roi blaenoriaeth iddynt, a pham?

Q1. Which of the issues listed above do you think should be a priority, and why?

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society is the professional body for pharmacists and pharmacy in Great Britain. We lead and support the development of the pharmacy profession to improve the public's health and wellbeing, including through advancements in science, research and education. We welcome the opportunity to provide input into the Committee's deliberations regarding its future priorities and its important work programme.

Priority 1: Health & Social Care Workforce

We believe that the top priority for the Health and Social Care Committee should be the health and social care workforce. We are aware that the pandemic has impacted significantly on the pharmacy workforce, as it has across the entire health and social care community. For this reason



there is an urgent need for the Committee to explore the short term plans to meet the predicted winter pressures of 2021/22, to understand how the workforce will play a role in covid-recovery plans, as well as longer term plans to transform and modernise the workforce.

We recommend that the Committee calls for and explores evidence from professional bodies and royal colleges representing the health and social care professions, as well considering how the plans being made at national levels by HEIW and Social Care Wales will meet the training and career path developments needed by the professions going forward.

As part of the inquiry into workforce, it will be vitally important to understand how the wellbeing of staff is being supported and how it can be sustained over the longer term.

We believe that the inquiry into workforce should also seek to understand progress in developing multi-professional working to ensure the right skill mix of professionals is brought together to improve care and efficiencies in service delivery. Issues of professional and organisational culture should be considered along with identifying other barriers to shared decision making and multi-disciplinary team working.

We appreciate that the Committee is already planning an oral evidence session with HEIW and Social Care Wales in the autumn. It is important that the views of professional bodies and other key stakeholders are taken on board as part of this important work. It will be critical for the Committee to understand the current pressures on the workforce and the projected challenges for sustaining a high performing health and social care workforce.

Priority 2: Access to mental health services

The impact of the pandemic on the mental health of the Welsh population is deeply concerning. With an anticipated surge of people requiring mental health and psychological therapies, it is critical that the Committee seeks to understand the current challenges, gaps in services and opportunities for the future. As a member of the Royal College Mental Health Expert Advisory Group, we support calls to understand the challenges of opportunities relating to access to psychological therapies, the availability of digital resources, the need for specialist intervention, the availability of care close to home, and the appropriateness of the NHS mental health estate.

We believe the pharmacy professional has an instrumental role in supporting mental health and should be equipped to be a key part of pathways of care when medicines and pharmacological responses are needed. Pharmacists working in primary care and in the community are well placed to interact with the population and to identify mental health concerns. As part of a pathway of care, a formal referral protocol could help to accelerate referral and signposting to other services, ensuring efficiency and quicker access to the right professional at the right time.

We believe that any inquiry into mental health services must also consider the digital transformation needed to ensure services are fit for purpose. This may require discussions with the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing and her officials, Digital and Health Wales, service users or representatives of service users, and representatives from professional bodies representing professionals working in mental health.

Priority 3: Evidence-based innovation in health and social care

We believe that digital transformation of health and social care is critical to the future sustainability of services in Wales. For pharmacy there are several enablers that will improve patient care,

increase patient safety and improve efficiencies across the NHS. These include pharmacist access to patient records and electronic prescribing across the whole health system. We are aware of digital innovation exemplars in Wales which can be replicated across Wales at scale and pace and believe more can be achieved by harnessing and replicating examples of highly effective innovation to improve service delivery.

Innovation is key to future progression and we would be keen to input into a Committee inquiry into this. We recommend the Committee should benefit from understanding innovation from a range of stakeholders including health and social care professionals, from the Bevan Commission, Health Boards and Welsh Government. It will also be important to understand the barriers to change and implementation as well as emerging opportunities for Wales. Discussion with Digital Health and Care Wales will also be critical to this work.

Innovation is of course not only limited to digital solutions and we would appreciate a broad scope of inquiry to consider innovation in training, models of care, workforce and team development. We are particularly keen to understand plans and progress for introducing pharmacogenomics and precision medicines into NHS services in Wales. This could benefit from input into any inquiry from Welsh Government and officials leading on the area of genomics in Wales, as well as input from the Life Science Hub for example.

Priority 4: Public health and prevention:

We support the need for a focus on public health and prevention. The pandemic has highlighted the desperate need for public health measures and interventions that support the health and wellbeing of the nation. Measures are also needed to tackle health inequalities and ensure positive health outcomes are not dependent upon social and economic advantage.

We believe it is now imperative that the Welsh Government delivers a compelling vision for public health and prevention. We believe this must include a range of approaches, including making most of pharmacy as part of public health interventions. Pharmacy has a key role to help reduce the backlog of care from COVID-19 and better manage demand across the health service as well as supporting the important agenda of preventing ill health.

We support the calls to action by the Welsh NHS Confederation Health and Wellbeing Alliance for the Welsh Government to tackle health inequalities. We agree there must be a cross-governmental, whole sector review if we are to adequately address the breadth of issues impacting on health inequalities. The development of a national cross-sector strategy and delivery plan will also be needed to move this forward.

We would support action by the Health and Social Care Committee to work with other Senedd Committees to hold a cross-committee inquiry into health inequalities and to explore how levers across Government departments are being used to improve health outcomes. This would be a broad inquiry addressing a wide range of socio-economic issues as well as health service issues, but it would help to address long standing inequalities in health and provide structure for such a challenging and important undertaking.

RPS Wales would welcome the opportunity of contributing to a cross-committee inquiry into health inequalities.

Blaenoriaethau allweddol ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd

Key priorities for the Sixth Senedd

C2. Yn eich barn chi, pa flaenoriaethau allweddol eraill y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd mewn perthynas â:

- a) gwasanaethau iechyd;**
- b) gofal cymdeithasol a gofalwyr;**
- c) adfer yn dilyn COVID?**

Q2. In your view, what other key priorities should the Committee consider during the Sixth Senedd in relation to:

- a) health services;**
 - b) social care and carers;**
 - c) COVID recovery?**
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Adfer yn dilyn COVID

COVID recovery

The impact of long covid on the population of Wales and on the health and social care workforce is a key area of work that we would actively encourage the Committee to address. We believe that new skills and ways of working to help manage pressures on the health and social care services are now needed, including responses to long covid and other emerging health conditions . We would be keen to contribute to a Committee inquiry into long covid to highlight how pharmaceutical care and the role of the pharmacy team can be harnessed to support patients across care pathways for long covid.