

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Effaith yr ôl-groniad o ran amseroedd aros ar bobl yng Nghymru sy'n aros am ddiagnosis neu driniaeth](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on the [impact of the waiting times backlog on people in Wales who are waiting for diagnosis or treatment](#)

WT 07

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Fferylliaeth Gymunedol Cymru | Community Pharmacy Wales





Community Pharmacy Wales response to the Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into

the impact of the waiting times backlog on people in Wales who are waiting for diagnosis or treatment

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Part 1: Introduction

Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) represents community pharmacy on NHS matters and seeks to ensure that the best possible services, provided by pharmacy contractors in Wales, are available through NHS Wales. It is the body recognised by the Welsh Government in accordance with *Sections 83 and 85 National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006* as 'representative of persons providing pharmaceutical services'.

Community Pharmacy Wales is the only organisation that represents every community pharmacy in Wales. It works with Government and its agencies, such as Local Health Boards, to protect and develop high quality community pharmacy-based NHS services and to shape the community pharmacy contract and its associated regulations, in order to achieve the highest standards of public health and the best possible patient outcomes. CPW represents all 714 community pharmacies in Wales. Pharmacies are located in high streets, town centres and villages across Wales as well as in the major metropolitan centres and edge of town retail parks.

In addition to the dispensing of prescriptions, Welsh community pharmacies provide a broad range of patient services on behalf of NHS Wales. These face-to-face NHS Wales services, available from qualified pharmacists 6 and occasionally 7 days a week, include, Pharmacist Independent Prescribing Services, Emergency Contraception, Discharge Medicines Reviews, Smoking Cessation, Influenza Vaccination, Palliative Care Medicines Supply, Emergency Supply, Substance Misuse and the Common Ailments services.

CPW is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to this important consultation as the issue of waiting times is one that is felt personally by all people working in healthcare and is of major concern to all the citizens of Wales. Whereas this response does not focus on the specific aspects being looked at by the committee CPW feel that there are many ways in which the community pharmacy network can take up some of the strain and support the movement of some of the clinical workload from those areas seeking to address the backlog and in this way support the return to normal NHS care.

Part 2: Ways in which community pharmacy can release capacity and reduce waiting times

The community pharmacy is the most accessible part of NHS Wales and provides care right at the heart of communities. Now that a new contractual framework has been agreed with Welsh Government, CPW feels that the time is right to leverage the new arrangements to provide an increased range of clinical services.



Providing an increased range of services from the community pharmacy network will help to relieve pressure on other parts of the NHS and to support GP practices to make inroads into the backlog in local provision.

Through the national *Common Ailments Service* it is becoming recognised that community pharmacies are the appropriate place within NHS Wales to manage all common ailments. Each common ailment consultation undertaken in a community pharmacy is the potential avoidance of another NHS appointment. CPW would recommend that the Health and Social Care Committee fully support the transition of this workload to community pharmacies by developing and marketing the Common Ailment Service.

The Common Ailment Service can be developed by extending the range of conditions treated. For example, from April a Sore Throat Test & Treat Service is becoming a national service. This service pharmacies to test for bacterial infections and treat sore throats without any impact on GP practices. This is an example of the direct transfer of workload from one primary care provider to another and the Committee should support the development of other services of this nature. The second way in which the service can be improved is to increase the uptake of the service. It is of extreme concern to CPW that the recent surveys of patients, undertaken across Wales to inform the Health Boards' Pharmaceutical Needs Assessments, report that less than 50% of local people even know that pharmacy services of this nature exist. CPW would therefore strongly recommend that the Committee consider a significant patient education and awareness campaign, of a similar magnitude to the annual flu campaign, to increase awareness of and encourage take up of community pharmacy services.

While the common ailments service has been mentioned there are many other services such as emergency medicines supply, stop smoking services, and emergency contraception services that suffer from the same low awareness and are all capable of releasing capacity in other parts of the NHS. In addition new and innovative services such as a Urinary Tract Infection Service and a Mental Health Support Service, both being trialled in Hywel Dda University Health Board area, are an excellent example of the opportunity to continually explore services that can be successful in a community pharmacy environment.

A further opportunity to improve services and reduce bureaucracy would be to allow community pharmacists, especially as independent prescribing is increasing, to refer patients directly for X-Rays and other diagnostic services as currently pharmacists have to ask GPs to arrange referral. The current arrangement is not in the interest of patients and is an inefficient use of time for both healthcare professionals.

The committee has correctly identified that the backlog disproportionately affects people who live in more disadvantaged communities, and this is again where the community pharmacy network can make significant inroads. The community pharmacy network is one of the few parts of the NHS that does not obey the

'Inverse Care Law' in that Welsh Government's own research shows there are more pharmacies per head of population in the disadvantaged communities in Wales.

Welsh Government has had the foresight to recognise that increasing the number of healthcare professionals that can diagnose and prescribe will provide GP practices with increased headroom to deliver more complex care. CPW and Welsh Government have worked in partnership to increase the number of independent prescribers working across the network and we expect numbers to grow significantly on an annual basis. We would again recommend that the committee encourage health boards to make full use of this growing resource.

Part 3: Conclusion

CPW recognise the pressures on NHS Wales as a result of Covid-19 and the resultant backlog in care. Community pharmacies across Wales would like to play a part in releasing pressure on other parts of the service.

CPW agree that the content of this response can be made public.

CPW welcomes communication in either English or Welsh.

For acknowledgement and further Contact:

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