



2 November 2011

Mark Drakeford AM
Chair, National Assembly Health & Social Care Committee
National Assembly for Wales

CARDIFF
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Dear Mark

NEW NHS DISCHARGE MEDICINES SERVICE

You will be aware that in advance of the National Assembly elections Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) published a manifesto for community pharmacy entitled *Good Health:Iechyd Da – The Best Medicine for Healthy Lives in Wales*. Amongst other things, that document called on the new Welsh Government to "*Establish a national community pharmacy based Hospital Discharge Medicines Reconciliation & Support Service to help patients transferring between care settings.*"

You will also recall that in CPW's evidence to your Committee's Inquiry into the Contribution of Community Pharmacy to Health Services in Wales we reported that:

"Discussions between CPW and Welsh Government officials are currently on-going in connection with the possible introduction of a new advanced service in Wales. The Post Discharge Medicines Service would provide support to patients recently discharged from hospital by ensuring that changes to patients' medicines made during a hospital admission are enacted as intended in the community, helping to reduce the risk of preventable medicines related problems and supporting adherence with newly prescribed medication. This new service will cost £3.6 million and is funded out of the Government's share of £11 million "profit-on-purchasing medicines"... The £3.6 million was calculated belatedly as a consequential of the release of £55 million in England for a New Medicine Service. "

I am pleased to be able to report that the new NHS Discharge Medicines Service was introduced yesterday, 1 November 2011. This is a completely "*Made in Wales, for Wales*" service that has been developed by CPW working with Welsh Government and Health Boards in Wales. It provides for the service to be delivered to individuals returning home after a period spent in any care setting. This covers hospitals, nursing or residential care homes, prisons or other establishments where individuals have been undergoing treatment for a condition. It will ensure that individuals who are returning to live in the community get the correct medicines and the ones they require to help them lead healthier lives. It draws on the medicines skills and expertise of pharmacists and exploits the accessibility of community pharmacies. In doing so, it helps to address two major health care problems, namely the interface between secondary and primary care and the on-going problem of medicines waste.

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Chair, National Assembly Health & Social Care Committee

The service centres on the Discharge Advice Letter (DAL) which individuals are given when they leave the care setting. The DAL contains details of the medication that the individual has been prescribed by their consultant. At present, the DAL is addressed to the individual's GP. In future, the information will also be provided to the individual's nominated pharmacy. This will allow the pharmacist to check that the medication included on subsequent prescriptions issued by the GP surgery is consistent with the medication prescribed whilst in hospital or care. The pharmacist will also make sure that the individual continues to receive the medication they need to treat any chronic conditions which were diagnosed prior to them being admitted. Research has revealed that literally thousands of people who leave Welsh hospitals every year have to be re-admitted simply because of medication errors. The service will also help address the considerable amount of waste medicines generated as the result of inaccurate or inappropriate prescribing.

This is the first NHS service to address these issues. It will ensure that the pharmacy liaises with the patient's GP to ensure that future repeat prescriptions contain exactly what is required and that there is no duplication. The service has been designed to be as flexible and practical as possible, for example it can be delivered via a relative, carer or other nominated representative and it can be delivered in the patients home or over the telephone as well as in the pharmacy.

The service will, initially, operate from 1 November 2011 to 31 March 2013. Whether it continues after that date will depend on the outcome of a detailed independent evaluation of its effectiveness. Arrangements are being made by CPW to appoint a suitable organisation to undertake the evaluation exercise.

CPW welcomes the introduction of the new service. We believe that it addresses some key problems experienced by patients and by NHS Wales and by allowing access to services via relatives and carers makes it genuinely innovative. CPW are happy to arrange for you and your colleagues to visit a pharmacy in your constituencies to see how this new service operates in practice.

Copies of the CPW press statement on this new service together with the Health Minister's comments are attached for your information.

Best wishes,

Yours ever



RUSSELL GOODWAY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Copies: Members of the National Assembly Health & Social Care Committee

EMBARGOED: 00.01, 1st November 2011



NEW NHS "HOME FROM HOSPITAL" MEDICINES SERVICE LAUNCHED IN WELSH COMMUNITY PHARMACIES

A new NHS Wales "*Home from Hospital*" medicines service that will be available from community pharmacies across Wales from today (Tuesday 1st November 2011) has been welcomed by Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW).

The new NHS Wales **Discharge Medicines Review Service** is designed to ensure that people returning home after a stay in hospital or other care setting continue to receive their correct medicines. The service will enable hospitals, nursing and care homes as well as patients themselves to take or send a copy of the Discharge Advice Letter, which is currently only sent to their GP, to their local pharmacy. The pharmacist will then check that future prescriptions issued by the surgery include all the medication the patient needs to treat their various conditions.

Welcoming the Minister's announcement, Ian Cowan, Chair of Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) said "I am delighted that the Health Minister has given approval for this service, which CPW called for in our manifesto *Good Health – The Best Medicine for Healthy Lives in Wales*. It gives a clear signal of the direction of travel being taken by the new government in Wales with the emphasis on preventing people becoming ill unnecessarily.

It is also an important breakthrough in closer working between secondary care and primary care and will directly benefit the thousands of patients in Wales who, every year, are readmitted to hospital because of medication errors".

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PRESS RELEASE

At the moment the Discharge Advice Letter is given to the patient when they leave hospital or nursing home and a copy is sent to their GP. Studies have shown that at least a quarter of the letters fail to reach the surgery within two weeks by which time a new prescription is issued containing incorrect medicines. This often results in patients having to be re-admitted as a result of not taking the correct medication.

This service will provide that where a copy of the letter is provided to the patient's nominated pharmacy, the pharmacy will arrange to meet, or have a confidential telephone conversation with the patient or the patient's nominated relative, carer or representative. A letter can also be taken direct to the pharmacy by the patient, or by their nominated relative, carer or representative.

The pharmacist will then check to make sure that the medicines included on the first prescription issued by the GP following discharge are those which the patient was prescribed by their hospital consultant and includes any medication the patients needs for any chronic or other condition. The pharmacist will make sure that the patient understands what each medicine is for, what it does and its effects. The pharmacist will follow up that consultation with a second conversation some ten days later to ensure that the patient is benefiting from the medicines being taken.

The pharmacist will also attempt to synchronise the prescription period to take account of any medication the patient already has at home in a bid to reduce the amount of medicines waste.

Mr Cowan said "This service will draw on the important skills and expertise of pharmacists, who are the medicines experts. It will deliver significant benefits for patients and for the NHS by reducing the number of unnecessary hospital re-admissions and help to tackle the problem of medicines waste. Effective communication between healthcare professionals in primary and secondary care is the key to making this service work for the patient."

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PRESS RELEASE

He added: "CPW have been working with Government and Health Boards on this service for some time and CPW is very pleased that it has finally come to fruition in time for this winter and the particular pressures on health and hospital services at this time of year. It is the first of the proposals in the CPW manifesto to be achieved and it is self-financing as the costs are funded from surpluses generated from the efficient purchasing of medicines by the community pharmacy network which are put back into NHS Wales each year under the provisions of the community pharmacy contract."

Ends...

Note to Editors:

Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) is recognised in the National Health Services (Wales) Act 2006 and by the Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Health & Social Services as the only organisation responsible for representing all of the 710 community pharmacies in Wales on all matters relating to NHS community pharmacy services.

CPW is the only organisation that represents every community pharmacy in Wales. It works with Government and its agencies, such as local Health Boards, to help protect and develop high quality community pharmacy services and to shape the NHS community pharmacy contract and its associated regulations. In doing so, it aspires to achieve the highest standards of public health and the best possible patient outcomes.

Further details of the service are available on the CPW website - www.cpwales.org.uk

For further information:

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PRESS RELEASE

Embargoed until 00.01 Monday 31 October 2011

Welsh Government Press Release

28 October 2011

WG110401

New pharmacy service to benefit patients

The Health Minister Lesley Griffiths has highlighted a new service that will be available from Welsh pharmacies from Tuesday 1 November.

Changes announced to the Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework in Wales include the introduction of a Discharge Medicines Review service.

The service will provide support to individuals following discharge from a care setting into the community for example, when a patient is discharged from hospital to home, by improving transfer of medicines information.

This means that patients will be able to take their discharge letter to their community pharmacy to ensure that the medication prescribed in hospital will continue to be prescribed, if appropriate, in the community. Their pharmacist will also be able to consider their hospital discharge prescription along side any other medication they may be prescribed, such as medication for long standing chronic conditions.

Lesley Griffiths said:

“The introduction of this service means that pharmacists and doctors will work closely together to make sure that changes in medication that occur whilst people are in hospital, or other care setting, are identified and acted upon when they are discharged. This will improve the service to patients and improve patient safety, as well as cutting down on wasted medicines.”

ENDS

For more information, please contact Gareth John on 029 2089 8100

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