



Palliative Care Matters for All: consultation

Scottish Government

18 October 2024 – 10 January 2025

Introduction

As the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and registered pharmacy premises in Great Britain, our role is to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public who use pharmaceutical services. We have a statutory role in relation to system regulation (as we regulate registered pharmacies) as well as the professional regulation of individual pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. Our main work includes:

- setting standards for the education and training of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy support staff, and approving and accrediting their qualifications and training
- maintaining a register of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies
- setting the standards that pharmacy professionals must meet throughout their careers
- investigating concerns that pharmacy professionals are not meeting our standards, and taking action to restrict their ability to practise when this is necessary to protect patients and the public or to uphold public confidence in pharmacy
- setting standards for registered pharmacies which require them to provide a safe and effective service to patients
- inspecting registered pharmacies to check if they are meeting our standards pharmacy.

Question 1a. Do you agree with the aims for this strategy?

Pharmacy professionals are employed across a range of settings including community pharmacy, GP practices and secondary care. Community pharmacies are often situated in areas of deprivation and rural localities and as such are ideally placed to support the objectives of the strategy.

Community pharmacy is relied upon for supply of medications and therapies therefore it would be essential to ensure partnerships are formed with relevant bodies to consider. Additionally, there is a network of pharmacies for palliative care which provides a good service, the scope and breadth of this could be considered to ensure consistency across the nation.

Question 2a. Do you agree with the strategy cornerstones, which form the basis for the strategy and delivery plans?

Pharmacy professionals and community pharmacies are in an ideal position to support the strategy. The standards set by the GPhC state pharmacy professionals should work in partnership with each other.

Pharmacy professionals should have knowledge and skills, and, in this instance, we would recommend palliative care skills and knowledge.

There should be support for pharmacy professionals to be able to access the appropriate information to provide the best care.

Question 3a. Do you agree with strategy outcome 1 and the proposed actions being developed to deliver this outcome?

There may be some upskilling required by pharmacy professionals to ensure they can effectively consult with patients, work in partnership with other organisations and collaborate across health systems to ensure patients, carers and other HCPs are supported when needed.

Question 4a. Do you agree with strategy outcome 2 and the proposed actions being developed to deliver this outcome?

Consideration should be given to working with regulators/professional bodies/education bodies to provide consistency in service provision from professionals.

We can also engage with our stakeholders to ensure pharmacy professionals have optimal education in palliative care, are able to provide person centred care to palliative care patients and their premises are suitable for the supply of palliative care medications. Palliative care pharmacy services should be considered across the health system to ensure optimal patient care and the safe and effective supply of palliative care medicines and services.

Question 5a. Do you agree with strategy outcome 3 and the proposed actions being developed to deliver this outcome?

Sensible approach and would enable effective planning and delivery of palliative care pharmacy services to patients in the community to ensure equity of access to such services.

Question 6a. Do you agree with strategy outcome 4 and the proposed actions being developed to deliver this outcome?

It would be useful to have digital screening tools for all pharmacy professionals to access as the first signs of illness might be picked up in a community pharmacy setting.

Pharmacy professionals, particularly in community often work in conjunction with services provided through NHS24 or OOH and may benefit from further training and support especially if screening tools are introduced.

There is a need to consider pharmacist prescribers especially in community pharmacy and appropriate access to patient records.

Prescribing pharmacists may be employed to provide palliative care general and specialist services hence a greater awareness and exposure to the subject in undergrad or foundation training may be beneficial.

Pharmacy professionals should be exposed to innovative models of care during undergrad and foundation training.

Question 7a. Do you agree with strategy outcome 5 and the proposed actions being developed to deliver this outcome?

This would align with our professional standards of person-centred care. We note that pharmacy professionals should have appropriate access to digital care plans through electronic notes to optimise communication and collaborative working across systems and settings.

Education and training through NES would be beneficial for all pharmacy professionals providing palliative care services to ensure standard training across the country.

Question 8a. Do you agree with strategy outcome 6 and the proposed actions being developed to deliver this outcome?

As the regulator, there is agreement with outcome 6 as proposed. Additionally, consideration of governance of the storage, dispensing process, prescribing process and delivery of medicines to patients. Our standards for registered pharmacies and IP guidance should be consulted where relevant.

Community pharmacies are a source of healthcare advice for patients and could be utilised to signpost patients/ carers or provide relevant health information. Pharmacy professionals should have access to any bereavement resources to ensure they are able to provide safe and effective care to bereaved families

Question 9a. Do you agree with strategy outcome 7 and the proposed actions being developed to deliver this outcome?

This would link in with post registration specialist training for pharmacy professionals. As the regulator, any new standards that are developed could be signposted to. We would advocate that any standards would include the safe and effective pharmacy care medicines and the provision of palliative care services.

Question 10a. Do you agree with strategy outcome 8 and the proposed actions being developed to deliver this outcome?

It would be important to link in with regulator to ensure aligned with requirements and standards. This would link to a number of areas including initial education and training, revalidation of pharmacy professionals, post registration guidance and prescribing guidance although this is not an exhaustive list.

If you would like to discuss the points raised in this response, or any other aspect of the GPhC's work, please do not hesitate to contact us.

General Pharmaceutical Council

10 January 2025