

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Gynllun Llywodraeth Cymru i drawsnewid a moderneiddio gofal a gynlluniwyd a lleihau rhestrau aros](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on the [Welsh Government's plan for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists](#)

PCWL 20

Ymateb gan: | Response from: Cymdeithas Cemegwyr y Cwmni | Company Chemists' Association



Response

Welsh government

Our programme for transforming and modernising planned care and reducing waiting lists in Wales

June 2022

Respond via email: SeneddHealth@senedd.wales,

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About the Company Chemists' Association (CCA)

Established in 1898, the CCA is the trade association for large pharmacy operators in England, Scotland and Wales.

The CCA membership includes ASDA, Boots, LloydsPharmacy, Morrisons, Rowlands Pharmacy, Superdrug, Tesco, and Well, who between them own and operate around 6,000 pharmacies, which represents nearly half the market.

CCA members deliver a broad range of healthcare and wellbeing services, from a variety of locations and settings, as well as dispensing almost 500 million NHS prescription items every year.

The CCA represents the interests of its members and brings together their unique skills, knowledge, and scale for the benefit of community pharmacy, the NHS, patients and the public.

Response

The CCA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Modernising Planned Care and reducing waiting lists. Over the last two years, the pandemic has placed significant pressure upon the Health Service in Wales. Compounded by existing pre-pandemic demands, this has resulted in delayed care and treatment times. From March 2020 to Feb 2022 the total waiting list has increased by 51.4%, whilst those waiting over 36 weeks has increased further still. With such enormous rises in waiting times, it is essential that all Primary and Secondary Care are supported to get back to pre-pandemic levels.

The Welsh Government's plan to rectify waiting times shows clarity and focus, bringing all stakeholders together for a common goal. The plan adds new thinking to existing strategies, with a strong focus on how digital tools and data will be developed and used to drive service delivery and more efficient management of waiting times. Whilst the main focus centers on Secondary Care, we are pleased to see that the plan includes and recognises the vital frontline healthcare services delivered by primary care, including Community Pharmacy. Our response will concentrate on Community Pharmacy and the role it can play in a strategic partnership to tackle increased waiting times exacerbated by the pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the community pharmacy network in Wales played a significant role in supporting millions of people, whilst also helping to keep pressure off GP practices, hospitals, and other public services during what has been a difficult time.

A key contribution from community pharmacy is its role in increasing access for patients particularly through: treatment for a range of common minor ailments; supplies of prescription medication in an emergency; or to access contraception (including emergency contraception). One in ten NHS seasonal influenza vaccinations are now provided by pharmacies and pharmacies have played an important role in delivering our hugely successful COVID-19 vaccination programme particularly in our most rural areas.

The 713 community pharmacies in Wales are well distributed being located on high streets, in shopping centres, supermarkets, and co-located with GP practices across every part of Wales. They are also distributed in the most deprived communities, and unlike most other healthcare settings – there are more community pharmacies in more deprived geographies (the “positive pharmacy law”). This puts community pharmacy in a prime location to support other healthcare professionals to drive down patient waiting lists.

In 2019–20, Welsh pharmacies provided a range of care, treatment and advice above and beyond the safe and timely supply of prescribed medications including:

- 75,000 Common Ailment Consultations – 80% of whom would have otherwise visited their GP
- 24,000 Emergency Contraception Consultations
- Administered more than 90,000 seasonal influenza vaccinations to people at the highest risk

- Supported over 12,000 discharges from hospital making sure people got the medicines they needed when they returned home after admission to hospital.

In addition, community pharmacy is continuing to develop its role in clinical care.

- Access to the Welsh GP record is available to pharmacists providing the emergency medicine supply, seasonal influenza vaccination and independent prescribing services
- 146 pharmacists have accessed support from Health Education and Improvement Wales to train as independent prescribers
- The community pharmacy sector have agreed an innovative new contractual framework dramatically increasing the role of pharmacy in accessible care.

These services maximise the use of community pharmacies, improve access for patients, and take pressure off other parts of the NHS. This in turn helps other providers to focus on reducing patient waiting times.

We are pleased to see that within the consultation, community pharmacy services will continue to be promoted as an alternative to visiting to urgent care services. They will play a vital role in supporting patients who may be already on a waiting list or require onward referral.

The Consultation Case Study states that all community pharmacies in Wales are able to offer an extended range of services via a national clinical community pharmacy service, including treatment for common minor ailments, access to repeat medicines in an emergency, annual flu vaccination, and emergency contraception.

“Presgripsiwn Newydd A New Prescription” has helped to develop community pharmacy into a more focused member of the primary care team, working closer with partners through collaborative meetings. To improve patient safety, A New Prescription aims to move community pharmacy from primarily a medication supply function to a broader role meeting the clinical needs of patients and the public. Historically, community pharmacy has always been a location for advice and this role continues to be developed and built upon as thousands of people routinely access their local pharmacy for advice and urgent care.

The integration and collaboration of community pharmacies within primary care clusters is vital to realising the potential of community pharmacy and transforming care pathways in the way necessary to achieve the vision set out in Pharmacy: Delivering a Healthier Wales.

Community Pharmacy is well distributed across Wales with easy access, which supports the consultation aim of better access to healthcare closer to home. We would like to see even greater collaboration between healthcare professionals, normalising referrals between community pharmacy and other parts of the NHS. This will support people receiving the right care from the right professional, providing timelier access to treatments. One of the enablers to this is information standards, to support the digital infrastructure needed for a modern healthcare environment.

Operating at the heart of local communities often with teams drawn from those same communities, pharmacy teams are well placed to tackle health inequalities. Prevention is a key pillar to reducing health inequalities and community pharmacy has long been recognised for its vital contribution to public health initiatives. Pharmacy can work with health bodies in Wales as well as with Public Health Wales, to further promote healthier lifestyles. This includes encouraging people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be more physically active, stop smoking, screen for health conditions, and provide wholistic health checks. As stated in the consultation Primary and Community Care Primary care services, General Practitioners (GPs), dentists, opticians and pharmacists on average undertake around 90% of all NHS activity. Community pharmacy often has the greatest opportunity to provide interventions, with regular touchpoints through repeat prescription collection, as well as a recognised high street presence.

In summary the Community Pharmacy network is well distributed across Wales often located in areas of highest deprivation and greatest need. Pharmacies offer a highly accessible service, often with extended hours. A New Prescription has helped to develop community pharmacy's role beyond a primarily dispensing function, to the delivery of a vital suite of clinical services. By harnessing the clinical expertise of pharmacy teams, this will support the health service in Wales to help reduce the care and treatment backlog. We welcome the government's commitment to community pharmacy through the new contractual framework and encourage the NHS to explore even further avenues to utilise the growing expertise within the sector. To maximise this opportunity, there is a need to consider digital enablers to support a growing role and need for interconnected care. This includes standardisation of coding and APIs to facilitate further innovation in the future.