



# The future of pharmacy in Scotland

RPS manifesto for the  
Scottish Parliament  
Elections 2021

## Introduction

As the leading organisation for pharmacists across GB, we've consulted with our members, the profession and other pharmacy organisations and have drawn together a list of asks for political parties that will deliver the best results for the pharmacy profession and for the people of Scotland.

Our manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Parliament elections sets out the key issues that need to be addressed to ensure a sustainable, integrated and strong pharmacy profession that delivers high quality, safe and effective care to Scotland's citizens.

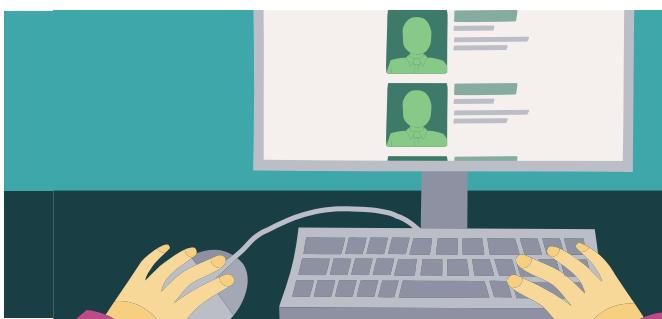
# Key asks



Ensure that IT systems across health and social care are interoperable with one another



Ensure time for learning and development for all pharmacists to support workforce development and enable safe delivery of services



Enable read and write access to a full and integrated electronic patient record for pharmacists in all care settings



Ensure that all pharmacy teams providing NHS services, including in the community pharmacy setting, are recognised and valued as key workers



Involve pharmacists and their teams in identifying and delivering solutions for reducing health inequalities



Promote and invest in the pharmacy profession as an attractive career choice



Promote and enhance the role of pharmacy teams in primary care vaccination and immunisation services



Fully fund and resource pharmacy to provide seven-day clinical services to meet the needs of patients and support the multidisciplinary team in hospitals

## Enabling an integrated and connected pharmacy workforce:

### Ensure that IT systems across health and social care are interoperable with one another

IT systems must be interoperable to improve information sharing across all care settings and support patient care by ensuring that up to date information is available at all stages in the patient journey. These systems must also facilitate pharmacy referral to and from other healthcare professionals and services. As people are empowered to have control over their own records this would make it easier for information to be shared with all healthcare professionals providing care services.

### Enable read and write access to a full and integrated electronic patient record for pharmacists in all care settings

Pharmacists have been able to access more patient information during COVID-19 to support and improve patient care and the capacity of other healthcare colleagues. While access to patient health records, laboratory results and the care record, is available to pharmacists working in hospitals and primary care, it is not routine for community pharmacists.

Access would enable pharmacists to:

- Give patients better advice with no delays
- Make more informed clinical decisions
- Improve pharmaceutical care
- Reduce the number of medicine related errors that contribute to unplanned hospital admissions

A YouGov public survey showed 85% of respondents want healthcare professionals treating them to have secure electronic access to key data from the medical record.

## Empowering the pharmacy profession to transform patient care:

### Involve pharmacists and their teams in identifying and delivering solutions for reducing health inequalities

The concept of the Inverse Care Law proposed thirty years ago by Julian Tudor Hart, describes a perverse relationship between the need for health care and its actual utilisation. The network of community pharmacies helps to buck the trend of the inverse care law as there are a greater number of pharmacies in socio-economically deprived areas. This ensures that the people across Scotland have access to healthcare and advice within their localities wherever they live.

Local pharmacy teams can act as champions and play an active role in breaking down barriers, by engaging with their communities and providing vital services including social prescribing, tackling obesity and improving health literacy. There is an opportunity to build on existing examples where pharmacists provide outreach services into the communities they serve. This local leadership and community asset should be utilised and built upon to help reduce health inequalities.

### Promote and enhance the role of pharmacy teams in primary care vaccination and immunisation services

There is huge potential for community pharmacy teams to be further developed as healthcare providers and public health hubs. Community pharmacists routinely provide NHS flu vaccinations in England and Wales. In Scotland progress has been slower, with pilot schemes and variation across Health Boards in terms of level of support for community pharmacy inclusion in NHS flu vaccination programmes, despite new COVID-19 related legislation.

Community pharmacies in Scotland should have greater participation in the national flu vaccination programme, to help increase uptake throughout the population. Community pharmacy involvement in a wider range of NHS vaccine provision, such as certain childhood immunisation and travel vaccination, should be facilitated through contractual arrangements.

# Establishing a valued and supported profession:

## Ensure time for learning and development is available for all pharmacists across all sectors to support workforce development and ensure pharmacists can deliver services safely

During COVID-19, community pharmacies have benefited from increased flexibility in opening hours. This protected time during the working day with limited interruptions has enabled pharmacists to deal with complex queries and prioritise workloads; this should continue.

Pharmacists do not routinely receive protected time to learn new skills and update their knowledge as part of a multidisciplinary team. Pharmacy workforce planning rarely considers the time and cost of education and training and any training and teaching that is undertaken puts a strain on other colleagues, adding to work pressures. We would like to see protected and funded learning and development time within the working day for pharmacists embedded within workforce planning.

As managing the health of patients becomes more complex due to the increasing prevalence of multiple long-term conditions and the development of new innovative medicines, the need for pharmacy expertise will only increase. The public must be assured that pharmacists can provide increasingly complex services safely, which will require pharmacy teams to continually build on their competence and constantly develop and advance their practice.

## Ensure that all pharmacy teams providing NHS services, including in the community pharmacy setting, are recognised and valued as key workers

Pharmacists working in all sectors and their teams provide expertise in all aspects of medicines, health advice and prevention, tackling health inequalities, supporting long term conditions and treating self-limiting common clinical conditions. Community pharmacies are contracted to provide services in local communities on behalf of the NHS and remained open throughout the pandemic despite the risks involved. In our consultations with members and engagement events with pharmacists, colleagues told us that greater recognition as an essential part of the patient journey is very much needed.

Community pharmacy teams are NHS service providers and must be recognised as such. They should have access to support and benefits, including mental health and wellbeing support, in the same way as other primary care providers contracted to deliver NHS services.

# Building a sustainable future for pharmacy:

## Promote and invest in the pharmacy profession as an attractive career choice

Pharmacy is the third largest healthcare profession. There are many opportunities for pharmacists to support our health service and deliver improvements to health for Scotland's citizens. However, it is vital that young people are encouraged to consider pharmacy as a career option and support to promote the profession is much needed. For example, including pharmacy at NHS Careers Fairs would help raise awareness of the opportunities that exist.

## Fully fund and resource pharmacy to provide seven-day clinical services to meet the needs of patients and support the multidisciplinary team in hospitals

Seven-day clinical pharmacy services in hospital:

- Enhance patient experience by giving patients the opportunity to discuss medication related aspects of their care and supporting progress through their care pathways
- Reduce variation in the quality of care by embedding the principles of pharmaceutical care into routine practice every day of the week
- Improve clinical efficiency and patient safety through increased deployment of clinical pharmacy staff. This allows a focus on optimal and safe use of medicines and delivering 7-day health and care services

However, it is a challenge to develop 7-day clinical and specialist services to meet the 24/7 need in hospital, without significant funding and resource to redesign the service and develop the workforce.



## To provide accessible healthcare

Throughout Scotland, community pharmacies provide patients with quick access to healthcare advice and support from a health professional. They are a particularly valuable resource on Saturdays when some other health services are closed, in rural areas where the nearest GP surgery may be miles away, and in deprived areas as a means of reducing inequalities in health and reversing the inverse care law.



## Pharmacists in all care settings

As the experts in medicines and their effect on the body, pharmacists can support patients to get the most benefit from their medicines. Using their unique skills and knowledge, pharmacists ensure that medicines can be taken together safely and effectively, tailor doses appropriately and, in some instances, prescribe new medicines and deprescribe existing medicines that are of no further benefit to the patient.



## To ensure value for money from medicines

With their unique knowledge of medicines, pharmacists are a vital asset to ensure that the significant annual investment in medicines is spent wisely and in a cost-effective manner. They do this by supporting appropriate prescribing, leading medicines management decisions in NHS boards, and working with patients to deprescribe inappropriate and ineffective medicines.

# Why Scotland needs pharmacists' expertise



## To build capacity and improve care in primary care

Pharmacists are well placed to increase access to care for patients in primary care and community settings by taking an increased role in managing common ailments, acute conditions and long-term conditions. This can improve patients' access to medicines advice, enable GPs more time and capacity for longer appointments and to focus on diagnoses and the management of more complex patients.

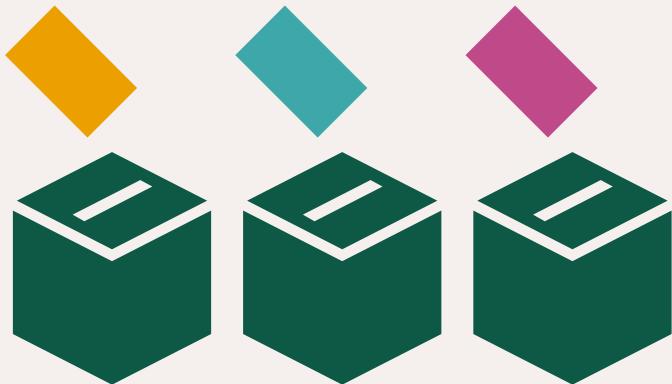


## To prevent avoidable harm

When used incorrectly medicines can cause significant harm to patients. Inappropriate medicine use also introduces unforeseen challenges such as unplanned and emergency hospital admissions as the result of adverse drug reactions. Ensuring that patients and health professionals have access to pharmacists and their expert medicines knowledge is paramount to reducing these risks.

# How you can help

## Are you a candidate in the 2021 Scottish election?



- Find out about the many pharmacists working across all sectors in your area, ask to visit them or speak to them to find out more about how they make a real difference to your constituents' health.
- Contact us to learn more about the impact pharmacy has across all healthcare settings.
- Support our calls to action and tweet **#votepharmacy** to @RPSScotland to show your support.
- Tell your constituents about how you are supporting the pharmacy profession.

### About the Royal Pharmaceutical Society

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.

### Royal Pharmaceutical Society in Scotland

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