



Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

Helping pharmacists achieve excellence

PE1220/I

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The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) is pleased to be given the opportunity to respond to Petition P1220

The RPSGB is the professional and regulatory body for pharmacists in Scotland, England and Wales. The primary objectives of the Society are to lead, regulate, develop and represent the profession of pharmacy. The Society leads and supports the development of the profession within the context of the public benefit. This includes the advancement of science, practice, education and knowledge in pharmacy.

There are a number of factors which should be taken into consideration with regard to dispensing doctors and community pharmacies.

Improving the health of the people of Scotland is at the heart of the Scottish Government's agenda and pharmacists contribute extensively to the local delivery of healthcare services. The 'Better Health, Better Care' action plan published in December 2007 acknowledged the role community pharmacy plays in the nation's healthcare and encouraged the expansion of this role. A total pharmaceutical care package gives patients access to the professional skills of a pharmacist in addition to the medical services provided by their GP.

Pharmacists are highly trained skilled professionals whose expertise encompasses all aspects of medicines use from research and development to end patient use. All pharmacists initially complete a four year honours Master of Pharmacy degree. Membership of the RPSGB requires successful completion of an examination at the conclusion of a one-year pre-registration training programme. Thereafter, continual professional development is a requirement of fitness to practice. A pharmacist's training is therefore highly specialised in all aspects of pharmaceutical science and the use of medicines, and as such is complementary to a medical practitioner's diagnostic expertise.

Co-operation between general practitioners and pharmacists is essential for maximum patient benefit. Competition is neither necessary in the context of the professions' differing specialist knowledge, nor desirable in patient interest. Every health care contact has the potential to be a health promoting contact and partnership working is the key to delivering a more holistic approach to health improvement.

Pharmacist's medicines management skills can support GP's and also other non-medical prescribers e.g. nurse practitioners and allied health professionals, encouraging evidence based, cost effective prescribing and sharing of knowledge and best practice in the primary care team.

Many pharmacists are now themselves prescribers, using their clinical expertise to improve chronic conditions with their medicines expertise, and encouraging self care by greater patient understanding of their medicines, decreasing waste and increasing concordance.

Pharmacists support healthy people as well as those with existing health problems. Their daily contact with members of the public through requests for advice and supplies of medicines for minor ailments provides regular opportunity to promote healthy lifestyles on a wide range of issues. Pharmacy's public health role is expanding and is now recognised as a core element of the new community pharmacy contract.

In conclusion, although the current arrangements for determining NHS Pharmaceutical Care Services Contracts may not be perfect, being based on largely subjective criteria, they do allow Health Boards to consider the access of a defined population to all the benefits that a local community pharmacy provides through a structured and transparent process. This is the preferred option for maximum public benefit, recognising the unique contribution of both the medical and pharmacy professions to patient care.

We will be happy to provide further information to the Health and Sport Committee if this would be of assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lyndon Braddick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Lyndon Braddick,
Director for Scotland
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (Scottish Office).