

Health and Social Care Committee

Inquiry into the contribution of community pharmacy to health services in Wales

CP 4 – British Lung Foundation Wales

Health and Social Care Committee inquiry into community pharmacy:

Comments from BLF Wales



12 September 2011

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to submit evidence to your inquiry.

BLF Wales works for the 1 in 5 people in Wales with a lung condition. Our evidence is grounded in our experience of working with people with lung conditions through our network of Breathe Easy groups.

We believe that community pharmacies have a vital role to play in improving health, and in making services more effective and accessible for people with lung conditions and other health problems.

Our specific comments are as follows:

1. Pharmacy must be fully integrated into the patient pathway. This applies to the acute and primary sector. Too often pharmacy is not sufficiently integrated with other services, resulting in a poorer overall service for patients and a missed opportunity for more effective use of resources.
2. We should make wider use of pharmacies as they are an obvious and accessible centre for health services, and are already found in most of our communities. In addition to providing a wider range of services in their own right, they could also be offering signposts to other NHS and third sector services. Wherever appropriate to do so the provision of medication reviews should be fully coordinated with all other services so that patients can feel the benefit of a seamless, well informed service
3. Smoking cessation is an area where we would like to see a major extension of the services provided by pharmacies. Given the significant damage to health, and to lungs in particular,

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inflicted by smoking, and the impact on the NHS of treating smoking-related disease, smoking cessation must remain a key priority for health policy and all of its providers.

The ultimate aim should be that all community pharmacies can offer smoking cessation services to level 3 of the NICE standards, which entails being able to provide the full range of interventions, from advice to nicotine replacement therapy and appropriate drugs.

4. The health protection and promotion role of pharmacies could also be developed further, for example making wider use of them to publicise the flu jab, and signposting people to where they can get the jab.

I append below for your reference some brief information about us and about the burden of lung disease in Wales.

If you would like any further detail about the points above, or about our work in general, do please contact us.

Yours faithfully

Chris Mulholland
Head, British Lung Foundation Wales

About British Lung Foundation Wales

BLF Wales supports the 1 in 5 people in Wales with a lung condition, and works to promote better lung health.

Across Wales we support over 20 Breathe Easy groups. These are self-help groups for people with lung conditions, their carers and families. We also raise public awareness about respiratory disease and campaign for better services for people with lung conditions, working with health professionals, partner organisations, politicians and the media.

British Lung Foundation across the UK runs a helpline, charged at local rate, which is staffed by respiratory nurses, welfare advisers and parent counsellors.

The burden of lung disease in Wales.

Lung conditions take a huge toll on the people of Wales. Around 1 in 5 deaths in Wales are from respiratory conditions. According to the Welsh Health Survey, 14% of adults in Wales report having respiratory illness. The burden is heaviest on the poorest. Levels of respiratory illness are twice as high in long-term unemployed people compared to those in managerial and professional occupations.

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Lung conditions also place a significant burden on the NHS in Wales. In 2008 there were 44,711 emergency admissions for respiratory diseases in Welsh hospitals. The average length of stay for each of these patients was over 7 days. Given that the cost of a week in hospital for each patient is around £2500, the impact of lung disease on the NHS, as well as on the patient, is considerable.

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