

Health and Social Care Committee

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

CP 25 – Powys Carers Service

Response from Powys Carers Service

Re: The inquiry into the contribution of community pharmacy to health services in Wales.

Powys Carers Service is a registered Charity & Company Limited by Guarantee that supports unpaid & family Carers throughout Powys. We provide information & support all Carers of all ages – young carers, young adult carers (16-25) and adult Carers.

For more information visit www.powyscarers.org.uk or contact Marie Lewis marie@powyscarers.org.uk 01597 823800.

During 2011, Powys Carers has received grant funding from The Pfizer Foundation to work with Community Pharmacies in Powys to raise awareness of Carers, their issues & needs, the work of Powys Carers Service and how Pharmacies can support Carers.

We based our project on evidence from the Pharmaceutical Journal's Article 'How Pharmacists Can Support Carers' (vol 270, 2003) and practice briefings from Carers UK and The Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

In deeply rural Powys pharmacies are potentially extremely important as sources of information and support to Carers as well as providing information and advice in the management of the medication for the person they care for. We also recognise that staff within pharmacies in the heart of their community may be able to identify Carers more easily than larger Pharmacies.

We visited each of the 23 community pharmacies in Powys and identified a 'Carers Champion' in each pharmacy to be a link between Powys Carers and the Pharmacy. This link enables us to provide up to date information on the available support for Carers and maintain the awareness of Carers needs by pharmacists.

The project has been supported by Community Pharmacy Wales' regional committee and Powys Local Health Board. Powys Health Board included Carers' Week as one of its contractually required community pharmacy healthcare campaigns for 2011/12. We forwarded Carers Week information packs for

displays and provided leaflets for each Pharmacy to include in every repeat prescription bag.

Pharmacies have offered us the use of their consultation rooms for drop in & awareness raising sessions. We intend to promote a week of Powys Carers Pharmacy Surgeries in Nov 2011.

Prior to the project starting we had received no referrals from Pharmacies or evidence that they signposted Carers. During the visits in early 2011, we found nearly all pharmacies were unaware of Carers Rights, support for Carers or Powys Carers Service.

Since the project started in Jan 2011 we have received 1 direct referral, 3 self referrals and an estimated 18 self referrals following the leaflet drop during Carers Week. We are planning Carers Awareness Training for Pharmacy staff and have invited Champions to our conference 'Collaborating for Carers' in Oct 2011. In Dec 2011 we will provide Pharmacies with information about Carers Rights Day.

We intend to develop our relationship with pharmacies further and have also made links with the Welsh Centre for Professional Pharmacy Education to ensure Carers information is included in relevant training (eg Stroke). We hope that this will develop further.

Conclusion

Community Pharmacies are a significant point of advice and information; they are well placed to identify Carers and signpost to further advice and support.

Working closer with Pharmacies has already been a positive experience for us. I understand that that the contractual obligation on pharmacies to participate in defined public health campaigns has allowed projects such as ours to gain "traction" and support. Before the new contract we may have possibly have received support from some, but not all pharmacies.

We recognise that Pharmacies have limited space (for leaflets/posters etc) and time to devote to all local services and charities, but we feel that supporting Carers as a partner in delivering Health & Social Care service should be made a priority to all pharmacies nationally.