



Integrated Pharmacy - a vision for the future

If you read the popular press you could be forgiven for imagining that every pharmacist in the country is hankering after your livelihood. Yet this is not a reflection of reality. On the contrary, pharmacists should be viewed as the untapped resource in the primary health care team.

They are skilled and motivated professionals who have spent many years working with medicines. In addition they can improve patient access to services, improve health outcomes and, by working in conjunction with other members of the primary care team, can improve the patients' care pathways.

They cannot deliver diagnoses or act as barefoot doctors in the high street, and the majority would not want to do that because they are well trained to work within their competences.

At GP Care we view the development of integrated pharmacy as an opportunity to work more closely with our pharmacy colleagues in delivering a range of benefits including:

- Improved patient care
- Improved access to reliable health advice
- Improved communication within the wider primary health care team
- Improved medicines management
- Reduced medicines waste
- Reduced workload in the practice (for repeat scripts)
- Improved patient compliance with medication

GP Care Pharmacy is not in competition with practices. The new pharmacy contract (yes they have one too!) split the existing pot of money between dispensing medication and "enhanced" services, such as medicines use reviews (MUR), smoking cessation advice and post-coital contraception. These services are funded centrally and do not impact on the PCT budgets for GMS services.

GP Care Pharmacy will work with your practice to deliver improved services, and will bid for additional services as they become available only if there is no financial impact on the local practices.

It is our opinion that, by working together, we can deliver a top class service across the pharmacy/primary care interface and utilise the skills of the pharmacists in ways that can only be beneficial to our patients.

Dr Carole Buckley
GP Care Board Member