

WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Thursday 17 July 2008

Pharmacy in England

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Dawn Primarolo): In April, we published the Government's White Paper, *Pharmacy in England – Building on strengths, delivering the future* (Cm 7341). The White Paper set out our future proposals for expanding high quality, clinical pharmaceutical services for patients and consumers and developing pharmacists' role as a leading clinical profession.

Following publication of Lord Darzi's comprehensive and groundbreaking *NHS Next Stage Review Final Report* (Cm 7432) and *Our vision for primary and community care*, we will publish next month the further consultation on structural changes for pharmaceutical services promised in the White Paper. I am keen that we give everyone involved and concerned ample opportunity to consider these in full. Consultation will therefore run through to the autumn and will be accompanied by relevant impact assessments. We also plan to hold further national events to support comprehensive discussion and debate as part of that consultation.

Since publication of the White Paper, we have proceeded quickly to the next stages to support implementation of our programme. We have:

- held a series of national listening events in May to support the launch. Over 630 delegates attended drawn from the NHS, the professions and representative bodies. The events gave delegates the opportunity to consider and to discuss our plans in more detail, including a number of key ideas for structural change which the Government believes are necessary to underpin the White Paper programme. We will publish our report of those events alongside the forthcoming consultation;

- announced in the *NHS Next Stage Review Final Report* that a new independent advisory non-departmental public body, Medical Education England, will advise the Department on education, training and workforce planning for pharmacists, as well as doctors, dentists and healthcare scientists;

- held events to discuss with pharmacists and others implementation and delivery options for the vascular risk assessment programme, including offering vascular checks through pharmacies;

- subject to Royal Assent, the Health and Social Care Bill has completed its passage through both Houses. In due course, a new General Pharmaceutical Council will be created to oversee the pharmacy profession. Consultation on the proposed Order for the Council will begin in the summer and it is intended to hold consultation events GB-wide in September and October; and

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- published responses to our consultation on the responsible pharmacist. We will lay regulations before Parliament in early autumn to implement a new statutory framework that will support pharmacists in using their clinical skills and those of pharmacy staff to improve patients' access to a wider range of services.

To support further work we:

- are publishing later today the national template for a service specification for chlamydia screening, to support primary care trusts commissioning of a locally commissioned enhanced service. This will be available on the website of NHS Primary Care Contracting at www.pcc.nhs.uk;

- will shortly advertise the posts of the two new pharmacy national clinical directors. They will provide strong, authoritative clinical leadership for pharmacists at both local and national level, championing the development of services and helping implement actions from the White Paper in hospitals and in the community; and

- are commissioning further research to map the target audiences for a pharmacy public communications programme. This will particularly focus on those people with long-term conditions and who are most affected by health inequalities. The results, to be available later this autumn, will inform the next stages of implementation.