

How can community pharmacy work within APMS contracts to provide services that meet local need?

APMS scenario briefing

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How can community pharmacists be involved?

Community pharmacists by extending their services under an APMS contract can help the PCT tackle their local priorities, especially on improving access and choice, reducing health inequalities and service re-design.

How can community pharmacy improve access and tackle health inequalities?

One of the main attributes of community pharmacy is its accessibility. Community pharmacies are located in the heart of local communities and provide immediate health care information and advice to local people, regardless of social class or ethnic group. The community pharmacist may be the only point of contact that some hard to reach groups have with the NHS. Thus the community pharmacy network plays a vital role in tackling health inequalities, which is an issue that the standards will address.

How can community pharmacy contribute to service re-design to the benefit of patients?

By shifting patient care from secondary care to primary care through service re-design, PCTs can improve access to services for patients and provide a more convenient location. Community pharmacists are already extending their role under the new pharmacy contract. Community pharmacists can additionally provide specific, tailored services to patient groups such as people with diabetes, coronary heart disease, those with sexual health needs or osteoporosis under an APMS contract.

What would an APMS contract with a community pharmacy look like?

Improving access and choice

An inner city area expects half their single handed GPs to retire in the next 4 years and it has proved nearly impossible to replace them. There is a community pharmacy in the heart of the neighbourhood which has space for consulting and examination rooms. The community pharmacy employs salaried GPs and nurses. The PCT contracts with the community pharmacy under an APMS contract.

Commuters find it difficult to access services in City PCT and want more choice on where they can access NHS services. Local community pharmacies are within an easy walk of the work place are set up as Walk-in Centres under an APMS contract with the PCT. Commuters find the location convenient and are able to access NHS services during their work breaks.

Minor ailments and public health

There are significant health inequalities in Deprived PCT and GPs are under extreme workload pressures and many consultations are for minor ailments that could be handled by the local community pharmacists. Deprived PCT sets up APMS contracts with local community pharmacists to provide minor ailment schemes. The community pharmacists also provide health promotion advice to support a reduction in health inequalities.

Service re-design and tackling capacity issues

The Workingtoohard Hospital NHS Trust can not cope with the volume of patients requiring INR testing for their anticoagulant therapy. Local community pharmacist supplementary prescribers provide an anticoagulant monitoring service and provide anticoagulant medication under an APMS contract. Patients find that the location is more convenient and that access has improved.