The National Pharmacy Association (NPA) is the not for profit trade body which represents the majority of independent community pharmacy owners in Scotland and across the UK. We support community pharmacies to succeed professionally for the benefit of patients. We provide our members with personalised advice on clinical, practice and legal issues and provide a wealth of resources on all professional and business matters including pharmacy service development, monitoring and review.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Parliament Health and Sport Committee Inquiry into the Scottish Government’s approach to eHealth and have limited our comments to those we consider relevant for our members as community pharmacy owners and their staff and patients. The NPA believes that it is timely for Scottish Government to develop a Vision on Digital and Social care to facilitate the building of a sustainable NHS and social care sector and would expect the Scottish Government Vision for Pharmacy to be aligned.

Scottish Government Vision for Pharmacy

‘Working together to ensure every person achieves better health and social care outcomes from high quality pharmaceutical care and the use of their medicines for an improved quality of life.’

Progress towards this Vision which was developed in “A Prescription for Excellence” in 2013 is demonstrated in the 2016 Scottish Government publication “Towards Future Pharmaceutical Care”.

Towards Future Pharmaceutical Care identifies achievements in pharmaceutical care from A Prescription for Excellence and lists goals for Scottish Government to implement. The goals for pharmaceutical care include:

- The use of the community pharmacist as first port of call for patients and members of the public for minor ailments.
- To continue to integrate pharmacists and pharmacy technicians within multidisciplinary healthcare teams
- Ensure linked and consistent pharmacy support for patients with long term conditions across the range of healthcare services they access.
- Integrate pharmaceutical care services following the recommendations of the independent review of Primary Care out of hours services, ‘Pulling together: transforming urgent care for the people of Scotland’.
- Evaluation of how automated technologies can release time for community pharmacists to invest in patient facing care
- Access to patient information for pharmacists for person centred care and services.
- The use of telehealthcare and mobile technologies to improve equitable access to NHS pharmaceutical care and services in difficult to reach situations.

Pharmacy services use various aspects of digital technology and include:

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The Minor Ailment Service (MAS)\textsuperscript{iv} which involves eligible patients electronically registering and enables patients to have a consultation in their pharmacy of choice and if appropriate for the pharmacist to prescribe and supply a suitable medicine free on the NHS.

The Acute Medication Service\textsuperscript{v} (AMS) enables the local community pharmacy to scan the patient’s 2D barcode on their paper GP prescription to draw down an electronic message to dispense and also claim NHS medicine supply.

The Chronic Medication Service\textsuperscript{vi} (CMS) is a shared agreement between the patient, the GP and the pharmacist. CMS requires electronic patient registration and the use of a web based Patient Care Record\textsuperscript{vii} to risk assess a patient’s pharmaceutical care. It may if suitable facilitate a serial prescription for up to 48 weeks medicine supply.

Other services provided in community pharmacy are the Public Health Service\textsuperscript{viii} including consultation and supply for smoking cessation and also emergency hormonal contraception, the Gluten free foods service\textsuperscript{ix} and Unscheduled Care\textsuperscript{x}.

Developments required for the Scottish Government Vision for community pharmacy and the Vision for Digital Health and Social Care include:

- Community Pharmacist direct electronic access to patient health and social care records. The NPA welcomes Scottish Government commitment to providing Community Pharmacist access to patient records and urges this to be priority for the initial stages of the Draft Strategy. The Community Pharmacy Patient Care Record should be integrated into the electronic patient record.

- Community Pharmacist Direct referral to other Health and social care professionals is required to support the integration of community pharmacy with other health professional and social care professionals and to improve the patient journey and efficiency within NHS services.

- Continued development of ePharmacy to improve electronic functionality for all community pharmacy services for patient registration, service provision and claiming. The NPA welcomes ongoing improvements to the patient care record system, and for the provision of WiFi in community pharmacies. We urge the Scottish Government to increase the availability of electronic prescriptions to all community pharmacy services and to widen eligibility of community pharmacy services to be available to all NHS Scotland patients.

- Continued eHealth support for the development of technology and digital tools to improve decision making and risk assessment of patients by health professionals including community pharmacists. Digital Apps such as the BNF\textsuperscript{xii} and the Polypharmacy Guidance\textsuperscript{xii} are examples of Apps that are regularly used in community pharmacy to improve pharmaceutical care.
• Robust evaluation of new technologies and their application for NHS community pharmacy services is required. The Prescription for Excellence Evaluation of Automated Technology Group has commissioned independent evaluation of scanning and robotic pilots from community pharmacies across Scotland.

• Development of Video- conferencing and other digital solutions for patient contact and consultations with and between health professionals must be supported on a national level. The recommendation from the evaluation of a recent tele-pharmacy pilot in Scotland recommends a larger study should be undertaken to confirm the potential of the tele-pharmacy to reduce health inequalities in rural areas.

• Community pharmacy is vital as a source of information for patients. Digitised information packs to support medicine management to improve self care, reduce medicine waste and improve public health should be developed for community pharmacy teams to use with patients.

□ What do you consider have been the main successes of the existing Scottish Government’s eHealth and telecare/telehealth strategies and why?

The ePharmacy development of NHS community pharmacy services for NHS Scotland has been very successful for the NHS and for patients.

□ What do you consider have been the main failures of the existing Scottish Government’s eHealth and telecare/telehealth strategies and why?

The main failure of the existing strategies is the lack of access to patient health and social care records for health professionals including community pharmacists.

□ How well does the Scottish Government’s draft Digital Health and Social Care Vision 2017-2022 address the future requirements of the NHS and social care sector?

The NPA agrees with the Draft Digital Health and Social Care Vision statements however no strategy was available to enable us to understand if what is required is addressed.

□ Do you think there are any significant omissions in the Scottish Government’s draft Digital Health and Social Care vision 2017-2022.

The NPA is not aware of any omissions in the Vision statements.

□ What key opportunities exist for the use of technology in health and social care over the next 10 years?

Key opportunities with regards community pharmacy are detailed in the Developments required section of our foreword.

□ What actions are needed to improve the accessibility and sharing of the electronic patient record?
This must be a priority for Scottish Government and must include community pharmacists receiving full read and write access to appropriate areas of the electronic patient record. The NPA can be contacted to provide information and feedback on the implementation of patient care record access for community pharmacists in England.

What are the barriers to innovation in health and social care?

The NPA believes the main barrier to innovation is the lack of integration among health professionals and also between health professionals and social care professionals. Community pharmacy is often at the interface between social care and health care for vulnerable patients and in most areas has little connection with Integrated Joint Boards or social care providers.

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1. [www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/Prescription-for-Excellence](www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Policy/Prescription-for-Excellence)
2. [www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/9155](www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/9155)
3. [www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/core_services.html](www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/core_services.html)
4. [www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/core_services/mas.html](www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/core_services/mas.html)
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