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In this issue:

- ❑ NHS Scotland launches new online resource for community pharmacists
- ❑ Endorsing prescriptions – is it clear?
- ❑ Community pharmacy – getting ready for the future
- ❑ Pharmacy premises – contract preparation payments
- ❑ Minor Ailment Service update
- ❑ Out of Hours Service: pharmacy in partnership for patients
- ❑ Introducing the new Pharmacy Contract Support Officer

NHS Scotland launches new online resource for community pharmacists

The new NHS Scotland Community Pharmacy eLibrary provides information services for all community pharmacists throughout NHS Scotland.

Navigable and easy to use, it acts as a single point of access to best evidence, information and learning services, communication tools and services for keeping up to date.

It draws information from the main NHS eLibrary, meaning that everything retrieved is of a high quality and is always clinically verified and up to date. The key difference between the main eLibrary and this one is that everything retrieved through this specialist eLibrary is particularly relevant to the community pharmacist thanks to a pharmacy-orientated filter.

The homepage features four main facilities: a Google-style search box for entering search terms; a section dedicated to common health issues; a selection of external 'quick links' (to online locations such as the BNF and the National Prescribing Centre), and a handy function to browse for solutions by BNF category.

There are also features that allow the pharmacist to access patient information - fact sheets and leaflets for

public understanding - and a medicines information email enquiries service for trickier questions.

Finally, there is a section dedicated to Continuing Professional Development. This area of the Community Pharmacy eLibrary provides access to directories of training and education courses, eLearning resources, conferences and events directory, and links to the LearnDirect Virtual Learning Centre.

Much of the information on the eLibrary is publicly accessible but certain resources are only available after registration. To register for a password simply select the 'Need to Register' link at the top of any page.

For further information, promotional materials or eLibrary training opportunities, contact Rob Westwood at

NHS Education for Scotland on rob.westwood@nes.scot.nhs.uk or Sandra Ladd, Librarian, Training Centre, Mackinnon House, Royal Edinburgh Hospital, tel. 0131 537 6878. Access the NHS Scotland Community Pharmacy specialist eLibrary at www.elib.scot.nhs.uk/pharmacy/.

Thanks to Rob Westwood, Information Officer, NHS Education for Scotland.

Endorsing prescriptions – is it clear?

For all unlicensed medicines it is important that the contractor clearly endorses the supplier, total cost and any out-of-pocket expenses directly on to the prescription as well as attaching the invoice. The prescription and invoice are separated on receipt at Practitioner Services Division (PSD) so it is very important that this information is recorded on the prescription form to ensure that appropriate payment can be made. MRHA guidance is that a 'special' may be supplied only if a licensed equivalent product is not available, or is unsuitable for the patient.

It is worth noting that some of the more frequently prescribed products which did not have a licence are now appearing as licensed versions:

- ❑ Hypromellose Eye Drops, Preservative Free, in bottles and single dose packs
- ❑ Levothyroxine Oral Solution, sugar and lactose free
- ❑ Metformin Oral Solution, sugar free

Thanks to Anne Lorimer, Pharmacy Locality Group Coordinator.

Community Pharmacy – getting ready for the future

A recent NHS circular¹ provided an update on the timeline for the implementation of the next phase of the ePharmacy Programme, and developments for the electronic transfer of GP10 prescriptions (ETP) between GPs, community pharmacists (CPs) and Practitioner Services Division (PSD).

The roll out of eAMS functionality is now underway. eAMS is the IT application of the Acute Medication Service. GP practices produce bar coded GP10 prescriptions with associated electronic messages for the vast majority of prescribing events. Development and testing of eAMS is also underway.

The ePharmacy Programme will continue to work with NHS Boards at a local level and the GP and CP IT System Suppliers to support the roll-out and implementation of both eAMS and eCMS functionality to both GP practices and community pharmacies; eCMS is the IT application for the Chronic Medication Service, which will “provide continuity of pharmaceutical care of patients with long term medical conditions”.

Good progress by PSD was also reported with regard to the ePay (electronic prescribing and dispensed messages system for the remuneration and reimbursement of CPs) element of the Programme.

The Public Health Service (PHS) is already with us and is defined as the “contribution of pharmacists to health protection, health improvement and medicine safety”. Pharmacists are public health practitioners and contribute to many public health areas. These vary depending on local needs and arrangements but can include advice and support on lifestyle changes (smoking cessation, healthy eating), sexual health (emergency hormonal contraception, chlamydia testing), cancer prevention and screening (oral health, safety in the sun), travel health, immunisation and many more.

Reference

1. e-Pharmacy Programme Update. NHS Circular. PCA(P)(2007)30. 1 November 2007.
[www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pca/PCA2007\(P\)30.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pca/PCA2007(P)30.pdf)

Pharmacy premises – contract preparation payments

Lothian pharmacists have recently received premises self evaluation forms with PCA(P)(2007)28¹ and have been informed of the revised timescales in PCA(P)(2007)31².

There are 180 pharmacies in Lothian and a process has been designed to make this as easy as possible for all concerned. The intention is to provide a slightly more detailed checklist with three or four more detailed questions around each of the points in the circular to make it easier for the contractor to make an objective analysis of their premises. This checklist can also be used as the development plan for those areas where deficiencies are highlighted. The completed questionnaire will provide sufficient information for the officer of the Health Board to sign off the forms with confidence.



Due to the tight timescales the questionnaires will be distributed in December for return in mid February. This will allow time for the forms to be processed and returned to the individual contractor by mid-March for submission by the end of March 2008.

Thanks to Anne Lorimer, Pharmacy Locality Group Coordinator.

References

1. Pharmaceutical Services. Remuneration Arrangements for 2007-2008: Contract Preparation Payments. Premises Guidance and Assessment Tool. NHS Circular. PCA(P)(2007)28. 9 September 2007.
[www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pca/PCA2007\(P\)28.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pca/PCA2007(P)28.pdf)
2. Community Pharmacy Services: Remuneration Arrangements 2007-8. Contract Preparation Payments. Claim Arrangements for Payments for Phases 2 & 3. NHS Circular. PCA(P)(2007)31. 1 November 2007.
[www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pca/PCA2007\(P\)31.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/pca/PCA2007(P)31.pdf)

'Hints & tips'

- ✓ Community Pharmacy Scotland has produced 'MAS Pricing Guide and Pricing Rules' to support effective prescribing, and ensure correct reimbursement; a copy was sent to all pharmacies in September – see www.communitypharmacyscotland.org.uk
- ✓ The NHS Lothian Minor Ailments formulary is available on the Lothian Joint Formulary (LJF) website www.ljf.scot.nhs.uk
- ✓ The only way to reactivate a lapsed patient registration is to either perform a consultation or referral or supply them with a product under the service; patients cannot be re-registered, and will not be included in capitation payments whilst lapsed
- ✓ Consider redesigning how eMAS operates in your pharmacy in order to record all consultations and referrals; this might include a role for qualified medicines counter assistants
- ✓ Some minor ailments persist, such as hay fever and eczema; use your professional judgement as to whether these conditions can be managed through the Minor Ailment Service
- ✓ You may find it helpful to keep *all information* relating to eMAS (the Lothian formulary, Price Guide, SOPs, etc.) in a convenient place in your pharmacy so all pharmacists including locums can access the information.
- ✓ Contact the ePharmacy helpdesk PSDHelp@psd.csa.scot.nhs.uk or telephone 0131 275 6600 if you would like a report of your eMAS registrations.

What eMAS is *not*

- ✗ An opportunity for patients to fill up their medicine cupboards at no cost – medication is only provided when the patient has symptoms that the pharmacist considers appropriate for treatment
- ✗ A service to reduce prescribing costs, e.g. GP prescribes antibiotic and sends patient to community pharmacy to obtain pain relief on eMAS – if the patient is already seeing the GP then all medicines required should be prescribed on a GP10
- ✗ A way of circumventing prescribing policies – all eMAS prescribing in Lothian follows LJF MAS formulary advice

eMAS stats update - did you know...

...that the Community Pharmacy website www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk has a link to the eMAS data produced by the Information and Statistics Division (ISD)?

Thanks to the **Lothian Pharmacy Practitioner Champions** for contributing to this update.
Please contact your local pharmacy champion if you have any questions or comments:

Fiona McCready South Central 0131 468 2566		Jill Cruickshank North West 0131 331 2579	
Jo Donaldson Midlothian joannadonaldson@nhs.net 0131 332 5721		Pamela Chisholm South West 0131 334 4694	
Sally Connolly West Lothian sally.connolly@nhs.net 01506 465030		Kaye Devlin North East 0131 661 2523	
June Edwards South East 0131 669 4428		Sally Arnison East Lothian 0131 312 8600	

Out of Hours Service: pharmacy in partnership for patients

NHS Lothian is keen to see pharmacy as an integrated partner in the out of hours service. If a patient presents to you during the out-of-hours period, there are a number of tools available to ensure the patient is managed appropriately:

- National Patient Group Directions (PGDs) to enable supply on CP(US) forms
- eMAS to supply appropriate treatment for minor ailments
- An 'emergency supply' to the patient of up to 5-days supply (for a fee)
- Contact a prescriber via the professional line to the out-of-hours hub.

Patient Group Directions

A new national out of hours PGD has recently been circulated. Remember to sign the PGD and return the signed copy to NHS Lothian. Failure to sign the PGD means that payment of CP(US) forms may be disallowed. The two PGDs for eMAS in Lothian (for fluconazole 150mg capsules and chloramphenicol eye drops) must also be signed and returned. The PGD for chloramphenicol allows the supply of the 10-mL POM pack. The age limit for chloramphenicol supply with the PGD is 1 year.

Further information is available on the Community Pharmacy website

www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/Unscheduled_care.htm

*Thanks to the Pharmacy Practitioner Champions
for contributing the text for this article
(see page 3 for contact details).*

Checklist for community pharmacists

- ✓ All pharmacy staff are familiar with the contents of the 'Unscheduled Care' folder
- ✓ The folder is kept in a readily accessible place for locums to access
- ✓ All locums are signed up to use the PGD; keep a supply of PGD Health Board authorisation forms for new locums to sign if required
- ✓ The CP(US) forms are always kept in the same place and all staff are aware of this; ensure there is always a supply of the forms available
- ✓ You understand the Direct Referral process, appropriate reasons for referral and know where the number is in the folder
- ✓ The Direct Referral number is displayed in a prominent place for all pharmacists
- ✓ Ensure that all counter staff are aware of the consequences of sending patients away if their prescription is not in the pharmacy, and to seek advice of the pharmacist on duty if this is the case
- ✓ You can also use the hub number to check prescriptions or to arrange for replacement prescriptions in the event of an item being out of stock
- ✓ You can alter the form of a medication on a prescription, e.g. capsules to liquid, and endorse it appropriately
- ✓ You do not have to supply a full month under the PGD; the Emergency Supply regulations allow for a supply to be made if the patient has had the medication before on one occasion only, e.g. eye drops prescribed by hospital after cataract operation.

Introducing the new Pharmacy Contract Support Officer

Aleisha Hunter took over this role from Claire Murphy at the beginning of November and is looking forward to working with community pharmacists in Lothian.

Aleisha's contact details:

3rd Floor, Stevenson House
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If you have any comments on Pharmacy News, or wish to contribute to a future issue, please email:
anne.gilchrist@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Deadline for submitting articles for next issue: end January 2008.

Read Pharmacy News on the Community Pharmacy website at
www.communitypharmacy.scot.nhs.uk/HealthBoards/lothian.html