

Dear Mr Macdonald

After contacting Campbell Shimmins, who represented Community Pharmacy Scotland at the Health and Sport Committee on 4th February 2020, we have clarified that he was referring to work undertaken in NHS Ayrshire & Arran to develop the role of Community Pharmacist Independent Prescribers in Common Clinical Conditions which is distinct from the Minor Ailments Service. This work is further development of the role community pharmacy has as a first port of call as envisaged by the soon to be launched Pharmacy First Service rather than research.

In two locations, Pennyburn Pharmacy in Kilwinning and Oggs Pharmacy in Ayr, Community Pharmacist Independent Prescribers have undertaken further training and are now using this to provide a Pharmacy First service that covers common clinical conditions such as ear, nose, throat and chest infections, as well as some dermatological conditions. Both have read and write access to the local GP practice EMIS systems and, effectively, act as an additional consultation facility for their patients, although the service is not exclusive to the patients of those practices. Initially, patients were triaged by the local GP practice and given appointments at the community pharmacy. As the service has developed, many patients have now also started to attend the community pharmacies directly to be seen, although some still come via the GP practice. There is also a referral process back in to the GP practice for patients with more severe conditions. Given the relationship, such patients are often fast-tracked for GP appointments.

The services see around 200 patients per month for conditions that would have previously been seen by GP practices, freeing appointments for patients that are more acutely unwell. Both provide monthly data to the Board on the types of patients seen and the outcome of each consultation. One of the pharmacists is working with HPS to collate clinical outcome data. The GP practices and community pharmacies work very closely together and have built a high degree of trust. GPs and practice staff speak highly of the service provided and, as outlined, we know anecdotally that patients now use the pharmacies as first port of call and it is this acceptance of this service that Campbell Shimmins was referring to at the session.

This is a service that we would like to further develop in NHS Ayrshire & Arran, although the current funding model restricts the pace. The service is the starting point of the ambition outlined by Community Pharmacy Scotland to have community pharmacist independent prescribers in every community pharmacy to provide a service such as this in the coming years.

If you require any further information please contact us.