



May 2013

## PSNC Briefing 053/13:

A briefing containing key messages which LPCs and contractors may be able to use in response to concerns about the quality of advice given in pharmacies.

Ahead of the publication of a report into community pharmacy services by Which? magazine, PSNC has held conversations with other pharmacy bodies about talking to the media on the issue.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society and General Pharmaceutical Council have been considering the report and have agreed to hold an event in the summer at which they will be asking representatives from across the sector to work with them to improve standards. PSNC will make a short statement on the report on Monday which may be helpful to LPCs:

“It is of course always disappointing to read headlines claiming that community pharmacies are not all delivering services to the highest possible standards, but we know that pharmacies of all different types continue to work hard to deliver the highest quality services to their patients.

That said, this report from Which? should serve as a reminder for community pharmacy contractors of the need to maintain their focus on staff training and development and to ensure that they have robust protocols in place for giving self-care advice and selling medicines and that these are being followed.

Delivering high quality services is particularly important as we move forward in the reformed NHS where we may face competition from a raft of other healthcare providers, so we are pleased to see the RPS and GPhC working to support the profession on this and we look forward to their meeting in due course.”

### Alastair Buxton, PSNC Head of NHS Services

If the report receives significant coverage in the national press it could be picked up by local papers who may want to speak to LPCs about it. In addition to the above, LPCs may want to consider including the following key messages in any responses they need to give:

- Although we do not know exactly how Which? arrived at their ratings we do accept that they found some variability in practice
- As a profession, community pharmacy is taking this seriously and the pharmacy professional body and regulator have committed to holding an event to look at how we can improve the advice given to people purchasing medicines from pharmacies
- Some of the Which? findings will be a surprise to most community pharmacists who work hard to ensure their pharmacies offer high quality services and advice to patients
- Although different pharmacy businesses may face different challenges, community pharmacies of all sizes work hard to offer a safe and effective service for patients every day, dispensing hundreds of millions of prescriptions each year, identifying and correcting errors on prescriptions, and ensuring that patients know how to take their medicines safely

- Patients can be assured that pharmacists are committed to delivering a high quality service and are professionally regulated to ensure safe and best practice is maintained
- Community pharmacy organisations are working to help pharmacies ensure that their staff are effectively trained and have the skills they need to offer advice to people buying medicines

## Ends

For more information please contact Zoe Smeaton, PSNC Communications Manager  
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