PHARMACETICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PNA)

On 1st October 2020 The National Health Service (Pharmaceutical Services) (Wales) Regulations 2020 will come into force. They will place a statutory requirement upon health boards to publish a PNA by 1st October 2021.

BACKGROUND

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, given Royal Assent on 3 July 2017, places an obligation upon health boards to undertake a pharmaceutical needs assessment (PNA).

The underpinning rationale for introducing PNA is to ensure the full range of community pharmacy services are taken into account and aligned with general primary care services, and that decisions on the level and extent of community pharmacy services are grounded in addressing the identified health care needs of the local population.

The most significant change introduced under the Act relates to the way in which health boards make decisions on applications to the health board pharmaceutical list (previously known as Control of Entry). Under the National Health Service (Pharmaceutical Services) (Wales) Regulations 2013, the location of a pharmacy was dependent upon the contractor deciding to make an application. When health boards determined these applications they were limited to considering need in terms of dispensing services only. No account could be taken of the wider health care needs such as extended opening hours, influenza vaccinations or common ailment services to reduce pressure on GP services.

The new PNA regulations will change fundamentally how Control of Entry decisions are made - by shifting from a system that is driven by the contractors and focused heavily on dispensing - to a system led by the NHS that responds to the wider pharmaceutical needs of local communities. The requirements for PNA will be aligned with other health needs assessment requirements to support a holistic and comprehensive approach is taken to needs assessment.

A PNA will cover the full range of essential, advanced and enhanced services under the Community Pharmacy Contract Framework. This will enable health boards to consider the level and extent of pharmaceutical services required to meet the needs of their population; and to do that in the context of their plans and priorities for primary care services.
CONSULTATION

On 11th October 2019 a stakeholder engagement event was held at the Welsh Government offices in Cardiff. It was attended by a variety of community pharmacy, primary care and health board representatives. Further to this a consultation on the PNA proposals was run between 30 September and 25 November 2019. Below is the Welsh Government’s response to the consultation.

Welsh Government Consultation Response

PNA REGULATIONS

The regulations containing the PNA requirement will be known as The National Health Service (Pharmaceutical Services) (Wales) Regulations 2020. The timescale for the new regulations to come into force is 1st October 2020. This will place a statutory requirement upon health boards to have published a PNA by 1st October 2021.

From October 2021, all applications to the pharmaceutical list must demonstrate how they will meet any identified need set out in the PNA. Consideration of applications will be in the context of the published PNA.

DEVELOPING THE PNA

Each Health Board is required to publish its PNA by 1st October 2021. Health Boards are establishing steering groups to oversee the development of the PNA and it is understood CPW will be part of these groups. Once the PNA has been developed the Health Board will be required to go out to consultation with all stakeholders including pharmacy contractors; it is expected that this should happen in Summer 2021. Contractors will be updated on these developments as they arise.