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Pharmacy and Alcohol Misuse Services

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The Pharmacy White Paper

- The 2008 Pharmacy White Paper *Pharmacy in England: building on strengths – delivering the future* refers to the scope for pharmacists to contribute to alcohol harm reduction in five areas:
 - Healthy lifestyle advice
 - Brief interventions
 - Prescribing/PGD supply of medicines to reduce alcohol intake
 - Blood tests
 - Supervised monitoring of medicines to treat alcohol withdrawal



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The Pharmacy Contract (for England & Wales)

- Promotion of health lifestyles is an essential service with two parts
 - Prescription linked intervention service
 - Participation in six local and/or national PCT-organised public health campaigns a year
- Pharmacists also have a contractual requirement around signposting to other services where appropriate



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Why Pharmacy?

- Pharmacists are trained health care professionals, trusted and reliable
- Conveniently located in the vast majority of communities and very accessible
- No appointments necessary, open late nights and weekends
- Patients visit pharmacies when they are healthy as well as when they are sick
- Pharmacies are good places for information to be distributed to patients and the wider public
- Large number of pharmacies now have private consultation rooms
- Pharmacies can also offer informal settings which can encourage otherwise reluctant individuals to come forward



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What's the evidence base?

- RPSGB commissioned a review of community pharmacy and alcohol misuse services in 2008
- There is evidence of the effectiveness of community pharmacy based public health interventions such as smoking cessation and methadone maintenance for addictions.
- This suggests that similar benefits could be derived from their involvement with alcohol misuse



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What's happening now?

- The Wirral PCT has commissioned its pharmacies to deliver brief interventions (at July 56 of 86 had signed up)
- Clackmannanshire (Scotland) has trained and recruited 9 pharmacies to deliver brief interventions for a 6 month pilot
- Academics from Kings College London in collaboration with Lambeth PCT are currently undertaking a 2 year study 'Brief Alcohol Intervention Service in Community Pharmacy settings'.
- In 2007 there was also a pilot of 9 pharmacists in Glasgow delivering brief interventions, the research from this has been published
- Hopefully these initiatives will all contribute to further building the evidence base for Community Pharmacy's involvement