



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Presgripsiwn Newydd A New Prescription –

## One Year On



**The future of community pharmacy in Wales**  
January 2024

# Contents

---

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our reforms</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>One year on – what has been achieved?</b>	<b>7</b>
Expanding the clinical role of community pharmacists	7
A workforce with the skills needed to deliver outstanding pharmaceutical care	12
A commitment to quality, collaboration, and integration within primary care	13
Valuing the contribution community pharmacies make to the NHS	16
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>17</b>

# Foreword

---

Community pharmacies make an important contribution to public health. Through the provision of health services, pharmacies encourage footfall in town and community centres, this with their role as local employers, act as an economic driver promoting social capital, health and well-being in communities across Wales.

In April 2022, we introduced substantial reforms to the way the NHS contracted with community pharmacies, encouraging the provision of clinical services and promoting integration with other primary care contractors, the NHS and social care. In the first year since those reforms, the community pharmacy sector has demonstrated its commitment to do more of the things people and the NHS need utilising the unique skills and expertise of pharmacists and pharmacy teams.

The reforms described in **Presgripsiwn Newydd** published in December 2021 have been the catalyst for transformation in community pharmacy. Building on the traditional strengths and values of the sector to ensure the continued safe dispensing of prescribed medicines, pharmacies now deliver more clinical services more consistently and in greater number than ever before. This has been instrumental in reshaping the way that many people access NHS services in Wales.

*Presgripsiwn Newydd – One Year On* describes the significant progress made since April 2022, there is always more to do but the clear indication is that our reforms are having a significant positive impact for pharmacies, the NHS and the people of Wales.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. E. Morgan', written in a cursive style.

**Eluned Morgan MS**  
Minister for Health  
and Social Services

# Introduction

---

In April 2022, the Welsh Government, health boards, and Community Pharmacy Wales agreed wide-ranging reforms to contractual arrangements for community pharmacies in Wales. These reforms described in detail in **Presgripsiwn Newydd – A New Prescription (gov.wales)** placed much greater emphasis on the provision of clinical services from pharmacies recognising the benefits for patients and the public that could be realised by better utilising the accessibility of Wales' network of around 700 pharmacies and the skills and expertise of the pharmacy professionals who work in them.

The agreement focussed on securing improvements in access to care for patients, reducing pressure on other NHS services, and increasing the proportion of NHS funding available to community pharmacies directed towards clinical service provision. These actions aimed to reenergise the delivery of pharmaceutical care in every community in Wales to meet the needs of the NHS and people in Wales now and for future generations.

This report summarises the progress that has been made in the 12 months following those reforms.

## Community Pharmacy in Wales

As of March 2023, there were 708 community pharmacies located on high streets, shopping centres, alongside GP practices and in supermarkets in every community in Wales. All health boards make arrangements with these pharmacies for the provision of a range of NHS services including dispensing prescriptions, ensuring medicines are used safely and effectively, providing timely access to advice and treatment for common ailments, and promoting and protecting people's health and wellbeing by providing advice on healthy lifestyles and vaccination against infectious diseases.

In addition to their role in providing NHS services, pharmacies are community assets, sources of social capital and economic drivers on our high streets, helping support and stimulate the local economy, creating local employment opportunities and encouraging footfall into other businesses. Pharmacies are a critical part of Wales' foundational economy, helping to create and sustain vibrant local communities.



# Our reforms

---

The reforms agreed between the Welsh Government, the NHS and Community Pharmacy Wales represented a joint vision for the transformation of community pharmacy in Wales in four key areas:

- 1 Expanding the clinical role of community pharmacists.
- 2 A workforce with the skills needed to deliver outstanding pharmaceutical care.
- 3 A commitment to quality, collaboration and integration within primary care.
- 4 Valuing the contribution community pharmacies make to the NHS.

## Expanding the clinical role of community pharmacists

---

The principal objective of reforms was to better utilise the expertise and accessibility of community pharmacists, making pharmacies the first port of call for NHS care for a range of conditions which can be safely managed by pharmacists that would otherwise need to be provided by other less accessible or less appropriate NHS services. Reforms were also intended to ensure people in Wales received a more consistent offer from their pharmacy by ensuring the most important services

offered through some pharmacies were available from them all. This greater consistency would in turn increase awareness of and confidence in pharmacy services amongst the public leading to greater utilisation of pharmacies and reduced pressure on other parts of the NHS.

In April 2022, four key community pharmacy services (the common ailments, emergency contraception, emergency medicine supply and seasonal influenza vaccination services) were brought together in a new Clinical Community Pharmacy Service (CCPS). The reforms committed to expand the CCPS to allow pharmacists to provide bridging and quick start contraception from later in 2022.

The reforms also included a commitment to significantly accelerate the roll out of independent prescribing in community pharmacy and to enable all pharmacies with suitably qualified staff to provide a new national independent prescribing service. The Pharmacist Independent Prescribing Service (PIPS) ensures more people can be treated for an increasing range of acute conditions and uncomplicated infections, as well as improving access to an increased range of oral contraception. The PIPS also allows health boards to agree that a pharmacy can provide other prescribing services to meet specific local needs.

## A workforce with the skills needed to deliver outstanding pharmaceutical care

---

Expanding the clinical role of community pharmacists requires the workforce have the appropriate knowledge and skills, including undertaking additional training to become a prescriber. Utilising the skills of the whole pharmacy team is also critical to releasing pharmacists from those activities which can safely be delivered by others. To facilitate this, the reforms recognised a need to increase the number of pharmacy technicians who work in the community pharmacy sector.

Health Education Improvement Wales (HEIW), as the strategic workforce body for NHS Wales, is responsible for ensuring the community workforce is available in sufficient numbers and with sufficient skills to deliver the objectives of the reforms. To do this HEIW committed to:

- Support community pharmacists to train as independent prescribers.
- Provide modern apprenticeship pre-registration pharmacy technician training for community pharmacy employers.
- Ensure community pharmacists are eligible to receive NHS funding for extended, advanced and higher level post-registration education, when aligned to local and national workforce priorities.
- Conduct and evaluate the protected learning time (PLT) pilot to inform the future of PLT for community pharmacy.

Reforms also included a workforce incentive providing financial support to pharmacies recruiting and training pharmacy technicians.

## A commitment to quality, collaboration and integration within primary care

---

Improving access and quality in primary care requires the integration of community pharmacies in primary care clusters and creating opportunities for pharmacists to work with other primary care professionals. Building on the collaborative working scheme introduced in 2018 reforms made funding available to appoint a Community Pharmacy Collaborative Lead (CPCL) in every cluster in Wales. Funding was also committed for an evaluation of the CPCL to identify priorities for improving this role in future years.

## Valuing the contribution community pharmacies make to the NHS

---

In 2021/22 community pharmacy contract funding (excluding retained purchase profit) was set at £151.2m with £12.4m (8%) available directly and indirectly for clinical service activity. Reforms committed to increase overall funding in future years and to increase the proportion of the total funding available for clinical services.



# One year on – what has been achieved?

---

## Expanding the clinical role of community pharmacists

---

### A new consistently delivered Clinical Community Pharmacy Service

As of April 2022, 704 pharmacies (99.4% of all pharmacies in Wales) were providing the CCPS and the four services it comprised when launched. The number of pharmacies providing each of these services (the common ailments service, the emergency contraception, emergency medicine supply and seasonal influenza vaccination services) increased following the introduction of the reforms (Table 1).

**Table 1: Percentage of pharmacies providing each component of the clinical community pharmacy service before and after reforms.**

Service included in CCPS	Percentage of pharmacies providing immediately before reforms	Percentage of pharmacies providing one year after reforms	Increase
Common ailment service	99.3%	99.4%	0.1%
Emergency contraception	90.4%	99.4%	9.0%
Emergency medicine supply	93.0%	99.4%	6.4%
Seasonal influenza vaccination	90.4%	99.4%	9.0%

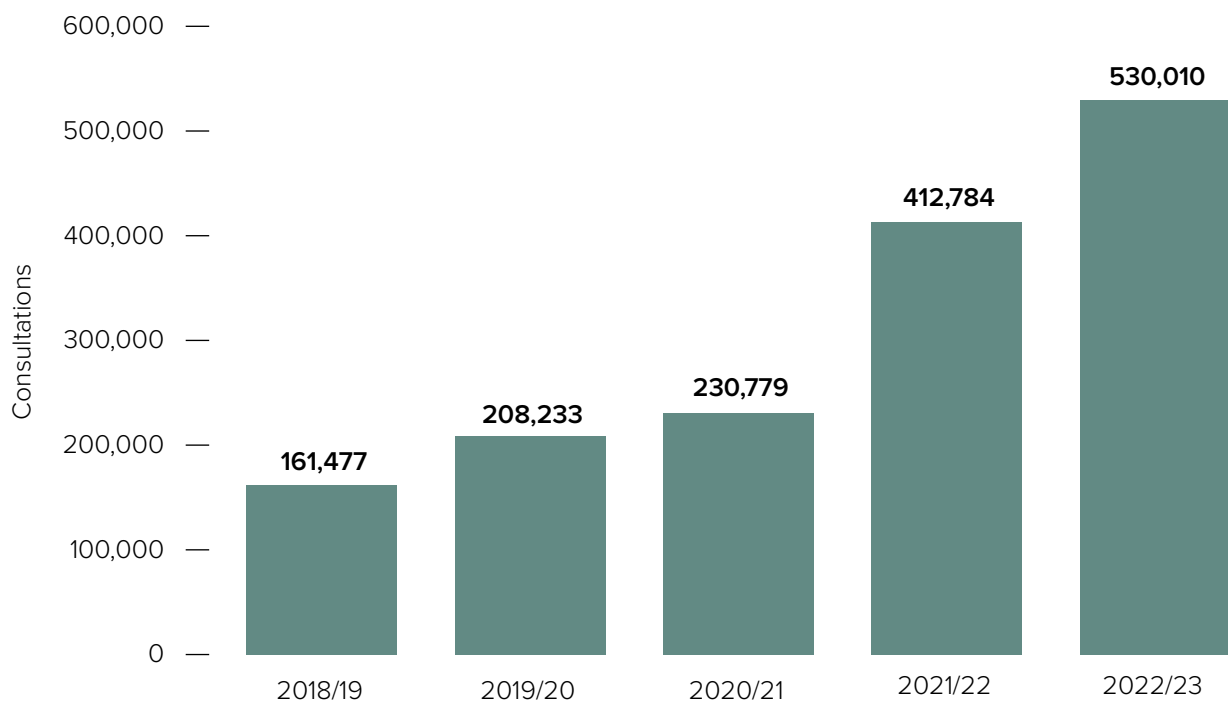
Since December 2022, community pharmacies providing the CCPS have also been enabled on completion of additional training, to provide a Bridging and Quick-start Contraception Service with 701 pharmacies (99.0%) providing this added contraception component at the end of March 2023.

### Increasing the volume of clinical service activity undertaken in community pharmacies

In addition to the increased proportion of pharmacies providing each of the CCPS components, the reforms were associated with an overall increase

in clinical service consultations being undertaken (Figure 1). An additional 117,000 (28.4%) CCPS consultations took place in 2022/23 when compared to the year preceding the reforms with service levels more than two and half times higher than pre-pandemic levels.

**Figure 1: Total clinical community pharmacy service consultations (sum of consultations for each component) in the year after and four years preceding reforms**

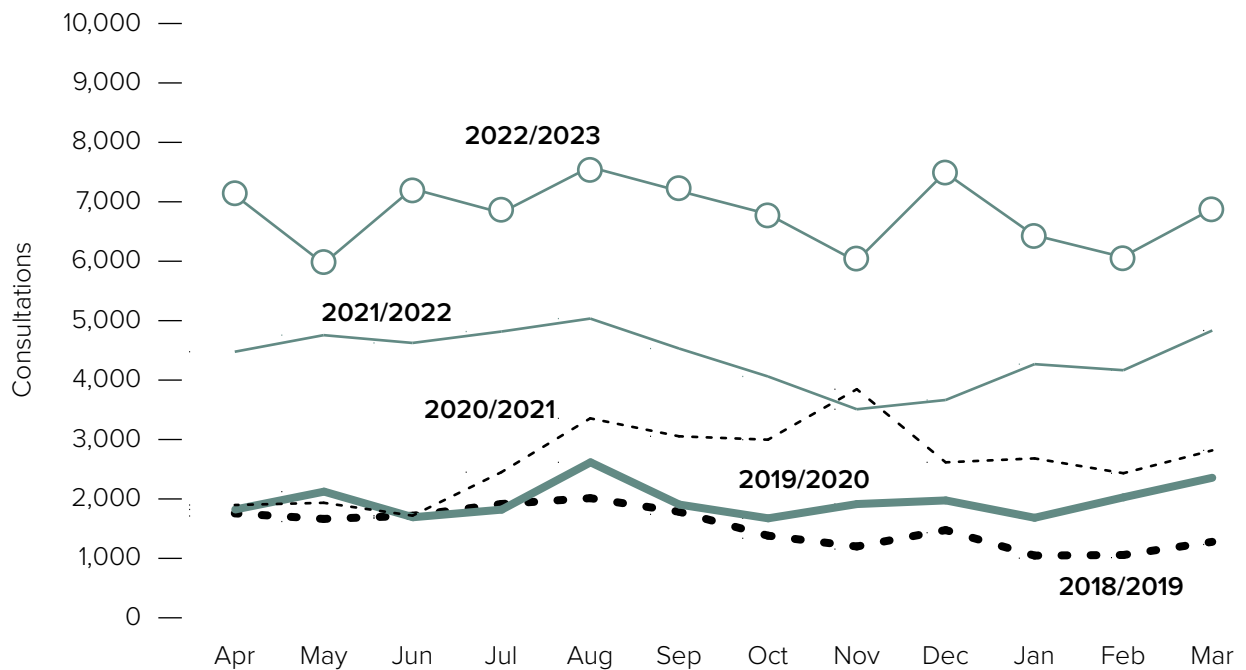


The number of consultations in the long-standing emergency contraception and seasonal influenza vaccination services remained stable following the reforms. However, significant increases in emergency medicines supplies and common ailment service consultations were observed. When asked “what would you have done had the service not been

available at your pharmacy?” nearly 80% of service users reported they would have accessed the GP or out of hours. This means the CCPS has resulted in more than 400,000 fewer GP or out of hours consultations in 2022/23, freeing up these services to provide care to other patients.



**Figure 2: Emergency medicines supply service consultations by month in the year after and four years preceding reforms**



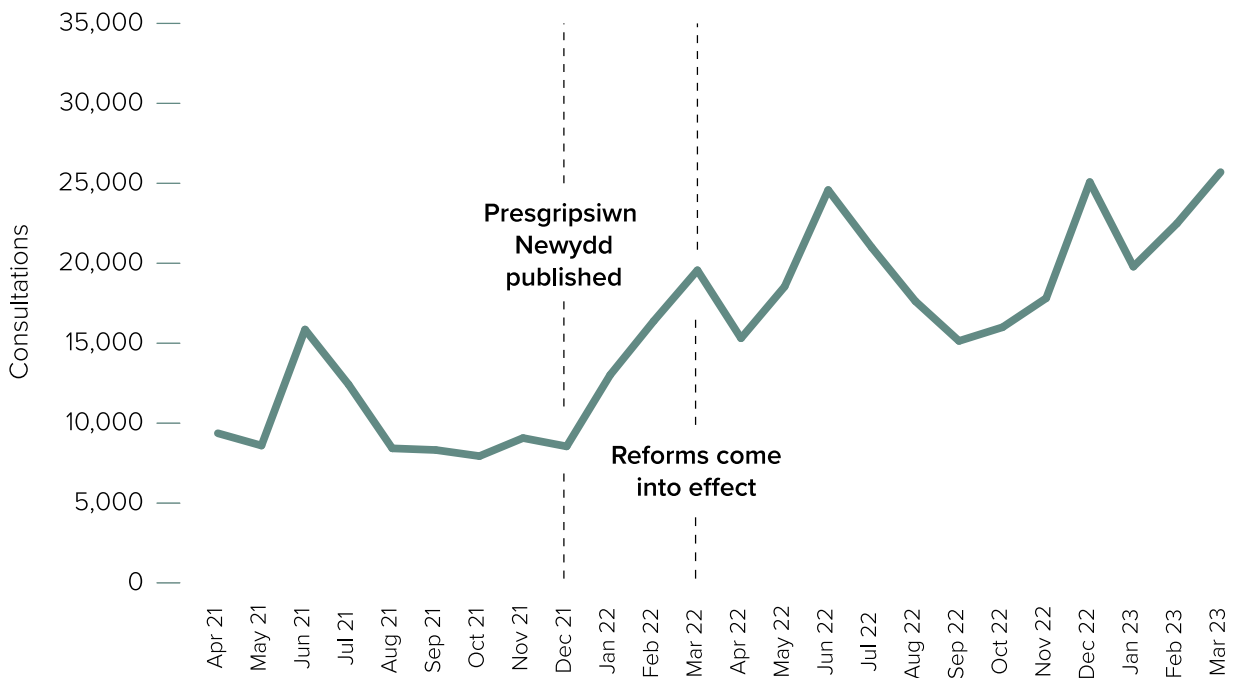
The number of emergency medicines supply service consultations increased by more than 50% (81,545 versus 52,744) with the number of consultations in each month of 2022/23 higher than the equivalent month in each of the four years before the reforms (Figure 2).

A substantial increase was also observed in common ailment service activity with more than a quarter of a million consultations taking place since the reforms came into force, rising to more than 300,000 consultations since [Presgripsiwn Newydd – A New Prescription \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales) was published in December 2021 with the increase coinciding with the [winter pressures initiatives announced](#) on 11 January 2022 (Figure 3).

The number of people registered as Common Ailment Service users has also increased over the last year with 74,000 more people registered in March 2023 than April 2022 an increase of 64%.



Figure 3: Common ailment service consultations by month April 2021 to March 2023



Within the Common Ailment Service, 502 pharmacies were accredited to provide the Sore Throat Test and Treat (STTT) Service where pharmacists with additional training, clinically assessed more than 27,000 adults and children over the age of 6 years for the signs and symptoms of bacterial sore throats

before using a Rapid Antigen Detection Test (RADT) to determine whether their symptoms were caused by infection with streptococcus bacteria requiring antibiotics (which were then supplied by the pharmacist) or by a virus which required only symptomatic treatment (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Infographic to show the number of sore throat test and treat consultations in relation to the number of patients receiving a RADT and the number being supplied antibiotics for the full year 2022/23

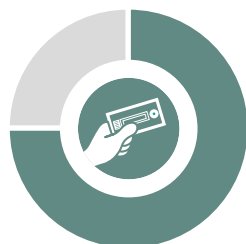
**27,353**

adults and children over 6 years of age present to pharmacies with sore throat



**20,550**

receive a RADT (75%)



**6,366**

supplied antibiotics (23%)



During December 2022, at the peak of the Invasive Group A Streptococcus (IGAS) outbreak pharmacists completed 9,521 sore throat test and treat consultations. Antibiotics were supplied in just 15% of consultations, contributing to improved antimicrobial stewardship at a time of unprecedented demand.

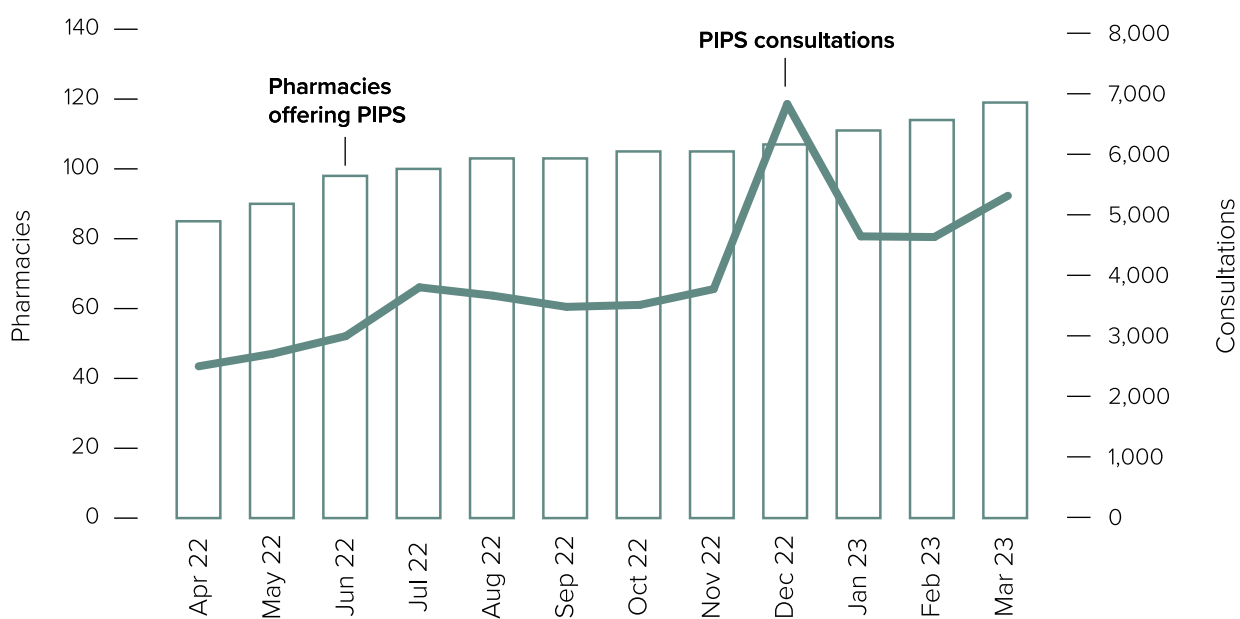
Community pharmacies continued to provide timely access to emergency contraception with over 94% of consultations taking place within 72 hours of unprotected sexual intercourse. The availability of bridging and quick start contraception from community pharmacists since December 2022 is providing more convenient immediate access to some forms of ongoing contraception without the need for referral to another service provider. At March 2023, 701 pharmacies were providing both emergency and ongoing contraception and 424 patients had been supplied quick start

and bridging contraception. In March, 2.7% of consultations for emergency contraception also resulted in the supply of ongoing contraception.

### Using the skills of pharmacist prescribers in community pharmacy

The national Pharmacist Independent Prescribing Service (PIPS) has enabled appropriately trained pharmacists to treat an extended range of ailments and provide a fuller choice of oral contraception. This provides improved access and is helping to divert patients that would likely have otherwise visited their GP. The PIPS was available from 119 pharmacies (17%) by March 2023, up from 85 in April 2022, representing a 40% increase in availability. More than 46,000 consultations were carried out in the last year (Figure 5) with 98% of people using the service reporting they would have visited their GP or another NHS service had the pharmacist not been able to prescribe a treatment for them.

**Figure 5: PIPS consultations by month for the year 2022/23 and pharmacies signed up to offer the PIPS by month for 2022/23**



## A workforce with the skills needed to deliver outstanding pharmaceutical care

### Developing a highly skilled community pharmacy workforce

Additional clinical training for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who wish to provide clinical services is provided by HEIW. All pharmacists and pharmacy technicians providing the CCPS services must complete HEIW's National Clinical Services Accreditation (NCSA) programme, by end March 2023:

## 2,805

pharmacists and pharmacy technicians had completed NCSA allowing them to provide NHS Wales commissioned clinical services;



## 223

pharmacists and pharmacy technicians were trained by HEIW to provide vaccination services in 2022/23;



## 1,519

pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants were trained to offer stop smoking services;



## 590

pharmacists were trained to offer the Sore Throat Test and Treat Services;



## 1,455

pharmacists were accredited to provide the Emergency Contraception Service and of these, **865** were accredited to provide the Bridging and Quick-start Contraception Service implemented in December 2022.



### Supporting community pharmacists to train as prescribers

HEIW committed to support 60 community pharmacists every year to undertake Independent Prescribing training at a Higher Education Institute in Wales. In the year following the reforms HEIW supported 97 training places for community pharmacists an increase of 60% of the number agreed as part of our reforms, taking the total number of community pharmacists supported by HEIW since 2020/21 to 202.

### Providing access to pre-registration pharmacy technician training for community pharmacy employers

The wider availability of clinical services from pharmacies is dependent on pharmacy technicians and the wider pharmacy workforce being available in sufficient numbers and with sufficient competence to take on roles previously undertaken by pharmacists.

In 2022/23, HEIW supported an additional 55 modern apprenticeships for community pharmacy employers. A financial incentive was included as part

of the reformed contract to encourage and reward those employers who saw the benefits of ensuring pharmacy technicians were available to train and work alongside pharmacists in their pharmacies. At least 489 pharmacies (69%) now employ one or more pharmacy technicians up from 449 in April 2022 (63%).

### Expanding the role of pharmacy technicians

The reforms also enabled pharmacy technicians to provide the Discharge Medicines Review (DMR) service meaning they can now take on more clinical roles that would have traditionally been undertaken by pharmacists. Currently, 161 pharmacy technicians are accredited to provide the DMR service providing vital support to patients following a discharge from hospital and helping prevent medicine errors and re-admission.

### Piloting protected learning time for pharmacy professionals

In 2021, we commissioned HEIW to undertake a protected learning time (PLT)

pilot and evaluation of the effectiveness of protected learning time in community pharmacy. **This pilot concluded in June 2022 and the findings are available here.**

## A commitment to quality, collaboration, and integration within primary care

---

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF) continues to support collaboration with primary care providers through the Collaborative Working Scheme. The scheme provides funding to enable pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to meet and participate in joint working with other professionals in primary care clusters. In 2022/23, 2,317 meetings or joint working initiatives took place covering a range of areas including maximising the benefits of community pharmacy services, improving repeat prescribing systems to reduce waste, and engaging with primary care cluster priorities through attendance at cluster meetings.



In addition, funding continues to be available for all clusters in Wales to employ a Community Pharmacy Collaborative Lead (CPCL). Bringing community pharmacy leadership to primary care clusters has allowed improved collaboration between professionals for the benefit of local communities (see examples).

**The following are just some examples of the successful projects that have been made possible by the CPCL role:**

### Llanelli Cluster



The **Llanelli Cluster within Hywel Dda University Health Board** ran a pilot for 12 months allowing 17 pharmacies within the cluster area to provide mental health and wellbeing signposting support. Pharmacists and pharmacy staff were able to train to become mental health champions. This training included an online mental health first aid learning and assessment. The service targeted patients that have recently been prescribed medication for a mental health condition and provided the patient with an opportunity to have monthly contact with a trained mental health champion at the pharmacy. Considering the success of this programme Welsh Government has committed to ensure there is a trained mental health champion available at every community pharmacy in Wales and HEIW are now supporting the role out of this training.

### Upper Valleys Cluster



The **Upper Valleys Cluster in Swansea Bay University Health Board** were successful in receiving funding via the Welsh Government Climate Change Team to launch an inhaler recycling scheme. This service encouraged patients to return unwanted or used inhalers to their local pharmacy. The scheme aimed to increase general awareness of responsible inhaler disposal but also acted as a pilot to test the feasibility and acceptability of a more environmentally friendly option for inhaler disposal. The Upper Valleys Cluster have been sharing their learning with the Wales Inhaler Task & Finish Group which includes representation from NHS England Sustainability Team and Devolved Nations. The other UK Nations are looking to the pilot project in Wales to inform future models of pharmaceutical waste services that can demonstrate carbon savings and contribute to NHS net zero.

## Dwyfor Cluster



The **Dwyfor Cluster in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board** was able to secure additional funding to support pharmacies in the area to hire additional pharmacist independent prescribers during the summer months. This enabled the cluster to increase capacity to better manage the seasonal influx of temporary residents holidaying in the Llyn Peninsula over the summer. Funding was provided to support the hiring of additional pharmacists, as well as an advertising campaign aimed at temporary residents of the area. This helped to facilitate referrals into pharmacy services and divert patients that may have attended a local GP, minor injury unit, A+E or out of hours service. Pharmacists in the Dwyfor Cluster provided 2,839 CCPS and IP consultations during July and August 2022, successfully reducing demand on alternative healthcare providers and supporting the cluster population during peak demand.

Welsh Government has funded an evaluation of the CPCL role which has now been completed and is available from <https://www.gov.wales/review-community-pharmacy-collaborative-lead-cpcl-roles>.

We plan to review the findings of this evaluation and use these to guide the future development of the CPCL role.

### Providing every pharmacy in Wales with the access to digital tools and information they need

Access to appropriate digital tools and having a pharmacy workforce equipped with the necessary digital skills and competence is a key enabler for the integration of community pharmacy within primary care. Digital Health and Care Wales (DHCW) has allocated 2,400 Microsoft Office 365 licences to

community pharmacy users including 345 pharmacy technicians. Providing access to NHS email enables community pharmacy teams to communicate confidently and securely with colleagues across NHS Wales. Additional functionality like Microsoft Teams is enabling community pharmacy to collaborate more effectively with other pharmacies, other primary care professionals, and the NHS.

The Choose Pharmacy application available to all pharmacies from DHCW is enabling pharmacists to access patients' summary medical records and share details of pharmacy consultations with the patients' GPs digitally.

## Valuing the contribution community pharmacies make to the NHS

Community pharmacy contract funding (excluding retained purchase profit) increased to £157.2m in 2022/23 an increase of £6m (4%) on the previous financial year. Of this, £28.9m (18.3%) was available directly and indirectly for clinical service activity, an increase of £16.5m which included £4.36m to support the PIPS.

To ensure the public understands and values the services pharmacies offer, we have developed a range of resources promoting the CCPS and distributed these to pharmacies across Wales.

Further resources have been developed for use by pharmacies to support the

STTT service and to encourage patients to return their used or unwanted inhalers to their pharmacy to be disposed of in the least damaging way possible for the environment, as well as support patients to get the most out of their inhalers supporting our ambitions in **NHS Wales Decarbonisation Strategic Delivery Plan (gov.wales)**.

Community pharmacy has featured strongly in our ‘Help Us Help You’ campaign (Figure 6).

Find out more about the campaign here – **Help Us to Help You | GOV.WALES**

View further communications materials developed by Welsh Government here – **Welsh Government Communications Services Digital Toolkit**

Figure 6: Examples of some of the resources used to promote pharmacy services as part of the ‘Help us Help You’ campaign





# Conclusion

---

Prescription Newydd described a clear ambition to transform the role of community pharmacy to meet the needs of citizens and the NHS in Wales. In the first year since our reforms were implemented, significant progress has been made to utilise the skills, expertise and accessibility of pharmacists in our communities more effectively.

A stronger focus on clinical service provision, on workforce development, on promoting integration of pharmacies within primary care, and continued investment in the sector is helping to ensure more people in Wales have access to the NHS care they need from appropriately skilled professionals, closer to home, whenever they need it.

