PRACTICE BASED PHARMACISTS

In December 2015, Simon Hamilton MLA announced a five year initiative that would see additional investment in 2016/17 of up to £2.6m, rising to £14m per year in 2020/21, to provide for pharmacists to work alongside GPs. By year 5 there will be approximately 300 (whole time equivalent) practice based pharmacists in post. Pharmacists in GP practices will allow GPs more time to spend with patients and improve patient outcomes. It will also improve the safety of prescribing, reduce the level of errors and waste through managing prescribing systems, medical reviews and reconciliation.

The Strategic Leadership Group for Pharmacy has issued the following statement of endorsement for Practice Based Pharmacists.

*The Strategic Leadership Group for Pharmacy*, chaired by the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, has endorsed the first steps taken by GP Federations and Health & Social Care Board to integrate Pharmacists within the GP Practice setting. This important development will support the implementation of the Department’s Medicines Optimisation Quality Framework by helping to deliver the primary care component of this Regional Model. That Model outlines what patients can expect when medicines are included in their treatment in different health and social care settings and supports the involvement of pharmacists with patient facing roles in multi-professional teams.

The Practice Based Pharmacy initiative will enhance the strong relationships and levels of cooperation that currently exist between GPs and pharmacists in hospital and community sectors and thereby help improve patients’ outcomes from medicines. This will be achieved through pharmacists using their clinical skills to manage patients, review medication and build on effective working relationships to contribute to optimisation of medicines across the health service. This should improve health and well-being for patients and ultimately help ease pressures in primary care.

\(^1\)The Strategic Leadership Group for Pharmacy was established to provide leadership and direction for HSC organisations in delivering system wide reform and innovation in the areas of medicines optimisation and deployment of the pharmacy workforce. The membership comprises representation from a range of pharmaceutical professional and healthcare interests.