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1 **Abstract**

2 Objective: To investigate the general public's perceptions of the community pharmacist's  
3 (CP) role in Wales by exploring understanding, awareness of services provided and potential  
4 interventions for promoting the role of CPs. Methods: Qualitative methodology using focus  
5 group (FG) discussions exploring opinions, facilitated by a moderator (pharmacist) and an  
6 assistant. Topics discussed included: what a CP does; reasons for visiting; from whom they  
7 seek advice on medicines or lifestyle issues; use of traditional and newer services and  
8 promotion of services. The groups, totalling 32 participants, represented non-users and users  
9 of pharmacy services, i.e. pupils from a local secondary school (x1 group), people from the  
10 local community (x3), and patients plus carers from a Parkinson's disease group (x1). FG  
11 discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim and analysis was undertaken to identify  
12 themes. Key findings: Traditional dispensing and supply of medicines roles were clearly  
13 recognised, but poor awareness of the newer services emerged, particularly in public health  
14 roles. CP's professionalism was acknowledged, but there was confusion over where they 'fit'  
15 within the National Health Service (NHS) or with General Practitioners (GPs), with concerns  
16 or misconceptions raised over the impact of commercialism on professionalism. Conclusions:  
17 Based on these findings, the public is accepting of the extended role of CPs and would  
18 engage with CPs for a wider range of services. However, there is a lack of awareness of what  
19 public health services are available. Considerable work is needed to increase public  
20 awareness, during the strategic development of these services in Wales

21

22

## 23 **Introduction**

24 In the United Kingdom (UK) the role of the community pharmacist (CP) includes dispensing  
25 medicines, clinical services as well as wider public health roles. Traditionally the role of the  
26 (CP) in the UK has been based on a funding model which revolves around the supply of  
27 medicines. Changes in health policy and the introduction of contractual frameworks during  
28 the last decade have resulted in the implementation of new services to make better use of  
29 CPs' skills and knowledge.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

30 The first pharmacy contractual framework was launched in 2005 in England and Wales (with  
31 similar services also available in Scotland). It consists of three different service levels:  
32 Essential, Advanced and Enhanced.<sup>[1]</sup> This includes services such as disposal of unwanted  
33 medicines; promotion of healthy lifestyles; signposting (referral to other sources of  
34 professional or alternative providers for support); medicines use review (MURs); discharge  
35 medication review (DMR) (Wales only); new medicine service (NMS) (England only); and  
36 vaccination services. The aim of the new contract was to make better use of the skills and  
37 expertise of CPs and their staff; to promote community pharmacies as an integral part of the  
38 NHS organisation; support healthcare and tackle health inequalities; and support self-care<sup>[2]</sup>.

39 More recent policies also indicate that the integration of CPs into the multidisciplinary health  
40 care team is essential<sup>[3-6]</sup> and the development of services within UK community pharmacies  
41 is cited as critical to the management of a more 'community' rather than 'hospital' based  
42 National Health Service (NHS) system.<sup>[4]</sup>

43 However, little is known about the public perception of either the traditional or newer CP  
44 roles. One reason for this is that much of the research has concentrated only on the views of  
45 those who use pharmacy services as opposed to the general public who may have had little or  
46 no experience of accessing community pharmacies. Key to the successful implementation of  
47 any policy development for the expansion of community pharmacy services and public health  
48 roles is to collect evidence on the views, not only of service users, but also of the general  
49 public. If opportunistic screening and health related services are to reach those who may not  
50 have considered accessing health interventions from a community pharmacy in the past, then  
51 we need to understand what factors are barriers or facilitators to doing so.

52 Research conducted before the 2005 pharmacy contract framework was introduced<sup>[7]</sup> found  
53 that the public were confused about the relationship between the role of the CP and the

54 patient's General Practitioner (GP). The authors concluded that there is a need to promote  
55 services to the public in order to improve uptake and allow services to develop. In 2007, a  
56 national evaluation of the new pharmacy contract <sup>[8]</sup> found that customers strongly related to  
57 CPs as the providers of information and support regarding medicines, and that they would  
58 also use the pharmacy for treatment advice for minor illnesses. Research carried out in 2007  
59 on the provision of the MUR service in Wales <sup>[9]</sup> concluded that there was a need to consider  
60 both local and national advertising campaigns to improve public awareness of the service.  
61 Other aspects highlighted as potential barriers to the uptake of MURs in this study were the  
62 public's perception of the professionalism of CPs, and clarity about their role in the provision  
63 of public health promotion services. These issues were explored further in studies conducted  
64 in the UK and also Sweden. <sup>[10-14]</sup> A systematic review conducted in 2011 <sup>[10]</sup> investigated CP  
65 and consumer attitudes to the role of CPs as providers of public health advice. They found  
66 that service users felt they rarely received public health services from CPs and were unsure  
67 whether or not CPs had the expertise to perform such a role. However, those who had  
68 experienced public health advice from CPs were generally satisfied with the service. A  
69 review of the literature by Agomo in 2012 <sup>[11]</sup> on the role of the CP in public health identified  
70 three studies on the theme of pharmacists' perception of their role in public health, and also  
71 cited research conducted in 2004 by Blenkinsopp et al <sup>[12]</sup> and Anderson et al, <sup>[13]</sup> into users'  
72 attitudes to this role. Other non-UK based studies have also found that what the public expect  
73 of pharmacy services varies greatly <sup>[14]</sup>

74 In 2012, Gidman et al <sup>[15]</sup> presented the findings of a study to explore public experiences and  
75 opinions of pharmacy services in Scotland. This is one of a few studies which address the  
76 views of the general public rather than service users. They found that although there has been  
77 expansion of the role of CPs, many members of the public still preferred to access their GP  
78 for services. They concluded that improved communication and information sharing between  
79 the GP and CP is essential to support development of pharmacy led services.

80 In summary, apart from work carried out by Williamson et al<sup>[7]</sup>, Blenkinsopp et al<sup>[8,12]</sup> and  
81 Gidman et al<sup>[15]</sup>, research relating to the role of CPs has largely been aimed at service users.  
82 Since a member of the public is not likely to become a service user unless they are aware of  
83 or understand where and how that service is delivered, an important research area has been  
84 missed. This is one of very few studies to focus on the general public's attitudes towards the  
85 role of CPs and the first to do so in Wales.

86

87 Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the general public's perception of the CP's  
88 role in public health.

89 **Objectives:**

- 90 1. To explore the public awareness of the role of the CP
- 91 2. To establish what influences the public's awareness of the CP's roles and to identify  
92 which services provided by CPs the public are currently accessing.
- 93 3. To explore which services the public would use when made aware of their  
94 availability.
- 95 4. To canvas opinion on the potential interventions for raising public awareness of the  
96 role of CPs and the services offered by them.

97 **Method**

98 Study design

99 A qualitative cross-sectional study adopting focus group (FG) methodology to explore the  
100 public's perceived role of the CP, their reasons for visiting a pharmacy, from whom they seek  
101 advice from on medicines or lifestyle issues, their awareness of traditional or newer  
102 pharmacy services and their views about the promotion of services.

103

104

105 Ethics

106 Ethical approval was gained from Cardiff School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science,  
107 Cardiff University and focus group participants were recruited following informed consent.  
108 All data were anonymised and all information collected stored confidentially and securely.

109 Settings and participants

110 Participants were from a wide range of backgrounds – urban, village and rural and because  
111 they resided close to the Wales / England border it is worth noting that they could have  
112 accessed pharmacy services in both countries.

### 113 Recruitment

114 Recruitment took place within a ten-mile radius of a large urban town in North East Wales,  
115 using quota sampling to identify four different social groups (i.e. sixth-form pupils from a  
116 local secondary school, a young adult group, an older adult group, and a local community  
117 group) to represent the general public. In addition participants were recruited from one  
118 service user group (i.e. patients and/or carers from a Parkinson’s disease organisation). Initial  
119 contact was made to the relevant ‘lead’ for each group. This included the Head teacher of the  
120 local secondary school, and communication lead for the joint voluntary organisations in the  
121 nearest town and village community groups. The leads recruited participants from their  
122 members and participant information letters and consent forms were passed on to participants  
123 via these lead contacts. Groups of six to eight people were recruited to take part in each focus  
124 group, using a purposive sampling approach to obtain a broad range of demographic  
125 characteristics.

126 Exclusion criteria were under the age of 16 years, learning disabilities or communication  
127 difficulties due to the complexity of consent issues and practical issues of running focus  
128 groups with such participants.

### 129 Topic guide

130 A topic guide was designed by the researcher (who has many years’ experience working as a  
131 community pharmacist and delivering public health roles). It was also informed by the  
132 limited literature<sup>7-13</sup> in this area and reviewed by a pharmacist with extensive practice  
133 research experience. The topic guide was piloted by four individuals who were members of  
134 the public and known to the researcher, no changes were made as a result of the piloting. The  
135 guide sought to explore views about a) what does a CP do, b) reasons for visiting, c) where  
136 they go to seek advice about medicines and lifestyle issues, d) experience of using pharmacy  
137 services (using open questions – inductive approach) and opinions about the promotion of  
138 services (after being made aware of them - deductive approach using mainly closed  
139 questions).

### 140 Data collection

141 Focus groups were conducted between May-June 2012 and were facilitated by a moderator  
142 (pharmacist lead researcher) and an assistant. Participants were allocated a code for  
143 identification and to maintain confidentiality. Gender, age and socio-economic group (based  
144 on the categories adopted by standard market research agencies) were also noted. <sup>[16]</sup> All FG  
145 discussions were recorded and transcribed verbatim. During the latter part of the FG  
146 discussion, to aid the discussion, participants were informed via a handout of the range of  
147 services offered by CPs, for example: Disposal of unwanted medicines; Promotion of healthy  
148 lifestyles; Signposting; Medicines Use Reviews (MURs); Discharge Medicine Reconciliation  
149 (DMR) (Wales); New Medicine Service (NMS) (England); and vaccination service. A  
150 mixture of deductive and inductive analysis was undertaken depending on the stage of the  
151 focus group.

## 152 Analysis

153 Transcripts were manually analysed by coding the text to identify themes followed by a code  
154 and retrieve method of analysis. This allowed patterns, common themes and differences  
155 between the data collected from each group to be identified. The lead researcher analysed the  
156 transcripts and these were quality assured for accuracy by the research assistant. Transcripts  
157 were also reviewed by the project supervisor to confirm identification of appropriate themes.

158 Construction of the themes was achieved by observing the patterns or clusters of data with  
159 similar meaning as is characteristic of the qualitative research paradigm. <sup>[17]</sup> The themes were  
160 tabulated to identify the broad patterns, or themes, which emerged and then re-categorised  
161 into more specific thematic groups, or sub themes. Data within each group and between each  
162 group were compared and contrasted to enhance the interpretation of findings. After each FG  
163 was conducted there was a debriefing between the Moderator and assistant. Transcripts were  
164 produced and reviewed for initial analysis before the next FG was conducted. This  
165 maximised the reflexivity of the researcher in the process.

## 166 Results:

167 In total, there were 32 participants across five focus groups; 14 were male and 18 females,  
168 ranging from 16 to 81 years of age. Apart from the school pupils and university students (n=  
169 9), the majority of the sample were in the B, C1 & C2 socio-economic groups (B -  
170 Intermediate managerial, administrative, professional ; C1 - Supervisory, clerical, junior

171 managerial; C2 - Skilled manual workers). All participants were of White British ethnicity.  
172 Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of focus group members for each group.

173 Insert table 1.

174 Five main themes emerged from the data, Table 2 presents these and their sub-themes. These  
175 were: the CP's role, professionalism, commercialism, reasons for visiting, and accessibility.

176 Insert table 2.

177

### 178 **Theme 1: CP's Role**

179 There was variation between the groups in what they understood by the term 'community'  
180 when applied to pharmacists. The use of the title 'Chemist' or 'Pharmacist' varied across  
181 participants. Amongst the school pupils the use of the term 'Chemist' tended to be influenced  
182 by what their parents used but they were quite happy using the term Pharmacist. Participants  
183 in the groups representing the 'older' generation acknowledged that the term 'Chemist' was  
184 more familiar to them but they also felt comfortable switching between the two words.

185 There was a strong awareness of the dispensing role of CPs across all the groups, checking  
186 dosage, and the storage and distribution of drugs were mentioned as being part of the role.  
187 The important role of the CP in being alert to adverse reactions or interactions when  
188 dispensing prescriptions also emerged.

189 The participants were also aware of the CP's role in giving advice and answering queries; in  
190 ensuring prescriptions issued by doctors were safe, and monitoring for interactions between  
191 prescribed or purchased medicines.

192 *'I think a pharmacist is more likely to have a – a better working knowledge of*  
193 *what different drugs do than necessarily a doctor.'* (YF1)

194 and

195 *'Isn't it the Pharmacist's job to – also – like – check- that – it's been the correct*  
196 *dosage and -for something that the doctor has prescribed? To ensure like – just to*  
197 *ensure the safety of – um – the patient, and to ensure that the doctor hasn't made*  
198 *a mistake – just to check over it-also'* (SF4)



199 Participants commented that they would use the CP as the ‘first port of call’ for medication  
200 advice and acknowledged that they perceived them as well qualified, specialised or experts in  
201 drugs.

202 However, there was very little awareness of the public health role of pharmacists.

203 *‘...I mean they’ve got the products in their shop but you wouldn’t assume they*  
204 *know much about nutrition or anything like that.’ (SM4)*

205 Rather than asking advice on dieting, purchasing diet products was the main link that  
206 participants made with pharmacies. It was felt that CPs should be promoting healthy eating  
207 rather than diet products, and this was of particular concern to the younger participants.

208 *‘And I think that is a little bit of a point as well [(YF1) definitely for me] to me-*  
209 *because it- make out as if - well they’re pushing a faddy diet thing in the win laid*  
210 *out in their window there. I’m not really going to trust them about – a healthy-*  
211 *options...’ (YM1)*

212 Also:

213 *‘whereas instead they could promote like – what’s that- Eat for um- is it Eat*  
214 *Healthy for life or something’ (YF2)*

215 Although participants were generally unaware of the support already available from CPs for  
216 people suffering from chronic conditions, explanation of the service and the ensuing  
217 discussions around the MUR, DMR and NMS services produced the following feedback.

218 *‘I - I can see if you had a long term – the fact that you would be at – the doctors-*  
219 *quite often, [M: yes].Sort of – the pharmacy would- help out in that respect.[M: So*  
220 *like a backing up for the doctors?]Yeah. Well- a balancing out the NHS services*  
221 *isn’t it?’ (YM2)*

## 222 **Theme 2: Reason for Visiting a Community Pharmacy**

223 Participants had some experience of using the dispensing services and seeking advice and  
224 answering queries as described earlier; however, the purchase of a range of products was also  
225 discussed, including Over The Counter (OTC) medicines, toiletries and other products.

## 226 **Theme 3: Professionalism of the CP**

227 The role of CPs as being ‘professional’ was recognised with a strong belief in the CPs’  
228 knowledge and understanding on medicine related issues.

229 *‘Highly qualified – in -like- their knowledge of drugs – so – they can obviously*  
230 *give you- um – instructions – and um – what’s the word? [K: advice]? – advises-on*  
231 *drugs- and –’ (SM1)*

232 There was some variation in how the link between CPs and the NHS was perceived. The link  
233 between being *paid* by the NHS was being used as a criterion on which to judge whether or  
234 not the pharmacist has a *role* in the NHS.

235 *‘How can it be part of the NHS as a private enterprise? For dispensing and being*  
236 *paid by the NHS surely?’ (V2F1)*

237 Participants across the five groups expressed the belief that a pharmacy being linked in some  
238 way to a GP surgery gave them the feeling that the CP would operate with a greater level of  
239 professionalism. There seemed to be a general assumption that CPs and GPs worked closely  
240 together.

241 *‘I think you think that the pharmacies that are like attached to the GP surgeries*  
242 *they’d have more expertise -in- like those – in like - drugs and stuff like that- in*  
243 *comparison with something like say [name of commercial company]which sells like*  
244 *not just drugs, but it sells hair products, something you can use in the bath - like*  
245 *just more of a general store in comparison to a pharmacist –’(SM3)*

246

247 Members of the school group commented that they felt that CPs working in large multiple  
248 pharmacies or supermarkets were less well trained, less trustworthy and were not perceived  
249 as highly professional as the CPs working in smaller pharmacies or those attached to  
250 surgeries.

251 *‘So they’re just trying to er - sell more- make more money, rather than like a local*  
252 *pharmacist which is actually trying to help people.’ (SM2)*

253 When asking other pharmacy staff about minor queries they could be confident that the staff,  
254 if unable to answer fully, would refer to the CP if necessary and major queries would be  
255 directed by staff straight to the CP. Concerns over privacy were also expressed.

256

257 **Theme 4: Commercialism**

258 The potential conflict between commercial pressures and altruism or professionalism  
259 emerged as a theme. There was a perception that pharmacies ‘linked’ to GP surgeries had less  
260 of a retail role than other types of pharmacies and therefore were not as commercially biased.

261 *‘I think you think that the pharmacies that are - attached to the GP surgeries*  
262 *they’d have more expertise -in- those – in - drugs and stuff like that- in comparison*  
263 *with something- say [name of commercial company]which sells not just drugs, but*  
264 *it sells hair products, something you can use in the bath – just more of a general*  
265 *store in comparison to a pharmacist’ (SM3)*

266

267 Different attitudes existed to CPs working in large multiples and supermarket pharmacies  
268 because of commercialism, where the latter were considered to be less professional and less  
269 qualified. In contrast, the smaller pharmacies were thought to be less commercially biased  
270 and therefore more caring, more professional and more available to them for personal support  
271 and advice. As shown by the following quote:

272 *‘But the er – I think the local pharmacist listens to you ...’ (PM3)*

273

274 Concerns were expressed about the use of generic medicines or variation in the  
275 appearance or name of the dispensed items. Participants thought that this may be related  
276 to commercial pressures.

277 **Theme 5: Accessibility**

278 Accessibility was a very important influencing factor when choosing CPs for advice and to  
279 answer queries. It was commented that it is much more convenient for participants to speak to  
280 their CP or access the products for treating minor ailments than getting an appointment with  
281 the GP.

282 *‘Someone- someone to see who’s quicker to see than your doctor...’ (PM2)*

283 The difficulty in gaining an appointment with the GP, and the long waiting time incurred  
284 when waiting for an appointment was mentioned across the different groups.

285 The use of a particular pharmacy seemed to be influenced by whether it was local to where  
286 they lived.

### 287 **Awareness of Community Pharmacy Services**

288 There was variation in the level of awareness of pharmacy services, yet groups expressed  
289 interest and enthusiasm for the range of Advanced level services available when informed  
290 about them.

291 *'No-not heard of it [DMR] but- I like the idea a lot.'* (YF1)

292 and:

293 *'No I hadn't heard of it but it- does sound- just like common sense'*(YM3)

294 A comment was made during the Parkinson's focus group when discussing the DMR:

295 *'something that's been needed for a long time...'* (PM3)

296 Of the Enhanced services, vaccination and minor ailments generated the most discussion and  
297 participants felt these were services they would access in the future.

### 298 **Promotion of CP's Role**

299 It was commented on that CPs and GPs should do more to promote services and inform the  
300 public about what is available, with leaflets and signs being the most commonly suggested  
301 method. It was also felt that 'Government' had a responsibility to promote the role,  
302 particularly around public health/ health promotion services.

303 *'Well you could have – like I said before – Public Information films on TV*  
304 *Most doctors surgeries have um – TV – the TVs- So they could) put it in*  
305 *there sort of thing'* (PM3)

306 *and*

307 *'Also maybe you could get GPs to make people more aware of them--*  
308 *because obviously people are obviously always going to see the GP. The*  
309 *GP could always suggest to them that you could actually go to a*

310           *pharmacist – which would be a lot quicker and a lot more convenient for*  
311           *you– so- (SM3)*

312

### 313 **DISCUSSION**

314   The aim of the study was to investigate the general public’s perception of the CP's role in the  
315   UK and this was largely achieved. The following five broad themes were identified to capture  
316   the public’s views these were - the CP role, reason for visiting, professionalism of CP,  
317   commercialism and accessibility. Of these themes, the CP role, and reason for visiting closely  
318   resemble the seeding questions in the topic guide, however, the other three themes were not  
319   associated with seeding questions.

320   The public represented by the focus groups in this study were largely unaware of the full role  
321   of the CP. During discussions they were supportive of the extended role of CPs and would  
322   engage with the profession for a wide range of services.

#### 323   Strengths and limitations

324   The use of focus groups as a research methodology proved very successful in generating  
325   discussion with a number of participants. However, it is acknowledged that those interviewed  
326   were from a limited demographic sample. (i.e. white ethnicity and from one part of North  
327   Wales). Further research is needed in different geographical locations within the UK in order  
328   to include non-white ethnic groups, individuals in the 25 to 50-year-old age group and more  
329   diverse, socio-economic groups.

330   With benefit of hindsight it might have been helpful to have collected some data on whether  
331   participants had experienced an interaction with a CP as this might have influenced their  
332   responses.

333   The moderator was an experienced community pharmacist and the relationship between the  
334   participants and this researcher may have been influenced by the ‘professional’ title. This  
335   could have affected the way they responded in the focus group. However, during analysis the  
336   induction of themes was quality assured for accuracy by the research assistant and reviewed  
337   by the project supervisor to reduce the influence the lead researcher’s professional role might  
338   have had on the interpretation of data.

339 The methodology adopted was qualitative in nature, and as such these findings may not be  
340 representative of the views of the general public as a whole. It is acknowledged that the data  
341 were collected in 2012 and since then the different pharmacy roles may have started to  
342 become more embedded in the public's awareness; however, there is no evidence to support  
343 this as yet. This study used a small sample of participants, as indeed did the Gidman study,<sup>[15]</sup>  
344 however, the sample was purposively selected in an attempt to represent the general public.  
345 Further FGs to recruit participants to cover all parameters of age, socio-economic groups and  
346 ethnic populations would not only enhance the sampling framework, but also help to ensure  
347 that no new themes emerged.

348 The participants demonstrated some knowledge of the traditional roles of CPs, yet little  
349 awareness of the newer services, particularly with regards to public health roles. Nevertheless,  
350 once participants were aware of these services, they seemed to accept their value and  
351 welcomed more information about them. The professionalism of the CP was acknowledged,  
352 but there was confusion over where they 'fit' within the NHS and their relationship with GPs.  
353 The findings of this qualitative study support the need for better marketing of the different  
354 services offered by CPs, with future publicity campaigns designed to address any  
355 misconceptions about professionalism and commercial issues.

356 It is interesting to note that similar issues around working with other medical professions were  
357 also identified in a recent Canadian study.<sup>[18]</sup> Since the present study was conducted, other  
358 work carried out in Australia<sup>[19]</sup> and Scotland,<sup>[15]</sup> explored public opinions on the role of CPs  
359 and the determinants influencing pharmacy choice. Both studies indicated that although  
360 community pharmacies were perceived to provide convenient access to the public for supply  
361 of medicines plus advice and treatment of minor ailments, the GP was favoured for serious or  
362 chronic conditions management. They also concluded that the preferred location of the  
363 pharmacy was away from a supermarket or large store when seeking these more specialised  
364 services.

### 365 **Implications and recommendations**

366 In order for the extended role of the CP to be maximised, several issues need to be addressed  
367 to include: raising public awareness and promotion of pharmacy services; dealing with  
368 misconceptions surrounding professionalism; and more equality around access to services. .

369 The professionalism of CPs was questioned with regards to the potential conflict between a  
370 commercial and professional role and needs to be addressed as a matter of priority. Whilst the  
371 two can co-exist this may not be necessarily what the public perceive and they need further  
372 clarity on this. The data suggest that urgent attention needs to be given to providing the  
373 public with some clear awareness about what the role of the CP is, how it relates to the GP's  
374 work and how they communicate with each other.

375

376 The accessibility of CPs was a positive influence for participants when considering factors  
377 which affect the uptake of services offered by CPs. It was interesting to note that many were  
378 unaware of the availability of a consultation room in many community pharmacies. Although  
379 access to services needs to reflect the pharmaceutical needs of the local population, variation  
380 in what services are offered by which CPs can sometimes be confusing to the general public.  
381 There can even be inconsistencies within the same pharmacy where staff accredited to deliver  
382 these services may not be available at all times. Equally important is the need to ascertain  
383 *where* the public want to access these developing services since supermarket or multiple  
384 pharmacy chains were not the preferred setting in this study. <sup>[19]</sup>

385 Furthermore, there is a need to identify gaps in the public's understanding and awareness of  
386 the role of the CP if they are to utilise the CPs role in public health and other health promotion  
387 activities.

## 388 **CONCLUSION**

389 In conclusion, this study has revealed a possible mismatch between the actual services on  
390 offer and what the public perceive to be available from a community pharmacy. This was  
391 particularly evident with the newer public health roles.

392 Based on these findings, the public is accepting of the extended role of CPs and would engage  
393 with the profession for a wide range of services. However, there is currently a lack of  
394 awareness of what services the public can expect from the CP. In order to make the best use  
395 of resources in providing services to the public further research is needed to investigate the  
396 general public's awareness of the CP-led services already being provided and type of setting  
397 in which they want the service provided. This study should be extended by conducting  
398 further FGs in order to explore views of other individuals to include different demographic  
399 groups. Moreover, there is a need to see if these views are representative of the wider

400 population, and therefore can be generalised, by conducting a quantitative, questionnaire  
401 based study.

402 This research could also have wider implications for translation of health policy into practice  
403 throughout the UK and globally.

404 Considerable work is needed to increase public awareness and understanding during the  
405 strategic development of services, contract design and service specification. This design must  
406 also address the issue of the pressure that commercialism may have on the provision of a  
407 robust professional service, so that pharmacists are able to exert their full professional and  
408 clinical expertise.

409

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**Table 1: Characteristics of Focus Groups Participants (n=32)**

<b>Focus group code</b>	<b>Participant code</b>	<b>Age (in years)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Socio – Economic Group</b>	<b>Duration (hours. minutes)</b>
V1 Location - Function room in a village pub	V1F1	52	F	C1	1.14
	V1F2	76	F	B	
	V1F3	68	F	C1	
	V1F4	68	F	B	
	V1F5	48	F	C2	
	V1M1	75	M	C1	
	V1M2	54	M	B	
S Location- School study room	SF1	17	F	All sixth form school pupil	0.55
	SF2	17	F		
	SM1	17	M		
	SM2	16	M		
	SM3	17	M		
	SM4	18	M		
P Location- Salvation Army room	PF1	67	F	C1	1.54
	PF2	78	F	B	
	PF3	68	F	B	
	PF4	81	F	C1	
	PM1	68	M	B	
	PM2	60	M	B	
	PM3	63	M	C2	
V2 Location- As V1	V2F1	66	F	C1	1.33
	V2F2	56	F	C2	
	V2F3	75+	F	B	
	V2F4	65	F	C1	
	V2F5	67	F	B	
	V2M1	57	M	B	
	V2M2	72	M	A	
Y	YF1	30	F	C2	1.08

Location -	YF2	20	F	University student	
As V1	YM1	25	M	D	
	YM2	20	M	University Student	
	YM3	20	M	University student	

**Key:** V1- First Village group. S- School group. P- Town group sourced from Parkinson's Society. V2- Second Village group. Y- Young adult group. M-Male. F- Female. Socio-economic groups A-E based on standard Market Research tools.

**Table 2: Themes and Sub-themes**

<b>Theme no.</b>	<b>Theme name</b>	<b>Sub-theme number</b>	<b>Sub-theme name</b>
1	Community pharmacist role	1.1	Dispensing
		1.2	Prescription Medicine query/advice
		1.3	Purchased Medicine query/advice
		1.4	Healthy living query/advice
		1.5	Dietary query/advice
		1.6	Minor Ailment query/advice
		1.7	Chronic condition management
2	Reason for visiting	2.1	OTC purchase
		2.2	Toiletries purchase
		2.3	Other products
3	Professionalism of Pharmacist	3.1	Role as part of NHS
		3.2.	Professional behaviour
		3.3.	Professional knowledge
		3.4	Inter-professional relationships
		3.5	Relationship with public/patient
		3.6	Professionalism of staff
		3.7	Privacy

4	Commercialism	4.1	Generic medication
		4.2	Large multiples
		4.3	Supermarket pharmacies
		4.4	Small pharmacies
5	Accessibility	5.1	Convenience
		5.2	Location