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Look after your eyes

Community pharmacy public health campaign report

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To report on the Look after your eyes community pharmacy public health campaign delivered through community pharmacies in Wales during July 2013.

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List of abbreviations used in this report

AMD	Age related macular degeneration
CPD	Continuing professional development
CPW	Community Pharmacy Wales
LHB	Local Health Board
MUR	Medicines use review
NHSSSP	NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership
PEARS	Primary Eyecare Acute Referral Scheme
RNIB	Royal National Institute of Blind People
WCPPE	Welsh Centre for Pharmacy Professional Education
WECS	Welsh Eye Care Service
WeMeReC	Welsh Medicines Resource Centre
WOPEC	Welsh Optometric Postgraduate Education Centre

Executive summary

Under the community pharmacy contractual framework community pharmacies are required to participate in up to six health promotion campaigns per annum, either local or national (in the manner reasonably requested by Local Health Boards). In 2011, Health Board Chief Pharmacists agreed that Public Health Wales would facilitate and evaluate up to three national campaigns per annum. This paper reports on the second national community pharmacy public health campaign of 2013/14, the main purpose of which was to provide people seeking advice on eyecare with information on how they can maintain healthy eyes and reduce their risk of sight loss by adopting a healthier lifestyle.

The campaign also offered an opportunity to:

- Provide advice on lifestyle changes which reduce the risk of sight loss;
- Remind people of the importance of having a regular eye examination;
- For people using medicines for eye conditions such as glaucoma or ocular hypertension to have a medicines use review (MUR); and
- To encourage signposting of patients that are seeking treatment for more complicated eye conditions to a local accredited Welsh Eye Care Service (WECS) optometrist.

The campaign was supported by all Health Boards and delivered in partnership with Public Health Wales, Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) and the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB).

Further support for the campaign was provided by the International Glaucoma Association, the Macular Society, Optometry Wales, the Royal College of Ophthalmologists in Wales and the Chief Optometric Advisor for Wales.

Relevant continuing professional development (CPD) activities and resources were made available by the Wales Centre for Pharmacy Professional Education (WCPPE), this included face to face training events supported by the Welsh Optometric Postgraduate Education Centre (WOPEC). A large number of pharmacists accessed the CPD resources made available for the campaign.

During the month long campaign pharmacies across Wales supported individuals using medicines for eye conditions such as glaucoma and ocular hypertension by prioritising them for an MUR. During each MUR the pharmacist advised patients of the importance of medicines adherence as a means of preventing further sight loss. Pharmacists checked that patients using eye drops could do so appropriately.

Pharmacists and staff reminded people who enquired about eye health or who were purchasing related products (sunglasses, reading glasses, contact lens solutions etc) of the importance of having a regular eye examination with an optometrist.

Pharmacy staff also distributed campaign materials which included information on how healthy lifestyle choices can reduce the risk of avoidable sight loss.

Approximately 36,000 leaflets were distributed to pharmacies across Wales. Prompted by the campaign, pharmacists completed 1,933 MURs with people taking medication for eye conditions. This represented 11% of all MURs in that period. Pharmacists were more likely to identify actions to improve the use of medicines during an MUR prompted by the

campaign than they were with other MURs during the campaign period. Analysis of routine data regarding NHS eye examinations and WECS did not indicate that there was any significant change in the pattern or number of referrals.

The campaign received favourable media coverage in both the pharmaceutical and ophthalmic professional press with reports suggesting that inter-professional working between optometrists and pharmacists may have improved as a result of the campaign. The Welsh Government has recently committed to future campaigns of this type in its Eye Health Plan¹.

¹ Welsh Government. *Together for Health Eye Health Care Delivery Plan for Wales 2013-18*. 2013. Cardiff.

1 Background

Currently there are approximately 100,000 people in Wales who are living with sight loss and over the next 25 years this number is expected to double². NHS Wales spends an estimated £122m on eye and vision problems each year³. When indirect costs, such as the provision of informal care are added in, this figure may be considerably higher⁴.

The incidence of visual impairment and age-related eye disease increases with age with over 80% of sight loss occurring in people aged over 60 years. Sight loss has a huge effect on a person's quality of life, their families and society as a whole. For example, people with sight loss are significantly more likely to have a fall than a sighted person and there is a high correlation between someone having a stroke and experiencing loss of vision. Although sight loss can affect anyone at any time, several groups are at an increased risk of losing their sight unnecessarily. South Asian communities have an increased risk of diabetes and consequently diabetic eye conditions, including diabetic retinopathy. African and African-Caribbean groups have an increased risk of developing glaucoma. In addition, people living in socio-economic deprivation are less likely to access primary eye care services placing them at an even greater risk of avoidable sight loss

Smoking greatly increases the risk of developing age related macular degeneration (AMD) and there is a proven link between obesity and eye

² RNIB. *Sight loss UK 2012 the latest evidence*. May 2012. London.

³ Welsh Government. *NHS Expenditure Programme Budgets: 2011-12*. March 2013. Cardiff.

⁴ Access Economics. *Future Sight Loss UK 1: The economic impact of partial sight and blindness in the UK adult population*. 2009. London

disease particularly linked to eye conditions such as AMD and diabetic retinopathy. The five leading causes of sight loss in the UK are:

- Cataracts;
- Glaucoma;
- Wet age-related macular degeneration;
- Diabetic retinopathy; and
- Refractive error.

Despite the relatively high prevalence of eye conditions, more than 50% of sight loss is avoidable with early detection and treatment. Early identification and intervention is crucial. Regular sight tests and health education around the importance of good eye health is a public health priority.

2 Introduction

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework places an obligation on community pharmacy contractors to signpost people to relevant health and social care providers and patient groups and to participate in up to six local or national public health campaigns each year. Health Boards in Wales agreed to support this national public health campaign, the main purpose being to provide people seeking advice on eye care with information on how they can maintain healthy eyes and reduce their risk of sight loss by adopting a healthier lifestyle.

Through the campaign pharmacies were able to provide advice on lifestyle measures that could reduce the risk of sight loss and offer a MUR consultation for people who were using medicines for the treatment of eye conditions such as glaucoma and ocular hypertension. The MUR consultation provided an opportunity for the pharmacist to advise each patient of the importance of medicines adherence as a means of

preventing further sight loss. Pharmacists could also check that patients using eye drops could do so appropriately. Pharmacists were asked to provide information regarding the number of MUR consultations taking place which had been prompted by the campaign. In addition to these consultations, pharmacies were able to promote other relevant services such as NHS smoking cessation and discharge medicines review services. Pharmacists and pharmacy staff were also asked to remind people of the importance of regular eye examinations. Where people presented with an eye complaint that could not be appropriately managed by the pharmacist, pharmacists were encouraged to refer people to a WECS accredited optometrist.

The support and expertise of the RNIB enabled this national campaign to be carried out.

3 Key Messages

The key messages which the Look after your eyes campaign was seeking to deliver were:

- Giving up smoking, losing weight and eating healthily reduces the risk of avoidable sight loss.
- The importance of having a regular eye examination, usually every two years.
- An MUR can help people with eye conditions to use their medicines more effectively.
- People who have a sudden eye problem can request a Primary Eyecare Acute Referral Scheme (PEARS) eye examination from an accredited Welsh Eye Care Service (WECS) optometrist.

4 Method

- 4.1 Look after your eyes was a month long campaign. During July pharmacists and pharmacy staff identified people with eye conditions or who were seeking advice on eye care and provided them with information on how they could maintain healthy eyes and reduce their risk of sight loss.
- 4.2 A letter was sent to all pharmacies by Health Board Chief Pharmacists a few weeks ahead of the campaign advising them of the campaign and reminding them of their contractual terms.
- 4.3 Campaign materials (Appendix 1) were designed by RNIB Cymru with advice from Community Pharmacy Wales (CPW) and Public Health Wales to ensure its appropriateness for use in pharmacies. Materials were delivered to the Public Health Champion in all pharmacies by the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NHSSSP).
- 4.4 Financial support was provided by RNIB Cymru to meet the printing costs of the public facing materials. The RNIB Cymru, CPW and Public Health Wales provided considerable resource to the media efforts (Appendix 2). CPW was also a key partner in developing the communication material for pharmacies and acting as a point of contact for community pharmacy contractors.
- 4.5 The Welsh Centre for Pharmacy Professional Education provided support to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to undertake CPD in preparation for the campaign (Appendix 3) which included live events entitled *Care of the eye* and *Glaucoma and MURs*, distance learning materials and quick reference guides to support

MURs for people with eye conditions. The WCPPE live events were supported by speakers identified by WOPEC.

- 4.6 A Welsh Medicines Resource Centre (WeMeReC) bulletin entitled *Eye health* was distributed to all pharmacists living in Wales in March 2013. The bulletin discussed the diagnosis and management of common ophthalmic conditions which present with a red eye.
- 4.7 CPW contacted community pharmacies by email before the campaign reminding them to participate and of the request to prioritise target groups for MUR consultations.
- 4.8 Case studies were developed which described people who had presented at a pharmacy with an eye health problem and who had benefitted from the advice of the pharmacist, and called for others to visit a pharmacy during the campaign for support and advice.
- 4.9 The campaign was launched on Thursday 4th July by the Minister for Health and Social Services at a co-located community pharmacy and optometrist in Cardiff. The launch was attended by partners.
- 4.10 A key campaign intervention involved pharmacists identifying people using medicines for eye conditions such as glaucoma or ocular hypertension and offering them an MUR consultation. Other interventions included pharmacists and appropriately trained pharmacy staff:
- Distributing campaign materials and providing advice on lifestyle changes, such as stopping smoking, eating healthily

and losing weight, all of which can reduce the risk of avoidable sight loss;

- Reminding people of the importance of having a regular eye examination, usually every two years; and
- Signposting people with symptoms which could not be dealt with appropriately in the pharmacy to a WECS accredited optometrist.

- 4.11 Pharmacy contractors were not asked to record or return specific information regarding the number of contacts they made during the campaign. It was agreed that the number and proportion of MUR consultations for the target group would be measured from MUR claim data submitted to the NHSSSP. When submitting claims for MUR consultations undertaken during the campaign period pharmacists were invited to indicate (by way of a tick box) whether the MUR was prompted by the public health campaign.
- 4.12 Further data relating to NHS eye checks and referrals to WECS was collected from claims made by optometrists.
- 4.13 Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel and Stata version 12.

5 Results

5.1 Medicines use reviews

During the campaign period (July 2013) 17,701 MUR consultations were undertaken, of these pharmacists indicated that 1,933 (10.9%) were with people taking medicines for eye health conditions such as glaucoma and ocular hypertension. The number and proportion of MUR consultations for the target group for the campaign by LHB are shown in Table one.

Table one: Number (%) of MUR consultations for target group by Local Health Board July 2013

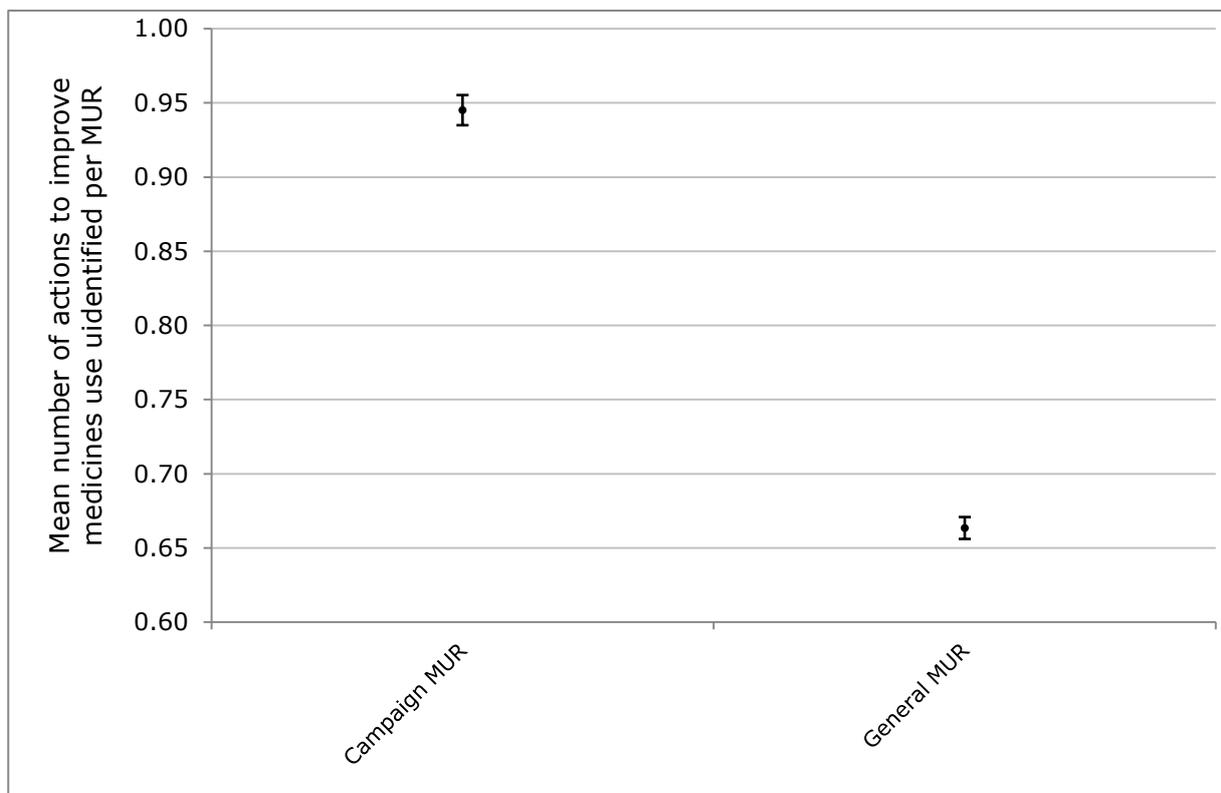
	MURs with target group (%)	MURs other than with target group (%)	MUR Total
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	344 (10.12)	3,055	3,399
Aneurin Bevan	224 (7.43)	2,792	3,016
Betsi Cadwaladr	596 (15.94)	3,142	3,738
Cardiff and Vale	269 (10.30)	2,343	2,612
Cwm Taf	252 (10.57)	2,133	2,385
Hywel Dda	216 (10.41)	1,859	2,075
Powys	32 (6.72)	444	476
Wales Total	1,933 (10.92)	15,768	17,701

Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

The number of actions to improve medicines use identified in MURs completed during the campaign was measured. In total 1,827 actions

were identified in the 1,933 eye health MURs (mean actions per MUR = 0.95 95% CI 0.94 - 0.96) and 12,290 actions were identified in all other MURs (mean actions per MUR = 0.66 95% CI 0.66 - 0.67). Significantly more actions to improve medicines use were identified during eye health MURs than in MURs in general ($p < 0.001$) (Figure one).

Figure one: Mean number of actions to improve medicines use identified per MUR consultation campaign versus general MURs July 2013 (Wales)

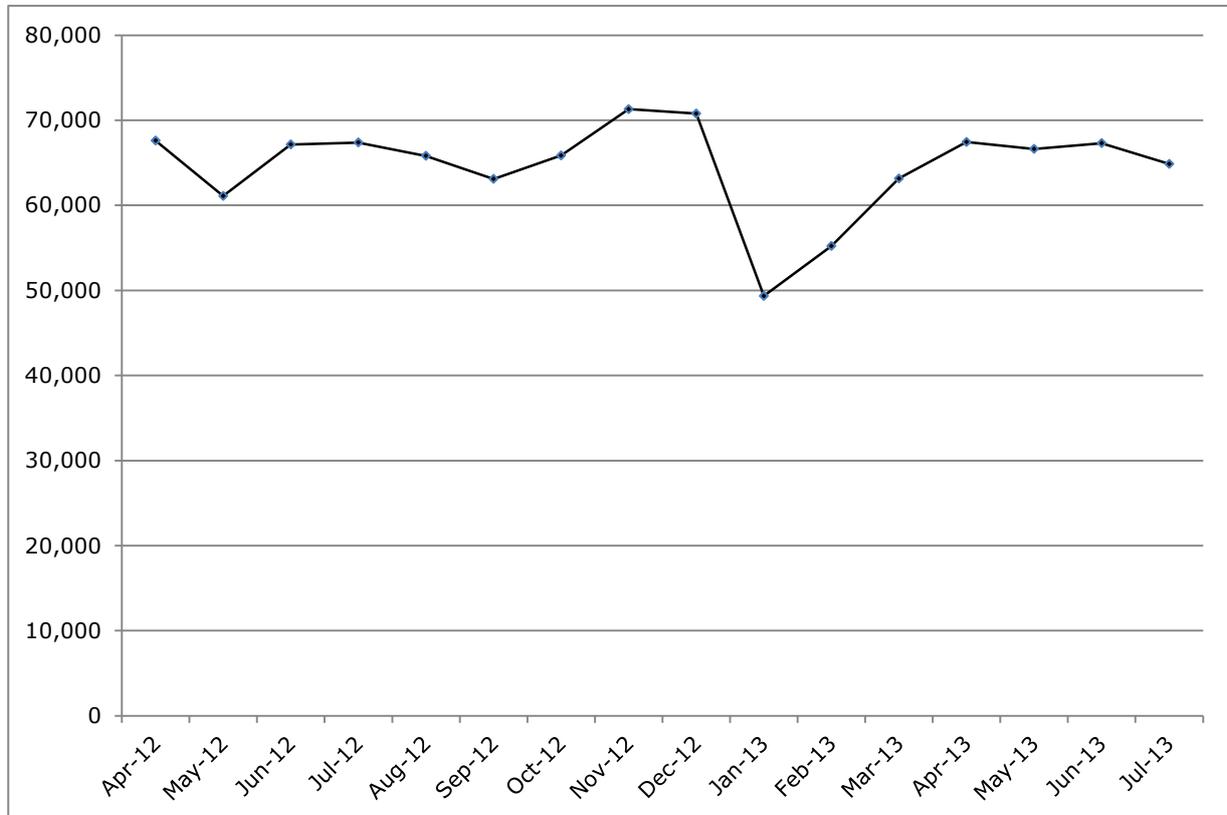


Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

5.2 Optometry services

The number of NHS eye examinations carried out by optometrists in Wales during the campaign and comparator periods is shown in Figure two.

Figure two: Number of NHS eye examinations July 2012 to July 2013 inclusive (Wales)



Source: NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership

There were limitations in the use of data regarding WECS referrals which meant that a meaningful comparison of data between the campaign and previous periods was not possible. The WECS has been remodelled and historical data is not comparable to data for the campaign period. At the broadest level there was no evidence that the number of WECS referrals during the campaign period changed when compared with the previous month in 2013 (8,716 vs 8,670 consultations).

5.3 Participation by pharmacies

The number of pharmacies that provided at least one MUR consultation with a patient prompted by the campaign was 358, representing just over half of all pharmacies in Wales (50.3%). The number and proportion of pharmacies providing at least one MUR consultation for the target group by LHB are shown in Table two.

Table two: Number (%) of pharmacies completing at least one MUR with target group during the campaign period by Local Health Board

Local Health Board	Pharmacies	Pharmacies providing at least one MUR with target group during campaign (%)
Abertawe Bro Morgannwg	125	65 (52.00)
Aneurin Bevan	128	54 (42.19)
Betsi Cadwaladr	154	79 (51.30)
Cardiff and Vale	106	51 (48.11)
Cwm Taf	77	50 (64.94)
Hywel Dda	99	47 (47.47)
Powys	23	12 (52.17)
Wales Total	712	358 (50.28)

5.4 Individual pharmacy reports

In addition to the data collected routinely regarding pharmacy and optometry services a number of pharmacies provided qualitative and quantitative information about interventions made during the campaign. Reports indicated that pharmacists referred 348 people for an NHS eye examination and 83 people to WECS during the campaign period. These included:

- A child with acute eye infection herpes referred to optometrist who diagnosed herpes simplex infection and who was subsequently referred to hospital;
- A patient seeking advice on hayfever reported unilateral symptoms and pain in eye referred to WECS optometrist who identified ulcer in left eye which was then treated;
- A patient with eye pain and visual disturbance referred to WECS optometrist subsequently diagnosed with choroidal neovascularization;
- A patient with irritable eye which was identified as an abrasion on referral to WECS optometrist; and
- A patient presenting with a burst blood vessel, pain and blurred vision, particularly when looking towards the right, on referral to a WECS optometrist the patient was found to have a subconjunctival haemorrhage with a reduced acuity due to a refractive error.

Case reports indicate that a number of patients were appropriately and timeously referred to an optometrist for treatment as a result of the campaign.

5.5 Optometry survey

SurveyMonkey[®] was used to produce a short online survey which was circulated amongst optometrists by Optometry Wales following the campaign. The questionnaire was designed to elicit the views of

optometrists as to the impact of the campaign. Fifty responses were received of these:

- A third optometrists said that they had discussed the campaign with a pharmacist before or during the campaign; and
- 50% reported receiving at least one referral from a pharmacy during the campaign with 15% stating that they had received 5 or more referrals.

6 Discussion

6.1 Participation by community pharmacy

The participation of individual community pharmacies was not monitored. From the routine data used to measure the impact of the campaign it was not possible to determine the number of pharmacies that actively participated. It was possible to identify that 358 pharmacies provided MUR consultations with the target group during the campaign. This represented just over half of all pharmacies. There are many other ways in which pharmacies could have participated in this campaign however this will not be apparent from data collected routinely.

6.2 Medicine use reviews

Over 17,000 MUR consultations took place during the campaign period. Of these 1,933 people using medication for eye health problems such as glaucoma, had an MUR consultation. Pharmacists were more likely to identify actions to improve medicines use during an MUR with the target group than during other MURs suggesting that this patient group has the potential to benefit from being prioritised for the service.

Whilst it cannot be measured, it is possible that as a result of the campaign, the quality of MUR consultations for target patients may have been improved; for example by using the patient facing materials or as a result of continuing professional development activity undertaken by pharmacists.

6.3 Patient literature

The RNIB Cymru provided each pharmacy with 50 *Look after your eyes* leaflets for disseminating to the public, further materials were provided by the International Glaucoma Association and the Macular Society. The

actual number of leaflets disseminated by pharmacies was not recorded. It is assumed that these were distributed during or after the campaign as part of the ongoing health promotion activities in pharmacies.

Bilingual posters were designed by RNIB Cymru and distributed to and displayed by pharmacies to promote the campaign.

6.4 Promotional activity

Social media was extensively used to promote the campaign. In particular Twitter was used by RNIB Cymru, CPW, Optometry Wales, Public Health Wales, Local Health Boards and the Minister for Health and Social Services to raise awareness of the campaign. Twitter messages ("tweets") were disseminated ("retweeted") by variety of followers using the hashtag #LOOKAFTERYOUR EYES.

6.5 Logistics and organisation

Campaign packs were delivered to the three regional depots of NHSSSP at least four weeks prior to the campaign start date. All pharmacies received the packs at least one week prior to the start of the campaign. All Pharmacies signed to acknowledge the receipt of campaign packs. No pharmacies contacted Public Health Wales due to non-receipt of materials.

6.6 Media coverage

See Appendix 2.

6.7 Use of routine data

Whilst in the previous [Lower your risk of stroke](#) campaign the use of routine data has proved relatively useful as a measure of participation it

has not done so in this case. The routine data used for evaluation of this campaign cannot determine whether pharmacies were actively engaged, neither can it determine whether pharmacies did not engage. It does however illustrate the limitations of using data of this type as a proxy for participation and further consideration will need to be given in planning future campaigns as to the appropriateness of this approach.

6.8 Wider implications of the campaign

The campaign contributed to improved professional relationships and understanding of pharmacy and optometry roles and was well received amongst both professional groups. The Welsh Government's *Together for health: eye health care delivery plan 2013-18*⁵ which was published shortly after the campaign contains several references to the potential contribution pharmacy can make to improving eye health. This may have been influenced by this campaign. There is an apparent enthusiasm on the part of both professions to work more closely in the future to the benefit of patients.

7 Conclusions

Look after your eyes built on the experience of previous national public health campaigns. As with previous campaigns there was considerable media coverage both in professional and general press.

There are indications that those pharmacies providing MUR services targeted their consultations for the target group and that they were more likely to identify medicines related or adherence problems in those MURs than they were in MUR consultations in general.

⁵ Welsh Government. *Together for health eye health care delivery plan for Wales 2013-18*. 2013. Cardiff.

In this campaign the use of routine data did not provide a robust means to measure pharmacy participation and the appropriateness of this approach will need to be given further consideration for future campaigns.

There was evidence of improved inter professional working during the campaign and an apparent enthusiasm to develop further opportunities for pharmacists and optometrists to collaborate for the benefit of patients with eye health needs.

8 Recommendations

- Where possible routine data should continue to be used as one means of measuring campaign impact however greater consideration needs to be given as to the appropriateness of this approach on a case by case basis.
- Consideration should be given to including pharmacies as a source of referral in data collected through WECS.
- Individual case reports collected by pharmacies during campaigns provide a useful insight into the type of interventions made during campaigns and of the individual patient benefit. Pharmacies should be encouraged to provide case reports and Public Health Wales and CPW should consider how this can be facilitated in future campaigns.
- This campaign provided an opportunity for professional groups (pharmacists and optometrists) to work together for patient benefit. Consideration should be given to multidisciplinary campaigns in future.

Appendix 1.



Peidiwch colli golwg ar eich anwyliaid...

holwch eich fferyllfa sut mae eich iechyd yn effeithio ar eich golwg

Don't lose sight of the ones you love...

ask your pharmacy how your health affects your sight

Gofalwch am eich Golwg 2013 • Look After Your Eyes 2013

Am fwy o wybodaeth ffoniwch 029 2044 9594 neu ewch i rnib.org.uk/cymru

For more information call 029 2044 9594 or visit rnib.org.uk/cymru



Arlannir y gwasanaeth Fferylliaeth Gymunedol yma gan GIG Cymru
Rhan o gynllun Iechyd Da – Good Health Fferylliaeth Gymunedol Cymru
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Appendix 2. Look after your eyes campaign media coverage list (supplied by partners).

National media

BBC Online - High street pharmacists join the battle to save people's eyesight in Wales as the number suffering sight loss is expected to double over 25 years

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-23185542>

Chemist and druggist. Wales pharmacies set for July eyecare campaign

http://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news-content/-/article_display_list/15805205/welsh-pharmacies-set-for-july-eyecare-campaign

Chemist and druggist. Wales pharmacists refer hundreds in July eyecare campaign

http://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news-content/-/article_display_list/16039322/wales-pharmacists-refer-hundreds-in-july-eyecare-campaign

Optometry today. Pharmacy initiative raises eye health profile in Wales

<http://www.optometry.co.uk/news-and-features/news/?article=4972>

Pharmaceutical Journal. Pharmacies to focus on eye health

http://www.pjonline.com/news/welsh_pharmacies_to_focus_on_eye_health

Pharmaceutical Journal. Promising early data from welsh eye health campaign

http://www.pjonline.com/news/promising_early_data_from_welsh_eye_health_campaign

Pharmacy Life.

http://www.pharmacy-life.co.uk/443/welsh-eye-campaign-already-a-major-success?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=E-newsletter+Monday+29th+July&utm_content=E-newsletter+Monday+29th+July+CID_338edf0f5d6d730723a382284684ae5&utm_source=TheWebBureau%20Email%20Marketing&utm_term=Read%20More

Local media

Aberdare online.

<http://www.aberdareonline.co.uk/content/%E2%80%98look-after-your-eyes%E2%80%99-national-community-pharmacy-public-health-campaign>

Calon FM. Interview with pharmacist *insert name*

http://www.calonfm.com/105fm/?page_id=12863

Carmarthen Journal

<http://www.thisissouthwales.co.uk/launches-eyesight-campaign-Carmarthen-pharmacy/story-19481727-detail/story.html#axzz2mhgg64JX>

Appendix 3. Uptake of relevant Welsh Centre for Pharmacy Professional Education (WCPPE) provided support

WCPPE event/materials	Number attended/requested
Distance learning pack: Pharmaceutical care of the eye	36
Live event: Care of the Eye	282
Live event: Glaucoma and MURs	164