**New standard  - 21 November 2018**

*NHS Digital must be quoted as the source of this information.*

A new standard that will improve sharing clinical information between community pharmacies and GP practices has been published.

This will allow information that community pharmacists gather from patients when providing services such as vaccinations, medications and guidance with minor ailments and share that information digitally with patients’ GPs.

Improving data sharing between community pharmacies and GP practices is expected to cut medication errors, improve patient safety and reduce administrative work for staff.

The first part of the standard, which has been developed by NHS Digital, the Professional Record Standards Body and other partners, details what information should be recorded about vaccinations administered and emergency medicines supplied by community pharmacies.

Not only will the standard support better care in the community, it will provide high-quality data for service planning, commissioning organisations and public health programmes by standardising vaccination information.

Stephen Goundrey-Smith, PRSB advisory board member for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, said: “Pharmacists are offering an increased range of services. As these services expand further, it will become increasingly important for pharmacists to share vital information about patient care with GPs.

“By doing this digitally, we can ensure that care professionals have timely access to relevant information, leading to better, safer and more personalised care.

“This sharing of data will also demonstrate the value of pharmacists’ professional input into patient care.”

Dr Vishen Ramkisson, senior clinical lead for Medicines and Pharmacy at NHS Digital, said: “The data standard is the first step towards ensuring relevant information about services provided by community pharmacies can be shared digitally with other health professionals so that patients’ health records are complete and comprehensive.

“Ensuring IT systems across the NHS can securely share information in a common language is key to this, and we hope that GP and pharmacy IT suppliers choose to develop their systems to use this new standard.”

**Next steps**

* The first part of the standard can be implemented by community pharmacies and GP practices using Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) – a standard for the digital exchange of healthcare information so that it can be generated by one system, and then read and understood by another.
* NHS Digital has developed the data standards into FHIR message definitions. These technical requirements are now available to be used by GP and pharmacy clinical system suppliers to develop their systems so that they can send or receive this structured information.
* NHS Digital is working with pharmacy and GP clinical system suppliers to start implementation in their systems. The pilot phase will begin in early 2019, with roll-out anticipated by the end of 2019.
* Vaccine administration and emergency supply of medication are just the first of many information models being developed to support information sharing.
* PRSB will next be working on data standards for:
* Medication Reviews
* Appliance Use Review
* New Medicine Services
* Digital Minor Illness Referral Scheme
* Hospital discharge summaries to community pharmacy