

COI

“GPhC

VIDEO CLIP 1

Vice-Chair
National Association of LINKs

RUTH MARSDEN:

I've been involved in patient involvement in health for about 9 or 10 years. The LINKs are a key opportunity for all constituents of an area to have their say in healthcare.

I sometimes feel I'm trekking to the pharmacy far too often. For people in my situation, with multiple conditions and varying co-morbidities, we're inevitably on pills for this and potions for that. One medicine becomes due one week, another one another week, and getting the repeats means that you have to trek to the doctor to replace the prescription and get it resigned, and then trek back to the chemist every single week, sometimes twice a week for five or six different preparations. It would make an enormous difference if we could synchronise these.

Physical access problems are a conspicuous issue, and it isn't just for somebody like myself who's a wheelchair user. You've got to understand there are other people who are in a similar parallel position, mums with prams and pushchairs, ladies with zimmerframes who need to access the pharmacy on a regular basis.

Thinking of the extended role of the pharmacist and the wider involvement that he's going to have with the patient's general well-being, if you consider the so-called private consultation areas in so many pharmacies it's a corner with a curtain and it affords neither privacy nor discretion. There is no conspicuous route through which one can complain about a pharmacist or register issues, positive or negative. Now where do these issues go? There ought to be some way in which the experience of the users can be aggregated, can be gathered together, not in some kind of remote and academic manner, but actually to improve the service, and I would like to see the regulator instituting something like this so that people do feel it is of some use for them to register their experiences.

I would think that to 99.9% of the general public the mere concept of pharmacy regulation is remote and largely invisible. Health is a key determinant in quality of life for every single person in this country. An independent regulator can give credibility to the profession and it can give confidence to the public.

I think I would like to see pharmacy regulation as more enabling. I'd like to see it as enabling from the point of view of the pharmacy professional himself, I would like to see it as enabling in terms of building public confidence and knowledge of what happens within the profession. I would like to see it avoid at all costs becoming too Londoncentric, too over-professionalised, too incestuous, and I would like to see it working very much in collaboration with the users, the pay masters, dare I say, the customers, the patients, the public themselves, done with them rather than done to them.

END OF VIDEO CLIP