

Response from the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh to the Scottish Government consultation *Achieving Value and Sustainability in Prescribing*.

The Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, known as the "College", is a prominent independent medical standard-setting body and professional membership organisation. We aim to meet doctors' professional and educational needs and promote clinical standards and public health. We strive to guide and influence health policy and represent our members' views. The College has a strong UK and international presence with over 14,500 Fellows and Members in over 100 countries – including in every part of the UK – covering 54 medical specialties and interests.

The College welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. While the Scottish based Fellows who provided input to inform our consultation response did not give specific views on all of the individual medicines or products contained within the consultation, there was general support for the principles behind the consultation and for the proposals contained within it.

Our Fellows agree that it is important to reduce the use of items that may have low or limited effectiveness or provide low value for money for NHS Scotland where there are more cost-effective items available. They also understand that the variation in prescribing practice across Scotland can cause confusion and should be addressed. The College considers that work to achieve value and sustainability in prescribing is part of the Realistic Medicine agenda which we support. In this context, one Fellow wished to highlight an example he saw recently of an 83 year old patient who was in hospital after falling at home and fracturing her hip. To his concern, she was recommended an expensive new osteoporosis medicine- costing around £1500.00 pa- despite never having taken Vitamin D, calcium or alendronate. In addition, a lack of social care meant her discharge from hospital was severely delayed and this experienced physician wished to emphasise his belief that the value and importance of providing social care should be a key consideration as well as the value of medicines.

While we generally are supportive of the proposals within the consultation, some Fellows did indicate that they believed that the vast majority of doctors strive to make person centred and informed decisions and that although they agree prescribing decisions should be generally based on guidelines, it was also important for clinicians to have some degree of flexibility in specific cases. It would be useful if guidance was provided in this regard.

Finally, in terms of the specific proposals, the College would like to strongly agree with the recommendations around reducing the risk of antimicrobial resistance; we recognise that antimicrobial resistance is a major national and international challenge. We are very aware of the excellent work of the Scottish Antimicrobial Prescribing Group (SAPG) and understand that these proposals support their aims. Appropriate prescribing of antibiotics is absolutely essential, both in terms of human health but also in relation to environmental and financial costs, and the proposals here are positive ones.