Countdown to the London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 begins

In just under three years’ time, the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will begin. The massive task of planning the pharmacy services is now well under way. David Mottram, Mark Stuart and Pamela Venning describe how the Olympic and Paralympic pharmacy planning is progressing.

An Olympic and Paralympic Pharmacy Clinical Services Group has been appointed by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) under the leadership of Mark Stuart, who was superintendent pharmacist for the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games. This group formally began its planning work in April this year and comprises a team of specialist pharmacists whose skills cover the many diverse aspects of setting up the unique world class Olympic and Paralympic pharmacy services.

In total, there are seven Olympic and Paralympic medical streams under the direction of Pamela Venning. These are sports medicine, emergency medicine, pharmacy, imaging, polyclinic, veterinary medicine, and physiotherapy.

Medical services

There will be four Olympic and Paralympic Villages and five sites for the football venues for the London 2012 Games, each containing a fully stocked pharmacy to provide medicines requirements of accredited athletes, Olympic and Paralympic staff, team officials, media, International Olympic Committee members and members of the Olympic and Paralympic family. In total, the pharmacy services will serve the medicine needs of around 200,000 accredited people.

The London pharmacy will be situated in a purpose-built polyclinic located in the athletes’ residential area. There will be a maximum of around 17,000 people residing in the Olympic and Paralympic Village. The pharmacies in the Weymouth and Eton Dorney venues will be situated in temporary facilities within the residential areas of their Olympic and Paralympic Villages.

Each of the pharmacies will dispense prescriptions written by local UK doctors and also for over 1,000 visiting team doctors from 205 different countries for the Olympic Games and a smaller number for the Paralympic Games. In addition to catering to the specialist medicine requirements of elite athletes, pharmacy staff will be involved in providing information to athletes about drugs restricted in sport, with a comprehensive specialist medicines information service provided for the games.

Role of the clinical services group

The scope of the Olympic and Paralympic pharmacy services broadly falls into four categories:

- Education and training for Olympic and Paralympic workforce and UK pharmacists
- Olympic and Paralympic formulary development
- Polyclinic and venue infrastructure and logistics
- Volunteer workforce recruitment

Education and training

The scoping for an Olympic and Paralympic pharmacy education strategy has been completed and the creation of specific learning content is ready to begin. There has been excellent support from UK pharmacy organisations, particularly the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education, which will be key in delivering some of this education on a national level in the run-up to 2012. The education plan contains elements related to training volunteer pharmacy staff who will work during games time, and also to provide all pharmacists in the UK access to information they might need if they are involved in the care of athletes.

Education will therefore be targeted at three levels:

- The volunteer workforce
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working in the vicinity of games events
- The national pharmacy profession

The plan is to disseminate information about the pharmacy services to the other LOCOG medical divisions and the media during the planning phase, but then to deliver specific training for pharmacy staff within and in the vicinity of Olympic and Paralympic venues immediately before the games.

With the various levels of education being developed, all UK pharmacy staff, whether directly involved with the games or not, will have the opportunity to enhance their...
knowledge about sport and exercise medicine. In this way, it is expected that a legacy from the games will be a well informed pharmacy profession, with the prospect of the formation of a group of pharmacists with special interest in sport and exercise to be affiliated with the new professional body and local practice forums.

Formulary development A specific Olympic and Paralympic formulary will be used for prescribing within the Olympic and Paralympic environment, and all medicines supplied to accredited people for personal use will be provided at no cost. There will be unique procedures in place to assist athletes and athlete support personnel meet their rights and responsibilities under the antidoping regulations of the IOC and the International Paralympic Committee. This formulary will be approved by the IOC Medical Commission.

The Olympic and Paralympic Pharmacy Clinical Services Group is currently drawing up the first draft of the formulary for consultation with the other Olympic and Paralympic medical streams and the IOC. An Olympic and Paralympic Formulary Committee will be formed during early 2010.

Pharmacy infrastructure The polyclinic pharmacies will operate in a similar style to an outpatient dispensary. This will be the coordinating points of medicine supply for the athlete and spectator medical facilities at each of the 35 spectator venues (including the new Olympic and Paralympic Stadium and Wembley Stadium) and dozens of other training venues around the UK. The polyclinic pharmacies will be located in the Stratford, Weymouth and Eton Dorney areas, as well as the five cities hosting the preliminary Olympic and Paralympic football matches (Manchester, Cardiff, Glasgow, Birmingham and Newcastle). The Olympic and Paralympic pharmacies will also co-ordinate and supply drugs for emergency use at all Olympic and Paralympic venues.

The plans for the purpose built polyclinics in the Stratford village are nearing completion, which is when, with colleagues at LOCOG, the Pharmacy Clinical Services Group will begin designing the dispensary and the logistic and co-ordination hub for medicines at all the Olympic and Paralympic venues.

Volunteer pharmacists and pharmacy technicians Up to 90 volunteer pharmacists and registered pharmacy technicians will be given an opportunity to work at the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012 (see Panel).

The road ahead The Olympic and Paralympic Pharmacy Clinical Service Group will continue to meet monthly and looks forward to working with a wide spectrum of colleagues in order to provide a world-class pharmacy for the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games.