

What can pharmacists in GP Practices do?

Practice-based pharmacists can work as part of the general practice team, supporting the capacity of GPs and practice staff, by focusing on all aspects of patient care that involve medicines management. With expertise in medicines, they can add considerable value to the skill mix of the practice team through:

- Resolving day-to-day medicines issues.
- Triaging and managing common ailments.
- Managing and prescribing for long term conditions.
- Reconciling medicines following discharge from hospital.
- Overseeing repeat prescription reviews.
- Supporting the GP practice to reach quality improvement targets and to deliver enhanced services.
- Leading clinical audits with the multidisciplinary team.
- Contributing to clinical education within the practice.

The practice-based pharmacist offers a number of advantages to general practice:

- Improving patient access to healthcare.
- Supporting the management of the general practice workload.
- Increasing the capacity of GPs to focus on patients with the most complex needs.

Medicines safety and patient outcomes can be improved by harnessing the skills of the practice-based pharmacist. By taking part in multidisciplinary case reviews as well as consulting with and treating patients directly, the pharmacist can review and advise on the ongoing need for medicines and support patients with their medicine taking to achieve improved adherence and better clinical outcomes.

The addition of an independent prescribing qualification adds considerable value to the role of the practice-based pharmacist, ensuring patient medication can be optimised and quality improvement enhanced, particularly for patients with long term conditions, polypharmacy and complex medication regimens.

What can't pharmacists do?

Pharmacists are not a substitute for GPs but are complementary to the general practice team and can enhance the skill mix of the multidisciplinary team.

Practice-based pharmacists cannot refer patients directly to secondary care. They can however signpost patients to appropriate services and other healthcare professionals such as community pharmacists or other members of the general practice team.

What support and mentoring do pharmacists need?

Pharmacists need to be fully integrated into the general practice multidisciplinary team to enable them to understand and adopt the philosophy of general practice.

Pharmacy Home Page: beneath text on ***Practice Based Clinical Pharmacists*** (PDF/ weblink?)

Pharmacists need to be supported by mentorship and training programmes as part of their continuing professional development. This is particularly important when moving into new areas of practice.

What competencies should GPs look for in pharmacists?

Registered pharmacists have undergone a four-year MPharm degree and 12 months preregistration training under the supervision of a pre-registration tutor before taking their registration exams.

Following qualification pharmacists may undergo foundation training through postgraduate studies and obtain:

- A non-medical prescribing qualification.
- A clinical diploma in hospital pharmacy, or community pharmacy.
- A research qualification (e.g. a masters degree).
- Therapeutics diploma.

Those who have not worked in general practice would, as part of an induction programme, require training in a number of areas including use of surgery computer systems, Quality and Outcomes Framework, clinical coding, clinical and information governance, and safeguarding adults and children.

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