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Background

Work undertaken from 2019, supporting the NHS LTP and development of an integrated pharmacy workforce forecasted a deficit of >50 Pharmacy Technicians across our local system by end of 2025¹.

A key element for integration and transformation of our pharmacy workforce was the development of a strong pharmacy technician leadership and education platform. This included:

- Developing the role of Lead ICS Pharmacy technician for Workforce, Education and Training (Lead PT WE&T) to lead the project
- Project management (PM) support aligning, tracking and monitoring the various elements required for successful delivery
- Securing Health Education England (HEE) funding for cross sector placements for pre registration pharmacy technicians (PTPTA)
- Working with Hospital, Primary Care and Community Pharmacy teams to secure meaningful cross sector placement hosts
- Working with Finance and HR colleagues to recruit apprentices
- Collaborating with training providers to assure eligibility
- Initial placement activity focussed on current workforce challenges and areas with historic recruitment difficulties
- Education and Clinical Supervision networks with regular contact

The Integrated Care System (ICS) supported the project to be lead employer for 2 PTPTA's, provide supervision, HR support & salary gap. Once recruited apprentices spent time rotating through community pharmacy, primary care & acute trust. Apprentices gained experience, knowledge and skills to be able evidence all General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) IET Standards as part of the two year programme and register with GPhC securing roles locally in Mental Health and PCN employers.

Ongoing system support facilitated further apprenticeship cohorts to be added to the project. A key enabler was the increase in ES provision to support increased capacity and assured quality learning journey. We were able to offer role diversification and upskilling to Pharmacy Technicians (PT) from our existing Medicines Optimisation (MO) team who were keen to support the development of others and support workforce expansion as part of their role while adding supervision skills to their competencies.

A key aim at the start of the project was to offer each of our 15 PCN's an opportunity to experience supporting development of PTPTA's and learn from process to be able to develop supervision skills in each PCN Pharmacy Team to support future PCN Pharmacy Team growth.

ICS Lead PT W.E&T and PM supported independent bids (primary care & community pharmacy and single sector community pharmacy) providing advice, sharing learning and expertise developed through the project, giving confidence to system partners to skilfully expand their workforce.

Leadership & Accountability

Those undertaking training have a robust induction period with a clear pathway for accountability. The diagram below ensures that the trainees and supervisors have a clear assurance and governance process.

Local Educational platform is developing each year with ICS Lead PT W.E&T coordinating ES, CS & placements hosts.

This has built a supervision Community of Practice and supported other single sector & GP Integrated placements across the county, resulting in building great working relationships & communication

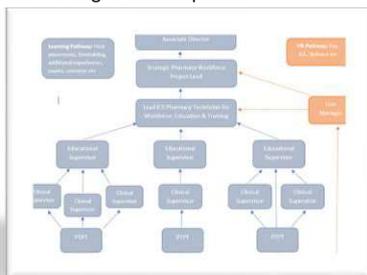


Figure 1: Education & Reporting Structure for PTPTAs

Quality Supervision

Initially the Lead ICS PT WET conducted all ES role requirements, however increased PTPTAs required the expansion and development of ES capacity. Our existing PT workforce were given the opportunity to upskill and complete the ProPharmace ES course. This increased capacity whilst developing the skills of our qualified PT workforce and aligned to their Personal Development Planning. Evaluation of process included feedback taken from PTPTA regular reviews, training provider, line manager appraisals, end of year and end of course feedback. As well as feedback from the regional NHS WTE SW PTPT Programme Board meetings.

From the first cohort we found that quality supervision (see figure 2) was paramount to trainee success which was further recognised by the training provider who described the supervision as 'platinum standard' across the two year programme due to consistent, high quality conversations with trainees, providers and extended placement hosts and trainees themselves.



Figure 2: Attributes for Quality Supervision

Benefit to System

Our system has successfully recruited to ALL commissioned places. To date this project has added 6 qualified technicians to the workforce with a further 6 due to register with GPhC in 2024, 8 in 2025 and projected 10 for 2026. This project will have reduced anticipated 2019 deficit of 52% by end of 2025, aiming to have achieved a deficit reduction of 72% by 2026. See Figure 3.

This continues to be attainable with the dedication of increased supervision capacity to ensure trainees have quality supervision throughout their learning journey.

Future benefits to the system from increasing pharmacy professional supervision is the stimulation of interest, ability and capacity to support the legacy workforce in upskilling and future pharmacy technicians undertaking advanced practice courses. Whilst providing leadership to colleagues in supporting pharmacy roles that wish to upskill and develop.

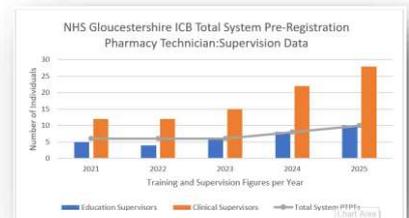


Figure 3: PTPT Figures aligned with supervision figures
* figures include ICB employed and independent PTPTs, 2024/2025 projected figures

Discussion and Further work

The outcome of this project is the development of a sustainable education and leadership platform that supports the pharmacy technician workforce pipeline. Through quality improvement we have been able to show the benefit of quality training supervision enabling both employers and PTPTAs to experience a well supported, robust learning and training platform.

Through training we enable PTPTAs to embed within future employment teams. We are continuing to increase our numbers and have several stakeholder employers now applying to host their own apprenticeships making use of levy funding to support the clinical transformation opportunities within their practice. For Community Pharmacy it has provided the opportunity through optimal use of skill mix to increase the clinical focus for our registered pharmacy professionals.

References

1. One Gloucestershire. Integrated Pharmacy and Medicines Optimisation (IPMO) Plan, v1.9 (Sept 2021). Not widely accessible.
2. One Gloucestershire. ICS Operational Executive Core Paper, April 2022. Not widely accessible.
3. Pharmacy Technician Workforce Expansion Project. 2023 Available online: Pharmacy Technician Workforce Expansion Project | Health Education England (hee.nhs.uk) (Accessed online 20/3/23)
4. ProPharmace: Training Through Innovation, Educational Supervision, 2022. Available Online: Educational Supervisor Programme - ProPharmace (Accessed online 20/3/23)