

PTJ

Journal of the Association
of Pharmacy Technicians
United Kingdom



New Appointments and Networking

- Meet your new President and Vice President
- Members Business Meeting
- Learning Resources: centre pullout





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KAY MORGAN FAPharmT – Editor (Guest)
editor@aptuk.org

Try anything at least once

Hello, my name is Kay. I'm your guest editor for this exciting spring edition of the PTJ.

It was with great delight that I accepted the offer to be guest editor while National Officer recruitment processes were ongoing. When an opportunity comes along that gives the chance to try out a role it's a no brainer to give it a try. It's not a one woman task though, I have to say a huge thank you to everyone involved for their assistance and patience helping me through the process for the first time. I learnt the PTJ starts with the members, as the journal would be empty if it wasn't for you all sharing your projects and work. I encourage you to get in touch with the editor if you have an idea or would like to share the work you have been involved with. You may be surprised how much you enjoy the process and the warm fuzzy feeling when you see your name in print.

I am honoured this journal gets to print breaking news of our new president and vice president posts. Read about Liz and Ellen and their rise to presidency/vice status. Although with that comes the end of a chapter with Tess's last address as outgoing president. As you will read she encourages us to look forward and aim high. We would do good to heed her suggestion to ensure the roles of pharmacy technicians continue to develop and build on foundations laid.

The variety of articles; from developments in aseptic education to the APTUK platform we can use to record our CPD, the launch of a new Scottish National Pharmacy Technician Group to a visit to 10 Downing Street hopefully means there is something for everyone.

The Journal contains information about learning resources and a guide how to complete revalidation. The Journal has been cleverly designed so you can pull out the centre pages and use the guide as a learning resource or a reminder on how to complete revalidation records. The centre flips over to a flyer advertising the April business meeting. To assist with the PlusOne campaign consider pinning this to workplace notice boards or sharing with members and non-member colleagues.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as I have reading the submitted articles. Like Liz Fidler's story I had thought of 2 careers before pharmacy choose me. Journalism was my other one, who would have thought that I could ever have both?

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PTJ 2019 Timeline

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Keep up with all the news and info on APTUK's 2019 conference and awards by using the twitter hashtag #APTUK19

Author and reviewer guidelines

Full instructions are available online at www.aptuk.org. Articles must be submitted electronically to editor@aptuk.org. Authors are required to transfer copyright in their work to the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK.

Subscription available on request. For more information contact membership@aptuk.org



TESS FENN MAPharmT – APTUK President 2014-2019

Immediate Past President – 10th February 2019

Immediate Past President's Address

Dear Members,

As this is my last column to you, I firstly would like to thank each and every one of our members for the support and trust that you have given me during my Presidency. It has been a tremendous 5 years. I believe that APTUK's professional leadership status has grown and it is uplifting that the Association's reputation as the professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians is now fully embedded.

When I took up my Presidency in 2014, APTUK had just become a Limited by Guarantee Company 'Not for Profit' and the challenges were to modernise and implement quality management systems into the running of the organisation; raise APTUK's profile with members, non-members and our stakeholders; increase the number of members; reach pharmacy technicians working in the community and support the evolution of pharmacy technicians from an occupation status to that of a profession.

I am pleased to report that we have more than doubled our membership since 2014 and saw a 16% growth in membership last year alone. Our membership has become more reflective of and representative of the diverse roles and sectors where pharmacy technicians work. It is still an onward and upward journey but I believe we have laid strong foundations on which to build. I urge you all to continue your support by engaging in our **plusone** campaign, the challenge I gave at conference last year for every member to recruit one more.

October last year saw the launch, at the Pharmacy Show, of APTUK's Strategy and Vision for 2018 to 2021 which sets out our four strategic goals 'LEAP'; leading, expanding, advocating and progressing. These have been developed by the Board of Directors and the professional committee through listening to our members, the wider pharmacy technician profession, the whole of pharmacy, our stakeholders and the feedback we gained from the 'horizon scanning' event we held in January 2018. The goals for our future build upon our past achievements, organisational history and our values and purpose. They also align with the UK Pharmacy and National Health Policies. You can read the full strategy on website: <http://www.aptuk.org/static/pdf/f5dc43089c22ea29f55f6a252118b2fb.pdf>

In starting to deliver our 'leading' goal, I am pleased to show how we have been 'supporting

and influencing the future delivery of innovative pharmacy practice' by the recent work we have endorsed and have been involved with. APTUK has been represented at the table and has participated in the development of these documents, all of which have been recently published by RPS.

'Polypharmacy: Getting our medicines right' provides a summary of the scale and complexity of the issue of polypharmacy. It outlines how healthcare professionals, patients and carers can find solutions when polypharmacy causes problems for patients and points to useful resources that can help. <https://www.rpharms.com/recognition/setting-professional-standards/polypharmacy-getting-our-medicines-right>

'The safe & secure handling of medicines' is an important read as it covers all aspects of good practice when obtaining medicines, their transport, receipt, manufacture or manipulation and storage plus the issuing and disposing of medicines. This new version has been broadened to provide guidance to all professionals who handle medicines wherever the healthcare setting may be. <https://www.rpharms.com/recognition/setting-professional-standards/safe-and-secure-handling-of-medicines>

'Administration of medicines' provides principles-based guidance to ensure the safe administration of medicines by healthcare professionals and is aimed at registered healthcare professionals, therefore applicable to pharmacy technicians now undertaking this role.

<https://www.rpharms.com/Portals/0/RPS%20document%20library/Open%20access/Professional%20standards/SSHM%20and%20Admin/Admin%20of%20Meds%20prof%20guidance.pdf?ver=2019-01-23-145026-567>

“THE GOALS FOR OUR FUTURE BUILD UPON OUR PAST ACHIEVEMENTS, ORGANISATIONAL HISTORY AND OUR VALUES AND PURPOSE”



APTUK has also been working with the RPS and the GPhC to publish a reflection and learning resource to support everyone across pharmacy to learn the lessons from the Gosport Independent Panel report. The Gosport report, published in June 2018, found that at least 450 patients died having been inappropriately prescribed opioids between 1989 and 2000.

It is absolutely essential that pharmacy technicians read and learn from this. Not only to help empower us, as healthcare professionals, to raise concerns in the first place but also to have the confidence to follow these through and ensure they are heard and acted upon. The learning resources can be found on our website <https://www.aptuk.org/learning>

Much of mine and the Board's work since conference 18 has been working towards electing our next President. This has involved some complex and detailed legal work that was needed to change our APTUK Articles which sit with our organisational Memorandum. The Articles govern how we run APTUK and required a change to allow the President to come from and be elected by the members. I am delighted that this work was completed in the timescales we needed and our new President is now duly in place.

So it remains for me to say that it has been an absolute honour and a humbling experience, to have served as your President. I have been proud to

represent our pharmacy technician profession as your leader and it has brought me into contact with so many amazing and inspiring people. I take away with me a wealth of experience, fond memoirs and wonderful friendships as I now join the prestigious list of past APTUK presidents.

Through the dedication and conscientious work of the voluntary Board of Directors, the Professional Committee of National Officers and our local branches, pharmacy technicians are recognising the value of belonging to their leadership body; they are displaying professionalism and more are becoming advocates for their own profession. I hope that this is testament to my Presidency and that I have made a difference.

I offer my congratulations to our new President, Liz Fidler and I have every confidence that she will, along with the Vice President, Ellen Williams, the Board and the professional committee, put her own time in the perspective of history, building on our resilience and strong foundations.

I am tremendously proud of APTUK, our pharmacy technician profession and will enjoy being a loyal APTUK member and enduring advocate.

As always I will leave you with some reflection.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." —Eleanor Roosevelt

APTUK Membership information

CURRENT FEES

To Join APTUK follow this link www.aptuk.org/about-us/join-aptuk/

The current annual fees are:

Full £48

Associate £14 (for retired members)

Students are free of charge

Please ensure you have amended your standing order, direct debits will be updated to any new fees

APTUK JOURNAL

Four editions of the journal are printed and posted to all full, fellow and associate members.

Editions are also available electronically via the member's area on the APTUK website.

All members, including students can access previous and current editions via the member's only area.

To discuss sharing your work in the journal contact editor@aptuk.org

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Please inform Lynn Ali, the Membership Coordinator if you have recently changed any of the following details or not sure if we hold current details:

- Email?
- Address?
- Home or mobile telephone?
- Sector of work?

APTUK WEBSITE MEMBERS ONLY AREA

Please ensure you have access to the member's area to receive electronic journals and find details of other benefits of membership.

To request a username and password please contact Lynn Ali, the Membership Coordinator.



Have you heard about the APTUK **plusone** membership challenge? For further details on how you can get involved visit our website www.aptuk.org/plus-one-aptuk18-membership-challenge

Contact details for Lynn Ali - APTUK Membership Coordinator
Email: membership@aptuk.org Answerphone: 0121 632 2025



LIZ FIDLER FAPharmT – APTUK President
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Incoming President's Address

Whilst typing this article, I am reflecting on the whirlwind of the last few days. I was extremely honoured to receive the chain of office on the 9th February 2019 from Past President Tess Fenn.

Looking at the chain and the names inscribed of the past presidents, many of whom I have had the great privilege to have known, I feel it important to share with members that the history of the Association and its values and beliefs are incredibly important to me. If you have had the time to read my statement you will see my commitment to this reflected.

As many of you experience in your professional lives, change is often necessary to meet evolving needs. I am looking forward to leading change for APTUK where needed to ensure our sustainability and position as the professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians and to ensure that the Association remains as current and reflective of membership needs, now and in the future, as it did in 1952.

Growing the membership and supporting professional development for the benefit of patient care will be at the heart of my term as president.

APTUK will be hosting a morning Members Business Meeting on 6th April 2019 at the GPhC Offices, Canary Wharf, London and this will be key for members to engage with. Branch representatives will also be in attendance. As well as reflecting on our past achievements, I will be posing some key questions to members to help strengthen and focus APTUK's strategic direction. We will be utilising technology for members that can't attend. Look out for more information on this event which will be sent to members directly and advertised on social media. I would encourage you to spread the word amongst colleagues at work, at your local pharmacy and through any route you feel appropriate as the Association relies on its members support. All welcome.

The afternoon will be open to non-members, allowing us to showcase key workstreams and provide information on the main issues impacting the pharmacy technician profession. An opportunity for non-members to come and see what APTUK are all about.

I have had the privilege of having had diverse roles throughout my career. The most recent are reflected in my biography (see p12) but I wanted to share with you my journey. It feels a bit indulgent, but will hopefully emphasize why I feel



so passionately about the contribution pharmacy technicians make to pharmacy services and patient care.

Where it all started

My career began in community pharmacy. I remember being given my slip of paper as it was a work experience offer between Strood Pharmacy and the Library. Although I do love a good book, I recognised that keeping quiet would be a challenge! So, the decision was easy. Pharmacy it would be. Work experience led to becoming a Saturday girl and then on the counter, slowly moving my way to the 'back'. I soon learnt under the fabulous leadership of Vanessa Roach and Mr Mangal that being at the back was not the place to be when it comes to supporting patients to make the most of their medicines.

After many fulfilling years in community pharmacy, I made the difficult decision to transfer to hospital pharmacy. The move was career driven and I sent a flyer to all the local hospitals and received letters saying 'no thanks' some of this I believe was due to the fact that my initial training had been in community and I was one of the first 'NVQ' cohorts. This experience has stayed

“As many of you experience in your professional lives, change is often necessary to meet evolving needs.”

with me as I am firm advocate for not making a judgement on paper and that; skills, knowledge and experience from something out of the normal route should never just be disregarded.

The good news is that I received a letter inviting me to an MTO2 rotational pharmacy technician interview at Maidstone Hospital, this really interested me as it included working in aseptics (I had no idea what that was). Worth mentioning here that a certain Tess Fenn was on the interview panel!

Transitioning from community to hospital was interesting. Skills from both sectors are essential and I believe this will be a great strength of the new pharmacy technician qualification. Although I struggled initially with 'topping up' the IV cupboard, my customer service skills and pace were second to none! There are many more comparisons regarding underpinning skills and knowledge required, regardless of the sector of practice. The contributions pharmacy technicians make in various sectors has long been acknowledged, however not all sectors have been able to train pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians. The revised October 2017 General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Initial Education and Training Standards provide a great opportunity to expand the number of healthcare environments in which pharmacy technicians can undertake training.

I have worked with many pharmacists in many different roles and have always felt that robust education has underpinned the confidence in my abilities as a pharmacy technician. Pharmacy

technicians are all in trusted positions where we make an impact on patient care. We must work as a team, where we have confidence in each other's unique skill set. Respecting what each team member can bring to the service is critical. I have spent much of my career asking questions and exploring education pathways of those I work with including those out with the pharmacy profession. I would really encourage this as there are a lot of misconceptions and judgements made.

Although APTUK is the professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians, I feel it is important to say how supportive I am of the many complimentary roles to the pharmacy profession, pharmacy assistants, dispensers, medicines counter assistants, health champions, drivers, porters and other roles that also have a critical role in delivering a patient focussed service.

The pharmacy workforce is diverse and relies on so many skills to deliver a patient focussed service. We all have a part to play and I am looking forward to celebrating and championing the role that pharmacy technicians contribute.

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We are currently offering a financial package to Students in their 2nd yr of training in the form of a £3.7K (taxable) bursary that decide to join the RAF Medical Reserves. We are also recruiting fully qualified Pharmacy Technicians who are registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). This is an opportunity to apply and develop your skills in an environment of unique personal and professional challenge.

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Human Resources and Administration Work Streams Updates

It's been a busy few months for me as Secretary and the HR workstream!

Mid December saw me take on the interim Director of Human Resources role to enable Andrea Ashton to support the Communications workstream. Working with Nicki Ody, HR Policies and Procedures National Officer, we have updated the induction and recruitment and selection packages, for those volunteering with the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK). Nicki has utilised resources from Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and advised on the membership of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). Membership of the NCVO has enabled us to access resources that support the development of the policies at APTUK.

Over the next few months the HR workstream will be working on retention by updating the appraisal system for our Associates and Professional Committee and creating exit interview surveys for departing Associates and National Officers.

The role of APTUK Secretary has the responsibility for updating details at Companies House, this is required as part of us being a Limited by Guarantee Company. Changes to the Articles of the Association enabled us to revise the recruitment requirements for the President role i.e. we could recruit from members outside the Board of Directors. We also used the opportunity of revising these Articles of the Association to give future options for payments to Board members. This is not in the pipeline now, but making changes now gives us options in the future and made the best use of legal monies required to make any changes to the Articles.

Companies House, and the Articles of the Association, have very clear legal guidelines that need to be followed. These included specific requirements for calling meetings to change the Articles, and recording the agreements and decisions made. The organisation of these meetings and the minuting of them is an essential

part of my secretary role. Once the Articles of the Association were agreed my role was to register them at Companies House. You will find a copy of the new Articles on our website.

The next few weeks will see me completing more legal requirements with Companies House to register the new members of the Board!

The work of the Secretary is never done!



GAIL HALL
FAPharmT

APTUK Secretary and Interim
Director of Human Resources
secretary@aptuk.org

Communications Workstream Update

It has certainly been a challenging time for the Communications work stream due to the departure of Rachel Raybould, Lee Cogger and Sam Murray and other vacancies that exist in the team. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Rachel, Lee and Sam for their hard work and support. Communication with our members and stakeholders is key to the success of APTUK, so our priority and focus is to ensure we can maintain our messaging; to continue to engage with pharmacy technicians; encourage membership and involvement and to plan our upcoming face to face events. I have stepped into the Director role in the interim and the team currently includes Matthew Towner as Interim Website Office; Gwen Yale, Events Officer and associates, Kay Morgan, Iman Hassan and Shelley Mannion. I would also like to say a huge thank you and well done to Kay Morgan, who has produced this fabulous edition of the PTJ as guest editor.

As you will have seen #APTUK 19 is booked and now open for registration. The good news is prices have been frozen this year and early bird discount

is available for 2019. With the launch of our strategy we will be focusing on 'LEAPing into the future' and also actively supporting you with peer review for revalidation. Look out for the exciting programme coming soon! Before conference we will be at the Clinical Pharmacy Congress (CPC), if you're visiting, make sure you come and say hello and meet your National Officers. It's great to see a pharmacy technician theatre at CPC this year featuring some great speakers and a leadership panel Q&A with APTUK Fellows, Vice President and President.

Our Membership business meeting this year will be held outside of conference to coincide with our business year and will be held on the morning of April 6th 2019. We look forward to hearing your feedback at the event. In the afternoon, we will be holding an APTUK showcase to give non-members a taste of what APTUK offers and to encourage membership. Do encourage your non-member colleagues to come along. The Plus One challenge continues (more information on page 11), so this is an

ideal opportunity to recruit your plus one (or more...!).

We will soon be launching individual twitter accounts for President, Vice President, Directors and National Officer roles to help with communicating directly with our stakeholders, watch this space. I will be working closely with Liz and Gail, Interim HR Director, to plan recruitment to our vacant posts – Editor, Media and Engagement Officers - so if you are interested and have the expertise, or would like to develop in this area please get in touch.



ANDREA ASHTON
MAPharmT

Interim Director of Communications
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Aseptic Processing Programme Launch

On the 7th November 2018, at the National Health Service (NHS) Pharmaceutical Quality Assurance and Technical Services Symposium in Chester, the NHS Technical Specialist Education and Training group (TSET) launched the latest version of the Aseptic Processing Programme (APP).

Background

The original 2010 programme was highly respected and recognised by auditors, managers and trainers as foundation training for NHS personnel undertaking aseptic preparation of medicines. The original programme was accessed by more than 2000 individuals and institutions before redevelopment of the content started in 2015.

Many will recall that the original programme was available as a paper based workbook, CD-ROMs and an online interactive workbook. Due to many changes in legislation and practice over the years, the 2010 version of the APP became outdated and was eventually withdrawn in May 2017.

Back in 2015, NHS TSET commenced an APP revision project. This began with a survey to determine how and who was using the original programme. It also aimed to ascertain how well it fulfilled user requirements. This piece of work was necessary to scope the content and format of the revised programme. The results of the survey showed some interesting differences in how NHS aseptic units chose to use the original programme and provided some useful insights into the demographics of users. It also provided an opportunity for respondents to identify content they wished to see in the revised offering. This information was used by NHS TSET to help create a brief for the new version and to develop a project plan.

As part of the brief, it was decided that some chapters of the original programme should be split into two new distinct chapters. It was felt that this would allow expansion of the subject matter and aid clarity. Following demand indicated in the survey, new chapters were commissioned such as one on pharmaceutical quality systems and another on qualification and validation. In addition, TSET members representing the UK Radiopharmacy Group suggested the creation of a new chapter on the preparation of radiopharmaceuticals.

Challenges

One of the challenges in developing this revised learning programme was the ever-changing landscape in aseptic work today and thus keeping the content up to date before launch. For example, part way through the revision process, the Quality Assurance of Aseptic Preparation Services (5th Edition)¹ was published. This meant that the newly

drafted chapters had to be revised further to reflect new terminology and standards. In addition, new content on neuraxial devices was developed for inclusion in the aseptic technique chapter only to subsequently require replacement before the launch of the new APP programme due to the device design changes that occurred. One might say that this indicates that aseptic processing is an exciting and fast paced area of pharmacy to work in. It did however prove a challenge to the project timelines and to the project team.

Another challenge to the project was the geographical spread of subject matter experts across the UK and the fact that each one holds a substantive post within a busy NHS aseptic, quality assurance or radiopharmacy department. NHS TSET are immensely grateful to all those who burned the midnight oil to provide support and expertise to this project whilst holding down challenging day jobs.

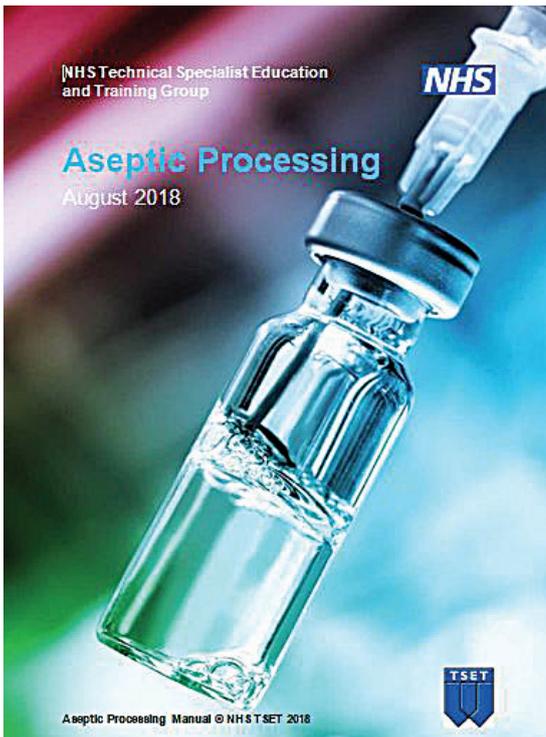
The APP 2018 Chapters

The 2018 version of the APP now includes the following chapters:

- Introduction (Including Good Manufacturing Practice)
- Legislation and Standards
- Basic Microbiology
- Clean Room Design
- Clean Air Devices
- Personal Health and Hygiene
- Pharmaceutical Quality Systems (**New**)
- Environmental Monitoring
- Pre-Processing and Collation
- In-Process Checking and Product Approval
- Clean Room Clothing (**New**)
- Aseptic Technique
- Clean Room Behaviours (**New**)
- Transfer Procedures
- Qualification and Validation (**New**)
- Preparation of Cytotoxics
- Preparation of Intravenous Additives (CIVA)
- Preparation of Parenteral Nutrition
- Preparation of Radiopharmaceuticals (**New**)
- Storage and Distribution
- Waste Management
- Sanitisation-Premises and Equipment

The content of the chapters has been fully updated and expanded. It delivers new and engaging content, additional information, plus outstanding images and

1. Quality of Aseptic Preparation Services (Fifth Edition) Edited by Dr Alison M. Beaney, D Prof, MSc, FRPharms on behalf of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the NHS Pharmaceutical Quality Assurance Committee. Published by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. 2016



graphics to enhance the assimilation of knowledge. Some chapters contain real-life case studies to illustrate the importance and critical nature of aseptic work.

In addition, there are selected questions and exercises linked with each chapter to be used for personal reinforcement of learning or as a part of a mentoring and assessment process.

Designed to be accessible for many levels of experience, the new programme will provide basic knowledge for those new to the field but will also top up and refresh the knowledge of experienced personnel.

APP 2018 is free to use for all NHS personnel, registration and access available from www.tset.org.uk.

New users will need to register for an account on the website home page using their professional email account. Once registered, the APP chapters

are available for download from the newly created APP zone on the site. Registration also gives access to the NHS TSET Technical Professional Development Portal.

New APP registrants are encouraged to develop their knowledge by working through each chapter in sequence with the support of a work-based trainer or mentor.

What's next?

NHS TSET is currently working on additional chapters to add to the programme such as a chapter on biological therapies. These will go live in the APP zone in the coming months.

Excitingly, NHS TSET is soon to commence the second phase of the APP update project. This will see the subject matter from the 2018 chapters transformed into e-learning including an on-line assessment feature. This will provide an immensely engaging and flexible way for personnel to learn about aseptic processing or refresh their current knowledge. This is naturally a big undertaking that will ultimately take some time to develop and test.

NHS TSET hope that those working in the field of aseptic preparation will think it worth the wait and will find it an invaluable tool, especially during this time of change in NHS pharmacy technical services training.

RACHEL DIXON MPharmT

TSET Projects Coordinator
Project Development and Technical Lead,
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Have you heard about the APTUK Membership Challenge?

Have you made your pledge to recruit a new member to APTUK?
Have you encouraged a new member to join and shared this news with others?

For further details on how can you can get involved in the #Plusone challenge visit our website
www.aptuk.org/plus-one-aptuk18-membership-challenge



National Pharmacy Technician Group Scotland

The National Pharmacy Technician Group Scotland (NPTGS) was created at the request of NHS Scotland (NHSS) Directors of Pharmacy in 2017.

The role of NPTGS is to:

- Enable professional leadership and the development of professional practice for pharmacy technicians in Scotland
- Share best practice, networking and problem solving to meet NHS Scotland and patient requirements
- Support role development and skill mix, including that of unregistered pharmacy support staff at a national level through collaboration on the development of educational strategy
- Act as a consultative resource for matters relating to pharmacy technician practice
- Contribute to the delivery of the national pharmacy strategy

Membership of the group is comprised of lead pharmacy technicians representing the managed service of 13 Scottish territorial Boards; in addition, we also have members representing community pharmacy and NHS Education Scotland. Members are predominantly nominated by their Director of Pharmacy. Group members are expected to work at a strategic level within the group and their own Board or area of practice and be a role model and professional leader for pharmacy technicians.

The group meets every two months and is always well attended. The chair of NPTGS is Dr. Carol Nairn, Head of Medicines Supply Chain, NHS Tayside and vice chair is Margaret Vass, Lead Pharmacy Technician, Fife Health & Social Care Partnership. NPTGS has an agreed work plan and several work streams to support the delivery of this e.g. workforce and initial education and training standards. We also work in partnership with Nicky Nardone, Pharmacy Technician Clinical Leadership Fellow on workforce planning, developing a career pathway for pharmacy technicians, developing an updated optimum skill mix model and support Nicky's work to explore barriers and enablers to professionalism for pharmacy technicians.

NPTGS has established links with the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK, NHSS Directors of Pharmacy, NHSS National Acute Pharmacy Leads, NHSS Primary Care Community Pharmacy group and the Scottish Practice Pharmacist and Prescribing Advisors Association. We are currently working in partnership with Pharmacy Management to deliver workshops designed for a pharmacy technician audience at their conferences.

In December 2018, NPTGS published their first strategy on communications. The key aim of this strategy is to enable effective two way communication with every pharmacy technician in Scotland regardless of their area of practice within the public or private sector.

You can follow NPTGS on Twitter @NPTGS1, request to join the NPTGS Facebook group or contact via e-mail at admin.nptgs@nhs.net

APTUK President and Vice President Appointments

The APTUK Board of Directors are pleased to announce appointments to the President and Vice President posts following the recent nomination process. The new President and Vice President take up their posts from 9th February 2019 and the Board and professional committee look forward to working with Liz and Ellen.



Liz Fidler, Associate Dean – Quality, Health Education England working across Kent, Surrey and Sussex, has been appointed as President. Liz has led many national projects for pharmacy technician development, including Accuracy Checking for Community Pharmacy Technicians, securing funding for Pharmacy

Integration Fund projects and is currently leading on the development of the new pharmacy technician qualification. Liz is a Fellow of the Association and APTUK Pharmacy Technician of the Year in 2017. Liz has held positions on the Kent Branch Committee and was previously APTUK's Education Officer instrumental in the development of the Foundation Practice Framework.



Ellen Williams, Director of Regional Pharmacy Training, South West Medicines Information & Training (SWMIT) has been appointed as Vice President. Ellen has a wealth of pharmacy and strategic leadership experience with the education sector. Ellen is a Fellow of the Association and has made a

significant contribution to APTUK, having previously held National Officer positions of Editor and Events Officer.



The appointments come following Tess Fenn's announcement of her decision to step down from the role as President at APTUK's annual conference in June 2018. The Board of Directors, on behalf of APTUK and our members, wish to take this opportunity to thank Tess for her outstanding commitment to

the Association, her leadership as President and for her dedication to advancing the role of the pharmacy technician profession in the delivery of patient centred care.

Revalidation:

Introduction and Background

What is Revalidation?

Revalidation is a process whereby pharmacy professionals demonstrate competency in their knowledge, skills and attitude to ensure the public that they are fit to practice.

This is an annual, mandatory requirement by the regulatory body, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC).

It helps pharmacy professionals (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) to:

- Keep their skills and knowledge in their area of practice up to date
- Reflect on how to improve their practice
- Show the public and the patients that the care they provide is safe and effective as set out in the standards for pharmacy professionals.

Pharmacy professionals will be required to submit revalidation records every time they renew their registration with the GPhC. The requirements are:

- Four CPD records
- One reflective account based on standards for pharmacy professionals (the standards are decided by GPhC)
- One peer discussion

CPD Records

The requirement is to complete four CPD records a year, of which two have to be planned.

- **Planned learning:** When learning is planned in advance and activities support this knowledge / skills gap then take place e.g. when you start work in a new area of pharmacy and want to learn more about that area of practice.
- **Unplanned learning:** When a situation occurs which causes an unscheduled learning activity e.g. when you are unable to respond to a patient's query and realise there is a gap in knowledge. This becomes unplanned as you would then start thinking about what activities you can undertake to fill this knowledge gap.

For further guidance, see links at the end of the article.

Reflective Account

All registrants are required to submit one reflective account based on the GPhC standards for pharmacy professionals. GPhC have chosen the following three standards for the current revalidation cycle. They are:

- Standard 3: Pharmacy professionals must communicate effectively
- Standard 6: Pharmacy professionals must behave professionally
- Standard 9: Pharmacy professionals must demonstrate leadership

You will need to reflect on one or more of these standards in your reflective account. They relate to one another therefore; it is easier to provide a single reflective account on all these if you want to do that. Please visit the link below for further information on the various examples that will help you to complete your revalidation records.

Peer Discussion

- Peer discussion involves having a conversation with someone that you trust. It has to be honest and open and reflect on your learning and practice.

- You can choose your peer and they can either be another healthcare professional or someone from a totally different background.
- Your peer can be based in the UK or outside and the discussion can be via telephone, video call or any method that you choose. For further guidance, please follow the GPhC link.

Support provided by APTUK

APTUK website has various learning resources that can support you with CPD and revalidation.

The resources can be found under training on the homepage and range from short videos to currently sixty two bite sized CPD modules.

Once learning has been completed, you can document and save your CPD records on the learning log, a facility that APTUK has for its members.

The learning log replicates the GPhC revalidation templates which will make it easier for you to submit your records when required.

Please visit the link below for further information on the various examples that will help you to complete your revalidation records. https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/revalidation-resources-pharmacy-professionals#revalidation_examples

For further information on your revalidation timeline, please visit: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/your-revalidation-timeline>

For the revalidation framework, please visit: https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/document/gphc_revalidation_framework_january_2018.pdf

Contact your Revalidation National Officer for further information.

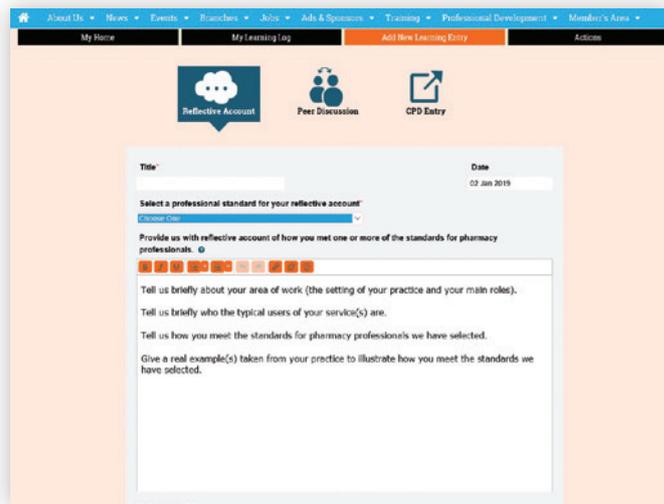
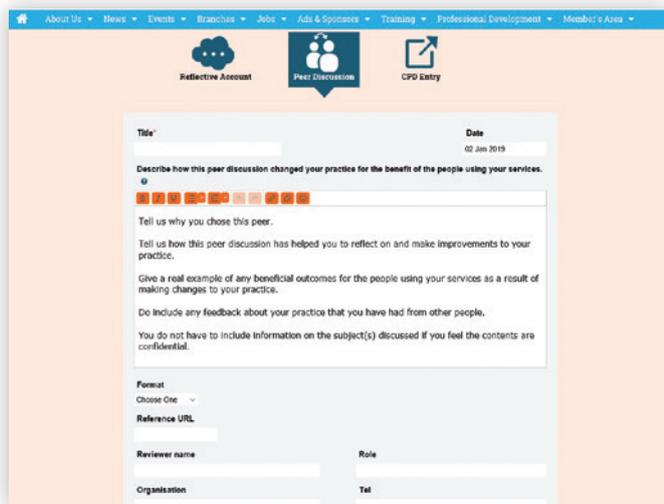
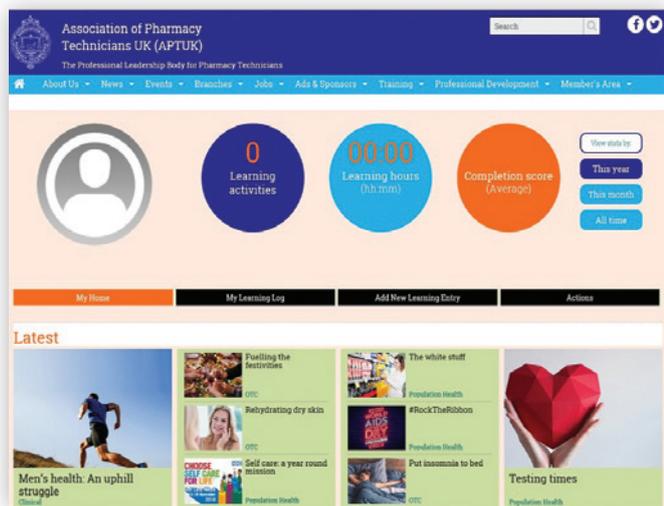


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APTUK Website Learning Resources

The APTUK website has various learning resources that can support you with your Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and revalidation.



Members will need to register an account on the website to access this information. If you are not a member of APTUK – this is one of the many benefits of membership – see our website for more information www.aptuk.org

CPD Resources

The resources can be found under the training tab on the homepage and range from short learning videos to (currently) 62 bite sized CPD modules.

Topics include:

- Clinical topics: Antimicrobial stewardship, Depression in adults, Low back pain, Asthma management and many more
- Revalidation, Meeting the standards, Professionalism and Professional judgement.

Visit the APTUK website www.aptuk.org to see all the learning resources available for you.

Recording CPD

Once learning has been completed, you can document and save your CPD records on the learning log, a facility available to APTUK members.

- Log in
- Click on your name
- Click on My Learning Log
- Click on Add new learning entry
- Click on CPD entry

- You will have two options: unplanned or planned. Choose depending on the type of learning.
- Record your learning
- Save.

The learning log replicates the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) revalidation templates which will make it easier for you to submit your records when required.

Reflective Account

All registrants are required to submit a reflective account based on the GPhC standards for pharmacy professionals. GPhC have chosen the following three standards for the current revalidation cycle:

- Standard 3: Pharmacy professionals must communicate effectively
 - Standard 6: Pharmacy professionals must behave professionally
 - Standard 9: Pharmacy professionals must demonstrate leadership
- You will need to reflect on one or more of these standards in your reflective account. They relate to one another therefore it is easier to provide a single reflective account on all standards if you want to do that. Visit the web pages below for further information and various examples that will help you complete your revalidation

records. https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/revalidation-resources-pharmacy-professionals#revalidation_examples

For further information on your revalidation timeline visit: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/your-revalidation-timeline>

For the revalidation framework visit:

https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/document/gphc_revalidation_framework_january_2018.pdf

Please contact your Revalidation National Officer if you require further information.



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APTUK Membership Business Meeting & Showcase Event



**Join us on Saturday 6th April 2019 at
General Pharmaceutical Council
25 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5LQ**

10.30am - 1pm Membership Business Meeting

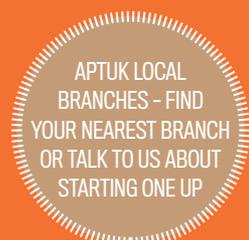
This meeting forms part of APTUK business as a Limited by Guarantee Company and provides an opportunity for APTUK members to hear the annual reports from the APTUK work streams and take part in discussions around APTUK priorities and future planning.

For the first time ever, for the benefit of any members who are unable to attend, parts of the meeting will be streamed live on the internet and we will also be using social media to take your questions for the committee.

Your views are important to us, please come along to engage with and influence the work of your Professional Leadership Body.

2pm - 4pm APTUK Showcase Event

APTUK is committed to ensuring members are kept up to date with national policy and drivers impacting on the pharmacy technician profession. The showcase is an opportunity for members and non-members to meet key pharmacy technician leaders from APTUK and partners to update your knowledge on some of the most important areas of work impacting the profession. Meet your directors, committee members, associates and branches - see what your professional leadership body does for you...



National Officer for Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians

May I introduce myself as the APTUK National Officer for Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians (PTPT's). I have been in post since October 2018.

I am Chief Pharmacy Technician at Manchester Foundation Trust. I ensure that within my own department pharmacy service assistants receive appropriate training and development in line with the standards set by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). Through involvement with my own trust apprenticeship steering group I have become increasingly aware of the importance of the changes in the apprenticeship standards. I was invited to be a member of the Pharmacy Services Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group on behalf of APTUK. The Pharmacy Apprenticeship Trailblazer Employer Group is comprised of employers from all areas of pharmacy and works to ensure that the apprenticeship standards meets the needs of employers.

In addition, we as registered professionals have a duty to embed these standards within the workplace.

There are employees in pharmacy currently, such as 'pharmacy assistants' or 'counter assistants', who are not registered professionals themselves, so registered pharmacy professionals must provide assurance that the unregistered workforce are competent and equipped to support the delivery of a safe and effective pharmacy service. This applies to all sectors of pharmacy.

As a registered professional what is our role in ensuring that unregistered staff are appropriately trained as we delegate essential roles and tasks to assistants across all sectors?

The GPhC in their interim policy on minimum training requirements for unregistered pharmacy staff – September 2018, states *'that the role of the registered professional is to ensure that tasks are delegated to people who are competent and appropriately trained or are in training, and exercise proper*

oversight. In addition, the standards for registered pharmacies (Revised June 2018) require that staff have the appropriate skills, qualifications and competence for their role (and the tasks they carry out), or that they are working under the supervision of another person while they are in training.'

The policy is very clear about the expectations in outlining the minimum training requirements for unregistered pharmacy staff this enables us as pharmacy professionals to delegate certain tasks as outlined in the policy and afford the public the assurance they need to trust the profession and its employees within it.

Over the forthcoming editions of the PTJ I will be providing regular updates on both the Level 2 and Level 3 Apprenticeships and information regarding pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians that I hope you find informative and supportive.

REFERENCES

GPhC Standards for Pharmacy Professionals May 2017

GPhC Standards for Registered Pharmacies revised June 2018

JEANETTE ADRIAN

APTUK National Officer for Pre-registration
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National Officer Update: Level 2 Apprenticeship Standard

In my first update I will give a brief overview of the newly approved Level 2 Pharmacy Services Apprenticeship Standard for Pharmacy Service Assistants. The Apprenticeship Standard has been developed and agreed by experts across all pharmacy sectors involved in the Apprenticeship Trailblazer Employer Group.

I thought it would be useful to outline the role of the Pharmacy Apprenticeship Trailblazer Employer Group and their links and collaborative working with the GPhC, professional bodies and representatives from all areas of pharmacy.

The Pharmacy Apprenticeship Trailblazer Employer Group is comprised of employers from all areas of pharmacy and works to ensure that the apprenticeship standards for unregistered pharmacy service assistants meets the needs of employers.

The Trailblazer Group puts its recommendations out for consultation and asks the pharmacy profession to respond so they can listen to and take into account views and recommendations to ensure parity and equity across all sectors. There is a realisation that completing a consultation document can be time consuming, it is time well spent as the future training of our entire workforce, not only the assistants as in this apprenticeship, is reliant upon the standards being absolutely clear, robust and achievable. I would encourage you to participate in any future consultation in relation to our profession.

Approved Level 2 Pharmacy Services Apprenticeship Standard for Pharmacy Service Assistants

There are unregistered employees in pharmacy, such as 'pharmacy assistants' or 'counter assistants'. The qualification

will be undertaken by unregistered pharmacy employees and seeks to encompass the traditional roles of dispensing, counter and pharmacy assistants.

This staff group are fundamental to the delivery of the service, they are required to be enrolled on one of the recognised / accredited courses within 3 months of starting employment with the full support of a professional within their service area, require leadership from pharmacy technicians, time to train to the GPhC standards.

Level 2 Apprenticeship

The duration of this apprenticeship is between 12 and 15 months.

There are five standards or 'duties' within the Pharmacy Service:

- Dispensing and Supply of Medicinal Products
- Communication
- Pharmacy Law & Ethics
- Person Centred Care
- Health & Safety in the workplace

Pharmacy Service Assistants will be required to 'know, have an understanding', 'be able to' and 'demonstrate behaviours' in a manner associated with each standard, referred to as Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours and will be embedded into the training.

End Point Assessment(EPA)

I am going to focus on what is perhaps the biggest difference in this newly formed qualification which is the introduction of the End Point Assessment (EPA) what it is, who does it and what does it mean for us as employers, our apprentices and the public?

- **What is it?** The EPA is a pre-requisite determined by the Institute for Apprenticeships and consists of holistic assessment of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours, to demonstrate that the apprentice has achieved a level of competence to be able to perform to each of the standards irrespective of sector. It follows a set assessment process, takes place towards the end of the qualification but needs to be planned in advance.
- **Who does it?** The EPA will be carried out by independent, suitably trained individuals, known as an End Point Assessors employed by a registered, regulated End Point Assessment Organisation. As an employer this provides additional robust, quality assurance that the apprentice and the pharmacy assistant workforce understands their responsibilities in providing a pharmacy service, and importantly delivers patient centred care.
- **What does it mean for employers?** Employers will be able to select which end point organisation to use to perform the EPA and will need to put forward the apprentice for the EPA as part of a timely process known as the 'gateway'. This is described at the point at which the employer is satisfied that the apprentice is working to the standards. The employer will need to be supportive of the entire process and be in a position to plan with the apprentice the requirements of the individual.

• **What does it mean for Apprentices?** A portfolio of evidence will be submitted for scrutiny. A Pass, Merit or Distinction will be awarded, determined by performance on completion of the EPA, but importantly the apprentice will be unable to achieve their apprenticeship without passing the end-point assessment.

• **What does the EPA look like for the Level 2 Pharmacy Service?** The EPA is separated out into three assessment methods, as agreed by the Pharmacy Apprenticeship Trailblazer Group and includes:

- Knowledge Test
- Simulated Observation – with additional Q & A session
- Professional Discussion

each of which are graded and determine the overall grading of the qualification.

Registered pharmacy professionals must provide assurance that the unregistered workforce in all sectors are competent and equipped to support the delivery of a safe and effective pharmacy service.

The GPhC has recognised Pearson Edexcel and City & Guilds to deliver the Level 2 knowledge-based and Level 2 competency-based dispensing/pharmacy service assistant qualifications.

In line with policy the GPhC 'will inform pharmacy professionals and registered pharmacies of their obligations under this policy and will enforce this policy through our fitness to practise process and take appropriate action against registrants who fail to comply with this policy' through gathering information from inspector's feedback, complaints and feedback from training providers.

This gives a strong message that we as pharmacy professionals are held to account in delivering the standard of training outlined by the GPhC standards.

In summary the Level 2 Apprenticeship seeks to support the delivery of national objectives, offering individuals employed within a pharmacy or health care setting the ability to achieve, develop and work to the standard required by the GPhC. Through the process of embedding these standards offers assurance that our future workforce is suitably equipped to deliver a safe and effective Pharmacy Service.

Useful Links

- www.pharmacyregulation.org
- www.skillsforhealth.org.uk
- independent end-point assessment organisation**
- Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO)**

REFERENCES

- GPhC Standards for Pharmacy Professionals May 2017
- GPhC Standards for Registered Pharmacies revised June 2018

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NHS England Launches Long Term Plan

NHS England (NHSE) has launched its Long Term Plan outlining priorities for the NHS in England over the next 10 years.

Recognising the pride that is held in the NHS in its 70th year, growing concerns about NHS funding, staffing, increasing inequalities and pressures from a growing and ageing population and the optimism for future possibilities for continuing medical advance and better outcomes of care the report, developed in consultation with patients, patients' groups, professional bodies and frontline NHS leaders describes the changes planned over the next decade.

In summary these include:

- How the NHS will move to a new service model in which patients get more options, better support, and properly joined-up care at the right time in the optimal care setting
- The action the NHS will take to strengthen its contribution to prevention and health inequalities
- The priorities for care quality and outcomes improvement for the decade ahead
- How current workforce pressures will be tackled and staff supported
- A wide-ranging and funded programme to upgrade technology and digitally enabled care across the NHS
- How the 3.4% five year NHS funding settlement will help put the NHS back onto a sustainable financial path
- How the plan will be implemented.

The report recognises the role of pharmacy and pharmacy professionals play to support the delivery of the plan.

In response to the report, Tess Fenn, former APTUK President said "The report rightly recognises the role of pharmacy as a fundamental partner in the provision of community-based health care and the inclusion of the pharmacy team in new Primary Care Networks is welcomed. Making better use of community and GP pharmacist's clinical skills further enables and enhances the supporting role of the pharmacy technician. The benefits of medication reviews for care home residents, many of which are now carried out by NHSE Medicines Optimisation in Care Homes (MOCH) funded pharmacy technicians, in reducing risk and preventing hospital admissions, is recognised and will be rolled out further. Providing NHS Health Checks, supporting early detection and prevention of cardiovascular and respiratory disease, and increasing the numbers of physical health checks for people with mental health problem are all areas in which the pharmacy team will impact on the prevention agenda described in the plan. Improving outcomes through support and education of patients to enable them to get the best from their medication, reduce waste and promote self-care is also recognised in the report and pharmacy technicians are well placed to deliver on this aspect of the plan. APTUK looks forward to working collaboratively with patients and the public, professional partners, NHSE and the Government to realise the ambitions within this plan."

For more information and to see the plan visit: <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-plan/>

RPS Launch New Professional Guidance on the Administration of Medicines in Healthcare Settings

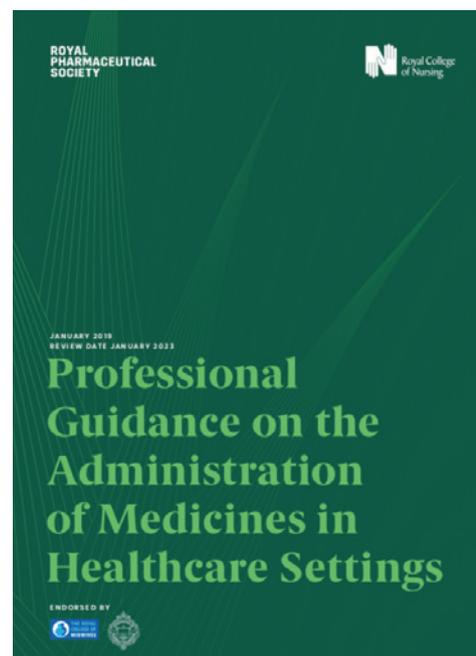
This professional guidance has been co-produced by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and provides principles-based guidance to ensure the safe administration of medicines by healthcare professionals. The Guidance is endorsed by APTUK and the Royal College of Midwives and has been produced to coincide with the withdrawal of the Medicines Management Standard by the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

The guidance is aimed at registered healthcare professionals and is therefore applicable to pharmacy technicians now undertaking this role. The principles however, can be applied in any healthcare setting by any persons administering medicines. The clinical elements of the prescribing of medicines (such as choice of medicine, treatment duration and method of administration) are beyond the scope of this guidance. The guidance applies across the UK.

The guidance in full can be found via:

<https://www.rpharms.com/Portals/0/RPS%20document%20library/Open%20access/Professional%20standards/SSHM%20and%20Admin/Admin%20of%20Meds%20prof%20guidance.pdf?ver=2019-01-23-145026-567>

This guidance was developed following an eight-week consultation as part of the project on the Safe and Secure Handling of Medicines and was overseen by a multidisciplinary Task and Finish group including service users. Details of those who responded to the consultation and of those individuals involved in the development of this guidance are acknowledged in the Professional Guidance on the Safe and Secure Handling of Medicines. If you have any comments on this guidance please contact RPS Professional Support team at support@rpharms.com If you have suggestions for additional resources or practice guidance please contact RCN Advice Team: **0345 772 6100**.





New Guidance Published by RPS – Polypharmacy: Getting Our Medicines Right

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) has been working with stakeholders, including APTUK, on new guidance on polypharmacy (when people take multiple medicines) for pharmacy professionals and all healthcare organisations involved with medicines.

Medicines have a very positive impact on the lives of millions of people. But as more of us live longer, with multiple long-term conditions, we take more and more medicines. This can become a practical challenge and it also increases the risk of harm.

Polypharmacy: Getting our medicines right provides a summary of the scale and complexity of the issue of polypharmacy. It outlines how healthcare professionals, patients and carers can find solutions when polypharmacy causes problems for patients and points to useful resources that can help. Best Practice statements aimed at specific groups are included and for pharmacy technicians these are described as:

- Pharmacy technicians in all care settings contribute to reducing the impact of taking multiple medicines and the pill burden on people and particularly for vulnerable groups such as older people
- Pharmacy technicians in all care settings, undertake ongoing training to ensure that their consultation skills enable

high quality person-centred discussions about medicines; that they can carry out holistic, structured medication reviews and use evidence-based tools to support high quality medication reviews and that they highlight any issues or concerns raised with the most appropriate person (e.g. pharmacist, prescriber, multidisciplinary team)

- Pharmacy technicians undertaken medication reviews in all care settings, where possible, within the pharmacy and multidisciplinary team and with the input of people using medicines, as well as carers if the situation allows
- Pharmacy technicians have an understanding of the side effects of medicines, recommended doses and best time to take a medicine for optimum effect and are alert to identifying persons taking multiple medicines, especially those who may not be managing the challenges of taking complex regimens or multiple medicines and highlight these people to their pharmacist or prescriber.
- Pharmacy technicians in all care settings manage the supply and storage of appropriately prescribed medicines reducing medicines wastage and associated cost savings and engage with people to increase medicines adherence to potentially reduce admissions to

hospital caused by poor adherence

- Pharmacy technicians in all settings are alert to potential adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and take steps to reduce the risk of harm, this should include highlighting any issues identified with the most appropriate person and ensuring the reporting of suspected ADRs using the Yellow Card Scheme.

There is also a shorter version of the full guidance and an infographic aimed at patients.

In response to the publication of the guidance, Tess Fenn, Former President of APTUK, said “As the number of people living into advanced years with multiple long-term conditions is increasing, polypharmacy is a considerable health challenge. The risk of potential harm to people taking multiple medicines is increasing. Pharmacy technicians and other healthcare professionals have an opportunity to address this and to support patients and the public. APTUK are pleased to have been instrumental in the development of ‘Polypharmacy: Getting our medicines right’. The best practice recommendations in this guidance aim to explain the responsibilities that everyone has around problematic polypharmacy and the resources will guide pharmacy professionals to take a lead role in enabling behavioural and system change”.

Have you registered for the new APTUK website?

www.aptuk.org

Ensure you log on to the members area to take advantage of the new features

NHSE: Investment in GP Contract

NHS England has announced £4.5bn will be invested over five years from 2020 in general practice under the umbrella of the NHS Long Term Plan. By 2023-24 the aim is to recruit an extra 20,000 healthcare workers; including pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, to transform the way health is delivered across England through new models of care.

It will put in place important new capability and capacity in primary care, of the type usually received by patients in hospitals and will drive forward significantly multi-professional working. The report recognises that within Primary Care Networks a dedicated team of pharmacist and pharmacy technicians who can undertake medication reviews, improving medicines optimisation and safety, supporting care homes, as well as running practice clinics.

For more information, the full report can be found here <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/gp-contract-five-year-framework/>

Tess Fenn APTUK President at that time responded to the report and said "I am pleased to see the recognition in the report that pharmacy technician skills can contribute to the wider primary care team, building on the experience and evidence gained from the investment in Care Home Pharmacy Technicians. Pharmacy technicians, as one of a number of professionals integrated in Primary Care Networks, will support patient care and contribute to improving the health of the population, carrying out medication reviews, supporting de-prescribing and antimicrobial stewardship. These are exciting opportunities, realised as a result of workforce pressures in general practice. It will be important to ensure that workforce strategies and education and training are developed to ensure these new opportunities can be delivered and that other sectors of practice continue to deliver quality pharmacy services. APTUK looks forward to supporting NHS England and other pharmacy organisations to realise



these opportunities for the benefit of patients and the public".

England's chief pharmaceutical officer Keith Ridge said the GP contract is "a boost for patient care and a tremendous vote of confidence in the pharmacy professions". Read more here <https://www.england.nhs.uk/email-bulletins/pharmacy-and-medicines/>

NHS England Help Us Help You Campaign

NHS England has launched a 'Help Us Help You' campaign.



The aim of the campaign is to encourage the public to use their local pharmacy as their first choice of healthcare setting for clinical advice for minor health concerns such as coughs, colds, stomach problems and aches and pains. The campaign will help to further build the public's trust and confidence in community pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and the pharmacy team as providers of care and ensure minor illnesses are effectively managed in the right place.

Resources have been sent to all community pharmacies in England to actively promote the campaign and to inform and encourage customers to 'visit your pharmacy' next time they need clinical advice about a minor health concern.

Why not take some time to familiarise yourself with the resources so you are ready to offer advice for people with everyday minor health concerns?

There are a range of additional free resources available to order or download. To access these resources and register for regular updates on campaigns, visit <https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/>

Expanding the Role of Pharmacy Technicians

It was an honour to represent the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) at the Pharmacy Together conference organised by Pharmacy Management in London last November.

My role as Events Associate with APTUK gives an exciting opportunity to support the professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians. I can learn about the exciting and exemplary work being undertaken by pharmacy technicians nationally and advocate the role further.

The Pharmacy Together event invited pharmacy professionals from across the country to network, share ideas in best practice and gave an opportunity to showcase some of the amazing work being undertaken by pharmacy professionals including a Bradford College student. It was exciting to see their work presented in the poster zone.

My workshop titled “Expanding the Role of Pharmacy Technicians” was designed to be an open discussion forum to share best practice in terms of expanding the role of pharmacy technicians across all sectors of pharmacy. Throughout the workshop there was a clear enthusiasm for expanding the role and great engagement in ideas of how to take this forward.

I opened the workshop with a question, “what is a pharmacy technician”? The response to this was encouraging and interesting. Pharmacy technicians were described as:

- Professional
 - Leaders
 - Team players
 - Educators in the safe and appropriate use of medicines
 - Supporting patient safety
 - Registered healthcare professionals
 - Key part of the multi disciplinary team (MDT)
 - Proactive
 - A great asset to the pharmacy workforce
 - Experts in the technical use of medicines
- This question led to a discussion about how we can support pharmacy technicians to expand their roles further in some of these influential areas of pharmacy practice.

The participants of the workshop discussed the diversity of pharmacy technician roles and there was a consistency of feedback in terms of the lack of educational opportunities for

professional development. The initial education and training of pharmacy technicians is clearly outlined but we must also consider the post registration education and training. Lack of educational funding was discussed as one of the primary limitations with educational opportunities for pharmacy technicians. It was proposed by the participants that the lack of a clearly defined post registration education framework or pathway potentially impedes future development of the pharmacy technician role.

Significant developments are on the horizon across the NHS focusing on expanding the roles of pharmacy technicians and pharmacists. The key objectives are an integration of patient services, ensuring a sustainable workforce and supporting pharmacy professionals in terms of education and training.

The availability of appropriate education for pharmacy technicians would support pharmacists further with their own professional development and role expansion. This was an interesting discussion in the workshop and encouraging feedback from pharmacist participants was given in terms of their enthusiasm for expanding pharmacy technician roles in their area of practice.

Providing pharmacy technicians with the opportunity to further develop their knowledge and skills contributes to a sustainable workforce where all healthcare professionals are given the provisions required to work to the top of their professional license directly impacting on patient outcomes and service delivery.

In consideration of educational opportunities for pharmacy technicians, the workshop participants were surprised to learn about my peers and the education pathways they had chosen. I provided examples of pharmacy technicians who have and are currently undergoing further/ higher education in College and Universities in various disciplines. Pharmacy technicians have succeeded in the completion of a BTEC Level 4 Clinical Diploma, Postgraduate Certificates and Degrees. There has also been the opportunity for role expansion within management and leadership provided by CPPE. Other organisations are also advocating role expansion through the provision of resources to support

professional development including Health Education England, APTUK and the Primary Care Pharmacy Association (PCPA).

To support pharmacy technicians with expanding their roles it is imperative opportunities are made available to support their professional development. For those seeking to utilise the skills of pharmacy technicians I encourage networking nationally to engage with the learning opportunities available. Supporting pharmacy technicians to attend conferences like the Pharmacy Management event and enabling learning time outside of the workplace. I have attended many events and the number of pharmacy technicians in attendance is often limited.

By the end of the workshop it was concluded, pharmacy technicians are an integral part of any healthcare team with diverse and transferable skills contributing to the delivery of pharmacy services. Feedback from the workshop concluded participants learnt a variety of interesting information in terms of potential to expand the role of pharmacy technicians. Education was identified as a key driver for supporting role expansion. Collaboration with fellow pharmacy professionals was discussed as an important way forward to bridge the gaps in a lack of awareness of the educational opportunities available.

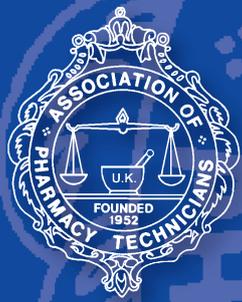
Participants left the workshop with one final question which I ask you to also consider:

“How will you expand the role of the pharmacy technician in your area of practice?”



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Medicine shortages:

An update on national strategies, regional support and local implementation

During conference breakout sessions we heard from 3 subject matter experts on medicines shortages. They provided an excellent presentation that really highlighted some of the issues encountered when procuring medicines across the NHS.

Jane Kelly (Principal Pharmacist, Commercial Medicines Unit at NHS England) discussed the hugely complex medicines supply chain, emphasising just how many links there are and how a problem at any stage of the process can cause a shortage. At any one time the NHS can be managing around 70 medicines shortages. Jane pointed out that sometimes a shortage doesn't mean simply finding an alternative; it can mean asking people to change their clinical practice.

Grace Lewis @CandDGrace · Jun 17
The hugely complicated medicines supply chain - at any point, something could go wrong #APTUK18 @NHSEngland @DHSCgovuk

Sharon Cooney (Senior Pharmacy Technician, Commercial Medicines Unit at NHS England) followed on from Jane by looking at the value of data. This highlighted the need for trusts to ensure the data they submit into NHS England is accurate as suppliers use this valuable information to forecast demand. Inaccurate data can lead to out of stocks due to higher than expected demand.

Kaz Yakhlef @KazYakhlef · Jun 17
Suppliers cannot plan for unforeseen shortages and this makes forecasting is extremely difficult #APTUK18 #APTUK1 @NHSEngland

Danny Palmer (Regional Medicines Procurement Specialist (South West) at University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) talked about the effect that procurement behaviour has on a medicines shortage (from a supplier and an NHS perspective), how stock piling can have a detrimental effect on the national availability of medicines that are in short supply but also the rising costs to the NHS when alternative suppliers increase their price during a shortage. Danny finished the session with some thoughts to take home around the Do's and Don'ts of Pharmacy Procurement.

Michelle @MichThePI · Jun 17
Danny Palmer making some very interesting points about professional behaviour in non patient-facing roles. Examples from procurement in times of shortages. #APTUK18



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Finance Officer
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Professional Guidance on The Safe and Secure Handling of Medicines

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) has launched professional guidance endorsed by APTUK which details the four core governance principles that underpin a framework for the safe and secure handling of medicines and can be used to develop working practices, policies and procedures.

Medicines are used in all healthcare settings and the safe and secure handling of medicines is essential to ensure patient safety. The revision of the 'Safe and Secure Handling of Medicines' broadens the scope of the guidance to all healthcare settings and covers all pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other health professionals working whose role involves handling medicines.

The good practice guidance described in this online resource covers

obtaining medicines, their transport, receipt, manufacture or manipulation and storage. It also includes information on the issuing of medicines, and their removal or disposal. Additional guidance is provided on the storage of medicines, the handling of controlled drugs and the safe and secure handling of medicines in theatres.

The guidance can be accessed via: <https://www.rpharms.com/recognition/setting-professional-standards/safe-and-secure-handling-of-medicines/professional-guidance-on-the-safe-and-secure-handling-of-medicines>

Sarah Green, Chief Technician Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, was a member of the Safe and Secure Task and Finish group. In response to the guidance being published she said "safe and secure handling of medicines is everyone's responsibility

and this updated guidance is key to promoting quality and safety across all sectors. Patient safety is at the heart of everything we do and the standards covered will form the basis of revised Trust procedures and audits to support all our services to be fully compliant. It is such an important resource that reflects the changes in service delivery and technology and should be the 'go to' guide for all. It has been an honour to represent pharmacy technicians and to ensure that our profession is recognised within the guidance. The governance principles show that pharmacy technicians are able to take leading roles in the safe and secure handling of medicines as a named or accountable individual. This clearly shows how our roles have developed over the years and that we are valued for the knowledge and skills we have."

Pharmacy bodies join together to support pharmacy sector to learn from failures of care at Gosport

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) joined together to publish a reflection and learning resource to support everyone across the pharmacy to learn the lessons from the Gosport Independent Panel report.

The report, published last summer found that between 1989 and 2000 at least 450 patients died having been inappropriately prescribed opioids. The report found no evidence that pharmacists in the hospital raised concerns.

To support further reflection and learning, the GPhC, RPS and APTUK are calling on pharmacy technicians in all sectors to share and discuss the presentation which:

- Brings together the key pharmacy themes from the report
- Looks at current pharmacy practice and how things have changed
- Recaps on the expectations on pharmacy professionals (including pharmacy technicians) and systems
- Highlights key resources and other materials

Read the full GPhC article on their webpage or download a copy of the learning resource. <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/news/pharmacy-bodies-join-together-support-pharmacy-sector-learn-failures-care-gosport>

The slides emphasise that pharmacy practice has improved significantly since these incidents took place, including through strengthened professional requirements, the introduction of the duty of candour, improved oversight of controlled drugs, and closer working across the multi-disciplinary team. It is important to reflect and learn from what happened to make sure that these failures in care are never repeated.

Tess Fenn, Past President of APTUK said: “Since the significant failures at Gosport Memorial Hospital, the role of the pharmacy technician has evolved exponentially. Pharmacy technicians are now an important component of front line pharmacy care and are often the first point of contact for patients and the public in both hospitals and community settings. As the role of the pharmacy team continues to expand, these slides should be used across all settings and will serve as a useful learning tool to ensure the harrowing events are never repeated.”

An Invitation to 10 Downing Street

Saturday 30th June was a normal average day, until I saw an email sent late on Friday night addressed ‘Invitation to a reception at 10 Downing Street to Celebrate 70 Years of the NHS [OFFICIAL]’.

My first thought was, this is a scam! Someone is out to wind me up! I decided to ring Downing Street. They confirmed this was a genuine event and I was informed there would be a drinks’ reception, the Prime Minister would meet a few guests, deliver a speech, meet more guests and then depart. I felt so honoured to have been invited to such a prestigious event that was simply a once in a lifetime opportunity. I later learnt that Gail Fleming, Dean of Pharmacy for Health Education England (London and Kent, Surrey, Sussex) and the team at Health Education England (HEE) put my name forward to attend as a ‘big thanks’ for my ‘above and beyond’ contribution for the work I did with HEE during my time as a Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician. This was such an honour and showed my work with HEE had been recognised.

The day of the event arrived, Wednesday 4th July, the middle of the heat wave we had experienced. I got a train up to London and a tube to Westminster and then walked to Downing Street. On arrival, there was a huge turnout for the event. There were around 200 healthcare professionals from around the country queuing to get into Downing Street to attend this special event. There was high security



present, a bag and body search was in operation before anyone could walk near the famous black door. Unfortunately, I think the cat was out for the day as he wasn't present; neither were any news reporters lining the front of Downing Street. When walking through No. 10, I was directed though a long corridor, past a beautiful picture of the Queen and many pieces of artwork including the different past cabinets in office. I was directed outside into the garden of Downing Street where pin badges were available to guests; a drinks reception, along with professional photographers taking pictures of all the guests. Then in true British spirit, the heavens opened and it chucked it down with rain! We were all directed to head back into No. 10 and asked to go upstairs to some reception rooms. I walked up and down the famous staircase (the stairs that Hugh Grant danced down in 'Love Actually', which I nearly tried myself!) where I came across yellow walls lined with portraits of past prime ministers.

“IT'S NOT THE LABOUR HEALTH SERVICE OR THE CONSERVATIVE HEALTH SERVICE - IT IS THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE - IT BELONGS TO ALL OF US”



On arrival to the reception rooms, drinks were being offered to guests and everyone was networking with one another. I met a paramedic from Southampton General Hospital and we shared our roles with one another. I managed to meet the Chief Pharmacist from Chelsea and Westminster Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, who I had met before during a pharmacy quality visit. I also met Ravi Sharma, the National Clinical Lead (Clinical Pharmacy & Genomics) at NHS England, who I have not met before, but often communicated with on Twitter.

I saw Jeremy Hunt entering the room, walking around speaking with guests. This was my opportunity to have a conversation with him face to face and to get one of the professional photographers to take a picture of me and him! I introduced myself to Jeremy Hunt, told him my role within pharmacy and we discussed patient safety around electronic prescribing within East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust. I spotted the Prime Minister speaking with guests in the other hall and before I could get anywhere near her, she was being escorted by her bodyguards to deliver her speech to guests. She told guests “It's not the Labour Health Service or the Conservative Health Service – It is the National Health Service – It belongs to all of us” and finished her speech by wishing the NHS a Happy Birthday, before quickly departing the hall. The event finished with Jeremy Hunt presenting badges to NHS workers with more than 40 years service and had their photograph taken with Mr Hunt. Before leaving Downing Street, it was a no-brainer to ask someone to take my picture in front of 10 Downing Street!

After the event, the Pharmaceutical Journal got in contact with me via Twitter and asked to interview me about my experience at Downing Street and an article was published about my and other healthcare professional's experience. On Thursday 5th July, the birthday of the NHS, BBC South East Today was reporting from my place of work at the Queen Elizabeth Queen Mother Hospital in Margate, speaking with staff about their roles in the hospital and how the NHS has changed in 70 years. I was lucky enough to be interviewed live for the BBC to share my journey as a pharmacy technician and about my experience at Downing Street. This interview is available on the BBC South East Today Facebook page for viewers to watch.



BENJAMIN SMITH MPharmT
APTUK/AAH Pre-Registration Trainee
Pharmacy Technician of the Year 2017
East Kent Hospitals University NHS
Foundation Trust



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