



PHARMACY TECHNICIAN JOURNAL

AUTUMN 2022

Journal of the Association of
Pharmacy Technicians United Kingdom

Achievements, Nominations & Developments

- Credentialling
- PTPTs views
- Black History
Month Events





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Features

8

PTPT Organises BHM Event

9-10

PTPTs Speak Out

16-18

Award Winner Blogs

18-19

Credentiailling: Mental Health

20-21

Meet the Member

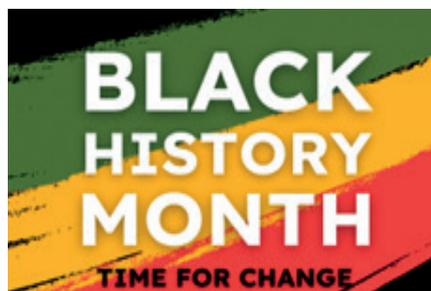
22

Pharmacy Technician Syndrome

APTUK

6

President's Column



7

EDI & Supervision in Community Pharmacy

9

Wales Update

12-14

International Pharmacy Technician Day Nominations





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KAY MORGAN FAPharmT – EDITOR
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A Time for Sharing

The festive season is a time for sharing, I'd like to share with you the selection of wonderful articles presented to us by our members and executive committee. I shared the editing tasks this time with Di, one of this year's member observers and I'd like to thank Di for her valuable input and support with this edition, it has been a pleasure sharing the process and working together as a team.

On International Pharmacy Technician Day on 18th October 2022, Claire, membership director was busy sharing on social media the great work pharmacy technicians do. A very small selection of the nominations we received of how you are driving the profession forward are printed in the centrefold, we received so many nominations that Claire flooded social media and apologies if your photo isn't printed in our centrefold, you are all very much appreciated and thanks for sharing.

Daf, digital director shares the successes from recent award ceremonies in Wales and presents us with an update on Delivering a Healthier Wales. Oli, business development executive, shares information around the much debated topic of

supervision and Shamma, on the EDI page shares some motivating quotes. I do hope you all enjoy reading this edition and that the content gives you inspiration to kick start your New Year. I wish you all well for the coming year and hope you get the opportunity to share some time with family and friends over the festive season.

We are delighted to announce that Elisabeth Read was randomly selected as the winner of the APTUK survey £50 Amazon voucher draw.

CONGRATULATIONS ELISABETH!

We had a terrific response and are still analysing the results of the survey, but we had some great feedback which we plan to use to continue to improve the APTUK membership offer. We will be sharing the results shortly.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to share their views.

Legal Disclaimer

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PTJ 2022 Timeline

Edition	Copy deadline
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Summer	4 August 2023
Autumn	13 October 2023

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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

Supporting Executive Team : Editorial Role

***"In order to move forward you have to look back"* Matt Maher**

By the time this edition of the Pharmacy Technician Journal hits the doormats, it will nearly be the end of the year. And what a year it has been.

The restrictions of the pandemic and lockdown are starting to fade, and the world has opened up again. This was reflected in the APTUK hosting its conference and awards celebration face to face for the first time in two years. Fitting, as we celebrated 70 years of the APTUK this year. We saw a change in leadership as Claire and Nic took on their new roles as President and Vice-president of APTUK and we launched our new 5 year strategy, focusing on how the APTUK can move forward and continue to represent our profession in these changing times.

Personally, I will look back on this year with pride. I stepped out of my comfort zone and applied to be a member observer for APTUK and have done things I didn't think I could do; I presented at the APTUK members business meeting; helped facilitate focus groups and webinars and have helped Kay, editor of the PTJ, to produce this edition.

There is definitely a theme of looking back and moving forward in this edition as I hope you will see. In the meet the member article, Leona reflects on her career as a pharmacy technician and the developments she has seen the pharmacy

technician profession go through and then looks to the future and how much further we can go.

Melanie, one of our newest Fellows, looks at her journey as a pharmacy technician and how she is now educating and inspiring the future generations of pharmacy technicians in her role as Director of Pharmacy Technician Education at the University of East Anglia.

We also hear from some Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians and how they are learning and developing with encouragement and support from more experienced colleagues and the APTUK.

Pharmacy Technician Day in October was also an opportunity to celebrate driving our profession forward, with some fantastic nominations for pharmacy technicians developing new and exciting roles. As a pharmacy technician, I can't wait to see what the future brings.



DIANE TORRY
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APTUK Membership information

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APTUK JOURNAL

Four editions of the journal are printed and posted to all full and fellow members. Editions are also available electronically via the member's area on the APTUK website. All members, including trainees can access previous and current editions via the member's only area.
To discuss sharing your work in the journal, contact: editor@aptuk.org

#membershipmatters #joinus #supportustosupport

Contact details for Lynn Ali – APTUK Membership Coordinator
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CLAIRE STEELE MAPHARMT – APTUK PRESIDENT
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President's Column

It is that time of year where we are all working very hard to get through the 'winter challenges'. It doesn't matter which pharmacy sector you work in as inevitably it will feel/be busier than usual. I've pondered this a lot lately and I wonder if 'winter pressures' are a thing of the past given we are busy all year round! Yet, despite this pharmacy technicians have continued to take on new roles with enthusiasm and commitment.

Since the last edition, we have said a sad goodbye to Geraint Young, Professional Lead for Wales, Diane Torry and Mira Makhecha, Member Observers 2021/22.

Geraint has been pivotal in supporting pharmacy technicians and APTUK in Wales and I would like to wish him all the very best for the future. Diane has joined forces with Kay Morgan, our editor to produce this issue as one of her many contributions to the Executive Committee. I would like to thank Diane and Mira for their time, insight and input, it has been a pleasure working with you and I hope you will consider roles with APTUK in the future.

With every goodbye, there is a hello! A very warm welcome to our new members as we continue to grow; I hope you enjoy your first edition of the journal.

Welcome too to Emily Guerin, APTUK Professional Lead for Wales and Thomas Freel, Member Observer 2022/23; you will find biographies of our new members on the website. We will hopefully have a second Member Observer joining the Executive Committee very soon.

A huge thanks to everyone who completed our survey 'What APTUK means to you'; we had a fantastic response from members and non-members and lots of constructive feedback for us to work on. We have undertaken a significant amount of work on our website over the past few years, but we know from the survey there is more you would like to see in terms of resources and functionality, look out for a more in depth survey on our website in the New Year!

The strongest theme that shone through the survey results is how you want us to be your voice, to challenge, represent and ensure the pharmacy technician profession is given the recognition it deserves. APTUK will continue to promote pharmacy technicians at every opportunity and be persistent in calls for proportionate representation.

We should receive the report from the UK Commission on Pharmacy Professional Leadership in January 2023 with recommendations for the future of pharmacy leadership bodies. I do not know what the future holds for us as a profession or for APTUK but I remain optimistic this will be the beginning of formal recognition of our profession and APTUK as the professional home for pharmacy technicians.

Finally, to all of you working over the festive period, thank you. I hope you will take time to relax with family and friends. If you are celebrating Christmas and the New Year, I would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

With kind regards,
Claire

Vice President's Statement

As the nights draw in and the year comes to an end, the longer evenings lend themselves to reflection. I have been privileged to be APTUK Vice President for six months now, and it is wonderful to consider the breadth of what has been achieved in 2022. Highlights for me include our Duty of Candour webinar, where Sarah Seddon's patient experience was an incredibly powerful and poignant reminder of why duty of candour is so crucial when things go wrong. APTUK were pleased to have Duncan Rudkin from our regulator, the General Pharmaceutical Council, also as a speaker at the event.

With October's Black History month, we were pleased to hold an event with guest speaker Dr Stuart Lawrence, who received an honorary membership at the APTUK 2022 conference earlier in the year. In the same month was International Pharmacy Technician Day, where in this issue you will find some of the nomination highlights.

As well as the APTUK conference, your APTUK executive team have attended the Clinical Pharmacy Congress, the Pharmacy Show, the Day Lewis annual conference and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society annual conference. We want to listen to what matters to you, celebrate your successes, and meet you in

person so please do come and find us at these large-scale events – we are here for you!

The Commission into Pharmacy Leadership is ongoing, and as Claire has explained, the outcome will be shared early in the new year. Whatever the recommendations may be, what is known now and will not change, is that, pharmacy technicians are registered professionals with a diverse skillset to be invested in and developed, respected, and fully utilised.

As well as your family and friends, please do check in on your colleagues this year and ask twice. To all our APTUK members I hope you have an opportunity to rest during the winter season and thank you for all you do. I also want to say an enormous thank you to past and present members of the APTUK Executive, our honorary APTUK members and the APTUK Fellows – the progression of the profession is a collective effort.



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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

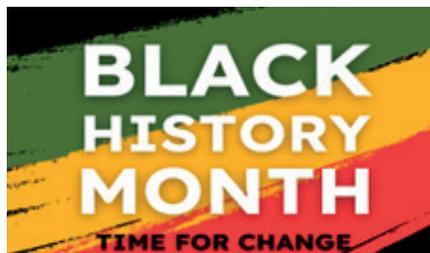


Black History Month (BHM) spanned across the month of October, with the powerful theme *'Time for Change: Actions not Words'*.

With the momentum for inclusive practice infiltrating our everyday practice as pharmacy technicians, there has been no better time to reflect on the theme of this year's BHM with implementation of a proactive stance and allyship for all colleagues, patients and people from an under-represented background.

Here at APTUK, our aim is to embed inclusive practice in everything we do as pharmacy professionals, and to ensure diversity is embraced, with equity and equality sustained in all that we do.

BHM is a time to celebrate the astounding achievements of the people of African and Caribbean heritage. To honour such achievements, APTUK organised a BHM webinar to discuss some of the issues surrounding black history and the communities we serve. Our very own newly appointed Honorary Fellow of APTUK, Hon. Dr Stuart Lawrence presented the webinar. As always, the presentation was inspirational and thought provoking with lots of areas covered including the effects of sickle cell anaemia on patients from a black ethnic background and empowering speech regarding the meaning of BHM and highlighting the race equality plan that Wales have established. Stuart educated us with the difference between anti-racist and someone that claims to be not-racist;



some absolutely fascinating and rich discussion points, facts and knowledge for everyone. The webinar is available for all members to access through the members' area on our website

[HTTPS://WWW.APTUK.ORG/](https://www.aptuk.org/)

I would like to share some motivating quotes from prominent figures from history, which have given us insightfulness and determination to continue to strive for equality, embracing diversity and promoting inclusive practice.

Martin Luther King Jr.

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that.... Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.... Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"

Ava DuVernay

"When talking about diversity, it's not a box to be checked. It is reality that should be deeply felt and held and valued by all of us"

Frederick Douglass

"The soul that is within me no man can degrade"

Nelson Mandela

"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances freedom for others"

Angela Davis

"If we do not know how to meaningfully talk about racism, our actions will move in misleading directions"

The above quotes from these famous leaders and visionaries who dedicated their lives to black empowerment are worth repeating. These are inspiration for future empowering messages for the oppressed.



SHAMMA BAIG
MAPHARMT

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Supervision In Community Pharmacy

Over the past several years one of the most hotly discussed, debated, and even argued points in the world of community pharmacy has been the question of supervision. APTUK have been involved in these discussions to try and ensure the voice of pharmacy technicians is not lost. There should be no decisions about pharmacy technicians made without pharmacy technicians.

But what does supervision really mean in this context? You may have seen the term splashed all over the pharmacy press, but not necessarily considered its impact on your day-to-day role. 'Supervision' is the term used in Regulation 220 of the Human Medicines Regulations 2012. It states that

a medicinal product (pharmacy only/ prescription only medication) must not be supplied unless the person supplying is a pharmacist, or the person supplying acts under the supervision of a pharmacist. In practice this is the reason why pharmacy technicians have to say 'sorry, the pharmacist is on lunch' if a patient comes to collect a repeat prescription and the pharmacist has popped out to get some well-earned nourishment, or why pharmacy technicians may have to sell two boxes of 16 paracetamol tablets, rather than one pack of 32.

APTUK will continue to engage with members to ensure we can best represent their voice when engaging in positive discussions with other pharmacy organisations. Sometimes it may feel as

if the supervision debate has been going on for as long as APTUK has existed, however the executive committee will continue to put the pharmacy technician voice forward and be 'around the table' whenever we are able to.



OLIVER JONES

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It Started With A Comment On Social Media

I embarked on my pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician journey in April of this year, after working alongside a few veteran pharmacy technicians for over a year. Working with them opened my eyes to the profession, and by far the biggest thing I have learnt from my study is the ability to reflect not only on my work but on myself.

Not long ago, I was browsing our local on-line staff platform when I noticed a particular post.

NHS Fife
Keeping employees up to date with what's going on at NHS Fife

Supporting Black History Month
Black History Month this October shines a spotlight on the continued achievements and contributions of Black people both here in the UK and around the world. It's also a time to continue to tackle racism and ensure that Black history is celebrated all year round.
You can find out more about Black History Month, including events online and near you, by clicking on the Black History Month website [here](#).



October normally has us thinking about the school holidays or Halloween but do you know it is also a time to celebrate Black History Month in the UK?

This got me wondering 'What is my place of work doing to highlight and support our diverse workforce?' and as many keyboard warriors do, I left a comment under the post asking just that, then turned my computer off and didn't give it another thought.

A few days later at the start of my shift, I was made aware that my comment had been read by some members of the senior team. Who then in turn posed me the question 'What ideas do you have on how we could celebrate Black History Month in our pharmacy to celebrate or support our colleagues?'

Initially I was stumped; what could we do, where do I start, why me and why did I write this comment and it was at this point I recognised how easy it is to write a comment online without realising who could be reading it.

I knew this was an opportunity for me to prove myself and that my comment was not just an empty gesture, a hash tag or

another black box posted on social media to show my support for marginalised people. Throughout my shift that day I chatted with colleagues about it and started to think about our pharmacy and medicines directorate, our patients and the fact that the general demographic of our local council area is majority white, meaning I should actually change my thought process.

I felt I couldn't ask our small group of non-white colleagues what they could do for me to celebrate this month, offering a support group also didn't feel like enough. What I feel is that it is more about what can I do to start a conversation with my white colleagues about equality and diversity, what can we learn and gain from Black History Month. What can we do to make sure we are being inclusive, open and valuing everyone?

After researching into what others were doing, I noticed APTUK's theme was 'Time for change: Actions not words' and this sparked a memory of the experience I felt after reading 'Why I am no longer talking to white people about race' by Reni Eddo-Lodge.

I took a lot from the book when I read it. Having previously been in a relationship with a black man and creating a child together, I do have personal interest in black history and culture.

However, this made me question what reactions other people would take away from the book, people that may not have the same kind of interactions or socialise with people from other races. Does the book have the same impact, what questions does it raise and what can people learn from it? Can we increase our empathy and understanding?

Studies have shown that reading is a great source of entertainment, a way to exercise the brain, improve concentration; sleep and general knowledge and books have that way of evoking opinions, conversations, relationships and emotions with its reader.

So, what better way to celebrate Black History Month by using words in a book to bring about action. I chose to organise a book club event where we read a book by a black author for over at least four weeks and then come together afterwards for an open, safe and enlightened discussion. I feel it gives us space to think of something other than pharmacy for a while yet maintaining professional links with our fellow colleagues.

After speaking with our director of pharmacy and medicines, who was more than happy to support my initiative, I was

able to apply and successfully order 15 hard copies of the book from our health care charity fund. This means these books are within our department forever, creating no need to worry about travelling to a library, buying the book or needing a Kindle.

After circulating my eye-catching poster within our break rooms and a few self-promoting emails, myself and 18 of my colleagues have signed up to spend the next month reading this book and I am excited to hear everyone's opinions and the discussions that this should create.



At the time of writing this I am only on page one of the book but I have high hopes for this event. I am hoping people can take something away from this that will be of benefit to their role, maybe change any unconscious bias or stereotypes they may have and generally learn, be open to different points of view, recognise our differences and celebrate them.

Every day Scotland is becoming more and more diverse and every little step each person can take to work on embracing authentic allyship only improves and benefits everyone we meet.



FIONA SMIT

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Celebrations And More In Wales

It has been a time to celebrate for pharmacy colleagues across Wales over the last couple of months.

The Welsh Pharmacy Awards saw a number of pharmacy teams celebrate success across all pharmacy settings. Sally Davey Chief Pharmacy Technician at Glangwili Hospital Pharmacy in Carmarthen won the Hospital Pharmacy Team of the Year Award for great team ethos and focus on the patient's journey as they move between sectors over a wide geographical area. With a focus always on patient safety and experience, the team has consistently worked together to do the best they can.

More information about the other award winners can be found here: <https://welshpharmacyawards.info/#winners>

NHS Wales Awards; The team at Glangwili also went on to win an award at the NHS Wales Awards for enriching the wellbeing, capability and engagement of the health and care workforce. A survey conducted showed that 47% of pharmacy staff in Glangwili General Hospital were feeling symptoms of burnout and 46% were feeling stressed in their day-to-day roles. Burnout leads to reduced levels of staff engagement which leads to lower productivity, reduced patient experience and an increased risk of accidents within the workplace.

More information on the nominees can be found here: <https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/improvement-cymru/improvement-cymru-academy/nhs-wales-awards/>

A huge congratulations to all pharmacy teams shortlisted for awards and enriching pharmacy experience for everyone.

Pharmacy: Delivering a Healthier Wales

October saw the launch of 2025 goals for Pharmacy: Delivering a Healthier Wales (P:DaHW).

The 2025 goals for pharmacy are further stepping stones

in the ambitions to reach the 2030 aspirations set out in P:DaHW Pharmacy: Delivering a Healthier Wales (rpharms.com). They have been developed through collaboration with hundreds of pharmacy professionals across Wales as well as other health and social care professions and patient representative groups.

Speakers at the launch included Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for Health and Social Services; Andrew Evans, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for Wales; Jonathan Simms, Chair of the Welsh Pharmaceutical Committee and presentations from project leads supported by P:DaHW.

This is a proud moment for the pharmacy team in Wales as we confirm the next steps for pharmacy in Wales and refresh our commitment to patient centred care.

Read the cabinet statement from Eluned Morgan. Written Statement: Launch of Pharmacy: Delivering a Healthier Wales 2025 Goals (27 October 2022) GOV.WALES

Diolch



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PTPT Talks About APTUK

As a new PTPT I have found using the resources available from APTUK extremely helpful.

Recently I have completed my CPD assignment from college, and with the help from the revalidation information accessible on the website, I could provide a good reflection on why CPD was important. However not only has APTUK helped with assignments, it has also helped me to feel a part of a

community. By seeing all the wonderful nominations for Pharmacy Technician Day, it has been an inspiration overall and provided good motivation for me to do the very best I can, especially as some of those nominated were people I look up to from my own Trust. It really has made a positive difference in my journey and opened my eyes to all the different areas and opportunities I get to experience throughout my life as a student.



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PTPT Talks About Errors

Coming from a background of no pharmacy experience I have been plunged into a world that is so rich in information it has helped me settle into my new role as a Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician (PTPT) at Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

I attended the duty of candour webinar event on September 22nd 2022, where Sarah Seddon and the Vice President of APTUK spoke to us about how candour is one of the most important attributes that a pharmacy technician can have. They explained to us that in this environment making mistakes would like to be avoided but that we should understand that this can't happen all the time and so they reinforced for us that making mistakes do happen, it's about how we handle them that makes the difference. They stated that when a mistake has been made it's important to speak up immediately so this can be rectified.

Talking to your colleagues around you

to ask their advice about how they might handle making a mistake, networking is vital as this allows a new perspective to be highlighted on the same issue.

Finally, APTUK also explained to us about how trusts around the country are shifting from a blame culture to a 'just' one. They explained that this change takes away the fear of reporting an incident as the new just culture looks to improve together by looking at why the incident happened and providing learning to prevent it happening again, rather than marginalising the person at fault. This change in work culture is being widely accepted as it allows an open conversation to happen as to why a certain mistake is or has been made, and it can then address the issue of what is needed to resolve the issue. It might be a case of needing to provide better/more up to date training or needing to remind ourselves of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), or even changing the SOP itself.

Note:

- Duty of Candour webinar can be viewed on the APTUK website; <https://www.aptuk.org/>
- GPhC resources are available via webpage: <https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/news/new-gphc-resources-duty-candour-highlight-importance-saying-sorry-when-things-go-wrong>



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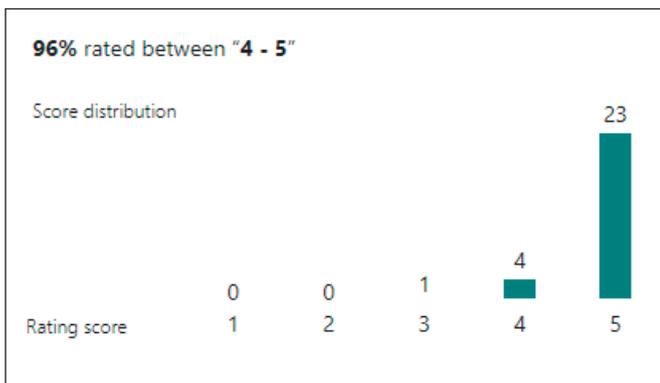
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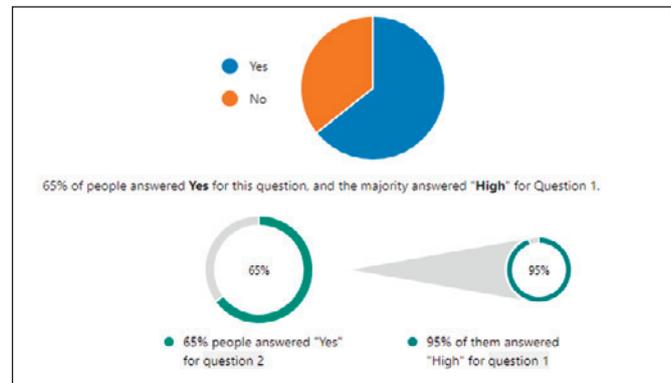
Post Event Survey

Duty of Candour 22/09/22

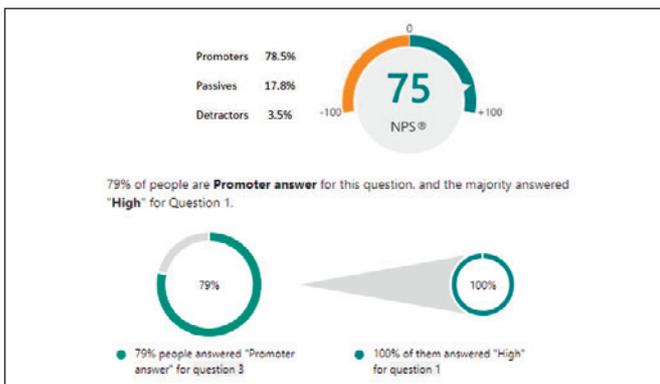
1. Overall, how would you rate the event?



2. Was this your first time to attend one of our events?



3. How likely are you to recommend this event to a friend or colleague?



4. What's the reason you've given that score?



5. Do you have any suggestions to help us improve future events?



International Pharmacy Technician Day 2022

Tuesday October 18th was International Pharmacy Technician Day this year and as usual we wanted to celebrate the wonderful pharmacy technicians in the UK.

We asked for nominations on 'pharmacy technicians driving the profession forward' as our theme. Following the pandemic, we wanted to focus on moving forward and the great work we know pharmacy technicians are undertaking. I was inundated with nominations and it was so inspiring to see not only pharmacy technicians nominating each other but our fellow healthcare professionals such as pharmacists and doctors.

Lots of us adapted throughout the pandemic to changes to our practices and these happened often and fast at times. What really shone through in the plethora of nominations was once again what resilient and adaptive professionals' pharmacy technicians are. Coming out of the pandemic now it was clear to see that as a profession we wanted to build on the skills gained and drive our profession forward. Examples of this in the nominations were those who were supporting future pharmacy technicians either through more formal educational roles or within workplace practices. We also saw examples of differing roles from the more "traditional" pharmacy technician roles such as medicines administration.

A big thank you to everyone who sent in nominations, congratulations to those who were nominated and as always let's keep promoting the fantastic professionals that are pharmacy technicians and I look forward to seeing what the next year brings!

These pages include just some of the nominations received, if you would like to see more, please visit our social media pages:



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THE ASSOCIATION OF PHARMACY TECHNICIANS UK www.aptuk.org

PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
 OCTOBER 18, 2022

PROUD TO BE A PHARMACY TECHNICIAN

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Carol Nairn is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by ... taking control of the wheel for NHS Tayside pharmacy technicians, creating opportunities for pharmacy technicians to learn and develop in their profession, providing excellent leadership to steer us through our journey to professionalism, helping us to navigate our career paths and driving professionalism for pharmacy technicians forward to allow us to reach our final destination.

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 OCTOBER 18, 2022

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Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

I would like to nominate Craig Hurst, our Procurement Technician at Manchester University Foundation Trust.

A year ago, the Trust switched from Ascribe to JAC, and the transition was challenging. He helped embed the system and supported colleagues.

On 8th September, just a year later, the Trust went live with EPIC, a patient record system that has been built for MFT over the last 2.5 years, which has superseded JAC for ordering medicines. There have been significant issues associated with this change, but Craig has fought to understand why things are going wrong and has highlighted fixes that are required. It will probably be the greatest period of change in his working life (as it is for all of us) but his unique role is crucial to ensure that we continue to obtain medicines to enable supplies to be maintained for patients of the Trust.

He is a hero and deserves recognition.

Nominated by Sue Banfield

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 OCTOBER 18, 2022

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Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

I would like to nominate our wonderful, super tech Pharmacy Technician, Jessica Matthews, who keeps everything ticking over in Hillingdon. As the only pharmacy technician in Hillingdon, she covers all the mental health services and supports our community health colleagues too. Jess has a wealth of experience, an array of skills, is knowledgeable, and very approachable and despite covering a large number of teams, she's always approachable and nothing is ever too much trouble for her, she always supports everyone with a friendly smile. Patients and staff alike, love Jess, and we really couldn't manage without her, she's hard working, a fantastic tutor and super talented.

Thank you for everything Jess.

Kemi (On behalf of Hillingdon team)

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 OCTOBER 18, 2022

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Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

We would like to nominate the wonderful Pharmacy technicians at Milton Keynes, CNWL. Between them, they cover community health and mental services. Their roles are diverse, and they work directly with multidisciplinary teams in order to improve patient safety with respect to medicines as well as enhance the patient experience. The team members within their services have been innovative, proactive and resilient.....without them our pharmacy services would not be deliverable. We want to say a massive thank you to them all: Rebecca Kinnersley, Sue Jermy, Alex Jones, Roxana Clarke and Catherine English.

Nominators: Anshu Rayan and Reg Akinaruse.

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 OCTOBER 18, 2022

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Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Jemma McLaughlin Homecare lead Technician. Is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by....

Working closely with our new systems provider 'epic for HIVE' and Colleagues across MFT to ensure we have solutions and functioning working processes despite HIVE not having a Homecare module.

Jemma has worked tirelessly with the HIVE team pre go-live to find a way to make the system fit for Homecare as HIVE has no function for this type of service and everything has been a workaround.

Her dedication in supporting the wider teams affected; clinicians, nurses, pharmacists and her own staff across all MFT sites has been above and beyond to ensure patient prescription are generated in a timely manner and the Homecare company can continue to provide medications to our 13,000 patients at home.

Well done Jemma for your contribution and dedication
 Nominated by Surgen Bayavarapu – Homecare Purchasing Officer

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OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Caroline Willoughby is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward through her strong leadership skills. Caz has recently stepped up into the role of senior dispensary support pharmacy technician, but she was leading the dispensary long before this. Caz takes the time to ensure her team are looked after and working safely. Caz puts patients at the heart of all she does. Our pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians always have positive feedback for Caz and can't sing her praises enough for the support she gives them while in the dispensary. Caz is supporting the shaping of our future pharmacy technicians.



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Chezel Abela is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by working tirelessly within our busy critical care multidisciplinary team. She has offered invaluable clinical support to both the nursing and medical teams for many years now and worked with us all throughout the COVID pandemic. Chezel has carved out a role as an invaluable member of our daily microbiology ward rounds. We have a very complex cohort of critical care patients with complex microbiology issues including immunosuppression, multi-resistant organisms, complex drug histories and co-morbid conditions leading to significant risk of drug interactions/reactions. Chezel ensures we have accurate information on current and previous antibiotic use, recent microbiology results and often identifies possible drug interactions. She also ensures accurate documentation of the advice given during the microbiology ward round and supports our team to update prescriptions. Her input helps hugely with patient safety and antibiotic stewardship. Without her ongoing dedication and work our critical care unit would suffer.

Nominated by Dr Emily Johnson

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OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Ellie is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by... the work she is doing as part of her electronic prescribing role. Ellie recently enrolled in a digital leadership course, to help enhance her leadership skills and to be part of a digital project which she would be able to manage from start to finish. Ellie is leading a team to implement a new electronic controlled drug register known as CD Manager. This new software module will be rolled out to different sites across the region and will require Ellie to write new Standard Operating Procedures and adapt current processes for the wider multidisciplinary team to use. Ellie also successfully completed her competency framework for the professional development of pharmacy technicians in recent months, a great achievement - well done Ellie!



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Gillian Brown is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by being the first Pharmacy Technician in Scotland to complete the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Vocational Training Foundation Programme for Pharmacy Technicians. The framework, which is still in its infancy, aims to build, in a progressive manner, a common set of behaviours and skills required by all Pharmacy Technicians. It is designed to increase confidence, competence and capabilities of Pharmacy Technicians and give them the opportunity to develop a systematic approach to practice within their defined roles. A massive congratulations from all of your colleagues at NHS Ayrshire and Arran and well done from your friends in the NES Pharmacy Technician Team.

Nominated by Sandie Taylor



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Katy Bean at East Kent Hospital University Foundation Trust is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by single handily running the pharmacy branch of the CMDU (Covid Medicine Delivery Unit) service for an estimated population of 695,000 working alongside the triaging doctors, the nurses delivering the Sotrovimab and at times helping Medway NHS trust when they haven't had triaging doctors, so we have had to assist their trust. Katy only qualified earlier this year, but she has, since starting her PTP course a little over 2 years with no pharmacy background whatsoever has learnt a difficult career during a global pandemic, she has as stated single handily dealt with the CMDU service, become a deputy manager at the Kent And Canterbury hospital dispensary. In my opinion her and one of our current PTP's (Emma Huggett) are what future techs should strive to become and if I am ever a tenth of what these 2 women are and are becoming, I would be so thankful.



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OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Kelly Wood is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by her passion for introducing human factors into the workplace to better understand how we can learn to do the right thing and share good practice without the fear of blame.



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OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Shirley is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by... Leading on the supply and distribution of vaccines for NHS Dumfries & Galloway. Shirley has recently began managing fridge and cold chain audits across the region, ensuring that vaccines are stored and transported in the correct way. Shirley sits on regional and national vaccine groups, discussing and solving issues for any supply disruptions which would have an impact on patient care. Shirley is a team leader in a busy acute site, and no matter how busy or under pressure she is - Shirley maintains a smile on her face, and is always professional, approachable and happy to help.



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Helen Kemp, Sarah Baker and Rhiannan Davies are pharmacy technicians who are driving the profession forward by supporting the Patient Safety and Professional Standards agenda of Well Pharmacy. They joined the Pharmacy Superintendent's Team in the last 12 months as Patient Safety and Standards technicians and have been working collaboratively with the Pharmacists in the team to address learnings from patient safety incidents, complaints and GPC inspections. Their commitment to Patient Safety and Professional Standards has been demonstrated via their high quality of work. They have brought fresh perspective to the team which has in turn contributed to new ideas and new ways of working.

Nominated by Wendy Lee



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OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

This year I particularly want to nominate my colleague Mihaela Grigore at East Kent Hospitals NHS University Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) who leads the Education, Training, Learning and Development (ETLD) team and have been responsible for helping so many pharmacy colleagues in achieving their level 2 & 3 qualifications this past year. Mihaela's absolute professionalism, the massive amount of support, advice, and confidence Mihaela has offered me over the past 2 years to help me in recently achieving my Level 3 diploma has been over and beyond my expectations and has me excited for the next chapter of my career in our sector, knowing I have a great team around me.

Nominated by Matthew Moore



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022

Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Chloe King is currently a Pre-Registration Pharmacy Technician at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. She is due to qualify and take up a permanent position in the Pharmacy team in the autumn. Chloe has completed her accuracy checking and is driving the role of the PTP forward by demonstrating that she is already working at a post qualification level both on wards and in the Pharmacy department. Chloe was nominated in the NHS health care apprenticeship awards for 2022. Well done, Chloe!

Nominated by Sharon Lafferty - Pharmacy Technician Team Leader Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Dwain Lyons-Thandi and Gemma Thomas are pharmacy technicians who are driving the profession forward by delivery first class training and providing vital support to trainee technicians and support workers throughout their training. They also continue to support development and encourage career progression in those trainees who stay at UHS. It is fair to say that I would not have made it through my training without their help.

Nominated by Christopher James

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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Emma is a technician who is driving the profession forward by... Using her years of primary care experience to support and mentor those new to the sector. Emma shines a positive light on all the great things Pharmacy Technicians can do and continues to thrive in her own role, most recently embarking on her clinical diploma.

Nominated by Kim Horsley



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Emily Livesey a Medicines Management Pharmacy Technician at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is involved in the pilot of launching a Pharmacy whiteboard on the trust's clinical software programme. Emily is currently working in orthopaedics and driving the project forward by trialling, implementing and feeding back on ways we can improve patient care. The whiteboard aims to direct the pharmacy ward team to the patients that require daily input, have complex medical needs and can also highlight upcoming discharges. By highlighting these patients Emily can ensure that the patients have the medication and reviews they require in a timely manner. Well done, Emily!

Nominated by Sharon Lafferty - Pharmacy Technician Team Leader Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Staci Drewe is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by arranging training for Pharmacy Technicians to progress. Staci has set up opportunities for established Pharmacy Technicians in our Pharmacy department to obtain National Qualifications such as ACPs and MMTs, when previously only in-house training was available. Staci also promotes learning with quizzes and is a great mentor to Student Techs and Pharmacy Assistants, and is always friendly, approachable and does her best to help everyone.

Nominated by Donna Rogers - Medicines Management & Medicines Information Technician

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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

My nomination is Laura Pearson

Laura stepped up to the role of dispensary manager to cover a gap in vacancies. During this time, Laura worked so hard to improve efficiency in the dispensary service. Reducing the requirement of ward-based staff to help support dispensary during peak work times. It was the most incredible modernisation in pharmacy I have seen in my career to date.

Laura promoted the pharmacy technician profession to A level students locally as well as with in the trust and for the APTUK East of England. Laura was a role model in how to behave and make active changes to all member of the pharmacy team.

Nominated by Sarah Heard

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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

My name is Natasha, and I am a student pharmacy technician. I am in my first year of learning and I would like to nominate Staci Drewe. She is my mentor and honestly my role model. I would not have been able to carry out this course without her help and support. She drives the profession forward by supporting all members of the pharmacy team, with her hard work and dedication. There is never a task too large for her to take on and she is constantly willing to help anyone. She manages our whole hospital pharmacy at MKUH when it comes to training a development, from band 6 pharmacists to pharmacy technicians. We are lucky to have her!

Nominated by Natasha Bone

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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Paulene Lawson is a pharmacy technician at Leyland PCN who is driving the profession forward by showing that it is possible to work your way up and it's you are never too old to learn / study. She was an ATO for a long time then took the plunge to do science at college, became a PTPT, and band 4 in hospital, band 5 in PCN and is now continuing her studies with them

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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Lauren Wrath is a pharmacy technician at GMMH who is driving the profession forward by using her newly learnt skills of becoming a super user, working the POCHI machine to be able to not only run the bloods in both the dispensary and within the clinics she is also now training others to do so, so that the service can remain efficient for the service users.

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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Christina is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by her enthusiasm and commitment to helping others. Christina is a newly qualified pharmacy technician only completing her studies this year. She has shown insight and professionalism beyond her years. Nothing is too much trouble for Christina - she often will turn her hand to filling gaps in the rota and jumping in where needed. She could be in aseptic one day, wards the next. She never complains or needs to be asked to help out. She manages to juggle workload and is always intuitive at task management. Christina is supportive of the new PTPT students and helps mentors the new members of staff with care and professionalism. If this is the future of pharmacy technicians, then we are in safe hands.



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PHARMACY TECHNICIAN DAY
OCTOBER 18, 2022



Pharmacy Technicians driving the profession forward

Roslynn is a pharmacy technician who is driving the profession forward by... implementing new ways in which pharmacy technicians can support the multidisciplinary teams when based up on hospital wards. Roslynn works between different surgical wards at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary and has helped to develop a system of pre labelling medications for elective hip and knee surgeries. This involves looking at upcoming theatre lists, and checking patient weights are correctly recorded to ensure the doses are appropriate. This allows discharges to be more timely and better organised, which often means there is no need for the prescription to be sent to the busy dispensary. Roslynn has also recently taken part in a mental health first aid course - enabling her to recognise signs that colleagues may be struggling or in crisis. Roslynn is always looking to develop herself and wants to concentrate more on improving her leadership skills and gaining more confidence when speaking in public.

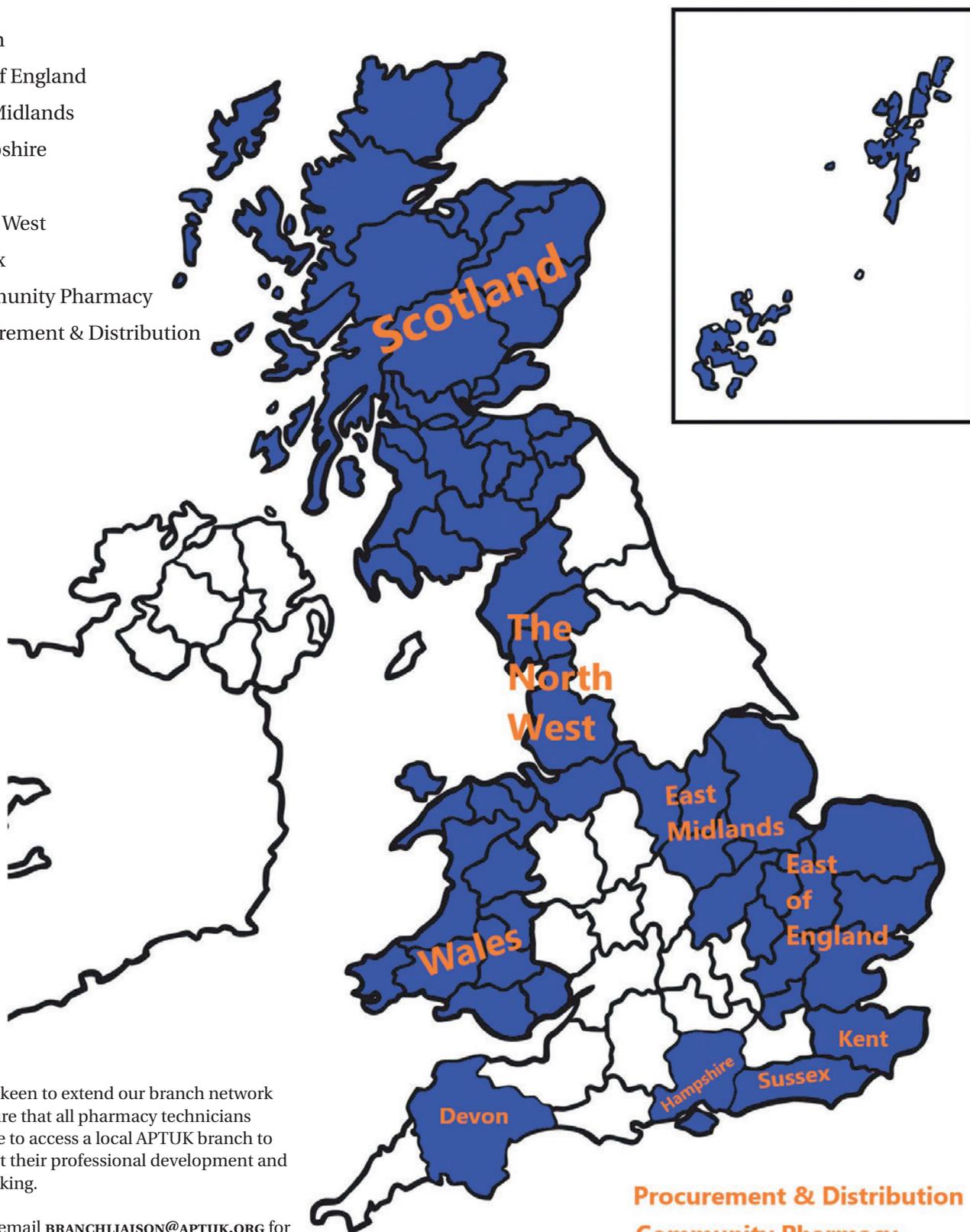


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Active Branches 2022

Active Branches List:

- Scotland
- Wales
- Devon
- East of England
- East Midlands
- Hampshire
- Kent
- North West
- Sussex
- Community Pharmacy
- Procurement & Distribution



We are keen to extend our branch network to ensure that all pharmacy technicians are able to access a local APTUK branch to support their professional development and networking.

Please email BRANCHLIAISON@APTUK.ORG for more information.

APTUK Fellow - Melanie Boughen

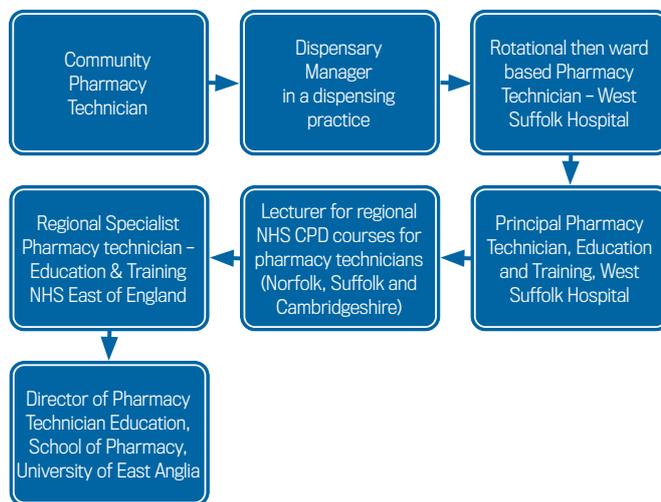
April 2022 was a strange time – being bestowed the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) Fellowship was wonderful. However, ironically, for the first time in about 14 years I was not at the APTUK Conference – I was struck down with Covid-19. My colleagues that were there called me on a video chat for the awards ceremony and only my husband saw the tears! That was not the only surprise, our fabulous team here at University of East Anglia (UEA) School of Pharmacy were also joint recipients of the APTUK/AAH Pharmacy Education Award.

Being recognised for my work and commitment to my profession is a humbling experience and receiving a Fellowship allowed me to reflect on the journey of my working life. My journey started a long time ago in community pharmacy and I realised early on in my career how much I enjoyed education.

Passion for Education

That enjoyment of education transposed into passion for education which has dominated my life as a pharmacy technician ever since and led me down an exciting path of development, not only for pharmacy technicians, but also for myself. Alongside my roles I have always been involved in other work-related activities which has included training as a lecturer, NVQ Assessor and Internal Quality Assurer for the local Further Education (FE) College, being an appointed member of the then, RPSGB Support Staff Advisory Group, completed a Master's degree in Healthcare Education and continue to be involved in education groups and committees to name but a few.

My simplified career journey:



Developing our future workforce

In everyday work I am the Director of Pharmacy Technician Education in the School of Pharmacy, University of East Anglia where I'm responsible for the provision of pre and post registration education and development for pharmacy technicians. This is unusual in itself as we are the only higher education institution in the UK that provides a GPhC accredited course for pharmacy technicians. Within the School I also have academic administration responsibilities and have recently been appointed as Chair of the Fitness to Practise Committee for the whole School which is probably also a first for a Pharmacy Technician.

Like so many other pharmacy professionals, I love my job, in fact, I am passionate about what I do and being in a position now

that can offer some influence on the bigger picture is rewarding. And again, echoing many colleagues, what I've achieved as a pharmacy technician, I would never have believed possible when starting out in the community pharmacy. However, I'm a naturally inquisitive, self-motivated person and fortunate to have had role models that have both influenced and supported me in my journey in both work and study. None of this happened without a commitment to work hard and it continues to this day as I now begin my doctorate. My advice when opportunities arise is don't be afraid, if you are able, seize that opportunity - give it a go, as you never know when you will have another chance.

Looking back to drive forward

I sometimes reflect on the progression that pharmacy technicians have made since I started, particularly those in secondary care, but there is still a long way to go, particularly the development and opportunities for our colleagues in the community sector. I have a continual aspiration that all trainees will be cognisant of the fact that they are in training to enter a healthcare profession, not just doing a course for their job. Personally, I have long felt that the initial education and training level is not representative of the knowledge and skills, or the responsibility and autonomy expected of a regulated profession and that it should be at a higher academic level. We need to seriously consider that higher academic qualifications would align to the professional recognition that colleagues in other healthcare professions have, opening opportunities where we have so often been excluded.

One specific opportunity is research which historically is not an active area for pharmacy technicians. Working in the School of Pharmacy and being involved in research, I realise the positive impact that this can have for our profession and how developmental it is for the way we both think about and approach our work and how it can stimulate our minds. There are so many capable pharmacy technicians out there and I would like to encourage and support others to become involved in research or projects to increase our visibility and credibility and most of all give us the confidence to question and influence future practice.

Needless to say, throughout all of this, APTUK has been there, and I have been a member – my original member number was 345! Having spent time as the Publicity Officer, I know only too well how hard APTUK work voluntarily on behalf of us all and I am so grateful.

Thank you for my award APTUK and thank you for being the voice for our wonderful profession.



MELANIE BOUGHEN
 MA (HEALTH. ED.), FAPharmT, FhAE
 Associate Professor
 Director of Pharmacy Technician Education
 School of Pharmacy, Faculty of Science
 University of East Anglia
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APTUK Award Winner – Sam Murray

I was absolutely delighted and overwhelmed not only to be nominated but to be awarded the APTUK Secondary Care Pharmacy Technician of the Year Award 2022.

I have worked in the NHS for 24 years at Bournemouth Hospital (now University Hospitals Dorset) where I joined as a student pharmacy technician in 1998 and have worked my way through pharmacy technician training and roles in Aseptic Production Unit (APU), Medicines Management, Accredited Checking Pharmacy Technician (ACPT) and then into management roles. I am now Operations Manager for the Pharmacy at University Hospitals Dorset (UHD) which has over 220 staff across 3 sites. I love my job!

The University Hospitals Dorset is 3 hospitals which all merged in 2020 and I was involved bringing the teams together and to support staff to adjust and adapt to the changes. As operations manager I lead on recruitment, operational delivery, HR matters, sickness, staff development and most importantly the health and wellbeing of the team. I am lead advocate for pharmacy technicians across the Trust and for decades have trained, mentored and supported 100s of pharmacy technicians over that time. I am passionate to mentor and develop staff to be their best and progress their skills and careers.

I responded to the Covid pandemic and led on the staff Covid vaccination programme within the Trust as well as for members of the public. As well as organising the clinic I have supported with; supplies of vaccines, staff rotas, leading the clinic shifts and

making vaccines. This work still continues as we see the roll out of winter boosters.

My nomination came from The Associate Director of Pharmacy and he said *'Sam is a truly inspirational pharmacy leader who for the past 25 years has driven, shaped and helped influence the hospital pharmacy services across Dorset. Sam recently embraced the merger of two large acute Trusts and now has a portfolio of supporting over 220 pharmacy staff in the largest and newest NHS organisation in the South West. Her enthusiasm, energy and caring nature has shaped the career of 100s of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and is regularly quoted as a reason people choose pharmacy as a profession. It is both a pleasure and honour to work alongside Sam.'*

I never imagined when I started this career where it would take me and I am honoured to have received this recognition for a job I love.



SAM MURRAY
MAPHARM T

Pharmacy Operations Manager
UHD Women's Network Lead
Pharmacy Departments UHD
samantha.murray@uhd.nhs.uk

APTUK Primary Care Technician of the Year 2022 – Gareth Hutchinson

My name is Gareth Hutchinson, and I am a Clinical Medicines Management Technician working in North Wales. I have been registered as a pharmacy technician for over 13 years and have worked across community pharmacy, prison, hospital, and now primary care. I recently won the APTUK Primary Care Technician of the Year Award 2022 for my work around asthma management.

Background

Three years ago, I completed the BTEC level 4 Clinical Diploma in Clinical Pharmacy Services. Part of the course is a specialist unit which allows the student to explore a subject of their choice in more detail. I originally wanted to look at pain management and addiction, but, whilst mulling it over, one of the practice managers explained that their respiratory nurse was on long term leave and they needed some help with their reviews. I thought at this point I could help the practice by auditing and reviewing patients, so I chose asthma management for my specialist unit and did a lot of

background reading and shadowing of respiratory healthcare professionals to help my learning.

I had to undertake an audit and I based mine on adult asthma patients who ordered more than 12 reliever inhalers within a year. This was one of the points in the National Review of Asthma Deaths (NRAD) report. I wanted to understand the patient's perspective of asthma and its management. It was clear from my audit that people's perceptions of asthma varied from person to person and their life experiences impacted on these perceptions.

I was asked to support a Health Board managed practice with their asthma patients. How could I say no!! As I was about to start holding clinics, we heard a whisper of a pandemic and several months later I, like many others, had to work from home. Whilst it was hard to adapt to working from home, this was a silver lining for me as I had more time to concentrate on asthma reviews. I started targeting patients who had not had an annual review in a year and who ordered

their reliever inhaler every month with or without a corticosteroid inhaler.

Autonomous Practice

One thing I requested from the start was that I could work flexibly and not have full clinic slots from 9 until 5 every day so that I could spend time with the patients to give extra support, guidance, and empowerment to make a health behavioural change. I try to be as accommodating to the patient as possible when it comes to booking appointments as I want to ensure that they attend. My annual review is structured around the patient, and we discuss beliefs, anxieties and both pharmacological and non-pharmacological management of their asthma. I believe it is important to spend time with patients with a long-term medical condition to build a good rapport, work as a team as well as giving them the information to help them manage their condition at home. I do this by signposting them to the Asthma & Lung UK website (<https://www.asthma.org.uk/>) as well as urging them

to download the 'All Wales Asthma' app. From my review there is an over-reliance on reliever inhalers, and I work with the patient to try and find why they need to use their reliever so frequently and discuss switching to a dual inhaler of maintenance and reliever therapy which I have found improves compliance with inhaled corticosteroids and removes the use of a standalone reliever inhaler. I also check inhaler technique, peak flows, smoking and alcohol status as well as weight and other co-morbidities that may impact on their asthma.

I follow up each patient every three months to assess their progress. Most patients like these extra reviews and it has

increased their compliance, knowledge and understanding of asthma and their inhalers which has in turn improved their asthma control overall. Once these patients are stable and happy, I then move them back to annual reviews.

Looking to the future

I am really enjoying my role and feel I am making a change to patient's health. As this is a new role for pharmacy technicians within our Health Board it has opened opportunities for other pharmacy technicians to undertake more clinical reviews and pushing the boundaries of their current roles.



GARETH HUTCHINSON
M_APHARM_T

Technegydd Fferylliaeth Rhagnodi
Meddyginiaethau Clinigol / Clinical
Medicines Management Pharmacy
Technician
Ebost/Email
gareth.hutchinson@wales.nhs.uk

A Pharmacy Technician Experience of CMHP CredentiaLLing

Career journey so far

I am a pharmacy technician and work as the Head of Medicines Optimisation and Pharmacy Services at Turning Point. Turning Point is a social enterprise, providing health and social care services which support people with their substance use, mental health and learning disabilities in over 300 locations across England. My role sits across the whole organisation supporting our substance misuse prescribing services, independent hospitals, care homes and supported living services.

I have been in my current role for just over 18 months and have been with Turning Point since 2018. Throughout my career I have had an interest in mental health and have experience of working in NHS mental health services. My promotion to "Head of" was very unexpected and my imposter syndrome has been in full force as a pharmacy technician working in a role which is traditionally held by a pharmacist. This can sometimes be a challenge especially when I am asked to represent my organisation externally and I often have to fight my nerves and remind myself that I have lots of experience and I have demonstrated that our services run very effectively with a pharmacy technician at the helm. Moving into a senior role has opened a lot of opportunities for me and over the last year I have presented at the Pharmacy Show and co-authored a chapter for a book exploring British Drug Policy however, there is often a feeling that I have to prove that I am "worthy" of holding this type of position.

I have always recognised the value of strong professional networks and have been a member of APTUK throughout my career. As I developed the medicines optimisation provision within our mental health and learning disability services I was keen to gain peer support from pharmacy professionals in other organisations. I had allowed my College of Mental Health Pharmacy (CMHP) membership to lapse a few years before when I had stopped working directly in mental health services and decided to re-join in order to support my own development and to gain access to the discussion boards which I had previously found very helpful. A supportive colleague from another organisation asked me if I had considered becoming a credentiaLLed member of CMHP; I read through the information and was intimidated by the work involved but also very keen as a pharmacy technician to "demonstrate that they are experts in the

field of mental health pharmacy". With some trepidation I made my application.

CredentiaLLing Process

The credentiaLLing process requires submission of a portfolio and then to sit a viva. The portfolio is very robust covering a wide range of competencies. I felt that the portfolio section really played to my strengths as a pharmacy technician and my initial training had prepared me well for identifying evidence which aligned with the competencies. My portfolio consisted of approximately 40 pieces of evidence split into different files which were submitted via DropBox.

The portfolio is assessed by a minimum of three credentiaLLed members; after my submission the registrar contacted me with some feedback points and I resubmitted a few of the pieces of evidence. Once my portfolio met the competencies I was contacted to arrange my viva. This part of the process was something I was not familiar with and was incredibly anxious about. After negative experiences at school I have always avoided anything which has required me to be assessed in exam conditions and have stuck to education and training which has been portfolio or coursework based. This was also my first experience of sitting an assessment virtually.

I was sent information prior to the viva which explained the format, the reference sources that I would need access to and who would be on the panel. On the morning of the assessment I had my BNF app, Maudsley Prescribing Guidelines and Psychotropic Drug Directory to hand. The viva comprised of two parts, 3 case vignettes which I would have 5 minutes each to prepare for and then a discussion of my portfolio. I found the vignettes very challenging; I immediately panicked when they came on screen and the 5 minutes preparation time went very quickly. In hindsight, I should have spent more time reading them and reflecting on what I knew rather than immediately trying to go through the reference sources. I now recognise that 5 minutes was not enough time to take my standard "coursework style" approach. After my preparation time the panel took turns asking me the questions from the vignettes; at the time it felt like a very intense grilling but on reflection and following the feedback it was clear that this was the panel supporting me to fully explain what I knew and to explore my understanding of the pertinent issues.

The discussion about my portfolio was much more comfortable for me and I enjoyed being able to explain more about the parts of my work which I was proud to share. After the viva I was convinced that I had done badly and had a very emotional phone call with my incredibly supportive husband. Fortunately, the panel got back to me very quickly and after an hour I had the wonderful call to tell me that I had been successful and would become the first pharmacy technician to be a full credentialed member of the CMHP. The registrar spent time giving me really constructive feedback which was very helpful and will support my planned CPD.

Looking Forward

I really would encourage all pharmacy technicians working in mental health to consider credentiaLLing. The process itself provides lots of opportunities for reflection, development and CPD and it is a fantastic way to show that pharmacy technicians are “experts in the field of mental health pharmacy”. I have no doubt that there are lots of pharmacy technicians that would be successful and I am more than happy to provide support to anyone that is considering beginning their credentiaLLing journey. I hope that when I re-credential in 5 years’ time that there are a lot of pharmacy technicians joining me on the list!

Comment from Nicola Greenhalgh, CMHP Registrar:

“Katherine became our 74th credentialed member joining the other 73 members from the UK, Ireland and the rest of the world

as the first member who is also a pharmacy technician. This is a massive milestone for the College of Mental Health Pharmacy, as an organisation who supports all members working in mental health pharmacy, we have been keen to recognise the enormous contribution pharmacy technicians make in supporting patients and improving care. The process of credentiaLLing is almost identical for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians with only slight differences in the viva to take into account the different roles that the two professions take. We have, as an organisation, always endeavoured to support people through the process and will only allow people to get through to the viva stage if we think they have the potential to be successful. CredentiaLLing is a massive success for those who achieve it but is particularly so for Katherine who had no peer to support her through the process which is what so many of us rely on. We hope that now people will see credentiaLLing as not just an option for pharmacists but as something within the reach of many of the expert pharmacy technicians working throughout mental health.”



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'An Interview With...Meet the Member'



Name:
Leona Mora MPharmT

Current Role:
Clinical Pharmacy Technician
- Pre-Op Clinic, University
Hospital Ayr

Highest qualification related to your role:
HNC Pharmacy Services
Development and
Management

Contact email:
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Steps you took to get to where you are now:

I started working in hospital in 1994/95 as a nursing assistant and did this for about for 4 years, I then had to decide whether I was going to do my nursing training as that's what I always thought I would do. However, an advert appeared on the notice board (digital vacancy posts were not a thing back then) for a pharmacy assistant technical officer and it really appealed to me. I applied and was successful and after about 1 year when a student pharmacy technician post was advertised, I decided to pursue a career in pharmacy, and started training at Stow College in Glasgow one day a week for 2 years.

Once qualified I was a rotational band 4 technician, though I quickly realised that my preferred area to work was in the wards. At that point all those years ago, it was the pharmacy technician's (PT) job to do the ward top ups, there was no such thoughts of PTs carrying out medicines reconciliation or counselling patients. Fast forward a few years and I obtained the Dispensary Checking Technician qualification and gained a band 5 post as well as starting the HNC in Pharmacy Services Development and Management, which was day release over 2 years at Telford College in Edinburgh. This course gave me a tremendous amount of knowledge in both pharmacology and in time management. I was always working to deadlines and in 2nd year we had to do a project and present it, all of which terrified me. During this time, I moved into a post in medicines management, dispensing and checking prescriptions at ward level. I enjoyed this as it was more interaction with patients and the wider multi-disciplinary team.

I then went on to complete a Professional Development Award: Assessment and Supply of Individual Patients' Medicines, this qualification allowed me to carry out medicines reconciliation. As this was now the direction that some pharmacy technicians were moving in and already being part of the ward based pharmacy team and assessing patients own

medication this was definitely something I was keen to do as it would mean I would play a more active clinical role in my post. I became very much a part of the clinical team carrying out medicines reconciliation and found I really enjoyed it, as stressful as it was some days, it was very rewarding. I was mainly based in the medical admissions ward which had a high turnover.

A few years ago, a new unit was built next to the Emergency Department (ED), called Combined Assessment Unit (CAU) and its purpose was to take the load off of ED by assessing patients at the 'front door' with a maximum length stay of 72 hours. I played a huge part in getting the unit up and running and have gained invaluable clinical knowledge, things that I never thought in my wildest dreams that I would be involved with. It was all this extra clinical knowledge that made me want to take the step into Pre-Op clinic in April of this year, it is an entirely new role for pharmacy technicians and to my knowledge the only one so far in the West of Scotland. It is such an exciting role with many areas to expand on and is a privilege to be part of the team.

What is the most challenging part of your current role?

I would definitely say the most challenging part is when patients are given dates for surgery with little notice and having to ensure that certain groups of medication are stopped in time for surgery. There is always the chance that surgery may need to be cancelled due to a patient not being given enough time. When that does happen, it is quite frustrating for everyone involved, as due to COVID some of these patients have been waiting over 2 years for surgery.

What surprised you the most being a pharmacy technician?

What surprised me the most and still does 20 years on is how little people understand the role, and to be fair until I started working in pharmacy, I wasn't aware of such a role, yet despite us developing and progressing so much over the years it is still not widely known what the PT role is. Having said that as we migrate into clinic settings and GP practices other healthcare professionals are starting to recognise us and what we can bring to the team.

If you had the chance to do it all over again, what would you change?

I am a believer in everything happens for a reason and wouldn't want to change anything as I believe everything I have accomplished has led me to where I am today.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

By far the thing I enjoy most is the patient interaction. We are in such a privileged position to be involved in their hospital journey and have them share some of their most personal medical and often family history with us and if I can make that experience a positive one for them then I feel I have achieved something.

What's the best piece of career or workplace advice you have ever received?

That regardless of what area of pharmacy you are working in then there is a patient at the end of it and I have always kept that with me. Often days are busy and we can lose sight of why we are doing the job we do. I have always tried to convey this when training other members of staff.

"THIS COURSE GAVE ME A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF KNOWLEDGE IN BOTH PHARMACOLOGY AND IN TIME MANAGEMENT"

What would you be doing if you weren't a pharmacy technician?

That's difficult as being a pharmacy technician has been part of my life for so long. A few years back I had a notion of training to be paramedic but decided not to pursue it, I think I would always have been involved in healthcare in some shape or form.

What do you think is the biggest issue currently facing pharmacy technicians?

The ever-changing roles are not always to everyone's liking. It's not the way things were always done; therefore some staff can struggle to see a new way of working. I feel that one of the biggest issues is still trying to get people to understand what our role actually is and that we are a registered group of professionals adhering to GPhC standards in the same way as pharmacists are.

Has anyone influenced your career decisions if so, why?

Over the years many people, mainly close colleagues/friends who probably know me better than I think they do, have influenced career decisions, especially where promotion has been involved. I have always maintained that I would never apply for job just because of the grade. Many higher grade jobs have come and gone but have not been ones that I could see myself in. Enjoying what I do is definitely key for me.

"I HAVE ALWAYS MAINTAINED THAT I WOULD NEVER APPLY FOR A JOB JUST BECAUSE OF THE GRADE"

What do you do that supports equality, diversity and inclusion?

I would never engage in any behaviour that could be seen as belittling someone because of a certain race, gender or ethnic background. I enjoy learning about different peoples' cultures and enjoying them for who they are, colleagues and patients alike.

What does diversity and tolerance in practice look like to you?

It is about promoting inclusiveness by not only accepting diversity but by being able to speak up when you know something is not right or someone is not being treated with respect.

What has been the highlight of your career, so far?

There have been many highlights and my current role in the pre-op clinic is most certainly up there. However, one I am especially proud of is when undertaking my project for the HNC. My project was to develop a training manual to help pharmacy technicians counsel patients on inhaler technique and it is still used to this day and gets updated regularly.

What is at the top of your to-do list?

One of my roles in the pre-op clinic is to transcribe patient's medications onto the electronic prescribing system prior to

a patient being admitted. This is currently completed by a pharmacist, however there is work underway to look at a process to allow pharmacy technicians to transcribe. It is an exciting opportunity and one I am looking forward to, so in terms of personal development, that would be top of my to do list.

When people look at you, what do you think they see?

I think they see someone who is approachable, professional, yet enjoys a good catch up with staff. That I always try to do my best at whatever task I am doing and that I would never be afraid to ask for help or admit I don't know how to do something.

What can you not get right, no matter how many times you try?

I cannot seem to step away from having imposter syndrome, no matter how many times I tell myself that I have worked hard to get to where I am, and of course I am proud of that, but there is always that bit that thinks 'who do you think you are?'

Where do you usually go/do when you have time off?

In an ideal world every holiday I would be lying on a sun lounger next to a pool indulging in some light reading, however that only happens once a year. Last year I took up paddle boarding and wild swimming, which I got some of my pharmacy friends into as well. It is such a good way of just letting go of all your stress or worries even if it is only for the time you are out in the water, it can have such a positive effect on your mind. My time off is almost always spent with my husband ferrying my daughter around to whatever arrangements she has made on my behalf.

Who do you go to for advice or to bounce ideas off?

I have really close colleagues who have become very good friends, in fact 2 of them were my bridesmaids and I met them through working with them, so I tend to go to any of them for advice depending on what the situation is.

What simple thing at work sparks joy?

Seeing a rota with no empty slots in it, although these are very few and far between. Also when we all come together for occasions in the department, so many of us are all busy with our own work that it is nice when we can all have a catch up with each other's lives.

Why did you join APTUK?

I joined as I wanted to be able to keep up to date with any new information and progression within our profession. It is also good to read what other pharmacy technicians are achieving.

What's next?

To continue developing the pharmacy technician role in a Pre-op setting and to promote the role as it is a new one.

Pharmacy Technician Syndrome; Symptoms, Diagnosis And Treatment

Symptoms

'What are you talking about?' I hear all of you say to yourselves whilst hopefully wanting to continue to read my first attempt at putting pen to paper. Well, keyboard to word document.

I hope you're wondering; 'I'm a pharmacy technician, what is this and what if it's me?' The answer is 'yes you are, keep reading and potentially'.

The inspiration behind me emailing the PTJ editor, Kay Morgan, to ask how I'd go about writing this for you all came when I used 'pharmacy technician syndrome' - a phrase I've been using for a while as a bit of joke with another pharmacy technician I'd been talking to.

It occurred to me that sharing my theory might be useful. I want you all to recognise the symptoms, diagnose and to encourage you to deal with it.

For context, I dropped an email to my fellow pharmacy technician contacts to inform them of an opportunity I'd seen via APTUK. I'm conscious that, for some utterly baffling reason, not every pharmacy technician is a member of APTUK! So I thought "spread the word" (obviously always with encouragement to join the Association).

One reply I received said something along the lines of "I'm really interested but I don't think I'm good enough." My heart sank as I instantly recognised a case of 'pharmacy technician syndrome' and a little bit of my previous self.

Diagnosis

I would define 'pharmacy technician syndrome' as a sense of not being good enough, seeing a learning or career opportunity and holding back. Not because you don't want it, but because of the fear of failure, a sense of not being good enough and imposter syndrome. I mean, you're already pinching yourself as to what you have achieved so far... am I right? Why rock the boat? I say "rock the darn boat!"

I am an ex-sufferer of this confidence sucking, potentially career and opportunity limiting affliction but I'm pleased to say I have made a full recovery. I'd like to advise you on how to do the same; take on that challenge, apply for that course, apply for the next step in your career or get more involved in something you know you'll be great at; but without the fear. Who knows, maybe even write an article for the PTJ...

I work for the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) as an

education supervisor and I can remember applying for this role as if it was yesterday. After being encouraged to by someone who thought I'd probably enjoy the role and be good at it, I filled in the application form. She believed in me and I didn't, I filled it in full of doubts. I wasn't going to get an interview but maybe some feedback on the application form would be really useful, so what had I got to lose?

Treatment

I couldn't believe it when I received confirmation I had an interview a period of time later. Instead of being nervous, I laughed; I am never going to get this job, but the interview was in London (pre-pandemic) and the interview process would be interesting, I had to write a presentation and spend the day there. You know what, why not? I decided this was a win/win. I'd learn something new, get some good feedback and I'll grow for next time or whenever something similar comes along. As you know, I got the job and the rest is history.

I think the support of my friend, who I'll be forever grateful to for her encouragement, was the difference for me. Therefore, what's my advice to you? Have someone who, when you get the symptoms of 'pharmacy technician syndrome', you can speak to and who can support you in that first step of going for it. Get out there and speak to other pharmacy technicians. Use your APTUK membership! Go to branch meetings, meet people, talk. Peer support is truly invaluable and the biggest (probably most underused) tool in your toolbox.

Since this incredible triumph (in my view anyway), I have chucked my hat in the ring for almost every opportunity that has come my way since, because I'm over the fear of failure. I still usually run my plans past someone for some encouragement, I treasure my support network and you should yours.

Another symptom management tip from me is to treat every opportunity or every potential career move as a learning opportunity. Tell yourself that you can do it and fill in the form to the best of your ability and see what happens. Knowing that the worst case scenario is you'll never be worse off. You'll always be better off with some useful feedback and who knows, there will be times when you get everything you wanted.

I haven't been 'successful' at everything

I've gone for since becoming an education supervisor. In fact, I've had two spectacular learning opportunities recently (notice, I'm not calling these failures because that's not what they are). At no point have I failed, I've been given great and very constructive feedback. One recent endeavour has opened up opportunities at work to learn a few new things. It has added variety to my week, satisfaction and pride at being entrusted to do something out my comfort zone. Another has made me re-evaluate what is important personally, professionally and to consider my work-life balance. I've channelled this into writing for you all and taking on a new thing away from work that I've been wanting to do for a while.

The Future

But why am I coming to you with this now? Why is it important we all make a full recovery from 'pharmacy technician syndrome'? Well Claire Steele recently spoke to Independent Community Pharmacist website about protectionism in our profession. 'Claire Steele says protectionism within pharmacy needs to be eroded and pharmacy technicians must be trusted to work independently if their profession is to realise its potential'.¹ If we are going to realise Claire's and APTUK's vision for the pharmacy technician of the future we need to believe in ourselves, embrace these new roles and grab learning and career opportunities with both hands. If we are going to be trusted to work independently, for the profession to reach its full potential, each and every one of us needs to realise we can do it. We are worthy, capable and qualified.

So, speak to each other, network, utilise your APTUK membership, champion your colleagues, offer each other support and encouragement. You can do this! We can do this! We deserve it.



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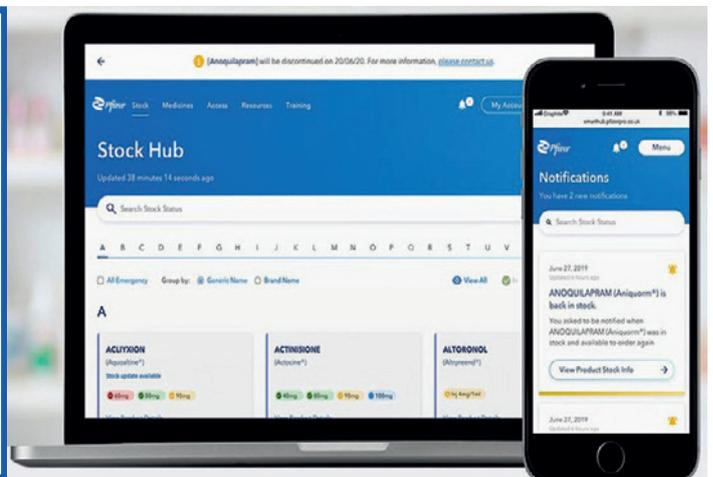
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