



PHARMACY TECHNICIAN JOURNAL

Journal of the Association of
Pharmacy Technicians United Kingdom

2026 | ISSUE 1



Diversifying, structuring and supervising career development

- Novel skillsets, experiences and responsibilities;
- Multidisciplinary collaboration;
- Staffing transitions within APTUK



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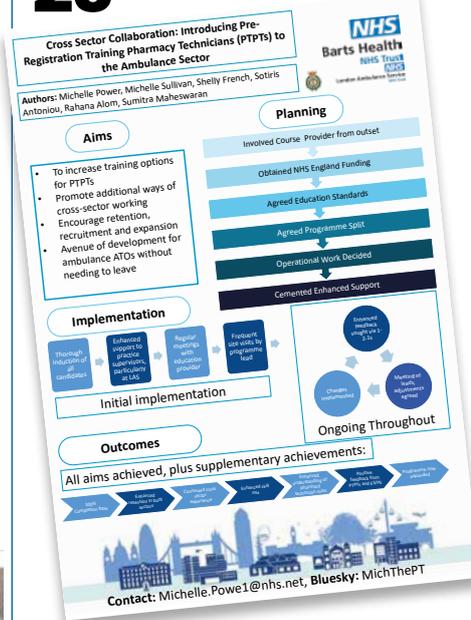
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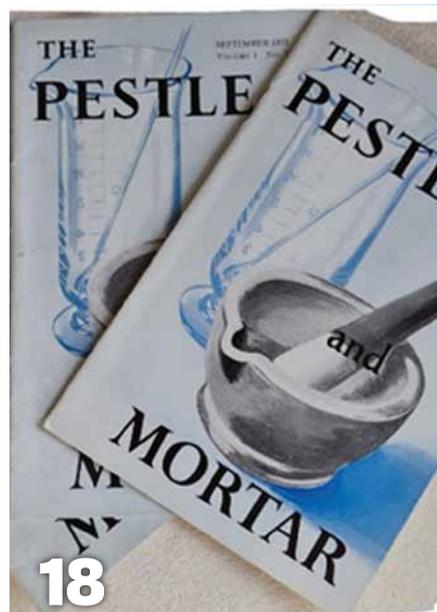
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New Year, New Beginnings, New Horizons

Welcome to the first edition of the Pharmacy Technician Journal for 2026. I hope that everyone who celebrates had a joyful, festive season and hope that nobody has been too badly affected by the heavy snowfall we have had in some areas and by Storm Gorretti, which battered the Southwest of England in the early part of the New Year.

APTUK also has some new beginnings. After having served as Vice President and then as interim President (and as Education Director before that), Amy Laflin begins the year as our new President. We also welcome Gail Hall as Vice President, Kate Gardiner as Professional Lead for Wales, Karine Loudon as Professional Lead for Scotland and Alishah Lakah as Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. You can read about our new members of the executive committee further in this journal.

After their 12-month tenure as member observers, we say 'goodbye' and a massive 'thank you' to Mel and Ellie, both of whom reflect on their time with the team, and we introduce our new member observers for 2026.

We also start looking forward to APTUK 2026 conference and exhibition, Expanding Horizons. Tickets are on sale now and we are busy developing the programme and booking speakers. We are following on from last year's conference, Advancing Practice, and focusing on the 4 pillars of pharmacy practice, but also looking at how our roles are changing and our horizons are growing with new legislation and changes in the wider pharmacy profession.

Another new beginning you may have noticed is that we have named this edition differently. Instead of 'Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter' editions we have made the decision to name each edition by year and number (2026 Issue 1). We have made this decision to make it easier to archive each edition and to forward plan as we hope to start producing more than 4 issues each year.

I would also like to welcome Caroline, from the editorial team who is guest editing this edition of the Pharmacy Technician Journal whilst I take a short leave of absence. I am looking forward to reading all the articles from members and the updates from the executive team. Thank you, Caroline, and the rest of the editorial team for your support in producing the journal.

Guest Editor Column

Stepping into the role of Guest Editor for this edition of the *Pharmacy Technician Journal* has been a privilege. Each issue of the PTJ captures a moment in time – a snapshot of the challenges we face, the innovations we drive, and the collective ambition of pharmacy technicians to push the boundaries of practice. This edition is no exception.

Across these pages, you'll find contributions that reflect the depth, diversity and development of our workforce. With insights into opportunities and new areas of practice for pharmacy technicians such as genomics and training in the ambulance sector; reflections on our history and how we have grown; and examples of so many inspiring pharmacy technicians who are excelling. This issue demonstrates the impact pharmacy technicians make when they are recognised, empowered, and supported.

I hope you enjoy this issue. We would love to hear from you if you would like to write an article for the PTJ, by emailing editor@aptuk.org or via the feedback form link on page 21.



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PTJ 2026 timeline

Edition	Copy Deadline
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Full instructions are available online at www.aptuk.org.

Articles must be submitted electronically to editor@aptuk.org.

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AMY LAFLIN MAPHARM T – APTUK PRESIDENT
 president@aptuk.org

President's Column

As I write my first article as President of APTUK, I feel both honoured and energised to be stepping into this role at such a pivotal moment for our profession. Pharmacy technicians across the UK continue to demonstrate resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to patient care. It is a privilege to represent you and to champion the work you do every day.

One of the most significant developments shaping our professional landscape is the forthcoming change to supervision. These reforms mark a long-awaited recognition of the expertise, capability, and professionalism of pharmacy technicians. They open the door to greater autonomy, clearer accountability, and more meaningful utilisation of our skills within pharmacy teams.

APTUK has published a detailed position statement on these changes, which I encourage all members to read on our website: [Position statement APTUK Member Briefing Supervision Changes Implementation January 2026..docx](#). As these reforms come into force, we will continue to advocate for clarity, consistency, and support to ensure every pharmacy technician feels confident and prepared. This is a milestone moment – one that strengthens our profession and enhances the care we provide to patients and communities.

I also hope that many of you have taken the opportunity to respond to the GPhC's consultation on the Initial Education and Training Standards (IETs). These standards will shape the next generation of pharmacy technicians, influencing how we train, develop, and grow as a profession. APTUK has submitted a comprehensive response, but the collective insight of our members is equally vital. Thank you to everyone who contributed their perspective.

Update from the UK Pharmacy Professional Leadership Advisory Board (UKPPLAB)

Following the recent UKPPLAB Board meeting on 9th December 2025, the Board has published both a meeting statement and an Independent Chair's blog, summarising and reflecting on the discussions and decisions from the meeting. These, along with several other important updates, are now available on the UKPPLAB website, including:

Sir Hugh Taylor recently spoke with Pharmacy Magazine about the future of professional leadership. You can read the interview here: <https://www.pharmacy magazine.co.uk/profession-news/professional-leadership-hugh-taylor-nov25>

There is also a podcast episode available, offering further insight into the Board's work and direction: <https://www.pharmacy magazine.co.uk/podcasts/pharmacy-magazine-in-conversation-with-podcast-sir-hugh-taylor-chair-of-ukpplab>

Updates reflect the continued evolution of professional leadership across pharmacy and the importance of strong, collaborative voices representing all sectors of our workforce.

Looking Ahead to 2026: New Energy, New Faces, New Ambition

As we move into 2026, I am excited by the momentum building within APTUK. We are welcoming new team members who bring fresh perspectives, diverse experience, and a shared passion for advancing our profession. Together, we are committed to strengthening our advocacy, expanding our support for members, and ensuring that APTUK remains a confident, credible voice for pharmacy technicians across the UK.

I am delighted to extend a warm welcome and heartfelt congratulations to Gail Hall on her appointment as Vice President of APTUK. Gail brings a wealth of experience, passion, and commitment to advancing the pharmacy profession, and I look forward to the leadership and vision she will bring to this role. I would also like to extend our sincere thanks to all APTUK members for their engagement and support throughout the nomination and election process. Your participation is vital in shaping the future of our professional body.

A special thank you goes to the other nominated candidates for their time, dedication, and willingness to contribute. Your involvement is greatly appreciated and reflects the strength and talent within our membership.

Please join me in celebrating Gail's achievement and welcoming all new members of the APTUK executive committee team. We welcome a Professional lead for Wales, Professional lead for Scotland and a Director for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging as well as five new member observers. You can meet our new team members on our website: [Biographies](#)

APTUK 2026 Conference: A New Approach, New Voices, and New Opportunities

As we look ahead to the APTUK 2026 Conference, we are excited to share that this year brings a refreshed approach to how we shape our programme and spotlight the expertise within our profession. In response to member feedback and our commitment to creating inclusive, relevant, and forward-thinking learning experiences, we have introduced several new processes designed to strengthen engagement and broaden participation.

One of the most significant developments is the introduction of an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for those who wish to speak at the conference. This new approach opens the door for a wider range of voices – across all sectors, levels of experience, and areas of practice – to contribute to the national conversation about the future of pharmacy technicians.

Importantly, this year's EOI process has been designed to align with the multiprofessional pillars of practice, ensuring that the content we curate reflects the breadth and depth of modern healthcare roles. By mapping proposed sessions to these pillars, we can build a programme that supports clinical excellence, leadership, education, research, and service development – while also highlighting the unique contributions pharmacy technicians make across the system. *(continued overleaf)*

This alignment will also help us identify topics that can be developed beyond the conference itself. Submissions received through the EOI process will feed directly into our national and branch webinar programmes, creating a continuous pipeline of learning opportunities throughout the year. Even if a proposal is not selected for the main conference, it may still become part of our wider CPD offer, helping us build a richer, more responsive learning environment for our members.

The APTUK 2026 Conference will continue to be a flagship event – bringing together pharmacy technicians from across the UK to share best practice, explore innovation, and celebrate our collective achievements. With these new processes in place, we are confident that the programme will reflect the ambition, diversity, and evolving scope of our profession more than ever before.

We look forward to receiving your expressions of interest

and to welcoming you to what promises to be an inspiring and energising conference in 2026.

This year is not just about change – it is about opportunity. Opportunity to shape our future. Opportunity to elevate our profession. Opportunity to stand together as a community of skilled, dedicated, and forward-thinking pharmacy technicians.

Thank you for your continued support of APTUK and for the work you do every day. I look forward to working with you, learning from you, and celebrating the achievements we will undoubtedly accomplish together.

Here's to a transformative year ahead, one that is united in purpose and one that is committed to shaping a stronger future for every pharmacy technician across the UK.

Best wishes,

Amy

Membership Reflections and Developments in 2025

As we reflect on 2025, it has been a defining year for membership at APTUK, marked by growth, stronger engagement, and a renewed focus on championing the pharmacy technician profession across every setting.

One of the most significant developments this year has been the continued increase in member numbers, driven both by new registrants joining the profession and by more experienced pharmacy technicians seeking a professional community that truly represents and supports them. This growth has reinforced the importance of APTUK's role as the professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians and has helped to strengthen our collective voice at a national level.

Throughout 2025, we also advanced several initiatives designed to enhance the membership experience. These included updated communication channels, a refreshed member support offer, and more opportunities for members to connect with national workstreams, consultations, and professional development resources. Many of these improvements were informed directly by member feedback, reflecting our commitment to ensuring that APTUK continues to evolve in line with the needs of the profession.

A key priority this year has been strengthening the visibility of the pharmacy technician profession across the wider health and care landscape. Our members have contributed to discussions on education reform, workforce transformation, and scope of practice, helping to ensure that the expertise and leadership of pharmacy technicians are recognised and utilised. The dedication shown by our membership has been instrumental in pushing this agenda forward.

Of course, challenges have also featured in 2025. Workforce pressures, ongoing operational demands, and the pace of change across pharmacy services continue to impact our profession.

However, these challenges have only underscored the need for a strong professional leadership body and a unified membership. APTUK's work this year has focused on advocating for members, supporting wellbeing, and ensuring that the pharmacy technician voice is represented where it matters.

As we look ahead to 2026, our priorities remain centred on building value for members, strengthening national influence, and supporting the development of a confident, capable, and future-ready pharmacy technician workforce. With the continued engagement and passion of our members, we are well placed to build on the foundations laid this year.

A major contributor to this will be the insight from our membership survey, which ran throughout November and December 2025. Initial responses have shown strong engagement across sectors and levels of experience. The survey will provide valuable reflections on what members value most, as well as opportunities to strengthen resources, visibility, and support. The findings will continue to shape our priorities and ensure that APTUK evolves in line with the needs of our diverse workforce. The evaluation of this survey will be shared later in the year.

On behalf of APTUK, thank you for your ongoing commitment, professionalism, and support. Together, we will continue to advance and elevate the pharmacy technician profession in the year ahead.



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Sussex Branch September Meeting: Genomics-Informed Medicines Optimisation

Our recent Sussex Branch meeting featured an insightful session on genomics and its growing role in pharmacy practice. We were delighted to welcome Lucy Galloway, Consultant Pharmacist in Genomic Medicine at the NHS South East Genomic Medicine Service (GMS), and Jessica Humphreys, Pharmacy Technician from the NHS North East & Yorkshire GMS.

Lucy provided an excellent overview of what genomics is and why it matters, explaining how medicines can be optimised using genomic data and introducing the principles of pharmacogenomics. This approach helps to predict how individuals respond to medicines, improving treatment outcomes and reducing adverse reactions.

Examples of genomics in current NHS practice include:

- Targeting cancer treatments based on tumour genetics
- Sequencing the genomes of infectious organisms (e.g. tuberculosis) for rapid diagnosis and tailored therapy
- Predicting patient responses to certain drugs to avoid serious side effects

Genomics is a key feature of the NHS Long Term Plan, making it essential for pharmacy teams to understand its impact.

Lucy highlighted how pharmacy technicians should prepare to discuss genomics confidently with patients, the public, and multidisciplinary teams. She also shared useful resources for further learning:

<https://www.genomicseducation.hee.nhs.uk>
<https://www.cppe.ac.uk/gateway/genomics>
<https://www.medicineslearningportal.org/p/pharmacogenomics.html>

Jessica then introduced the NHS GMS pharmacy internship projects, sharing her work on pharmacy genomics education and training, as well as insights from a recent workforce survey of pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians (PTPTs) and registered pharmacy technicians. Her presentation was inspiring and demonstrated how pharmacy technicians can make a real impact in embedding genomics into pharmacy practice.

Key takeaway: Genomics is transforming healthcare, and pharmacy professionals have a vital role in supporting this change. Now is the time to build knowledge and confidence in this area.



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A Brief Overview of the Hampshire Branch Meeting

The Hampshire branch of APTUK was delighted to receive a recent talk from Sarah Blowers, Lead Medicines Administration Pharmacy Technician at Hampshire and Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. The meeting focused on the role of pharmacy technicians in medicines administration.

Key themes and discussion points

Sarah discussed how the role of Medicines Administration Pharmacy Technicians (MATs) was introduced within the Trust with the aim of enhancing patient care. This included using the attention to detail of pharmacy technicians to reduce the risk of medicines administration errors, as well as helping to address challenges caused by nursing shortages.

She explained how medicines administration pharmacy technicians use their expertise to support medicines adherence by educating patients on the importance of taking their medicines as prescribed. Sarah also described the importance of building rapport with patients, negotiating treatment plans, and supporting patients to engage with their medicines. In addition, she highlighted the role MATs play in medicines governance, including the development of a competency framework to ensure safe practice in medicines administration.

Sarah gave an example of the medication reminder charts provided to patients, which include both the timing of doses and the reason each medicine is prescribed.

Highlights from Sarah Blowers' presentation and her professional journey

Sarah shared a summary of her professional journey, starting as a pharmacy assistant at Jay's Pharmacy, a community pharmacy,

before qualifying as a pharmacy technician in 2014. She then described her transition into hospital pharmacy, beginning at University Hospital Southampton, an acute hospital trust, where she worked as a rotational pharmacy technician before training as an Accuracy Checking Pharmacy Technician (ACPT) and moving into the medicines management team.

Sarah then moved into her current role at Hampshire and Isle of Wight Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, a community and mental health trust, where she works as a medicines administration pharmacy technician. She later became Lead Medicines Administration Pharmacy Technician, also supporting the education and training team within the Trust.

Reflections, outcomes, and feedback from attendees

The talk was warmly received by attendees and received praise, along with a thank-you letter from the Interim President of APTUK. Attendees from the Hampshire branch and other branches thanked Sarah for an informative and engaging session. An attendee from another Trust also expressed interest in exploring the introduction of a medicines administration pharmacy technician role within their own organisation.



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Medication Safety Branch – Review of Our First Year as a Branch

As we come to the end of 2025, we wanted to reflect on our first year as a branch. It has been a busy year, and we are proud of what we have achieved this year. We were able to offer four sessions for pharmacy technicians to attend. We have enjoyed setting up the branch and collaborating with guest speakers. The guest speakers provided engaging, informative, and thought-provoking sessions. We would like to say a big thank you to the guest speakers and to all the pharmacy technicians who attended in person or have watched the recordings.

A reminder of the sessions presented as follows.

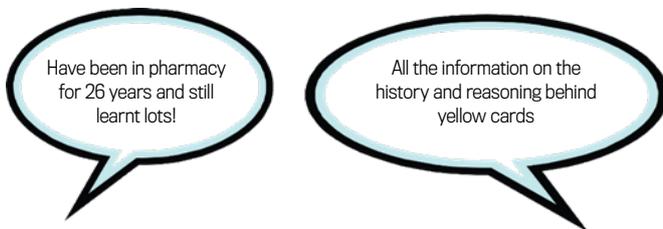
The highs and lows of being a Pharmacy Technician in the Medication Safety Officer (MSO) role

Nicola Stockmann, former APTUK President, joined us as Abigail Peckett – Medicines Safety Manager and MSO at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHSFT, turned to presenter mode to talk about their experiences working in medication safety and, especially, as Medication Safety Officers. They gave us insight into the origins of the role and their everyday experiences. Their passion in promoting all aspects of medication safety as well as developing our pharmacy technician workforce into this area of pharmacy was engaging and infectious. We hope to be able to support a growing number of pharmacy technicians in similar roles.

Championing Yellow Card Reporting

Maxine Wright – Medical Information Scientist (Prescribing Support) from the Regional Drug & Therapeutics Centre, based at the RVI in Newcastle, joined us at our second branch meeting in May to talk to us about yellow card reporting and how this contributes to patient safety. We heard about how yellow card reporting started, what should be reported, who can report, why we report, and the difference reporting makes in keeping people safe. It was an informative session covering an important topic. Please continue to report adverse drug reactions and defective medicines [Yellow Card | Making medicines and medical devices safer](#).

Feedback from attendees answering what did you like most about the event?

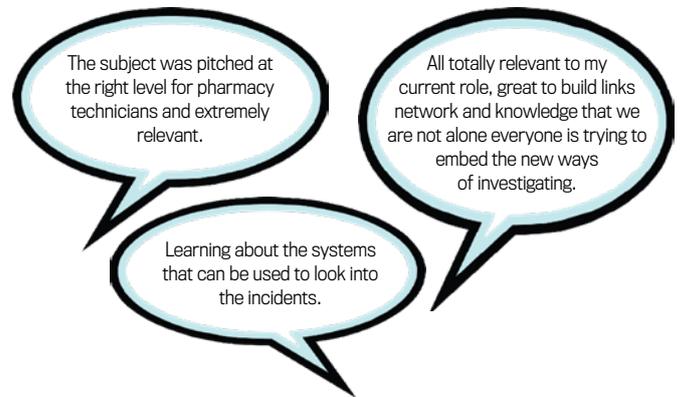


How do we learn from patient safety incidents?

Russ Palmer – Patient Safety Manager and Patient Safety Specialist at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHSFT joined us to talk about the changes to the national incident reporting criteria and the introduction of the national Patient Safety Incident Reporting Framework and Learning From Patient Safety Events, and how these frameworks can be integrated into incident investigations in all sectors to focus on the available learning opportunities rather than, as has historically been the case, the causative factors. He spoke passionately about embracing the developments and engaging staff in a variety of learning events

following an incident including After Action Reviews (AAR), SWARM huddles, MDT meetings, as well as moving away from the traditional Serious Incident investigation style to bring in a more responsive and patient centred response with a Patient Safety Incident Investigation (PSII). Russ's presentation showed his clear passion to promote investigations as opportunities for learning and to encourage all staff members to be able to experience these as a positive experience.

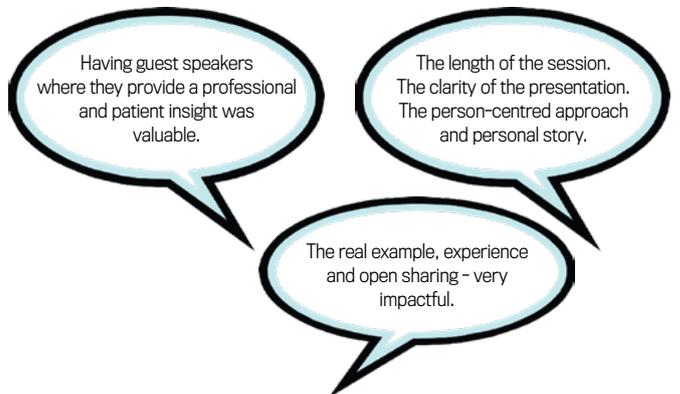
Feedback from attendees answering what did you like most about the event?



A Patient's Perspective on Duty of Candour

Our third branch meeting took place in November, where we were joined by Sarah Seddon – Specialist Pharmacist in Education and Training at Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust. We were honoured that Sarah was able to attend and share her story on 'A patient's perspective on Duty of Candour.' This was a powerful and thought-provoking story where Sarah shared her personal experience of lack of candour after mistakes were made in her care. This meeting sparked some interesting and open conversations, and we hope that the attendees found it to be a valuable session.

Feedback from attendees answering what did you like most about the event?



Feedback from attendees

Feedback is invaluable to developing the sessions going forward and we would like to thank the attendees who completed the feedback forms which were completed by pharmacy technicians who work in settings including Hospital, Mental Health, Community and Homecare.

All the feedback for the event, presenter, subject, and relevance

was positive. Questions were mostly answered with 'extremely relevant', 'extremely satisfied' and 'beyond my expectations.'

Attendees were overall very satisfied with the events answering this question with a total of 97% satisfied.

What our attendees told us we could to better?

- Include more perspective from community pharmacy technicians.
- Include more examples from pharmacy practice when discussing learning from incidents.
- More chance to network and discuss impacts of the topic with each other at the event.

What we have done with the feedback

We have discussed the feedback and used it to help us plan our events for 2026 ensuring we are delivering what our members will find useful for their practice and continued development.

Don't forget the sessions are recorded for those who were unable to attend the live sessions. These can be found in the branch section on the APTUK website.

What would you like to see presented for future sessions? Please email your ideas to the medication safety branch

medicinesafetybranch@aptuk.org



Amanda, Abi, Rebecca, Michelle
Medication Safety Branch Committee

Pride Branch - World AIDS Day Webinar

On 1 December 2025, the APTUK Pride Branch held an educational webinar to mark World AIDS Day. The branch welcomed guest speaker Stephanie Katiyar, a specialist in Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and Sexual Health at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, and founder and co-chair of the Pharmacy PrEP Network, PrEP PharmConnect. Stephanie has over ten years' experience in the field and was particularly keen to engage with pharmacy technicians on this important subject.

In the UK, more than 105,000 people are living with HIV. Globally, an estimated 38 million people live with the virus. More than 35 million people have died from HIV- or AIDS-related illnesses over the past 40 years, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

Medical advances now mean that people living with HIV can expect a long and healthy life, and that we have the tools to stop HIV transmission. However, HIV continues to be highly stigmatised and misunderstood.

The webinar focused on HIV and AIDS and how pharmacy professionals may encounter this within pharmacy practice. Key areas covered included improving understanding of the disease, developing drug history-taking skills, and learning more about PrEP medicines, which are becoming increasingly prevalent in primary care.

Attendees responded very positively to the webinar, and Stephanie shared the following feedback to thank APTUK for the opportunity to deliver the session:

"It was a pleasure to deliver the HIV and Sexual Health session for the APTUK group on the timely occasion of World AIDS Day, 1 December. I had the opportunity to engage with a dynamic and enthusiastic group of pharmacy professionals who asked thoughtful, insightful questions throughout the session. I was also able to promote the PrEP Pharmacy Network, which several attendees have since joined. Following the session, I have connected with one of the attendees from Turning Point to explore opportunities for outreach PrEP work in South East London."

For any members who were unable to attend the session, you can view it on the Membership section of the APTUK website. If anyone would like to contact Stephanie for more information or be involved in the PrEP Pharmacy Network, email her on stephanie.katiyar@nhs.net.



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England Update

Reflecting on Progress: A New Chapter for Pharmacy Technicians

The end of a year is not an ending, but a pivot – a chance to embrace new standards and legislation that shape the next chapter of our profession.

As we begin 2026, it's inspiring to reflect on how far we've come and look ahead to what's next. Last year marked a milestone with pharmacy technicians being added to Patient Group Direction (PGD) legislation – a significant step in expanding our scope of practice. Now, we begin 2026 with the knowledge that another transformative piece of legislation has been passed, further modernising and empowering our profession.

What's Changing in 2026?

The coming year will be bookended by two major developments under the new pharmacy supervision legislation:

From 7 January 2026: Pharmacists are able to authorise pharmacy technicians to hand out checked and bagged medications during periods of official absence.

From 10 December 2026: Pharmacy technicians will be permitted to supervise the assembly, preparation, and dispensing of medicines in aseptic units.

These changes represent a significant evolution in our responsibilities and professional autonomy. The gap between these implementation dates is intentional – it allows professional leadership bodies, including APTUK, to develop robust supporting guidance to ensure safe, effective, and consistent practice.

The past 12 months have brought important developments for pharmacy technicians, and this is only the beginning. Documents such as APTUK Professional Leadership – A View from the Pharmacy Technician Profession and the Department of Health and Social Care's 10-Year Plan clearly signal a forward-thinking approach to workforce development.

As Professional Lead for England, I am proud to contribute to this progress through my roles on the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's Pharmacy Technician Advisory Forum and the NHSE Pharmacy Workforce Group for Genomics. The discussions and initiatives underway are all focused on shaping a future where pharmacy technicians play an increasingly vital role in patient care.

2026 will be a year of opportunity and transformation. These legislative changes are not just policy updates – they are a recognition of the expertise and value pharmacy technicians bring to healthcare. Together, we will continue to build a profession that is modern, empowered, and ready for the challenges ahead.



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APTUK Membership information

CURRENT FEES

To join APTUK follow this link:
www.aptuk.org/about-us/join-aptuk/
 The current annual fees are
 Pharmacy Technician: £60 or £6 per month
 Early Years: £60 for 18 months or £4 per month
 Trainees are FREE of charge

Monthly fees are only available when setting up payment via the website: aptuk.org.

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

Please ensure your personal details are up to date by logging into your profile on the website:

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

For support or query, please contact Lynn Ali, the Membership Coordinator.

APTUK WEBSITE MEMBERS ONLY AREA

Please ensure you have logged into the website to gain access to the member's area to receive electronic journals, latest APTUK news and to find details of other benefits of membership.

For support with username and password, please contact Lynn Ali, the Membership Coordinator.

APTUK JOURNAL

Four editions of the journal are published digitally. Printed copies available on request. All members, including trainees can access previous and current editions via the member's only area on the APTUK website:

www.aptuk.org/key-resources-page/PTJournal.

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

#membershiptomatters #joinus #supportustosupport

Contact details for Lynn Ali – APTUK Membership Coordinator

Email: membership@aptuk.org

Professional Lead - Scotland

Karine Loudon is an experienced pharmacy technician who has worked across acute, primary care, and education roles. She is currently the Lead Pharmacy Technician for the General Practice Clinical Pharmacy Service in NHS Tayside, where she supports professional leadership, governance, workforce development, and service improvement.

Karine values collaboration and is committed to creating supportive learning environments through clinical supervision, peer review, and training initiatives. As a former Chair of the APTUK/National Pharmacy Technician Group Scotland (NPTGS) Scotland Branch, she has contributed to national

education and development workstreams. She remains dedicated to supporting colleagues and advancing the pharmacy technician profession across Scotland.



KARINE LOUDON
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Professional Lead – Scotland
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Professional Lead - Wales

I'm Kate Gardiner, recently appointed as Professional Lead for Wales. I have been a pharmacy technician since 2010, and over the years I've held several roles within the profession. Through it all, my passion for pharmacy – and especially for pharmacy technicians – has grown stronger, particularly over the last few years.

Currently, I work as Regional Manager for Knights Pharmacy across Cardiff and Penarth. In addition to this role, I also work with the Pharmacy Delivering a Healthier Wales board, contributing to initiatives that improve pharmaceutical care across the region.

Outside of work, I love spending time with my two children and enjoying the countryside with our horse.

I am absolutely thrilled to take on the role of Professional Lead for Wales. I am deeply passionate about advocating for pharmacy technicians and helping to advance their role within the pharmacy profession. A few years ago, I felt stuck in my

career as a pharmacy technician, but my involvement with APTUK showed me that there truly is a voice for every pharmacy technician.

Prior to this role, I have always felt supported by APTUK, and the opportunities I've had through the organisation have reinforced my belief that no dream or idea is too big. I am excited to bring this energy and drive to my work as Professional Lead for Wales, championing pharmacy technicians across the country.



KATE GARDINER
MPharmT
Professional Lead – Wales
wales@aptuk.org



THE ASSOCIATION OF
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- In the next edition of the Pharmacy Technician Journal:
 - More history of APTUK
 - More posters
 - Digital Clinical Safety officer
 - APTUK update

Interested in writing an article for the PTJ?

We are always looking for new articles so if you are interested in sharing your knowledge, research, experience, or opinions with fellow pharmacy technicians, then please get in touch.

Email: editor@aptuk.org

A Turning Point for Pharmacy Technicians: Expanding Horizons

Building the Bridge to Tomorrow

Imagine standing at the edge of a bridge that leads to an expanding horizon. Behind us lies the familiar landscape of traditional roles and responsibilities, albeit they have changed over the past year; ahead of us is a future where pharmacy technicians are even more empowered, educated, and integral to patient care. That bridge is continuing to be built right now – a structural part of this is through the GPhC consultation on Initial Education and Training (IET) standards and the forthcoming supervision legislation changes.

Why the GPhC Consultation Matters

The GPhC's proposals are not just incremental tweaks – they are structural beams in this bridge. Raising the qualification to Level 4, embedding stronger science foundations, and refining learning outcomes will ensure that tomorrow's pharmacy technicians enter the profession with deeper clinical knowledge and sharper decision-making skills. These changes prepare us for a healthcare environment that demands adaptability, autonomy, and advanced competence.

Supervision Legislation: Expanding Horizons

From January 2026, supervision reforms will allow pharmacy technicians to take on greater responsibility – initially distributing checked prescriptions without a pharmacist present. By December 2026, pharmacy technicians will independently prepare, dispense, and supply medicines, including in aseptic

services. This is not just a shift in tasks; it's a redefinition of professional identity.

“These changes are not just about education – they're about unlocking the full potential of pharmacy technicians.”

Looking Ahead

Together, these developments signal a future where pharmacy technicians are not simply supporting pharmacy – they are shaping it. The bridge we are crossing leads to a workforce model that is resilient, patient-centred, and collaborative. It leads to that expanding horizon.

Call to Action

As we step into this transformative year, engagement is key:

- Prepare for legislative changes personally and within your teams.
- Embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.
- The horizon is bright – and pharmacy technicians are walking toward it with confidence.



PHIL JONES
MAPharmT

Education Director APTUK
educationdirector@aptuk.org

Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

“My mission is to ensure every pharmacy technician feels they belong, so we can build a truly inclusive, valued, and thriving profession together.”

I am delighted to join APTUK as the Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. This is an incredible opportunity to advocate for our profession across all sectors of healthcare and at all levels. At this pivotal time in our profession, it is vital that our profession feels valued and included so we can truly represent the communities we serve.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to build on the excellent work already underway, strengthen genuine inclusive leadership, raise the voices of under-represented members, and embed belonging into professional development and engagement. My key priorities are to listen to members, understand barriers, and work collaboratively to turn inclusion into meaningful, practical actions for our profession.

I am genuinely excited about the year ahead and the progress that we can all make together. Let's continue to champion diversity, inclusion and belonging so we can create a more thriving workforce for us all.

Biography

Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging – Alishah Lakha

Alishah has been a qualified pharmacy technician since 2004, with experience across primary care, acute, mental health,

and private healthcare sectors. She currently works for NHS England as a Regional Pharmacy and Medicines Project Manager, specialising in antimicrobial stewardship, workforce development, and professional leadership.

Alishah chairs the East of England Regional Pharmacy Technician Leadership Group and is a member of the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's Expert Advisory Forum for Pharmacy Technician Practice. Alishah has a keen interest in addressing health inequalities and has worked in this area to support fairer, more inclusive systems for patients. She is passionate about developing the role of the clinical pharmacy technician and contributes to key national discussions, advocating for fairness, inclusion, and diversity within the pharmacy workforce. She holds a professional qualification in Leadership and Management, and her research achievements include published work supporting the advancement of pharmacy technician practice.



ALISHAH LAKHA
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Director of Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging
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Reflections on the Member Observer Role at APTUK



Over the past year, my experience as a Member Observer on the Executive Board of the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK) has been both professionally enriching and personally reflective. This role has provided a valuable opportunity to observe leadership, governance, and strategic planning within a

national professional body, deepening my understanding of how organisational-level decisions influence pharmacy technicians' practice, development, and professional identity.

Through regular engagement with board discussions, I have gained insight into the complexities of workforce advocacy, education and training standards, regulatory considerations, and patient safety. Observing these processes has highlighted the importance of evidence-informed decision-making and ethical governance within healthcare organisations.

The experience has also reinforced my understanding of how professional bodies must balance the needs of their members with wider healthcare priorities and system pressures.

On a personal level, the role has encouraged critical reflection on my own professional values and aspirations. Witnessing collaborative leadership in action has strengthened my appreciation of inclusive dialogue, respectful challenge, and the value of diverse perspectives in achieving effective outcomes. I have become more aware that professional influence is developed through engagement, accountability, and sustained commitment rather than position alone.

This experience has increased my confidence in contributing to strategic conversations and has motivated me to consider future leadership and advocacy roles within the profession. Overall, my time as a Member Observer has contributed significantly to my professional growth and reinforced my commitment to supporting the advancement, recognition, and ongoing development of pharmacy technicians.

Melanie Barnett, Former Member Observer APTUK

Member Observer Reflections



Over the past 12 months, I have served on the Executive Committee of the APTUK as a Member Observer. This experience has been incredibly rewarding, both professionally and personally.

The role has given me valuable insight into how a professional leadership body operates and how its decisions impact pharmacy technicians

at every level. During my time on the Executive Committee, I have contributed to discussions on education and training, regulatory changes, professional advocacy, and wider strategic priorities.

I have had the privilege of attending meetings, roundtables, conferences, and workshops on behalf of APTUK, engaging with external stakeholders and active members. These opportunities have enabled me to advocate for the pharmacy technician profession at both regional and national levels, support the recruitment of new and returning members, and gain a deeper understanding of the profession.

Professionally, this role has boosted my confidence in interacting with senior leaders. As a Civilian Pharmacy Technician within the Ministry of Defence, a role that can at times feel professionally isolating, being part of APTUK has helped me remain connected to developments beyond the military environment while building valuable professional networks across the UK.

On a personal level, this opportunity came at a pivotal moment. I was experiencing a loss of confidence and facing setbacks in my career progression. Applying for this voluntary role was something I had considered for several years, but training commitments had previously stood in the way. When I was offered the position, I embraced it wholeheartedly. Since then, my passion for pharmacy—and for inspiring and training the next generation of pharmacy technicians—has been reignited.

I am deeply grateful to the APTUK Executive Committee for their warm welcome, encouragement, and dedication. I hope this reflection encourages more members to consider embracing the role of Member Observer in the future.

Elsbeth Clarke, Former Member Observer APTUK

Follow all APTUK activities on social media:

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@aptuk.bsky.social

Welcome our Member Observers for 2026



Suzanne Bhagwanji



Chamene Hicks



Andrew Jell



Lynda Kelley (Shaw)



Hannah Todd

Suzanne Bhagwanji

Suzanne has been working in pharmacy for over 25 years. She began her career in a small, local independent chain of pharmacies as a counter assistant after completing work experience, later progressing to an Accuracy Checking Pharmacy Technician.

Nine years ago, she joined the pharmacy team at University Hospitals Plymouth NHS Trust and is currently a Senior Medicines Optimisation Pharmacy Technician. Alongside two other senior colleagues, she is helping to build the Medicines Optimisation Team and develop ward-based services.

Suzanne has a keen interest in Urgent and Emergency Care. Working in the Emergency Department has shown her the importance of having a pharmacy team at the front door and at the beginning of the patient's journey, making early interventions that are meaningful and beneficial to all.

Suzanne shared her thoughts on becoming a Member Observer:

"I am very excited to be given this opportunity to be involved in a national organisation whose focus is on pharmacy technicians and the important role that we play. I want to advocate for all pharmacy technicians, across all healthcare sectors in the UK, especially as our roles continue to evolve into more clinical and specialist areas. This is far beyond where pharmacy was, and what the expectations of pharmacy technicians were, when I started many years ago. I also want to use this year to learn, grow, and develop myself further, to be the best that I can be both at APTUK and for my colleagues at University Hospitals Plymouth."

Chamene Hicks

Chamene is an experienced pharmacy technician with over 10 years' experience across clinical, research, and aseptic services, including more than five years within the NHS.

She is skilled in clinical trial operations, GCP and GMP compliance, and investigational product management, with a strong focus on quality, collaboration, and patient care. She is currently working at a clinical trial service provider whose mission is to make clinical trial participation easier for patients and their families.

Chamene shared her thoughts on becoming a Member Observer:

"I look forward to the opportunity to actively collaborate with APTUK as a Member Observer during a particularly exciting period of growth and development for the pharmacy technician profession, bringing a member's perspective from my role in pharmaceutical and clinical research."

Andrew Jell

Andy has over 10 years' experience working in pharmacy, having started his career in community pharmacy as a Healthcare Counter Assistant. He progressed through the Pharmacy Technician qualification and Accuracy Checking programme, later becoming a Pharmacy Store Manager.

In 2020, Andy transitioned to a large acute hospital, where he gained qualifications in Medicines Optimisation and Discharge Facilitation. He is currently a Senior Medicines Optimisation

Pharmacy Technician, working alongside fellow senior pharmacy technicians to lead the Medicines Optimisation Pharmacy Technician team.

Andy has supported and led a number of quality improvement projects and is particularly passionate about patient care and advocating for the pharmacy technician profession.

Lynda Kelley (Shaw)

Lynda has worked in community pharmacy in the South Hams area on the south coast of Devon for 30 years and has been with Day Lewis Pharmacy for 19 of those years. She initially started as a Medicines Counter Assistant and progressed to become a Registered Accredited Checking Technician.

She has championed highly successful Healthy Living campaigns and raised thousands of pounds through Day Lewis charity days. Lynda also started her own weight-loss clinic in branch using newly available PGDs and currently has the highest number of clients across the company. In addition, she has helped run extremely successful flu clinics and contraceptive services.

Lynda believes now is the time to empower community pharmacy technicians to step forward and embrace their evolving roles.

Lynda shared her thoughts on becoming a Member Observer:

"I am looking forward to working as a Member Observer in the hope of empowering more community pharmacy technicians to step forward and advance their roles."

Hannah Todd

Hannah is a registered Pharmacy Technician who qualified in 2004, bringing over two decades of experience across community, hospital, and primary care settings. Since qualifying, she has worked within primary care in Greater Manchester, where she currently holds the position of Lead Pharmacy Technician.

As part of the senior management team, Hannah works alongside the Chief and Deputy Chief Pharmacist to help shape and deliver high-quality pharmacy services across the organisation.

Her professional development has been driven by a strong commitment to leadership and advancing the pharmacy technician profession. She is currently undertaking the Chief Pharmaceutical Officer's Pharmacy Leaders Programme and holds an ILM Diploma in Primary Care Management, both of which continue to strengthen her ability to influence service development and workforce progression.

Hannah is passionate about all aspects of the pharmacy technician role and firmly believes in maximising the expanding scope of practice to deliver the highest standards of patient care.

Hannah shared her thoughts on becoming a Member Observer:

"Joining APTUK as a Member Observer is an exciting opportunity to bring a member's perspective into the Executive Committee, champion the voice of our profession, and contribute to national workstreams that support and elevate the pharmacy technician workforce."

Supervision Changes For Pharmacy Technician Role Expansion

APTUK welcomes the legislative changes to supervision, released on the 12th December 2025, as part of a range of reforms to maximise the use of the skill mix in pharmacy teams and ensure that pharmacy technicians can utilise their knowledge and skills as registered healthcare professionals. These changes modernise and strengthen pharmacy supervision and recognises the vital role of pharmacy technicians in delivering safe, efficient, and patient-centred care.

These changes are not just about efficiency; they are about unlocking the full potential of our workforce. By enabling pharmacy technicians to take on these responsibilities, this supports the patient, ensuring they are being treated and seen by the right person at the right time. This is a win for patients, a win for the profession, and a win for our ever-evolving healthcare system.

APTUK's position is clear: patient safety remains paramount. Delegation must be underpinned by robust governance, clear accountability, and competency frameworks. We will work closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), and the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) to ensure these safeguards are in place.

Background

On 12 December 2025, the Government and DHSC approved The Human Medicines (Authorisation by Pharmacists and Supervision by Pharmacy Technicians) Order 2025. This legislation modernises pharmacy supervision, recognising the professional capabilities of pharmacy technicians and enabling a more efficient, patient-focused pharmacy service.

Key Changes Effective January 2026

From 7 January 2026:

Pharmacists can authorise trained pharmacy technicians (and other competent team members) to hand out checked and bagged prescriptions during periods when the pharmacist is absent or engaged in clinical duties.

From December 2026:

Further expansion will allow pharmacy technicians to supervise or undertake preparation, dispensing, sale, and supply of medicines, including aseptic services in hospital settings.

APTUK Position

APTUK strongly supports these changes as they:

- Empower pharmacy technicians to utilise their full skill set.
- Enable pharmacists to focus on clinical care and patient interaction.
- Maintain patient safety through clear governance and competency frameworks.

Implementation Support

APTUK will:

- Work with DHSC, GPhC, and RPS to develop national guidance and SOP templates.
- Provide training resources, CPD modules in partnership with education providers, and support the development of competency frameworks for pharmacy teams.
- Offer member webinars, FAQs, and practical tools to ensure safe and consistent adoption.

Additional guidance

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) have both published guidance on the authorisation process for checked and bagged prescriptions, including:

- Risk assessment and SOP updates
- Escalation protocols for high-risk medicines
- Competency and audit requirements

Access the RPS guidance here:

[Authorisation by a pharmacist – checked and bagged prescriptions | RPS](#)

Access support from the regulator for Great Britain: GPhC

[Legislation on pharmacy supervision: FAQs | General Pharmaceutical Council](#)

Next Steps for Members

- Review your organisation's SOPs and governance structures.
- Attend APTUK webinars and access member resources for implementation support. Webinars to be released soon.

APTUK remains committed to supporting members through this transition, ensuring patient safety and professional development remain at the heart of these changes.

For queries or support, please contact: info@aptuk.org

These changes mark a defining moment for pharmacy technicians. They recognise our professionalism, our skills, and our commitment to patient care. APTUK will stand with you every step of the way to ensure this transition is safe, effective, and empowering for our profession.

Thank you for your dedication and for being part of this exciting journey.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Executive Committee, Best wishes.



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Exploring Peer Discussion: Insights from a Doctoral Journey

When you receive your notification to submit your revalidation, what do you do about peer discussion? Have you planned a specific meeting, chosen your topic, and booked a room? How have you selected your peer? Is it based on the topic, their professional traits, personal characteristics, or something else entirely? These were the questions I wanted to explore when I embarked on my Doctorate in Clinical Education in 2020.

In 2023, I was awarded the Katherine Miles Poster Award at conference for showcasing the first part of my research journey, leading up to data collection. You may wonder what happened after that. Fear not—here is the ending to that journey. But first, a quick recap.

The Journey to Understanding Peer Discussion

To explore the experiences of pharmacy technicians participating in peer discussion, I used an online survey to gather a broad range of information and to inform a sampling frame. This enabled the selection of nine individuals from across Scotland, Wales, and England, working in community, hospital, and primary care pharmacy settings. All participants had experience of peer discussion, either for their own revalidation or by acting as a peer for others.

Within four weeks, I received 325 valid survey responses—and if you responded, thank you. Of those, 132 participants (41%) expressed interest in taking part in interviews, which was fantastic. Using the sampling frame, participants were filtered and a random number generator was used to select nine individuals for online one-to-one interviews.

By mid-June 2023, all data had been collected. This meant that I then spent over two years analysing the data and writing my thesis. Do not do a doctorate if you want to do anything quickly! The photograph (right) shows my dining room table – and this is what it looked like for around 18 months. I ate on a tray.



Making Sense of the Data

I used a data analysis process developed by Braun and Clarke, known as Reflexive Thematic Analysis¹. This method requires continuous reflection on how data are interpreted. This was particularly important as I am what is known as an ‘insider researcher’² – a pharmacy technician who completes my own peer discussion and revalidation. I therefore needed to take care not to interpret the survey data and interview transcripts through my own experiences, instead remaining focused on the data. My thesis contains many of these reflexive points to help guide readers through the process I took. So, how did I do this and what did I find? I coded the data into smaller chunks and then grouped those chunks to create themes and subthemes. These themes formed the basis of the data analysis, discussion, and recommendations sections of my thesis.

What I Found

Theme 1: Fostering Meaningful Discussions

Participants described peer discussions as more than just a requirement. For some, these conversations helped shape

professional identity and confidence.

Subthemes highlighted that:

- Some participants adapted naturally occurring conversations to meet the peer discussion requirement
- Others integrated discussions into existing activities, such as appraisals or training
- Experiences varied widely, from “it’s just a tick-box exercise” to “this genuinely supports my development”

Theme 2: Strategic Peer Selection

Choosing a peer was rarely random. Decisions were influenced by:

- Trust, familiarity, and shared understanding
- Professional expertise and hierarchy
- Practical constraints, such as availability and access

Two subthemes were identified:

- Intrinsic factors: personal traits and characteristics of the peer
- Extrinsic factors: practical and situational considerations

Theme 3: Navigating the Landscape of Peer Discussion

This theme explored how pharmacy technicians made sense of the structures and expectations surrounding peer discussion.

Participants described:

- Uncertainty about what the GPhC expected
- How peer discussion experiences evolved over time
- Challenges in finding a suitable peer, particularly for those in niche or isolated roles

Recommendations and Completing the Doctorate

My recommendations emphasised the need to clearly define the purpose of peer discussion and to consider how a more flexible approach could be adopted. Practical guidance and support should enable pharmacy technicians to make confident, context-sensitive peer selections, tailored to reflect the diversity of roles within the profession.

My next chapter is to publish the thesis and prepare a peer-reviewed article. However, this piece is for you—the wider pharmacy technician community. I hope it inspires reflection, conversation, and confidence as you approach your own peer discussions. More than that, I hope it sparks curiosity about research.

Whether it is a small project in your workplace or a larger academic journey, research starts with questions—and your questions matter. If my journey demonstrates anything, it is that research is possible, valuable, and within reach.

So, as you read this, ask yourself: what could you explore next?

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20 Years of the PTJ

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Pharmacy Technician Journal*, now featuring a refreshed look. In this issue, we have highlighted some of our past front covers, reflecting the evolution of the publication over the years.

Since the Association was founded in 1952, member communications have undergone significant changes. In the early days, with a much smaller membership, handwritten and typed updates were posted to members.

By the 1960s, these communications primarily consisted of Minutes from the Executive Committee meetings of the Apothecaries' Hall Dispensers' Association, as we were then known.

In 1966, our name changed to the Association of Pharmacy Technicians, and by the 1980s, printed bulletins and reports were introduced.

They were small folded printed sheets entitled Summer Bulletin; Conference Report or Minutes of the Annual General Meeting. Conference Programmes and Study Weekend Programmes were sent to members at this time.

The mid-1980s saw the launch of *Pharmtec Voice*, an A4 magazine published three times a year, featuring articles such as the President's Address, Branch Reports, NHS Advisory Group Reports, future conference details and even a tea break quiz.

The 1990s brought further transformation with the introduction of *APTUK News and Events*. The September 1999 edition included updates on Registration, the Code of Practice, and the first mention of our APTUK website.

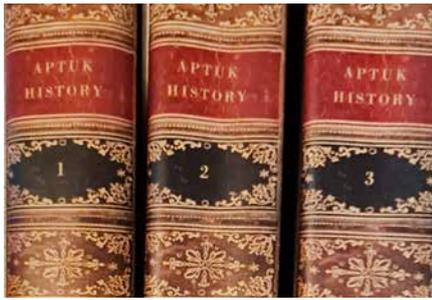
By 2000, the newsletter adopted a professionally printed A5 format, and by December of that year, the publication returned to A4 size under the name *The Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK Journal* – the title we still use today.

From black-and-white editions with minimal imagery to a full-colour magazine the Journal has continued to evolve, expanding the content and improving the design throughout the years.

Today, the *Pharmacy Technician Journal* remains a vital resource for our members, reflecting our growth and commitment to professional development. We hope you enjoy this edition and the journey through our history.



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The Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK '70 years of history'

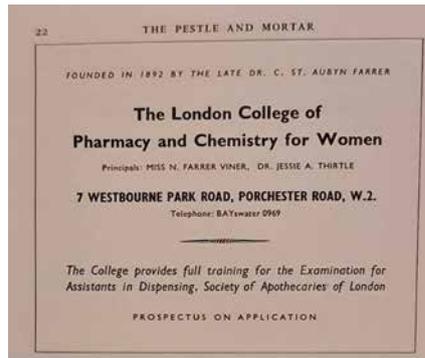
Part five: 'Our Journal & Conferences'

As we come to an end of our 1950-decade history, in this installment, the focus is on communication with our members. Through the years the Association has recognised the importance of keeping our professional members informed, and today we have many media outlets to ensure this. In the early days, however, this was very different mostly relying on the printed word.

Hence, it's an absolute pleasure to explore the origin of our outstanding 'Pharmacy Technician Journal'. We pay homage to all the authors and editors over the years and thank them for the hours of work it takes to bring up-to-date learning and information to members. It's a privilege and amazing to know we hold original journal copies in our historical archives. So, let's take a look and see how it all started.

'Pestle and Mortar'

One of A.H.D.As aims and priorities from the outset was to keep members well informed of the current and future activities of the profession and the Association. To achieve this, a glossy magazine was published and circulated to all members free of charge. It was called the 'Pestle and Mortar' and was deemed to be the official publication of the Association.



The first publication was in September 1953. Minutes from the October 1953 meeting tell us that the front cover was designed by a student. The editor was Dr Jessie Thirtle who had become a valued advocate of the Association through our relationship with The London College of Pharmacy and Chemistry for Women.

Advertisements in the Pestle and Mortar show Dr Jessie Thirtle as the Principal of the college. This was a college that provided full training for the examination for Assistants in Dispensing, Society of Apothecaries of London.

The Pestle and Mortar was registered with the British Museum and therefore had a wide circulation outside of the United Kingdom; circulated to America and many other countries. Within the four

copies of the magazine held in the APTUK archives, September 1953, March 1954, March 1955, September 1955, there are fascinating articles from authors in South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda and one about 'The Work of the Mission to Lepers' and the treatments used.

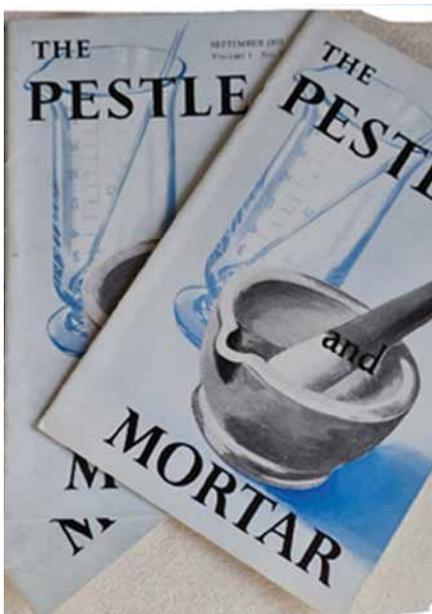
The magazine was costly to produce being printed by a high-class company that specialised in technical literature for scientific intuitions including pharmaceutical industries.

Advertisements were included as a way of offsetting the costs, and these are fascinating examples showing several medicinal products that were used at the time.

In time the publication became too expensive to continue in a glossy form, and it was replaced by a newsletter sent to members. The 1954 balance sheet shows how costly the publication was to produce.

Later, the newsletter evolved into a paper journal, the Pharm Tech Voice, which was a hybrid version between the paper newsletter and our Pharmacy Technician Journal of today. We will have more about these journals and their content in future editions of 'Our History' as we journey through the decades of the 1960s to the present day.

Although printed publications were



an excellent media for communication to members, as we all know, the benefits of face-to-face conversations and real-time discussions enhance camaraderie and stronger professional relationships. Thus, we see the birth of the APTUK conferences. Again, here we thank all conference organisers over the decades for their commitment, passion and dedication that it takes to deliver these inspired events.



Educational study Weekends and Conferences

As the A.H.D.A developed and evolved, the annual general meeting was included as part of study weekends. The weekends usually began on a Thursday afternoon and ended on the following Sunday afternoon. The programme, as it is today, was based on a theme and included many varied lectures and speakers. A fee was offered to guest speakers which was often donated to their favorite charity or the charity adopted for the study weekend.

In the beginning, the educational event was organised by a different local branch of the Association, allowing the weekend to be located across various geographical locations and thus giving all members an opportunity to attend.

Our prestigious conferences, now organised by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors, have become a highlight of the Associations annual calendar as they are the only conference that are solely dedicated to the pharmacy technician profession. The conference prides itself on showcasing pharmacy technicians' daily work and gives a tremendous opportunity for networking and sharing of best practice. As it was in the beginning, they have come to provide the latest information, an opportunity to exchange knowledge and seek ideas on the changing landscape of pharmacy. There clearly remains a hunger amongst



pharmacy technicians to all meet to learn, share and evolve. Many friendships have been forged by being part of APTUK and these still last and stand the test of time and extend beyond boundaries, just as they did in the early years.

As our early days' history of the 1950s draws to a close, there are two more topics that are worth mentioning.

Whilst searching our archives and letters, there was information from 1935 of an Association of Certified Dispensers that operated between the two world wars. There is no other information and nothing about their activities or scope. The Society of Apothecaries were aware of this group but were unable to confirm, in 1951, whether they still existed.

Another point, worth mentioning, as it connects with the quest for registration, is that in 1973, the Pharmaceutical Society suggested setting up a register, under their control, for hospital Pharmacy Technicians. However, the APTUK Executive Committee rejected this as registration should be for all pharmacy technicians, whatever pharmacy sector they worked in. It was clear from this that our Association's scope has always been

inclusive and looked to safeguard our role and profession in its entirety.

There is no doubt from this account, and it states the obvious that the 1950s were of upmost importance for our profession and professional leadership. It was a time of much activity and determination; not taking NO as an answer.

The next part of our history is equally as exciting as we journey into the 1960s. Much happened in this decade, not least that our title changed to Pharmacy Technician but more about this and our education in the next chapter.

Before we leave this part, it would be remiss of us to not to acknowledge, once again, our founder Miss Katherine L. Miles MBE and all the other founder members that supported her in the quest for recognition for Apothecaries Hall Dispensers Assistants. Hopefully this account will pay some tribute to their dedication as we are ever in their debt.

Other founding members include Teresa Davies, Doreen Palmer, Audrey Clarke, Joyce Padmore, Miss Jones, Miss Mitchell, Irene Watson, Alwyn Evans, Elefrida Linton and Margaret Whittle to name but a few.

Several members have been honored for their contributions to pharmacy; Norah Brierley, Elfrieda Linton, Katherine Miles, Joyce Padmore and Lesley Morgan.

Miss Miles was the first President and remained in post for quite some time, from 1952 to 1981. Following on from our founder, we have been extremely fortunate to have had many outstanding trailblazers leading our amazing professional leadership body. In a future edition we will pay homage and give thanks to all who have driven our journey to the place we are in today.

Tess Fenn BA Hons FAPharmT MAPCPharm

Tess is a Fellow of the Association of Pharmacy Technicians and has held positions of Kent Branch Secretary, Education Officer, Vice President, President, CEO, APTUK Director. Tess was also a Director and Secretary of the European Association of Pharmacy Technicians and now sits on the EAPT Advisory Board.



Julie Mathieson FAPharmT

Julie is a Fellow of the Association of Pharmacy Technicians and has held positions of Honorary Secretary, Minutes Secretary, Branch and Projects Officer, Vice President, APTUK Director. Julie was also one of the founder members of the North Wales and Borders Branch and now the All Wales Virtual Branch.



Cross-Sector Collaboration:

Introducing Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians (PTPTs) to the Ambulance Sector

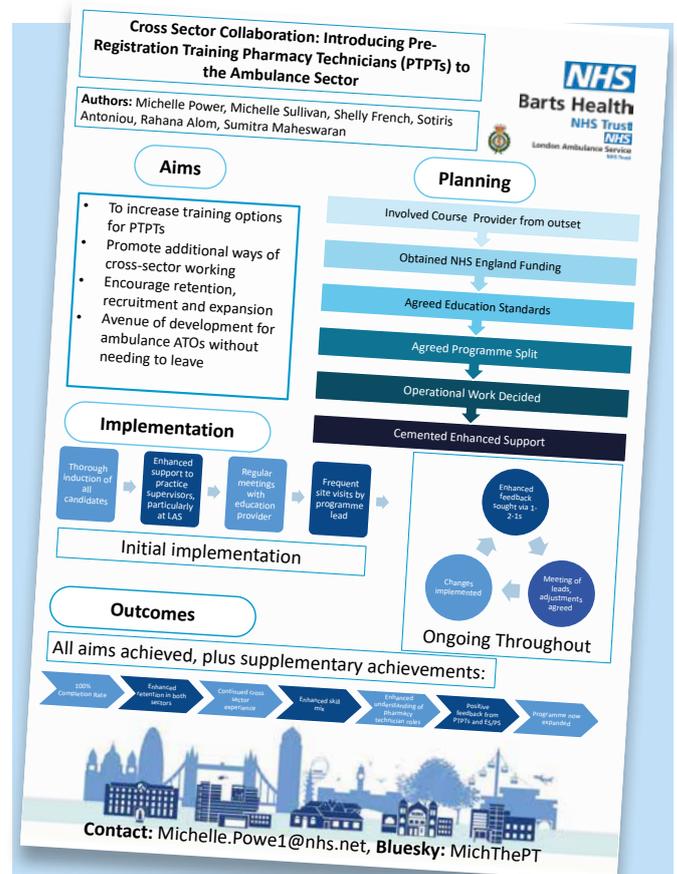
From February 2023 to February 2025, London Ambulance Service (LAS) and St. Bartholomew's Hospital (part of Barts Health NHS Trust), undertook an innovative cross-sector project that focused on Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician (PTPT) training.

While cross-sector delivery of the PTPT program was not new, and while Barts Health had previously collaborated with GP surgeries on similar projects, this work marked the very first time any Ambulance Trust had been involved in hiring and training PTPTs. As pharmacy in the ambulance sector operates quite differently to what is thought of as the 'traditional' pharmacy, careful planning was required to ensure everything went smoothly.

There were multiple incentives to establishing the program. From Barts Health's perspective we were keen to expand the training options available to our potential PTPTs, and to enhance our working relationship with our colleagues in other sectors. We were looking at various ways to improve and develop the learner experience, and eager to explore how the NHSE cross-sector training places could play a part in our future plans. Meanwhile LAS had undergone a major transformation project, expanding, improving and developing their service and increasing their pharmacy professional workforce. They were keen to build on this work but mindful they were largely reliant on external recruitment and limited in the development they could offer their junior staff in particular – any London Ambulance assistant looking to become a pharmacy technician would have needed to leave the Trust in order to undertake the required training.

While LAS was aware certain aspects of the course couldn't be delivered in-house, for example their dispensing focused on pre-packed bags for ambulance teams rather than named patient prescriptions, they were also aware that cross-sector training was increasingly thriving. As there was already a good existing relationship between Barts Health and LAS teams, and a proven track record of PTPT training at Barts, it was clear a collaboration between the two organisations would be a strong foundation to build the project on. After initial conversations to establish how viable such a program would be, and what core support would be needed to ensure its success, both organisations applied to NHSE for cross-sector training places – St. Bartholomew's would be the employer for four students on the project, with LAS employing their first ever PTPT.

Once the funding was granted a business case was approved for what would become my role – a band 7 education lead pharmacy technician, whose primary focus would be the cross-sector project. I would serve as educational supervisor for all Barts Health rotations, provide advice and support to LAS supervisors as they supported the program for the first time, help to establish reporting lines for any concerns, sickness or feedback the students may have and liaise with the education provider, the learners and our wider teams for any matters arising. Working closely with the education provider, Skills4Pharmacy, from the very beginning we confirmed what tasks were achievable within LAS and what would need to take place at St. Bartholomew's. We developed a rota that reflected this, recognising that all the assessor observations, as well as all dispensing and checking logs, would need to take place at the hospital, it was agreed that the LAS candidate would spend



a total of one year at St. Bart's. The Barts Health candidates, meanwhile, would spend three months of each year at LAS, at the pre-packing unit in the first year, learning how medications were prepared and stock was managed, audited and procured and at NHS 111 in year 2, shadowing then undertaking patient triage to develop their pre-hospital knowledge, counselling skills and ability to signpost to appropriate services.

The candidates were all inducted and enrolled in February and March 2023, and each was encouraged to feedback frequently about their experiences so we could respond to their suggestions or any unexpected concerns that arose. One early example of this came from the first LAS rotation a Barts' candidate undertook, we had ensured we kept the rotation aims simple, mindful it would be a very new environment and the rotation would only be three months, but the PTPT had developed her local competence and completed her training logs quickly, and was keen to increase what she was exposed to at LAS. We flagged this to our LAS colleagues, and it was agreed to add audit and procurement shadowing to the rotation. We continued this feedback and quick-response process throughout, particularly near the start of each student's time on each site, ensuring extra one to ones were in place so issues could be resolved quickly. As the learners all settled into the program, and the novel rotations became established, this support was dialled back to the normal schedule, though the candidates were aware that they could always contact me to raise anything in between meetings.

Ultimately all candidates involved in the programme completed their course on time, going on to achieve professional

registration with all of them still employed by their home Trusts following their confirmation as pharmacy technicians. Our Newham Hospital site now also has rotations to LAS, while LAS went from having one PTPT during the duration of the project to two in the following cohort, with two more joining soon to bring their current total to four. Other Ambulance Trusts have expressed interest in developing their own version of the program, which we have supported through discussions and hosting visits for them, to show our set up. Barts Health continue to collaborate with the PTPT programme and are looking to establish rotations for qualified pharmacy technicians in the future.

Acknowledgements to Michelle Sullivan (Deputy Head of Pharmacy, St. Bartholomew's Hospital) and Rahana Alom (Chief Pharmacy Technician, London Ambulance Service).



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Michelle Power started her career in community pharmacy in 2001, working part time as a counter assistant through her A-levels and undergraduate studies. As pharmacy evolved to include more services and her role expanded her passion for her work increased, and following graduation she undertook training to become a pharmacy technician before moving to hospital in 2014. While still a junior member of the dispensary team she was given the opportunity to undertake NVQ assessor training and began supporting students alongside her operational work. She found working with learners especially rewarding and following three years as a Lead Clinical Pharmacy Technician she decided to make the move into a formal education role, joining Barts Health NHS Trust in 2021 as Lead Education, Training and Development Pharmacy Technician for Royal London Hospital.

From 2023 to 2025 she undertook a secondment at the Trust's St. Bartholomew's Site, where she was the lead pharmacy technician on their joint project with the London Ambulance Service. Michelle has previously served as London Branch Secretary and PTPT Associate for APTUK.

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The Great Contraception Misconception

With pharmacy technicians being able to follow a Patient Group Direction (PGD) to provide a pharmacy contraceptive service (PCS) since October 2025, a clear understanding of contraception is more relevant than ever to pharmacy technicians. We now have an opportunity to make the PCS a safe haven where women feel empowered to ask questions about their health care options. There is a widespread misunderstanding about contraception and now is the ideal time to brush up our knowledge, so we are prepared for this exciting new opportunity.

What do women want from a PCS?

I conducted a straw poll to gain insight into what women of various backgrounds knew about contraception services and what they would like to see in their local pharmacy. Women expressed a strong desire for staff to be well trained with professional knowledge. Effective communication was also a priority, with women wanting to feel that they are understood and respected. They want a consultation with someone who understands how to help them decide for themselves which choice best fits their personal ethics.

What is the misconception?

Almost without exception, the women interviewed had the same misconception – that all forms of emergency contraception (EC), amongst other actions, prevent a fertilised egg from implanting in the womb. While this is the case with the copper coil (copper intrauterine device or CU-IUD), many people don't know that levonorgestrel and ulipristal acetate do not have a post-fertilisation mechanism of action. Many are also unaware that the CU-IUD may prevent implantation of a fertilised egg when used for long term contraception.¹

Both EC options offered in a pharmacy, levonorgestrel and ulipristal acetate, prevent ovulation through a high dose of hormones.

Since sperm are viable for five days after unprotected sexual intercourse (UPSI), delaying ovulation in the same way long-term contraception acts may well be the ideal way for a woman to avoid pregnancy when her regular contraception has failed. Understanding the five-day lifespan of sperm in the womb will help women understand why preventing ovulation might be the right option for them. So, a woman in a consultation may have had UPSI on Monday but sperm might not meet the egg until Friday – as Victoria Wood said in *Dinnerladies* 'you might actually conceive three days later in the queue at Homebase!'²

If ovulation has already occurred at the point of the consultation, taking the pill will have no impact on implantation. While changes have been noted in the endometrial receptivity to implantation, the changes have not prevented pregnancy, and the foetus has continued to develop as it would had the EC not been taken.^{3,4}

Despite working in a community pharmacy, I too believed that all forms of EC prevented implantation of a fertilised egg. Since those interviewed in the poll included high school staff who are present for sex education lessons, parents and others in healthcare settings, I can't help but wonder how many more people are unclear about their contraception options.

Who will this misconception affect?

While some women may not be concerned about the finer details, there are some who might like to receive clearer information in a consultation. Those who are choosing EC may make the wrong choice for their personal ethics if they do not have the correct understanding. There may also be pharmacy

technicians who will need to make a personal choice about whether they are able to provide the PCS in view of their personal ethics. Cultural and religious differences are celebrated in our society. Some choose not to eat meat, others avoid alcohol, the list is extensive, the people unique. The group affected by this issue spans countless religions and cultures. These are individuals who consider a life to begin, not at implantation of a fertilised egg, but at the moment of fertilisation.

What is already in place?

Current guidelines direct healthcare professionals to explain the different mechanisms of action of EC, only if the patient raises concerns. Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare, December 2017 (FSRH) states that '*individual women may want to know how a method of EC works. Women may have cultural or religious reasons for avoiding a method of EC that could have its effect after fertilisation. It is important that a woman who raises concerns about EC mechanism of action is given information about what is known and what is uncertain*'⁵

How can we improve the way we work along with this advice?

The FSRH guidance offers additional information only to those who specifically request it. There is wisdom in this recommendation, it could be distressing to a woman to introduce the topic of ethics at this point in her healthcare. The problem is that women with these ethical views may not be in a position to raise concerns.

Imagine a young woman who has been taught in school that all EC is going to prevent a fertilised egg from implanting. She never brings up the topic with her doctor since she believes she has all the facts. She has already decided that her personal ethics don't agree with EC but then has UPSI. She now faces a difficult decision – will she proceed with a potential pregnancy, even though it is not the right time for her to start or expand her family? Or will she choose to push her feelings aside and obtain EC? Deciding on the latter, she attends the consultation with no wish to mention ethics due to the inner turmoil she feels at abandoning her personal beliefs. Imagine the lifelong emotional burden, the unimaginable toll on her mental health – feelings that may be based on a misunderstanding about the medication she chose to take.

If someone tells us that they require alcohol-free, halal, vegan or vegetarian options we can support them as they express their individual liberty. But there is no simple phrase for someone who wishes to preserve a fertilised egg but would like to prevent ovulation. In fact, the concept itself might not even exist in the minds of many. Stating which religion you identify with is not enough since personal ethics vary by individual. One woman who took part in the straw poll expressed her frustration at not knowing how to phrase up the question to her doctor.

As we are trained not to offer unsolicited advice at the EC consultation, can we take steps to educate patients in advance? Our schools, community centres, GP surgeries and pharmacies are perfectly placed to deliver the correct message. With knowledge about available options, a woman can form her personal ethical opinions based on facts and not on misconceptions.

What can be done?

With the pharmacy technician role continually expanding, are there opportunities to collaborate with our communities to support education on this important topic? Can we

display posters that explain the available options simply? Can we encourage women to take an active interest in their own healthcare by creating an environment where they feel confident to ask questions?

What results can we hope to achieve?

- Efficacy is improved by early uptake of EC therefore better results can be expected if women are not delaying treatment while they weigh an ethical decision.
 - Private consultations with empathetic pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will empower women to ask questions about available contraception.
 - Collaborative working with schools and the community will provide a network of support that enables signposting to appropriate services.
 - Posters and visuals will reinforce the message that support is available free of charge in accessible community pharmacies.
- And of course,
- The contraception misconception can finally be cleared up

What next?

Now is the perfect time to ask yourself:

- Does providing this service agree with my personal ethics?
- If I don't feel able to take part in the PCS, how can I ensure that I express my views clearly to my manager?
- If I don't feel able to take part in the PCS, how can I maintain a high standard of person-centred care?
- If I do feel able to take part in the service, do I truly understand the concerns of women in my community?
- How can I prepare myself and my team to provide the empathetic, well informed service women expect?

During the course of writing this article, I visited many websites and found conflicting information:

Brook clinic: The only form of EC that prevents a fertilised egg from implanting is the CU-UDI. So, both pills will have no effect on a fertilised egg.⁶

Lloyds Pharmacy: Both pills may also cause changes in the lining of the womb which make it difficult for an egg to implant.⁷

FDA: Evidence does not support that levonorgestrel affects

implantation or maintenance of a pregnancy after implantation.⁸

FDA: Ulipristal acetate may also work by changing the lining of the womb (uterus) that may affect implantation.⁹

It's no wonder that patients are confused if even the professionals can't seem to agree. As pharmacy staff it would be greatly appreciated if an official position could be stated to help us weigh up our personal decisions and prepare to give professional advice in a clear and confident manner during consultations.

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The Quiet Guardian: Reflections on Practice as a Forensic Healthcare Pharmacy Technician

Abstract

As a forensic healthcare pharmacy technician, I work within a highly regulated and complex clinical environment where accuracy, professionalism, and ethical practice are essential. Although much of this work takes place behind the scenes, its impact on patient safety, multidisciplinary care, and recovery is significant. This reflective article explores my professional role within forensic mental health services, highlighting how precision, consistency, and compassionate practice contribute to therapeutic stability, legal compliance, and wider healthcare outcomes. By examining the technical, human, and collaborative dimensions of my practice, I aim to demonstrate the often-unseen value of pharmacy technicians within secure mental health environments.

Introduction

Forensic healthcare is a specialised area of healthcare that focuses on the assessment, treatment, and support of individuals who are involved with the legal or criminal justice system, or whose health needs are connected to legal investigations. It combines medical care with an understanding of law and legal processes, ensuring that patients receive appropriate clinical treatment while also accurately documenting injuries, collecting and preserving evidence, and providing expert opinions when required. Forensic healthcare professionals work in settings such as police custody suites, prisons, courts, sexual assault referral centres, and secure mental health facilities, prioritizing patient wellbeing, ethical practice, and legal integrity.

Pharmacy technicians play an essential role in medicines management across healthcare systems, supporting safe, effective, and lawful use of medicines. In forensic mental health settings, this role carries additional responsibility due to the intersection of clinical care, legal oversight, and stringent security requirements. Medicines management in such environments must balance therapeutic benefit with risk mitigation, public safety, and patient rights.

Through reflective practice, I aim to illustrate how the forensic healthcare pharmacy technician contributes to robust medication systems, multidisciplinary working, and patient-centred care within secure environments. Reflection allows me to examine not only what I do, but why it matters, highlighting the ethical and professional values that underpin my daily practice.

Where Pharmacy Meets Purpose

In forensic healthcare, I work with individuals who have complex mental health needs, often alongside histories of trauma, substance misuse, neurodiversity, and social disadvantage. Many patients are detained under mental health legislation and may experience feelings of loss of autonomy, mistrust, or institutionalisation. In this context, my role extends beyond technical competence to include consistency, reliability, and respect.

Every medicines reconciliation, supply, and record I complete supports not only clinical treatment but also ethical and legal responsibilities. Accurate documentation ensures transparency, accountability, and continuity of care. In environments where control and restriction are unavoidable, dependable pharmacy practice can help safeguard patient rights and preserve dignity. Through structured and reliable working practices, I help create an environment in which care can be delivered safely, lawfully, and effectively.

Precision as a Foundation of Safe Practice

Accuracy is central to all pharmacy practice; in forensic healthcare, it also functions as a critical mechanism for risk management and harm prevention. I am directly involved in controlled drug processes, medicines reconciliation on admission and transfer, audit compliance, stock management, and diversion prevention.

Each step in these processes contributes to patient safety and service integrity. Errors or omissions in secure settings can have serious consequences, affecting not only individual patients but staff safety and public confidence. By maintaining rigorous standards, following standard operating procedures, and applying sustained attention to detail, I support safe prescribing and administration practices. Precision, in this context, represents professional accountability, ethical responsibility, and respect for the seriousness of the environment in which I work.

The Human Element of My Practice

Although forensic healthcare environments are highly structured and security-focused, my work remains deeply human. I often provide consistent and professional interactions in settings that can be emotionally complex, restrictive, and unpredictable. Patients may encounter multiple professionals throughout their care; consistency in pharmacy practice can therefore offer reassurance and stability.

Clear communication, calm professionalism, and respectful engagement help to reduce anxiety and support understanding of treatment. While these interactions may appear routine, I have observed that they can reinforce dignity, promote adherence, and support engagement with therapeutic interventions. This experience continually reminds me that pharmacy practice, even

in secure and restrictive settings, is inherently patient-centred and relational.

Working Within a Multidisciplinary Team

Effective forensic healthcare relies on collaborative multidisciplinary working. I work closely with a specialist pharmacist, consultant forensic psychiatrists, nursing staff, psychologists, occupational therapists, security teams, and support staff. Each discipline brings a unique perspective to patient care, and medicines management is a shared responsibility.

Within this team, I provide operational insight by ensuring medicines are supplied accurately and on time, identifying discrepancies, supporting audits, and highlighting emerging concerns such as missed doses or stock irregularities. This contribution supports clinical decision-making, continuity of care, and risk assessment. By functioning as a reliable link between pharmacy services and clinical teams, I help strengthen treatment pathways and support rehabilitation.

Professional Resilience and Responsibility

Forensic pharmacy practice requires emotional resilience, adaptability, and unwavering adherence to professional standards. I must balance procedural rigour with responsiveness to dynamic clinical situations, often within high-pressure environments where risk awareness is constant.

Despite these challenges, I find the role professionally meaningful. Supporting individuals who may have experienced fragmented or inconsistent healthcare reinforces the importance of equitable, ethical, and compassionate practice. Through steady medicines management, I contribute to stabilisation, symptom control, and the creation of conditions that support recovery and rehabilitation.

Reflecting on the Wider Impact

My role as a forensic healthcare pharmacy technician extends beyond individual patient encounters. The work contributes to safer services, supports public trust in secure healthcare systems, and aligns with broader objectives of mental health care, recovery, rehabilitation, and community safety.

By ensuring medicines are managed appropriately, lawfully, and effectively, I help pharmacological treatment achieve its intended purpose—supporting recovery, reducing risk, and enabling positive change. In this way, the technical aspects of my role connect directly to wider societal outcomes.

Conclusion

Reflecting on my practice highlights the critical role of the forensic healthcare pharmacy technician within secure mental health services. Through precision, professionalism, and compassionate engagement, I support patient safety, multidisciplinary care, and rehabilitation.

Although often unseen, this role is fundamental to the effective functioning of forensic healthcare systems. Continued recognition, professional development, and reflective practice are essential to sustaining high standards, strengthening patient care, and inspiring excellence within the profession.



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From Customer Assistant to Store Manager: A Pharmacy Technician's Journey


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Career Pathway

I began my journey with Boots in 2012 as a Customer Assistant, gradually discovering my passion for pharmacy through daily interactions with patients and colleagues. This interest grew into a committed career path, and in 2019 I qualified as a pharmacy technician. The role allowed me to deepen my clinical knowledge and take on greater responsibility within the team. In 2023, I progressed to Store Manager, where I now combine my operational, technical and leadership skills to support both my colleagues and my community.

A Typical Day

My day is centred around people, processes, and patient care. I manage my team, ensure all daily tasks are completed, oversee pharmacy operations, and make myself available to support customers and patients whenever needed. Maintaining high standards, staying organised and being approachable are essential parts of my routine.

Training and Development

I completed my NVQ3 through Buttercups Training, which provided the foundation for my development as a pharmacy technician. Along the way, I have benefited from ongoing support, structured training and experience that has helped strengthen my confidence and capability within the profession.

What I Wish I Had Known Sooner

I wish I had begun working in pharmacy much earlier. I truly love my job, look forward to going to work every day and find huge fulfilment in helping people. Knowing how rewarding this career would be, I would have stepped into pharmacy sooner.

What I Enjoy Most

Supporting colleagues through their training and development is one of the most enjoyable parts of my role. Helping others become the best they can be is incredibly rewarding. I also value the strong relationships I have built with our patients and customers over the years – the sense of community is something I treasure.

Best Advice Received

The best advice I have ever been given is: If in doubt, always ask. It is far better to say you do not know than risk giving incorrect information, especially in a healthcare setting.

If I Weren't a Pharmacy Technician

With a degree in criminology, I would probably be working in a role connected to the police.

Challenges for Pharmacy Technicians

One of the biggest challenges is raising awareness of the pharmacy technician role. Many customers automatically ask for a pharmacist, even when a pharmacy technician can provide the support they need. Increasing public understanding – supported by the great work of APTUK – is vital.

Career Influences

I have been lucky to have mentors who encouraged me to pursue my goals. My previous manager Ayla, pharmacists Louise, Gordon and David, and Sharon, a pharmacy technician at our local health centre, have all provided invaluable advice and support.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

I treat everyone the same, which has helped me build strong relationships with vulnerable patients who feel comfortable opening up to me about their concerns.

Career Highlight

Being shortlisted for the Pharmacy Technician of the Year awards has been a standout moment. It felt incredibly rewarding to have my work recognised.

A Simple Joy at Work

Something as small as finding a long-awaited out-of-stock item in a tote genuinely makes my day it's the little wins that keep us going.

What's Next?

I aim to continue developing as a pharmacy technician and expanding my skills within community pharmacy.

Advice for Aspiring Community Pharmacy Professionals

Do it! Community pharmacy is one of the most rewarding areas to work in, offering the unique opportunity to see the difference you make to patients' lives.

Unlocking Your Potential in Three Simple Steps: A PWDS and CPPE Resource for Pharmacy Technicians

Abstract

Pharmacy technician roles are evolving rapidly, driven by key national policies and increasing recognition of their contribution across healthcare settings. To support this transformation, Pharmacy Workforce Development South (PWDS) and the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) have developed a new joint resource: *Resources for Pharmacy Technicians: Unlocking Your Potential in Three Simple Steps*. This practical, accessible poster maps key learning and development opportunities against the four pillars of practice, clinical, leadership, education, and research, offering pharmacy technicians a clear route to role progression and enhanced responsibilities. This article explores the context behind the resource, introduces the framework, and illustrates how pharmacy technicians can use it to shape their career development and contribute to service delivery, improvement and patient care.

Setting the Scene: Expanding Roles for Pharmacy Technicians

Pharmacy technician roles are changing. As healthcare systems become more integrated and pressures on services increase, pharmacy technicians are taking on broader responsibilities and working more closely with multidisciplinary teams to deliver high-quality patient care.

This shift is recognised in key national policies, including the *NHS England Long Term Workforce Plan*⁶ and *Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England* (DHSC and NHS England, 2023 and 2025)⁸ which outlines how we can build on the roles of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to meet the changing needs of patients over the next 15 years. Pharmacy technicians will play a central role in this evolution, and it is essential that they have access to the training and support they need to fulfil their potential.

The Four Pillars of Practice: A Developmental Framework

The *Multi-Professional Framework for Advanced Clinical Practice in England*⁵ provides a powerful structure for career development across the healthcare workforce. It is built on four key pillars (Health Education England, 2017):

• Clinical Practice

Developing the knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed to deliver safe, high-quality care. For pharmacy technicians, this might include training in clinical prioritisation, homecare, or technical services.

• Leadership and Management

Leading by example, managing services and people, and championing quality improvement. Pharmacy technicians are stepping into roles as team leaders and impact group leads, contributing to service development and shaping best practice.

• Education

Supporting others through teaching, mentoring, coaching, and supervision. The CPPE *Advancing Your Practice in Education pathway*², launched in January 2025, it offers a focused route for those looking to step into educational roles.

• Research

Contributing to service improvement and innovation through audit, evaluation, and evidence-based practice. CPPE's *Getting Started with Research programme*³ (launched in February 2025) and quality improvement training are valuable entry points.

These pillars already underpin professional frameworks used by pharmacists (e.g., RPS Faculty) and advanced practitioners. Embedding them in pharmacy technician development provides consistency, clarity and aspiration. Using the four pillars also aligns with other health care professionals creating professional recognition for advancing pharmacy technician practice in the multiprofessional spaces they inhabit.

To make the four pillars more accessible and actionable for pharmacy technicians, PWDS and CPPE created the *Unlocking Your Potential in Three Simple Steps* poster. This interactive tool is designed for use in personal development planning and appraisals, and can support self-directed learning.

STEP 1 Plan. Take control of your professional development.

"Where are you now? Where do you want to be? How are you going to get there?"

Developing yourself begins with taking initiative. Reflection and self-assessment help identify your learning needs and set personalised goals. If you plan your actions, you can create your path.

STEP 2 Choose your learning and expand your development

The four pillars of practice¹

Clinical practice	Education	Leadership and management	Evidence, research and development
Providing high quality healthcare that is safe, effective and person centred.	Enabling effective learning in the workplace	Leading and fulfilling management responsibilities	Engaging in research activities and using evidence to inform practice and improve services.
Scan me  OR follow this link	Scan me  OR follow this link	Scan me  OR follow this link	Scan me  OR follow this link

STEP 3 Take action

Professional development is more than reading an article, completing an e-learning or attending a workshop. The key to growth comes when you start putting your learning into action. As you progress, you move from knowing how to do something to doing it in practice. To become confident and competent, skills need to be practised and reinforced through assessment and feedback. How do you currently do this? How will you plan to do this?

Any questions? You can contact info@cppe.ac.uk OR pwds@uhbw.nhs.uk

Step 1: Explore the Four Pillars

Get to know each pillar and reflect on your current strengths and interests. What kind of pharmacy technician work/roles excites you? Where do you want to grow and develop?

Step 2: Discover Learning Opportunities

Explore CPPE and PWDS programmes mapped to each pillar. Each resource is clickable – just scan the QR code on the poster to begin. Highlighted resources include:

- **Clinical:** PWDS competency-based training (e.g. homecare validation, technical services, medicines optimisation and enhanced clinical practice) (PWDS, 2024)
- **Education:** CPPE's Advancing Your Practice in Education pathway (CPPE, 2024a)²
- **Leadership:** Leading for Change, CPHO Leadership Programme, pharmacy technician-led impact groups (CPPE, 2023)¹
- **Research:** CPPE Quality Improvement, Getting Started with Research³, and service evaluation workshops (CPPE, 2024b)

Step 3: Plan Your Next Steps

Use the poster to set personal goals, identify development areas, and discuss your aspirations with a mentor, manager or education supervisor.

Why This Matters: A Role for Everyone

An objective of the NHS England Pharmacy Technician Workforce Development Programme (Nov 2024)⁷ is to “support attainment across the four pillars of professional practice by increasing provision of training and supporting uptake of opportunities to gain experience”.

By using this resource, pharmacy technicians can:

- Take ownership of their development
 - Gain confidence in articulating their value and contributions as a pharmacy technician
 - Explore new roles, including those needed to support expanding services in primary care and community pharmacy
- The Delivery Plan for Recovering Access to Primary Care* (DHSC and NHS England, 2023)⁴ supports optimisation of clinical services, including enhanced use of community pharmacy and PGD-enabled pharmacy technician roles. With the first independent prescriber pharmacists graduating in 2026 (General Pharmaceutical Council, 2022), the contribution of pharmacy technicians will be critical in enabling pharmacists to fully apply their clinical skills.

The Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England (DHSC and NHS England, 2025)⁸ sets out a vision for a sustainable health service focused on prevention, personalised care, and bringing services closer to patients. Central to this plan is the

development of the healthcare workforce and making the best use of every professional's skills.

Inspiration and Mentorship

Development isn't just about education and training; it's also about inspiration. The poster encourages pharmacy technicians to reflect on role models in their own workplaces. Who inspires you? Could you be a mentor for someone else?

Managers and supervisors can also use this resource to start meaningful conversations. It's a springboard for recognising potential, encouraging reflection, and supporting real career growth.

Download the Poster and Take the First Step

The poster is freely available and can be downloaded by visiting: [Four pillars poster resource](#)

Exploring the Four pillars at APTUK Conference 2025

At the recent APTUK 2025 Conference, the four pillars of practice; clinical, leadership, education, and research were seamlessly woven into the programme, reflecting the conference theme of advancing and empowering the pharmacy technician profession. Interactive sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities encouraged delegates to explore each pillar in depth, share experiences, and consider how they can apply them in their own practice and identify opportunities for development and advancing practice across the four pillars.

A presentation/workshop delivered by Bianca Glavin from CPPE and Mary Carter from PWDS supported delegates by providing practical guidance on career development, demonstrating how to apply the four pillars in everyday practice. The session encouraged reflection on individual strengths and opportunities. The interactive approach helped delegates feel empowered, informed, and motivated to take actionable steps in their professional growth.

“Delegate feedback highlighted the impact of the session. One commented that it ‘really allowed me to reflect on where I currently sit in terms of the four pillars,’ while another shared, ‘I now understand where I need to develop and where to access the resources to support my growth.’ Many also valued the interactive nature of the session, noting, ‘It was great to hear perspectives from other pharmacy technicians.’” *(continued overleaf)*

We are keen to continue to provide APTUK members with an informative and educational publication which is a current representation of our profession.

Please tell us your views by answering a few short questions and share any ideas you may have to make it even better in the future. [Click on this link to share your views](#)



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Conclusion

The *Unlocking Your Potential in Three Simple Steps* poster isn't just a career map, it's a mindset shift. By translating the four pillars of practice into practical, engaging steps, this resource empowers pharmacy technicians to see themselves as leaders, educators, innovators, and clinicians. Whether you're new to the profession or looking to take the next step, this tool is here to help you unlock your potential.

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