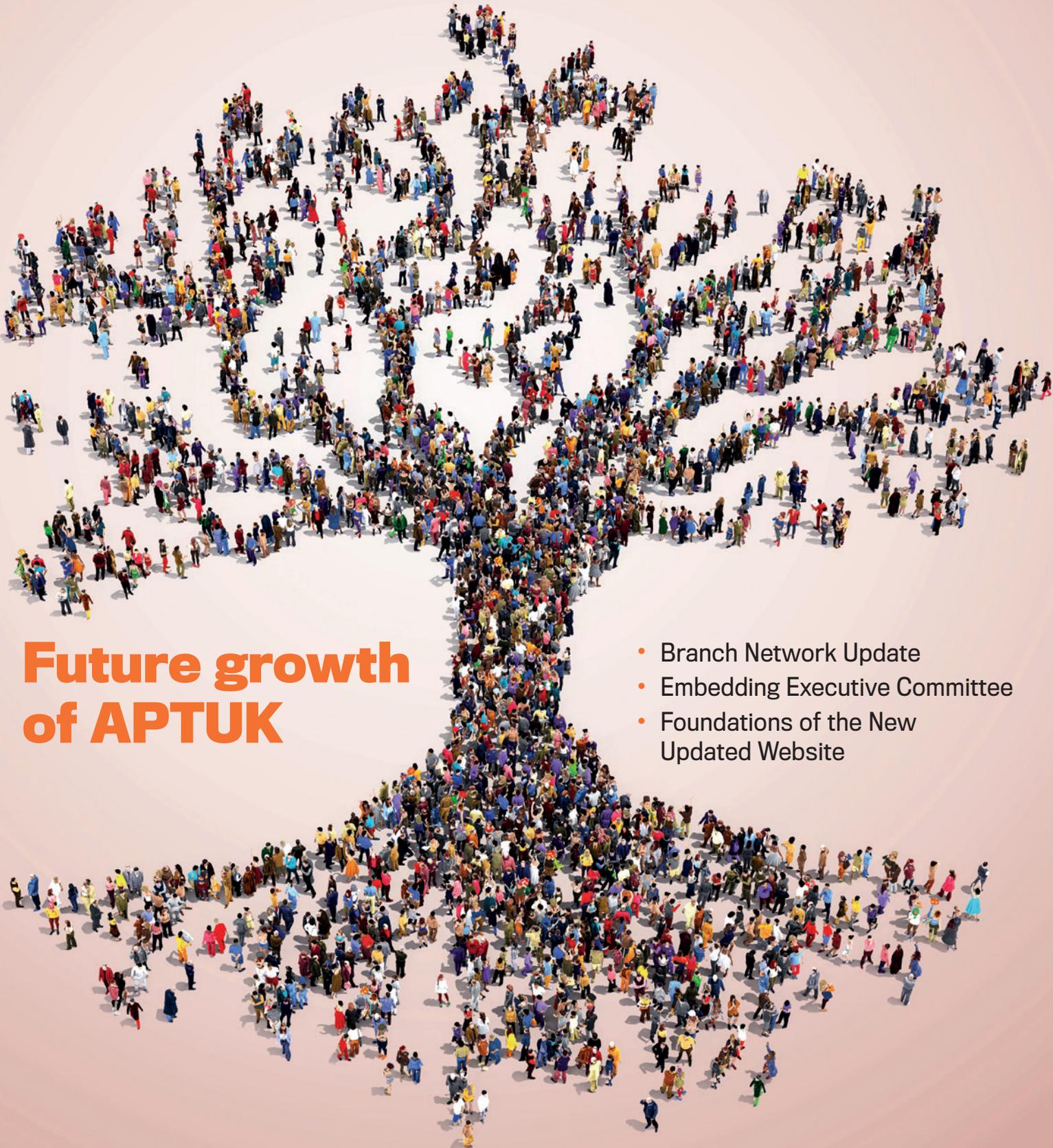




PHARMACY TECHNICIAN JOURNAL

SPRING 2021

Journal of the Association of
Pharmacy Technicians United Kingdom



Future growth of APTUK

- Branch Network Update
- Embedding Executive Committee
- Foundations of the New Updated Website



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APTUK

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Case Studies: APTUK National Officers

(Further case studies on p10)

"During the pandemic, alongside my colleagues at LHTR, I have been involved in business continuity planning, carrying out risk assessments for staff, adopting our working environments and modifying the delivery of our services. We developed training programmes and delivered training to pharmacy technicians and pharmacists in anticipation of supporting critical care with the preparation of IV medicines and redeploying pharmacy technicians to assist in administration of medicines. Our Trust was one of the first hospital vaccination hubs and I was involved in the set up, training and vaccine preparation, which I continue to help with. I am really proud of all the team have achieved in the last year. I have worked as volunteer media officer for APTUK throughout the pandemic, continuing our communication with members via the website and social media channels and have supported the organisation to develop position statements and professional guidance documents"



#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response



Andrea Ashton MPharmT
Assistant Director of Pharmacy
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Media Officer APTUK

"There have been some incredible examples of the roles pharmacy technicians have played in the pandemic response. From preparation and supply of medicines, to medicines administration, supporting critical care teams, and leading and supporting pharmacy services in the Nightingale Hospitals. Pharmacy technicians have also played a vital role in the COVID vaccination programme, involved in the procurement, storage and distribution, preparation and administration of the vaccine. Pharmacy technicians have and continue to showcase the very best of our profession and we at APTUK are proud to represent you. Thank you for all you do"



#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response



Ellen Williams
Vice President
APTUK

"During my career of over 30 years, I have had lots of opportunities to develop further and complete further qualifications, in training and assessing, final accuracy checking, clinical diploma, leadership and management and more recently a TPO Cert in health professions education. All of these opportunities, and more, have provided a very varied career where I feel I have been able to make a difference to patient care. It is a great moment when a patient says to you that no-one has explained that to them before and they understand their medicines better. I am fortunate to now work in a role in education where I develop and facilitate learning resources for pharmacy professionals and provide education supervision. I also volunteer to work for the professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians (APTUK) where I feel I have a great opportunity to support the development of the profession. If you would like a career where you can help people with their medicines and health care needs, that will also provide opportunities for further development, then a pharmacy technician career may be for you."



#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response



Joanne Nevinson,
MPharmT
Director for Professional Development, APTUK

"A career as a pharmacy technician provides the opportunity to work in a wide variety of healthcare settings. A role as a pharmacy technician enables you to make a direct impact on patient care and to participate in supporting the nation's health and wellbeing. Through my career I have been fortunate to work in a wide variety of settings and with colleagues from various healthcare disciplines, pharmacy has given me opportunities for personal and professional development that I do not think I would have had with any other career."



#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response



Katherine Watkinson
MPharmT
National Pharmacy Support Services Technician,
Turning Point
National Branch Liaison Officer, APTUK



KAY MORGAN FAPharmT – Editor
editor@aptuk.org

Exceptional Pharmacy Technician Roles

Welcome to the Spring edition. What have you been doing since restrictions were eased? Hope you been able to take some time out to rest & reset? The APTUK committee and national officers have been busy making improvements bringing the association up to date and implementing new developments.

Hayley explains the changes being made to membership and Gail shares news on the website launch. Which as we go to print is scheduled for early May so you might have a chance to visit the new-look website already. If not I encourage you to do so at www.aptuk.org where you will find new pages in the member's only section. Katherine, your new Branch Liaison Officer has been busy engaging with branches, both existing and new, creating a network of committee members to help update the branch resources and host the virtual member's meetings. Get to know Katherine, the branches and their achievements on page 9. You may find there is a new branch near you.

You may have recently seen reports in the media from around the world discussing issues of inequality. APTUK recently recognised a need to address inequalities and discrimination in the pharmacy profession. Read the progress Gail and Amy have made in their first article on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), one welcome development will be a regular feature in PTJ on this topic. You should have received an email in April with a link to the APTUK EDI survey, but your input doesn't need to end there, read the report on page 12 to find out how you can personally get involved.

It's not only the APTUK committee who have been busy. There has been various opportunities on social media recently to promote pharmacy technician roles and achievements. Andrea our

media officer shared case studies and cards with personal stories from both national officers and our members. Follow APTUK on social media @APTUK1 on twitter and /APTUK1 on Facebook to be involved in future campaigns and read historical posts. There is much pleasure in publishing articles that showcase the roles that pharmacy technicians do on a daily basis and I believe you have submitted some exceptional examples for this edition.

The case studies include Emma's experience of redeployment during the pandemic, and how Emily supported the vaccine roll out in care homes. Laura's piece gives detail on how ward-based pharmacy technicians are contributing to positive outcomes for patients in Suffolk, specifically mentioning the benefits of being digital which has been a key development or maybe a challenge for many of us recently. "I could see so much potential in having an IT solution and I wanted to explore it more" said Alix Massocchi then an opportunity to blend a pharmacy role with IT became available, I am sure you will be interested to read what she did next, there is more on pages 18 & 19. After any project it is always useful to pause and reflect. Mel Bryan shares her reflections from her journey through the Scottish Clinical Leadership Fellow Programme on page 16. She also shares some key learning points that we could all follow "you can't see the problem standing in the middle of the room you need to take some time and stand on the balcony." I hope you can take time out of your day to read the members stories and hope you all learn something from them.

I would love to hear your feedback on the information we publish, and as always, we are keen to hear your stories, the team are here to support you if you don't know where to start so please don't hold back, get in touch editor@aptuk.org

Legal Disclaimer

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PTJ 2021 Timeline

Edition	Copy deadline
Summer	9th July 2021
Autumn	8th October 2021

Follow all activities of APTUK on social media: Twitter - @APTUK1 Facebook - APTUK.ORG

Author and reviewer guidelines

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

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



LIZ FIDLER FAPharmT – APTUK President
president@aptuk.org

President's Address

Dear Members,

I do not think we have had the chance to draw breath and reflect on the last year yet! I am sure I speak for many of us when I say that the pace and finding some space to think about the future has not been easy. That is why I am so delighted to share with you the work undertaken on your behalf in the last year with a future focus.

Keeping you up to date

APTUK have tried to use a range of channels to keep you up to date, but I appreciate it may not have been easy to get the time to stay briefed. If you get the chance, there are videos on our website, trawl back through the Mailjet (they sometimes hide in junk!) or consider attending a virtual branch – no late-night car drives! I personally have found attendance at virtual meetings positive and morale boosting. APTUK is here for our members, so the resources are there to help you reconnect if you have needed to understandably step away.

Fresh approach to ways of working

APTUK have been radical and bold, I make no apologies for that, we needed change and I am personally optimistic that the hard work put in over the last year will pay off. The number of expressions of interest to join our new executive committee are so motivating, membership is higher than ever, and we are beginning to pay for some time on key posts and projects. We are on everyone's invite list to represent the profession and influence the much-needed change to empower pharmacy technicians. Change is happening and I will provide more details at our celebration event in July.

Our new executive committee will be operational from 1st July 2021, which also coincides with our 10-year anniversary as a registered profession. It is inspiring to reflect on how far the profession has come in the last decade. This new way of working will provide us with the opportunity to be more agile whilst still delivering our strategic plan. We have listened to members and embrace the opportunity to invite you to represent and support key projects. You will have seen these opportunities come to you and its great to support members with professional development opportunities.

Just in case you missed it, this is our new structure.



Continued on p6

Board of Directors and Executive Committee roles and responsibilities

Role	President	Vice President	Director of Digital Strategy	Membership Director	Director of Education				
Purpose	Internal - Provide inspired leadership and strategic direction to achieve APTUK's mission vision and organisational values External - Represent and set the strategic direction for the pharmacy technician profession to ensure the professions potential is realised across the UK	An integral role in the APTUK senior leadership team, providing support to the President, ensuring legal compliance in the president's absence and leading the country professional leads to deliver an integrated UK-wide strategy.	To develop and implement a digital and IT strategy and associated strategies to attract members and provide easy access to information and resources to support APTUK's key priorities and strategic business and operating plans	To develop and implement a targeted strategy to drive engagement and sustain growth of APTUK membership throughout the UK to support APTUK's key priorities and strategic plan	To develop and implement an education strategy that reflects the requirements of the pharmacy technician profession. To represent the profession leading the strategic education direction for pharmacy technicians				
Role	Operations Lead	Secretariat	Professional Leads	Editor	Branch Liaison Executive	Business Development	Equality and Inclusion Lead	Social Media Executive	Member Observer
Purpose	To lead and develop an operational plan that meets APTUK strategic vision, whilst remaining compliant with companies house legislation	To coordinate, process, manage and report on all membership applications and provide secretarial support to the Board of Directors	To partner with APTUK to lead and influence policy and practices for pharmacy technicians according to the home country needs	To lead and deliver the production of the Pharmacy Technicians Journal (PTJ), providing members with an authoritative and informative source of information	To lead, develop and manage a coordinated, active branch network providing localised support to APTUK members throughout the UK to facilitate education and networking opportunities	To engage with relevant suppliers / service providers to create symbiotic relationships whilst generating additional income for APTUK through sponsorship and advertising	To lead and coordinate all activities relating to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda for APTUK	To lead, promote and publicise APTUK's work and projects to stakeholders via social media platforms in order to increase APTUK profile and increase APTUK membership.	To provide member insight and independent observations on behalf of the members 1 year fixed term

I would like to take this opportunity to thank previous Directors, National Officers and Associates. Your commitment, passion and expertise has facilitated growth of APTUK and your continued support through the new way of working is welcomed and needed. Thank you for making the bold decisions to support longer term sustainability. The information provided in the Highlight Annual report evidence the organisations deliverables and recognises what we still need to work on for our members and the profession.

Highlight Annual Report

Members may have already received our highlight annual report, or it will be arriving imminently depending on when this drops on your doormat! I am so proud of what we have achieved, especially given the pressures we have all faced over the last 12 months. APTUK is a key partner and has representation at the highest levels across the UK. My thanks go to colleagues who contributed to producing it, but more importantly delivered the things within it.

Celebrate

Hopefully, you will have received a save the date to attend our virtual celebration event, I am really looking forward to this and hope you can join us.

Once the executive committee has formed, one of our key objectives is to review and update our 2018-2021 strategy, agree priorities for the next 3 years and share plans with members. This will include plans for conference 2022 when we will celebrate 70 years as the Association of Pharmacy Technicians.

Thank you

Having your continued membership means that you can trust that the Association will be present to represent and champion the profession even in a pandemic! So as ever, I ask you to spread the word about what makes you proud to belong to your professional leadership body. Membership growth, along with our new priorities and strategies, will ensure that pharmacy technicians represent pharmacy technicians as we start our second decade as a recognised and valued health care profession.

Liz Fidler FAPharmT
President

"A career as pharmacy technician provides a chance to work with a range of healthcare professionals to support patients with making the most of their medicines. I have been lucky to have worked in a range of healthcare settings, community, hospital, technical services and education - every second provides an opportunity to make a difference. A rewarding and fulfilling career in an exciting evolving profession"

#Pharmacy24
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

Liz Fidler FAPharmT
Associate Dean Quality
Health Education
England - South East,
President AP1UK

APTUK Membership information

CURRENT FEES

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

The current annual fees are:

Full £60

Trainees are free of charge

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

APTUK JOURNAL

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

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

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

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

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

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

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

APTUK WEBSITE MEMBERS ONLY AREA

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

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

#membershipmatters #joinus #supportustosupport

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

APTUK Membership Changes

APTUK has streamlined the membership categories creating a fairer approach to membership and improving efficiency of the administration processes.

Membership fees have remained the same for the past five years, while the work to develop and drive the profession has significantly increased. From the 1st May 2021 there will be five membership categories:

- Full Membership (including those awarded fellowships and retired members);
- Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician (PTPT);
- Early Careers Pharmacy Technicians;
- Retired Fellow Membership
- Honorary Membership.

Full APTUK membership will be a single, annual fee of £60 which is equivalent to only 16p/day or £1.15p/week! From June 2021 the website will host an online debit/credit card payment option for the annual fee, along with the new option of 12 monthly instalments at £6 per month (available from 1st June 2021). Retired Fellow and Honorary Members will benefit from being awarded free lifetime membership.

APTUK will continue to offer free membership to PTPTs during their training and for a maximum of 2-years appreciating the mutual benefits this brings. APTUK are delighted to hear the positive experiences that PTPTs have gained from this offer.

'I was told about APTUK through one of my good colleagues and mentors at work and I was extremely excited to learn of a professional organisation for pharmacy technicians. It was very easy to join online and as a Pre-Reg Pharmacy Technician (PTPT) I found it very generous and welcoming that the yearly fee was waived. I have found the website, newsletters and Twitter feed to have been a really important resource in my first year as a PTPT, particularly during COVID when the role of pharmacy technicians has been shown to be so important and versatile.'

Esme Kyle, Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician (Sep '20-Aug '22 cohort)

"I joined the APTUK to access information and support to help me through my apprenticeship. I moved into hospital pharmacy to pursue the course so felt a little overwhelmed and everything seemed really different. I felt that joining would not only give me information and resources but would also help me build a network of people outside of my Trust. I attended my first meeting soon after joining. It was really interesting and I came away feeling supported, knowing that all those people could be contacted and relied on if I needed help. The meeting was the

antimicrobial one, which helped me to learn about antibiotics from a hospital setting point of view. I then went on to do the online antibiotic guardian course, to help me prepare for both that element of my course and for practical experiences at work. The meeting allowed me to expand my knowledge of both the actual topic and the work that pharmacy technicians do in that area. That information was really important to me because I don't know if or what I want to specialise in post qualification. I'm hoping that being a part of APTUK will help me to learn about all the different pharmacy technician roles, making my decision at the end of the course easier."

Amy Brain, Pre-Registration Trainee Pharmacy Technician (Sep '20-Aug '22 cohort)

Following qualification, and registration, PTPT members will be able to convert to Early Careers Members and receive their first 18 months for the price of 12.

APTUK remains committed to offering value for money to all members.

Investments have been made in technology to support the development of the APTUK National Virtual Branch and the APTUK webinars for members.

Along with members receiving a hard copy of the Pharmacy Technician Journal (PTJ) the website now hosts a back catalogue of PTJs for members to access (student members only receive digital versions).

A new Executive Committee structure will be created in May-June 2021. This will enable representation of the profession at a strategic level, ensuring the skills and experience of pharmacy technicians are considered in policy making and future reform of health and social care systems.

To support the voluntary Executive Committee to achieve all the APTUK priorities, investment has been made for the paid Operations Lead post. This positive step forward will help to future-proof the organisation enabling APTUK to be proactive in a post-Covid world.

The article in this journal 'APTUK 2.0' will detail the investment in the website.

"I attended my first meeting soon after joining. It was really interesting and I came away feeling supported"

AMY BRAIN



HAYLEY FILE MPharmT,
Associate Officer
advancedassociate@aptuk.org

Follow all activities of APTUK on social media:

Twitter - @APTUK1 Facebook - APTUK1

APTUK 2.0 - www.aptuk.org

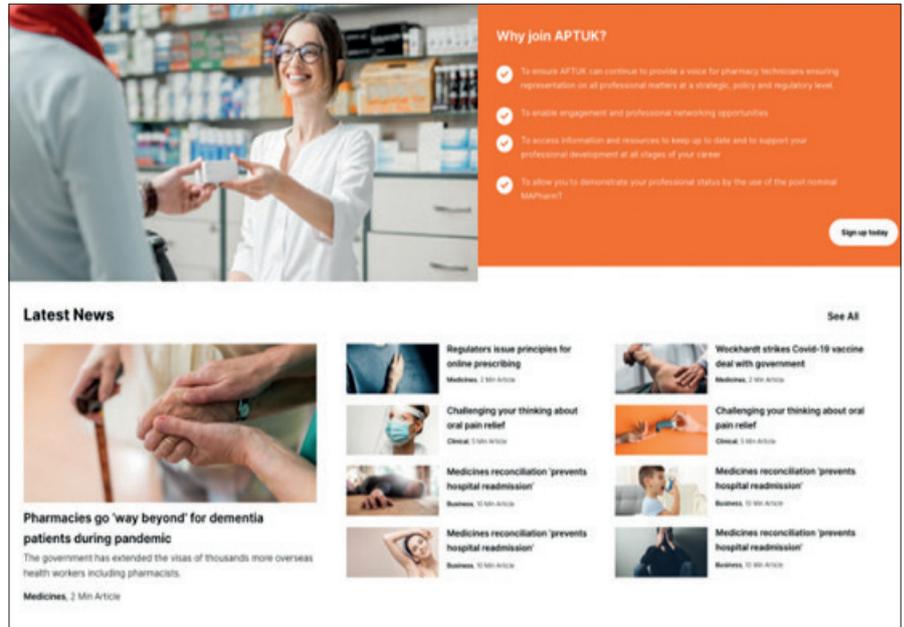
In the autumn of 2020, and ratified at the General Meeting in January 2021, the APTUK Board agreed to investment in a new website.

Over the first national lockdown visits to the APTUK website increased by over 80% with 7,171 pages viewed March-May 2020. The website was a key way for APTUK to communicate fast-paced information as the Covid-19 pandemic affected pharmacy technicians.

At the same time investment was made in video-conferencing through the upgrade of the Zoom-Pro account to include the webinar function enabling 500 attendees. In addition, all APTUK branches were assigned a Microsoft 365 account including email, Office applications and MS Teams. This investment enabled APTUK to deliver webinars for members and move to a national, virtual APTUK branch during Covid-19 restrictions. To date over 1,000 members have attended virtual webinars/branch meetings.

In January 2021, as part of the website development plans, we launched our monthly recommended learning. Members will receive an email signposting them to 2-3 learning resources on our website. Topics focus on areas of key interest or awareness events. For example in March, to coincide with International Women's Day, endometriosis and ovarian cancer awareness month, the focus was on women's health. Statistics showed that there was an increase of 30% of courses and learning resources accessed from our website with 67 members completing a course on the website during February 2021. The recommended learning email was opened by 64% of members who received it which is 40% over the average our website provider usually sees from these emails!

In addition, the new website will be clearer and easier to navigate (see prototype image). It will have a 'sticky' menu bar which will move on the page as the user scrolls. New pages have been created on the current website to support enhanced functions on the new website. This includes the creation of the 'wellbeing hub' and national and local APTUK branch pages. A 'shop' tab has been created ready to enable APTUK members to purchase APTUK merchandise. Investment in e-commerce functions will allow for online payments including instalment payments of membership fees, subject to meeting



A prototype of the home page for the new APTUK website.

membership requirements. To accompany the new website a mobile App is also in development. With over 60% of the visits to our website being from mobile devices this will be a valuable investment. The new website is scheduled for a phased launch starting on the 1st May 2021, with online payments from 1st June 2021 and online applications for accreditation of frameworks from August 2021. The introduction of GPhC 'look-ups' for registrants wanting to join APTUK will automate the application process along with auto-renewal functions and instant upgrades, subject to meeting membership requirements. All these functions will reduce administration time and costs.

Exciting times are ahead and here is what you can do to get ready:

- Register to use the website. If you are a member already and not using the website, you will need to create an account using the email address you used at membership application. Remember to check Spam/Junk files for verification emails as some work address, particularly @nhs, may block access.
- Members wanting to check/update their email address should open the settings function from the top right area where your name/photo appears. Contact membership@aptuk.org with your full name and membership number (if known) for further support.

- Create an account to log your learning records.
- Investigate the resources on the APTUK website for learning and development.
- Look out for the monthly recommended learning and get involved!

The new website is part of ongoing investment for our members. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact us.



GAIL HALL
FAPharmT
Director APTUK
secretary@aptuk.org

Branch Network Update

The last few months have been incredibly busy for the branches and I am delighted to share this update with you and begin what will hopefully be a regular and popular PTJ feature showcasing the excellent work of the APTUK Branch Network.

I took over as the APTUK Branch Liaison Officer at the end of November 2020. I have previously held a national officer post with APTUK and branch officer posts in Hampshire and Swindon and the branches are a real passion of mine, so I am very excited to be on board. My "day job" is as Acting Head of Medicines Management and Pharmacy at Turning Point, a social enterprise providing substance misuse, mental health, learning disability and public health services, I also work with ProPharmace developing and delivering training for pharmacy professionals and sit on the Investigating Committee at the GPhC. Until March I was on maternity leave so I was able to dedicate nap times to settling into my APTUK role and leading on some exciting developments.

It is recognised that the branches are an integral part of APTUK and a much-valued member benefit. I have been

working closely with the established branches to ensure they have the support they need to continue to support their local network and be ready for the day we are able to resume local meetings as well as developing the programme for the national virtual branch meetings. We have overhauled the branch handbook to make it more user-friendly and to make administration less onerous for individual branches. The branches pages have also been updated as part of the wider website development. <https://www.aptuk.org/branches>

The national virtual branch meetings are proving to be incredibly popular and are well attended. We are receiving consistently good feedback both from those that attend the live meetings and those that catch-up on the recordings which are available on the webpage www.aptuk.org/branches. The virtual branch meetings have made the branches more accessible to those who may be unable to attend local branches due to geography or other commitments. The virtual branch meetings have also given the wider membership the opportunity to see the fantastic work of the branches and have

inspired a further four areas to set up branches and I am delighted to welcome Hampshire, East Midlands, Suffolk and Sussex to the branch network. Hampshire and East Midlands have quickly thrown themselves into branch life and have been enthusiastic hosts for the January and March meetings; I caught up with these two new branches to find out more about what has motivated them to set up their local branches.

• If the branches showcased here have inspired you to consider setting up a branch in your area or if you would like to find out more about the branches, please contact branchliaison@aptuk.org



KATHERINE WATKINSON
MPharmT

Branch Liaison Officer APTUK
branchliaison@aptuk.org



Lianne Clark
Branch Officer

EAST MIDLANDS

What area does your branch cover?

We are the East Midlands Branch which can have different interpretations! We've defined this as Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Rutland, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

What was your motivation for starting a branch?

I'd been to a few meetings and used a few APTUK resources and wanted to support getting the message out there in some way. Starting a branch seemed to be the most obvious way to help.

What is the biggest challenge of starting a branch and what support have you received?

We are still in the infancy so it's hard to see any challenges yet but I imagine time could be one as we get everything off the ground and we start moving back to 'normal' following the pandemic. APTUK have been really supportive. There's an appreciation for the fact this is run by volunteers but also great communication and I've been given everything I need to get cracking (for example, email account, access to the APTUK Branches teams site and advice on setting up social media accounts).

What do you think the biggest benefit of having a branch in your area is?

I'm hoping we'll get some really good local engagement and peer support from each other. I want the different sectors to mix and see what we can all learn from each other. I want to support everyone to champion the role.

For more information about the East Midlands Branch contact eastmidlandsbranch@aptuk.org



Claire Williams
Branch Secretary

HAMPSHIRE

What area does your branch cover?

The Hampshire branch covers the postcode areas of Southampton, Winchester, Portsmouth, Guildford and Reading - if you fall just outside of this, still get in touch as we'd love to hear from you and we can sign-post you to your nearest branch if it isn't us.

What was your motivation for starting a branch?

To provide support and networking opportunities for our Pharmacy Technician colleagues within our area of pharmacy in hospital, local Primary Care Networks (PCNs), GP surgeries, and our colleagues in community pharmacy. At the current time with the increasing pressure on services we felt it was important to be able to offer a safe welcoming environment to share worries as well as ideas and learning.

What is/was the biggest challenge of starting a branch and what support have you received?

We hit the ground running by offering to host the January 2021 virtual national branch meeting having only tentatively set up the Hampshire branch in December 2020. The meeting went well and we received great support from the APTUK Branch Liaison Officer and APTUK Secretary. Technical issues were kept to minimum and there was a good level of interaction with the guest speaker from the GPhC!

What do you think the biggest benefit of having a branch in your area is?

Geographically we cover a large area and the impact of COVID is introducing more innovative ways to hold virtual meetings means that we feel now is an ideal time to start building up contacts across pharmacy sectors and sharing best practices as we look to work closer together. The accessibility of having a local branch to be able to discuss issues and support that are important to our local area, with the support of our professional body APTUK we also feel is key at this time.

For more information about the Hampshire Branch contact hampshirebranch@aptuk.org

I started my career in 2004 as a student pharmacy technician at the FRI where I spent time in the Eye Hospital, main dispensary, licensed production unit and IT desks. Once qualified, I went on to complete my MMT and ACT qualifications before a secondment opportunity arose in pharmacy IT. I have always loved IT and playing with data, almost as much I loved chemistry and playing with chemicals. In 2010 I specialised in Haematology at Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre and completed a foundation degree in medicines management, where I learned about conducting research, academic writing and lots about my own job! In the next couple of years I took up a role with the Electronic prescribing team after which I was seconded to work in the main IT department as a change manager. The next step in my career took me to Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire CCG to help implement a new IT system for high cost drugs. I work in a great team, analysing data, helping to shape treatment pathways and implementing NICE guidance. I feel that all the experiences through my career have delivered me to this point!



Andy Coles-Driver,
Pharmacy Technician,
Bristol, North Somerset
and South Gloucestershire
CCG

 **#Pharmacy24**
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"I am responsible for the training of all Pre-registration Pharmacy Technicians and supporting development of our large team of Pharmacy Technicians and Pharmacy support staff. I also support other areas in providing services including acting as an accuracy checking technician in dispensaries across the trust and in a ward environment at weekends to support the pharmacy team in providing a full weekend service. I also support the Deputy Chief Pharmacist with Patient Group Directions (PGDs) including delivering quality training to registered professionals in using PGDs within the trust and supporting the management of the review process of all PGDs within MTW. I have been a Pharmacy Technician for 30 years and it was the best career decision I ever made. I have worked in a variety of settings including secondary, primary care and pharmacy wholesalers. I love the invaluable difference Pharmacy makes to patient care from delivering medicines to a ward to counselling a patient on how to effectively use their medicines when they go home after a hospital visit. I am proud to be a member of the Pharmacy Team and a proud Pharmacy Technician!"



#Pharmacy24
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

Clare Williams
Lead Pharmacy
Technician –
Education and
training
Maidstone and
Tunbridge Wells
NHS trust

"Joining Maidstone General Hospital as a Pre-Registration Pharmacy Technician, I had no idea where my career would take me. Working in a hospital environment with so many blended people, I was inspired to contribute to the patient journey and make the most of my time at work. Once qualified, I was keen to understand the patient experience at ward level, so I progressed onto the then medicines management training scheme. This gave me an appreciation for inter-disciplinary working and how this could benefit our patients (and my own learning). I then had the opportunity to move into a supervisory role in the supply function of the pharmacy as lead procurement technician. I was humbled to have the opportunity to make a difference supporting the team who had first taken me under their wing, and taught me a lot about leadership. This challenging role led me to undertake the level 4 CIPS diploma. When the opportunity arose for the position of Dispensary Manager, I saw it as a chance to further grow and sharpen my skills in leadership. I did not appreciate how rewarding it would be to lead a team of such compassionate people to give care and support to our patients when they are at their most vulnerable. Today I am coming to the end of a Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship. I am lucky to have worked with and for some exceptional pharmacy professionals. I'm excited to see where the next leg of my journey as a Pharmacy Technician takes me."



Caroline Walker Pharmacy
Technician Weston General
Hospital

 **#Pharmacy24**
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"During the Covid 19 pandemic, the Pharmacy teams at MTW responded by being flexible, resilient and positive in supporting the delivery of excellent Pharmacy services including creating medicines collection points to enable patients to collect medicines without entering the hospital, continuing to undertake quality conversations with patients in supporting them with using their medicines whilst ensuring social distancing rules were applied and ensuring safe and effective supply of vaccines was maintained to support the vaccination programme at the trust. We also brought classroom training on to an online forum successfully and have to date trained over 100 people on Patient Group directions and how to use I-PGD them via learn interactive sessions"



#Pharmacy24
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

Clare Williams
Lead Pharmacy
Technician –
Education and
training
Maidstone and
Tunbridge Wells
NHS trust

"I am a Principal Pharmacy Technician working in a dedicated clinical trials pharmacy team and help to support over 300 studies. I provide a safe service to the patients at the Trust by ensuring medications are securely stored, dispensed, checked and destroyed in accordance with Good Clinical Practice (GCP), and I am responsible for final checking clinical trials before they are collected by the research team. I also manage a team of pharmacy support staff, and support the training and development of Pre-registration Trainee Pharmacy Technicians. This is the part of my role I enjoy the most as I am involved in their development, which I find very rewarding and fulfilling. During my career as a Pharmacy Technician, I have seen the role develop rapidly. This is an exciting time to explore a career as a Pharmacy Technician there are many different avenues of pharmacy, and there must definitely will be one out there suitable for you!"



Chris Waterhouse
MAPharmT
Principal Pharmacy
Technician - Clinical
Trials
King's College Hospital

 **#Pharmacy24**
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"I've been a Pharmacy Technician for 12 years, in which time I have been fortunate to have a number of opportunities and varying roles including Medicines Management, Technical Services, Community Pharmacy, secondary care and now Primary Care. For the past 4 years I have worked as a Senior Pharmacy Technician in Primary Care, managing the Pharmacy Services in GP practice run by a health board, which has been challenging and highly rewarding. I also represent Pharmacy Technicians in Wales as the APTUK Interim Lead for Wales. Becoming a Pharmacy Technician has given me the opportunity to have an extremely rewarding and diverse career and one in which I can see many more opportunities in the future"



Geraint Young
MAPharmT
Senior Pharmacy
Technician Primary Care
and Community Services
APTUK Interim Lead for
Wales

 **#Pharmacy24**
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"Since qualifying as a pharmacy technician, I have worked in several enjoyable roles that have taught me so much. I completed my pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician course at Gays' and St Thomas' hospital and stayed on to gain experience in both patient and technical services. I decided to explore more within patient services, for a couple of years I worked as a medicines management technician in a mental health trust, also on the liver wards at a general hospital. I thoroughly enjoyed the patient interaction and building good relationships with the ward staff. I decided to try something new and gain skills in another area, so I later moved onto a medicines management data team within North West London CCGs. I currently work in NHS England and Improvement within Specialised Commissioning. I have been able to get involved in pieces of work across the organisation around diversity and inclusion which I am very passionate about, this has all led me to where I am now in my career, shortly starting a secondment as an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion manager. As a pharmacy technician, you gain a range of transferable skills which will allow you to explore the pharmacy profession and beyond."



Janaki Chitabeen
Pharmacy technician
NHS England &
Improvement
Specialised
Commissioning
London region

 **#Pharmacy24**
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"I started my pharmacy career in community pharmacy. The dream was always to move into education, which I did in 2016 as an NVQ Assessor. In 2019, I started working as an Education Supervisor at CPPE, supporting pharmacy professionals on the primary care pathway. It's been a challenge! I feel in education I have found my calling and I'm really grateful for all the wonderful opportunities I've had throughout my career. From Tesco who gave me my MCA role, through to Buttercups who gave me my first education role and now at CPPE who have allowed me to branch out and grow my skills even further. I truly feel the sky is the limit! During the pandemic, I found myself going from delivering events face to face to suddenly being at home all of the time and delivering learning in a completely different format. I feel like I've spent the last 16 months constantly learning. I hope that I have supported the pharmacy professionals I work with during the pandemic by helping them continue with their training which is vital for their growth and the service they provide their patients. Hopefully, despite everything that has been going on, knowing that you can still learn and forward your career has been a comfort and kept some level of normality for people, in what hasn't been a normal year!"



Lianne Clark
Education Supervisor,
ACPT Tutor (CPPE
East Midlands APTUK
Branch

 **#Pharmacy24**
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"I am a rotational pharmacy technician (PT) within a hospital. What I enjoy most about my job is having the time to speak with patients in-depth about their medicines, and to provide advice and support where required. With the training, skills and knowledge I have acquired as a PT, this contributes greatly in supporting patients with better health outcomes; meticulous PT focus on medicines can highlight compliance issues which may have been a contributing factor for admission to hospital. Discrepancies highlighted with regards to inpatient prescribing when conducting medicines reconciliation contributes to improving medicines safety. New admissions take priority, however I strive to see every patient on my designated wards at least once a week to ensure they have enough medicines supply on the wards, which minimises the risk of missed doses and facilitates the efficient discharge process once the patient is medically optimised."



Laura Pearson,
Pharmacy Technician,
West Suffolk Hospital

 **#Pharmacy24**
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"Being a Pharmacy Technician is the most rewarding and challenging career. From helping patients to self-development, this career ticks all boxes. Having started my training in community, I worked my way through into the NHS where I spent most of my career specialising in general hospital, mental health (the best one by far!!) and project management. Through further development and training I went onto a senior leadership role as a Lead Procurement and Systems Pharmacy Technician and still developing myself with my PRINCE2 and CIPS (Chartered Institute of Procurement) qualification on the horizon."



Mohammed Ahmed MAPHarmT
Lead Procurement & Systems
Pharmacy Technician
RM Medicines Limited
delivered by The Royal
Marsden

 **#Pharmacy24**
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"I was already working in the Trust as a Healthcare Assistant and I wanted to begin a career within healthcare and an apprenticeship seemed to make the most sense without having to go back to university for another degree. After some research I became familiar with the pharmacy technicians that worked on the ward I was on at the time and they informed me of their duties and responsibilities and the opportunities for progression. As a student pharmacy technician my day to day activities change regularly. I am placed on monthly rotations so I can learn the functions of each department. There is a huge variety and opportunities for learning every day and at college. Literally no day is the same as the last. My manager meets with me on regular occasions to assess my progress and to find out if I have any issues or questions regarding my apprenticeship. I have never been part of such a supportive team in my working life. For me, pharmacy or more the role of a pharmacy technician is the perfect balance between patient contact and having the chance to have a positive influence in treatment for that patient."



Matt Rostron,
Pre-Registration Trainee
Pharmacy Technician
Lancashire Teaching
Hospitals NHS
Foundation Trust

#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"One of the areas that Pharmacy Technicians specialise in is Aseptic services where they are involved with manufacturing medication in a sterile environment, i.e. free from contamination. From managing the sterile unit to training staff that require these specific skills and knowledge, Pharmacy Technicians are at the forefront at providing this service. My role as the Head of Education and Training at Barf's Health Pharmaceuticals involves ensuring that all members of staff who work in the manufacturing unit are competent and have the right skills and knowledge that is required for their role. The opportunities for Pharmacy Technicians are endless with career progression in your area of interest."



Sheetal Joglea MPharmT
Head of Education and
Training
Barf's Health
Pharmaceuticals
APTUK Revalidation
Officer

#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"As an FQA for an awarding organisation I monitor the quality of assessments delivered by training providers, ensuring that our pharmacy qualifications for Pharmacy Assistants & Pharmacy Technicians are delivered in line with regulatory requirements. During the Covid19 pandemic I have been supporting the challenges that training & assessment staff & pharmacy learners have faced as a result of the restrictions, social distancing requirements & possible interruptions to their learning and assessment. As part of my Technical EQA role, I have also helped with the development of the pharmacy qualification assessment adaptation guidance to ensure that all learners have equal opportunity & are not unfairly disadvantaged & can still complete their qualifications. Whilst this has not been working directly with patients it has supported front line pharmacy services by continuing the progression of the pharmacy workforce & teams. In my patient engagement volunteering capacity I have been working as a local Covid Community Champion, being a voice for those around me by spreading positive public health advice, local support services & safety messages relating to coronavirus. Both roles are extremely rewarding & show how far teaching & hugely diverse a Pharmacy technician career can be"



Tess Fenn
Pharmacy Technician
FAPharmT
External Quality
Assurer/Education

#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"My Pharmacy career has spanned multiple sectors over the past 30 years. I have been lucky enough to have had some amazing mentors throughout my whole career and opportunities to provide the best care to patients in community pharmacy, community hospitals, GP practice, domiciliary settings, acute hospitals and academia. In my current role as Lead Pharmacy Technician for Education & Development it's now time for me to give back to the profession and support others by taking everything I have learned and sharing it with pharmacy support staff, PPTTs and pharmacists to help them enjoy a varied and fulfilling career as I have been lucky enough to have. If you are considering a role in healthcare, I highly recommend pharmacy. There are so many roles within the profession that you are bound to find something to suit you. If you enjoy helping people and making a difference but don't feel nursing is for you, then you should look at a career in pharmacy. With an excellent training infrastructure and professional guidance from our regulatory body, The GPhC and professional body, APTUK you have access to resources and support every step of the way. With pharmacy staff routinely supporting patients within GP practices, acute hospitals, community pharmacy, community hospitals, primary care, mental health and many other sectors, my advice to anybody considering pharmacy as a career would be: Don't be afraid to try away sector you can and bring the knowledge and experience you gain in each to make you a better professional overall for the benefit of your patients and your own career satisfaction."



Tracy Hledley
Lead Pharmacy
Technician for Education
& Development
East Sussex Healthcare
NHS Trust

#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"Within MFT, 2020 was entrusted as "Year of the Pharmacy Technician". With a focus on the roles we undertake, the service we provide and diversity within our profession. The pandemic did hinder original plans however, I was very pleased to be appointed as Group Chief Pharmacy Technician for the Trust during this time. I am extremely proud of all technicians and pharmacy support staff who have risen to the challenges over the last 12 months. I have witnessed staff adopt their roles, shift patterns and engage in fast paced changes to ensure the safety of our patients is maintained. Pharmacy Technicians have supported out patient clinics and implemented "drive through" collection points for our patients to collect medication and reduce the hospital footprint. CFV patients had the option of a delivery service during the shielding periods again coordinated and explained to each and every patient by the Pharmacy Technician offering counselling and answering any questions or concerns. Ensuring patients are cared for at all times under the pressures we have felt makes me very proud of my profession and fellow pharmacy technicians."



Tracey McLaren
Group Chief
Pharmacy Technician
Manchester
University NHS
Foundation Trust

#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"Becoming a pharmacy technician is a great career option that allows you to start out at the "grass roots" of the profession and then build on your knowledge and experience to take advantage of the many interesting career opportunities the world of pharmacy has to offer. I have worked in pharmacy for 22 years, starting in community pharmacy, where I gained my pharmacy technician qualifications, before moving to hospital pharmacy, further expanding my experience and knowledge in the specific areas of pharmacy that I personally enjoyed. I eventually specialised as lead pharmacy technician for pharmacy ICT and robotics for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, responsible for the continual development of pharmacy services across the trust and the installation and operation of technology for the safe and timely supply of medicines. I have recently progressed my career further at the start of 2021, taking up a new post working as a Senior Analyst for encompass working on the pharmacy build team. Encompass is a Health and Social Care wide initiative across Northern Ireland (NI) that will replace many of the paper based or outdated technology systems used by all Trusts in NI by introducing a digital integrated care record that will transform the way we care for people. I am very excited to have the opportunity to work on this massive project thanks to the journey my career as a pharmacy technician has led me on so far."



Warren Francis
MPharmT
Senior Workflow Analyst
- encompass
Northern Ireland National
Officer APTUK

#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"I chose pharmacy as a career as it combined my passion for science with an opportunity to work with people and patients in a healthcare setting. Since qualifying I have had the opportunity to work in settings such as GP practices, technical services, out patient clinics and in education and training. I believe that choosing pharmacy as a career offers an interesting, varied and rewarding career pathway and I am excited for the opportunities that lie ahead for our future pharmacy workforce across all areas of healthcare"



Mary J Carter MPharmT
Training Programme Director,
Pharmacy Workforce
Development South
Primary Care Associate
APTUK

#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"I started my Pharmacy career in a community pharmacy working behind the counter, learning about the day to day issues of our local population. I then became a Student Pharmacy Technician for the local Hospital trust where I developed my skills and learnt some of the many areas in which Pharmacy Technicians can have an impact on patient care and patient experience. I became a Lead Ward Services Pharmacy Technician within the same trust progressing and sharing my learning with others. After almost 15 years within this sector I wanted to make a difference closer to home and took an opportunity to work within my local GP Practice and develop my skills in Primary Care Services. I now support my current practice as well as the local Primary Care Network with ongoing population challenges supporting the patients and the multidisciplinary teams throughout. I also provide support through training an development/facilitation of other professionals. My role consists of medication reviews, medication queries, safety reporting, transcribing and audits, to name a few of the many tasks I undertake. Pharmacy Technicians now work in multiple sectors to offer support to patients and other healthcare professionals. We can make a huge difference in our roles by ensuring a safe, caring and effective service across the board and in our specialities. COVID 19 has been tough for everyone and has been, for me, about providing that reassurance in a time of uncertainty to our patients. Many healthcare professionals have volunteered their time to support the role out of vaccines on top of their usual day-to-day activities but we have been there for each other and the patients."



Gemma Rolph
Senior Pharmacy
Technician
GP Practice - Dover

#Pharmacy24

Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

"Over the last year it has been inspiring to see the part pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have taken in the response to COVID-19. From stepping up to new roles supporting patients in critical care, to being part of, and leading, the teams that are delivering the vaccination at incredible pace. I'm proud to belong to a profession that has done so much in such a difficult time"



Oli Jones
Education Supervisor
CPPE

#Pharmacy24

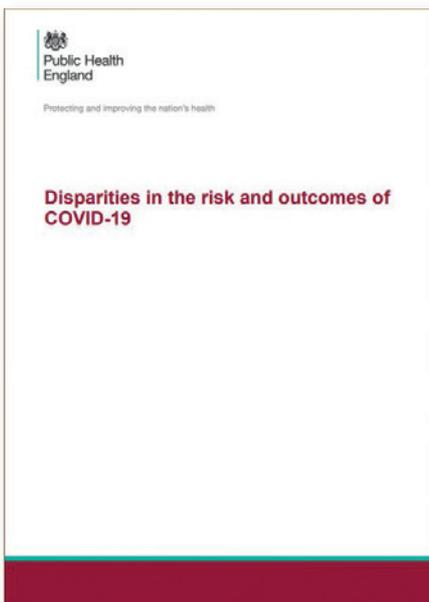
Celebrating the Profession's contribution to the COVID19 Pandemic response

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI)

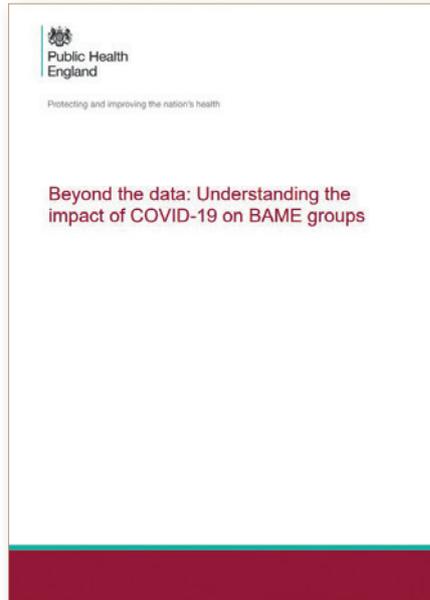
Welcome to the EDI pages. In this new, regular section of the Pharmacy Technician Journal we aim to update members with the APTUK ongoing commitment to their EDI agenda. We also hope these pages will be used to showcase good practice and the EDI work of our members.

In the summer of 2020 APTUK were invited to co-chair, along with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) and NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I), a national roundtable on Inclusive Pharmacy Professional Practice. Over 60 pharmacy professionals participated in the roundtable. The attendees were from many national organisations and included patient representatives. The roundtable arose as a need to address inequalities and discrimination in the pharmacy profession. This is both within pharmacy teams and when working with individuals and communities. Two important references for the roundtable were the Public Health England (PHE) reports into the Covid-19 pandemic.

Disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19¹ was a descriptive review of the data collected in the first wave of Covid-19. This report aimed to improve PHE understanding of the pandemic and formulate future responses. This report found the largest disparity was by age. Those aged 80 and over were 70 times more likely to die than those under 40.



Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on BAME groups² this report focused on understanding the extent ethnicity impacts the risk and



outcomes of Covid-19. The report found that, after accounting for all other risk factors such as age etc., Bangladeshi ethnicity had twice the risk of death to White British ethnicity. Those of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black ethnicity had 10-50% higher risk of death from Covid-19 than White British ethnicity. This report concluded that, along with other findings, ethnic inequalities in health and wellbeing that existed in the UK prior to the Covid-19 outbreak were made more apparent, and undoubtedly exacerbated them. These reports are guiding three key pieces of work from NHSE/I: BAME workforce and Communities; Health Inequalities in Primary Care and NHS Race and Health Observatory.

The first roundtable event agreed the aim:

‘To work collaboratively to develop and embed inclusive pharmacy professional practice into everyday care for patients and members of the public, to support the prevention of ill-health and address health inequalities within our diverse communities.’

The group meet fortnightly and worked following the roundtable event to produce the Joint Statement of Principles on Inclusive Pharmacy Professional Practice³.

Following the launch of the Joint Statement of Principles, the group worked on the development of a Joint National Plan for Inclusive Pharmacy Practice in England⁴.

Whilst this work was underway APTUK worked with Stuart Lawrence, younger brother of Stephen Lawrence, a motivational speaker, diversity and grief specialist. Stuart is also the brother-in-law of a pharmacy technician! Stuart delivered a 1-hour webinar for APTUK members on privilege, BAME-boxes and non-conscious bias. This webinar was well received by those attending. Stuart has continued to co-mentor and assist the APTUK Board in understanding the challenges faced.

The Joint National Plan⁴ was launched on the 10th March 2021 and identified immediate and minimum actions required by all partners. Phase 1 of this plan identified three themes for these activities:



Stuart Lawrence

Theme 1: Leadership and Representation

The APTUK project proposal for this theme is to collect baseline data from our members to identify any concerns regarding under-representation raising an action plan to address issues if they arise. The Executive Committee, once clarified through a restructure, will complete a similar exercise to identify the diversity of the leaders for APTUK. An advocate programme will be created and used to champion and cascade information via

APTUK branch networks, with policies developed to support those roles.

Theme 2: Professional Education and Training

The APTUK project proposal for this theme is to identify and signpost to training supporting cultural competence for pharmacy. These resources will be visible to all viewing our website in an open access area. Cultural competence training will be the focus of education and training materials provided to APTUK members as part of branch networks, webinars and website training packages for learning logs (through member accounts).

Theme 3: Healthcare and Service Delivery

Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England and Improvement (NHSE/I) will work with partners to develop a resource pack to support pharmacy to:

1. Better understand and interpret local population health data on health inequalities.
2. Better engage and work with diverse communities to design culturally competent and tailored approaches to healthcare delivery.

Get involved!

- Look out for the survey of our members to identify our representation across

the nine protected characteristics. The survey will be anonymous.

- Opportunities to volunteer with APTUK will be posted on our website www.aptuk.org/aptuk-jobs following the restructure in May 2021.
- Sign-up to the FutureNHS Collaboration Platform www.future.nhs.uk to follow the plan developments.
- Keep an eye on the EDI pages of our website for updates.

Make sure you are receiving emails from APTUK. Here we will request case studies, good practice or poor experiences, lesson learnt and solutions to problems. We will also be launching advocacy through our APTUK branch network. If you are not receiving email from us, as a member, and wish to please contact membership@aptuk.org to troubleshoot any issues.

If you have any further comments or suggestions for these EDI pages, please contact us.

REFERENCES:

1. Public Health England. *Disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19*. August 2020.
2. Public Health England. *Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on BAME groups*. June 2020.
3. APTUK, NHSE/I, RPS. *Joint National Statement of Principles on Inclusive Pharmacy Professional Practice*. September 2020.
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Equality, Diversity



& Inclusion



GAIL HALL
FAPharmT

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secretary@aptuk.org



AMY LAFLIN
MAPharmT

National Officer APTUK
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Introducing the New Operations Lead



My name is Vicky Hope and I have recently joined APTUK as Operations Lead. The purpose of the role is to oversee the leadership and management of APTUK's professional business operations and to support the development and setting of the strategic direction, including key objectives, priorities, and goals.

This is a new position which is part of the newly formed executive committee and I am very excited to be working with such an inspirational and passionate team.

My background is founded on a business studies degree and throughout my career I have gained extensive commercial operational experience including customer/client service, process development and implementation, marketing and team leadership, primarily in service orientated businesses.

For the last 10 years I have been working in the healthcare arena, which has provided a keen interest in the rapidly changing patient care landscape and I am looking forward to providing support for the development of the pharmacy technician profession.

How Our Team of Ward-based Pharmacy Technicians are Contributing to Better Outcomes for Patients

Digital benefits

As a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a call to action to streamline and improve our pharmacy services at West Suffolk Hospital, Bury St. Edmunds. This led to rapid changes to how we work, particularly on the wards which initially caused apprehension amongst the ward-based team. It is truly inspiring how swiftly our ward based pharmacy technicians (PTs) embraced and adapted to these changes and facilitated a more effective, responsive pharmacy service as a result.

Electronic prescribing in our Trust went live in May 2016 and last year our hardworking Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration (EPMA) team, including EPMA PT's, trained ward-based staff on the roll-out of 'medicines request'. Ward based pharmacy technicians can now request verified inpatient medicines via electronic prescribing, saving vast amounts of time transcribing and improving medicines safety. These requests are printed straight to the dispensary printer for rapid dispensing, reducing the incidences of missed doses. Pharmacy technicians play a large role in filtering and prioritising requests from ward staff for medicines requests, ensuring that critical medicines are treated as a priority, and deducing which requests can be fulfilled using ward stock where appropriate.

Pre-planning at ward level

Another incentive brought in which pharmacy technicians are central to delivering are the Patients Own Drug (POD) checking for 'To Take Out' (TTO) medicines. Once the pharmacist has completed the clinical screen, the pharmacy technician liaises with the patients/next of kin/care facility to ascertain which medicines are on the ward, at the patient's home, or require supplying from us. PODs are checked on the ward, and only sent back to pharmacy if they require relabelling. The pharmacy technician endorses the TTO to instruct the dispensary which items require dispensing, which the pharmacy technician then sends to dispensary – highlighting the urgency of the TTO where applicable. TTO's can again be printed straight to pharmacy or printed on the ward and sent via the pneumatic tube system (ideal if PODs need relabelling). The TTO POD checking process guarantees less items require checking in dispensary, speeding up the TTO route at dispensary level. Additionally, this gives the pharmacists more time to attend to other tasks specific to their roles.

Our ward based PT's strive to see every patient on the ward at least once a week for 'POD & Supply', regardless of how long they have been an inpatient. This ensures a regular top up of their medicines on the ward facilitating the efficient TTO and discharge process and further reduce the incidences of missed doses and volume of medicines requests from ward staff. It is very rewarding to come onto the ward of a morning to find there are minimal requisitions to attend to.

Speeding up discharge process

'Near Patient Dispensing' (NPD) was also introduced during the pandemic, which aimed to complete TTOs at ward level to expedite the discharge process. This has been piloted with success on a few select wards, with a view to rolling out this service across the trust. PT's conduct the TTO POD checking

method; if there are medicines requiring dispensing which are kept as stock on the ward, the pharmacy technician can dispense these on the ward and request their ward pharmacist, or nearby PT to conduct the final accuracy check, or vice versa.

All these incentives have proven incredibly efficient, reducing our TTO turnaround times by 50 minutes, the lowest turnaround time for a number of years. This has enabled patients to be discharged in a timelier manner and vacates beds for new patients which has been crucial whilst faced with COVID and our standard winter pressures.

Professional Recognition

It is important for our PT's to have a presence on the wards during the pandemic to support our wider colleagues across the trust and improve outcomes for our patients. Many of the PT's have expressed that over the course of the past year they have felt more like part of the ward team rather than an external service. During COVID, we were able to create a socially distanced stand for Pharmacy Technician Day 2020; we were thrilled to receive many messages of thanks and positive feedback from all grades of ward staff across the trust to display on the stand. Previously, our PT's felt a struggle to be recognised as registered healthcare professionals. Today, we feel that we are acknowledged and appreciated more in our trust as valuable members of the multi-disciplinary team (MDT).

The Future

Looking to the future, our pharmacy department are committed to expanding the roles and development of our pharmacy technicians. Our fantastic, hardworking and dedicated PT's will be key players in sharing ideas to implement the NHS Medicines Discharge Service, further promote medicines optimisation and facilitating pharmacy technician-led discharges. It has undoubtedly been a challenging year for us all, but we as a team have learned a great deal, adapted to new ways of working to reflect the 'new way of life' and upheld our professional standards in ways we could never have imagined pre-COVID, all with the common goal to deliver the best service possible to our patients.



LAURA PEARSON MPharmT

Rotational Pharmacy Technician
West Suffolk Hospital, Bury St. Edmunds
Laura.Pearson@wsh.nhs.uk
Twitter: @Laura_Pearson

Case study: Supporting COVID Vaccination Programme in Care Homes

I am a senior pharmacy technician and the lead for care homes and social care across Powys, Wales.

There is so much a pharmacy technician can do working within a care home which can make a huge difference to residents care and the management of medicines within the care home. In Wales, there are only a handful of pharmacy technicians working specifically in care homes and I am so proud to be one of them.

My role has changed largely in order to support the roll out of the mass vaccination programme.

During the vaccination programme I have been supporting the roll out of ordering, supply, cold chain management and logistics associated with the COVID vaccine, liaising with district nurses, transport and care home managers to ensure a smooth process. I was on hand to deal with all medical queries and concerns regarding the vaccination. This included answering questions relating to allergies and specific medical conditions. I was available in the care homes to support district nursing teams with cold chain management,

vaccination storage & administration and to provide general support. The team really valued a pharmacy professional being available to support. I have really enjoyed working together and building relationships with a wide variety of professionals, putting residents first and being part of the mass vaccination programme.

It's great to be able to say that the majority of our care homes have been vaccinated with first and second doses with just a small amount of residents left to vaccinate for second doses. It has been a real privilege to be involved in the COVID mass vaccination programme and a pleasure to see the residents vaccinated against COVID-19.



EMILY GUERIN MPharmT
Senior Pharmacy Technician/Lead
Care Homes and Social Care Powys, Wales
emily.guerin@wales.nhs.uk

Case study: Redeployment During COVID-19

As an Electronic Prescribing and Medication Administration (ePMA) Lead Pharmacy Technician, the main thing I have had to change during the past year is the amount of multitasking I have had to do. At the beginning of the pandemic, I was faced with building multiple clinical trial medicines into our electronic system to ensure the prescribers could easily prescribe a clinical trial if it suited the patient's needs, this included steroids and anti-viral medications.

On my weekend working I work on an acute medicine ward, where patients come in from emergency department for investigations and treatments. I started to see more and more COVID-19 positive patients admitted to the hospital. At the start of a shift I would have to get changed and ensure if I was to enter a bay to see a patient then I would have all the personal protective equipment to hand. Guaranteeing that my colleagues, patients and myself were safe and protected.

When the first batch of vaccines was received at the



hospital, all hands were on deck and my role had to change temporarily. Every day I would help out by calling numerous care home workers and patients who were aged 80 and above, offering the COVID-19 vaccination, booking them into the shared electronic calendar, directing them on where to go when first arriving at the hospital and booking them in for their second dose. My colleagues in my team were also doing this to ensure help was given to the wider team, to meet our quota of vaccines to be administered, which essentially reduced the amount of pressure on the NHS.

It has truly been incredible to see so many people come together in such a difficult time, to work together, even when redeployed and to show exceptional professionalism.



EMMA BEEBY MPharmT
Electronic Prescribing and Medication
Administration (ePMA) Lead Pharmacy
Technician, St Georges NHS Trust
Emma.beeby@stgeorges.nhs.uk

Scottish Clinical Leadership Fellow (SCLF) Programme

I have worked my entire career within the pharmacy department at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary, Scotland starting as a student pharmacy technician after leaving school. So when the opportunity arose to take part in the pharmacy Scottish Clinical Leadership Fellow (SCLF) programme with Scotland's Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Rosemarie Parr, hosted within NHS Education for Scotland (NES), I was more than a little apprehensive stepping away from my comfort zone.

Encouraged by those around me I came into the fellowship year (well technically 18 months but who is counting the world pandemic in the middle) looking to broaden my horizons and challenge myself. It was an opportunity to look at pharmacy from a completely different perspective and answer a question I had asked myself many times over the years, could I make a difference and work at a higher level?

Opportunities & Networking

One thing became clear very quickly the first thing I had to do was understand myself! The leadership and management development days working with a fantastic NES team, fellow pharmacy fellows and the medical clinical fellowship group were a huge positive impact on this. From Myers Briggs and action learning sessions to just being able to have challenging, honest conversations with others from outside the pharmacy bubble. After these sessions I always came away with so much learning to digest and reflect on. The added ability to have coaching sessions and work with an assigned mentor was an invaluable resource, all situations I would never have had if I had not applied for the programme.

The pharmacy SCLF group created such a close bond, we have all changed and grown through this year and have inspired each other to develop. The memories created from our shared journey together and the creation of not just a network of friends but also colleagues in whom I feel I can have complete confidence to be constructive, honest and support me.

As a SCLF one of the most privileged experiences I have had is the ability to watch and learn – the wealth and breadth of leadership within our professions is enormous. Time given by others, allowing access to meetings and environments previously unknown or was something that always “just happened” and given the opportunity to engage, contribute and develop is priceless.

Learning

One of our first sessions, Gail Caldwell Director of Pharmacy NHS GGC, gave a presentation on her leadership journey. I had goose bumps – fantastic presentations skills – definitely not an

introvert! One of her key learning points is with me often “you can't see the problem standing in the middle of the room you need to take some time and stand on the balcony” looking out above, this allows you the vision and clear space to influence and impact on what's happening.

Acceptance has been another great learning point for me, not everything goes to plan or is achievable. The impact of the pandemic on my project objectives for the year was considerable as pressures within the health service took over. However, this led to new learning and opportunities to put skills developed into practice when returning to work in my substantive role dealing with all the constant changes and the implementation of the Covid-19 vaccine programme.

Reflection

As I reflect back, my time in the SCLF program feels a bit like being in a giant jigsaw puzzle. You learn new ways of thinking, soak up different experiences, constantly put yourself out of your comfort zone and receive an amazing level of support from the pharmacy profession, fellow fellows and those around you invested in the program. But it is not until you take that step back you can see over the balcony and reap the rewards.

What has the influence of this programme done for me? It has given me the confidence to put myself forward for the chair of the National Pharmacy Technician Group Scotland (NPTGS). I am immensely proud to be in this role having an opportunity to work with incredible pharmacy technicians who are themselves inspiring leaders and represent my profession. I can put new learning into practice, I can help to influence the development of my profession moving forward and can still contribute to some of the original objectives, some of which have been immersed into the NPTGS work plan.

The involvement of pharmacy technicians within this SCLF program is fundamental to the future development of pharmacy. Allowing both professions to collaborate ensuring their knowledge and skills work as one for the benefit of patients and the service. Scotland is currently the only one of the four nations who has a pharmacy technician within the pharmacy programme.

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CONSIDER IT DONE

'An Interview With...Meet the Member'



Name:

Alix Massocchi MPharmT

Current Role:

Electronic Patient Record (EPR) Pharmacy Specialist at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Highest qualification related to your role:

NVQ L3 in Pharmaceutical Services, and currently studying for an MSc Health Informatics.

Steps you took to get to where you are now:

I always had an interest in science at school and spent a week of work experience in my local hospital pharmacy. Although it was very different to the chemistry laboratory image I had in my head, the thought of helping people for a living really appealed to me. When the student pharmacy technician role was advertised the following year, I applied and was successful. When I had completed my training, I moved to a different trust where I stayed for just over 15 years, following the conventional pathway for hospital pharmacy technicians – aseptics, completing Accuracy Checking Technician (ACT) certificate and then into medicines management. I took on more wards and eventually became the lead Medicine Management (MM) pharmacy technician for Medicine.

I'll be the first to admit that I actively look for new challenges. I don't like to do the same thing day after day, and I will always look to streamline processes because I dislike inefficiency so my managers often gave me mini projects. I would set up and run pilots for medicines management in new areas, redesign worksheets etc. One of the projects I was given was to record To Take Out (TTO) turnaround times to show we were meeting key performance indicators, but I realised that these figures had far more worth. For example, we could use it to track the busiest times for each ward area and deploy more staff when it was most beneficial and I became interested in how we could use data to improve our efficiency. Around this time, an IT company wanting to build an electronic prescribing system approached the department and I was invited to be part of a focus group. This was a huge turning point for me as I could see so much potential in having an IT solution and I wanted to explore it more. By now, I had spent 17 years in hospital pharmacy and I felt as though I couldn't go much further in my career here. I started to look for roles that could blend pharmacy, data and IT and I found what I was looking for at NHS Digital.

I joined NHS Digital in 2015 as a pharmacy terminology specialist, primarily compiling the Dictionary of Medicines and Devices (dm+d). The dictionary is a national standard and is how we enable electronic systems to pass accurate information between one another. This role gave me the opportunity to take part in some really exciting national projects such as e-referrals, immunisation records and giving NHS111 staff the ability to remotely produce prescriptions and send to a chosen pharmacy. I was also seconded to SNOMED CT International for six months to help restructure their drug dictionary. SNOMED CT is the most comprehensive and precise terminology system in the

world – a global common language for clinical terms. Sadly, in 2019, restructuring of NHS Digital resulted in my office being closed. Not wishing to relocate over a hundred miles away, I began looking for something new, which brings us up to the present day...

I currently work as the Electronic Patient Record (EPR) Pharmacy Specialist, within the EPR team at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Trust. Although I was employed to lead the Electronic Prescribing and Medicines Administration (ePMA) project, when I joined the trust we were still in the early days of 'going digital' and so for the first few months I worked alongside the configuration team. This provided me with a good understanding of how the system works on a technical level and I picked up lots of new skills, all of which are valuable as we move forward towards digitalising medicines.

I have also been heavily involved in the implementation of a new pharmacy stock control and dispensing system. I assisted with building the drug files into the system, which was doubly useful for me as we can then take that to form the basis of the drug catalogue for ePMA.

What is the most challenging part of your current role?

Ensuring we represent medicines using the correct codes from dm+d is critical. If an incorrect code is assigned and passed between systems, the result could be that a wrong medicine is prescribed, dispensed or even administered. I do get teased for being a little 'geeky' about codes, but it really is a huge factor in patient safety, since the end goal of ePMA is to 'close the loop'. Electronic verification e.g. barcode scanning, is used to ascertain the 'five rights' - the right patient, the right medicine, the right dosage, the right time and the right means of administration.

More recently, COVID-19 has provided us with huge challenges that none of us could have predicted. Whilst my team and I were used to working remotely every now and then, I do miss being with my colleagues in the office.

When the first lockdown came into force in England, we were days away from launching electronic observations (e-Obs) and I thought we'd have to delay, but as it would provide such critical information to clinicians, we held our nerve and rolled out, finding new ways to ensure nursing staff felt supported. It was a great success and definitely gave me confidence that we could continue to work remotely and still deliver what our colleagues need.

What surprised you the most moving from a traditional pharmacy technician role?

Everything! I'd only ever really known hospital pharmacy work, so moving to a desk job was a dramatic change. I missed being on my feet, the patient contact, the camaraderie of ward staff and of course the never-ending supply of cake. I found the flexibility of being able to choose my start times and to work from home when I liked quite strange, it took me a while to get used to that without feeling guilty. The biggest surprise was just how many different and interesting jobs were available that I had no knowledge of!

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

I don't think I'd change anything about my career, it's led me to where I am now and it's where I met my husband (also a

pharmacy technician). On a more personal level, I think I would've kept up computer programming from a young age, so I wasn't having to relearn some of it now!

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I enjoy the variety a great deal. No two days are ever the same and I feel like I am always learning something new. I also enjoy 'go-live' days when we launch a new project. You're full of adrenaline and it's so fast-paced, things are going on everywhere – it's exciting and exhausting all at once. But when the end of the first day rolls around, and feedback is coming in, you get the best feeling of having achieved something great.

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

That if you meet all the criteria in a person specification, then you're already over-qualified for the job. I credit Alison Hemsworth (Pharmacy Policy Developer at NHS England) with that! The job I have now was advertised as a pharmacist role, but they specifically wanted someone with a dm+d knowledge, so, I called the team and explained that I was a pharmacy technician but that I had an informatics background and they invited me to apply. Alison gave me the courage to do that.

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

I honestly don't know. I can't see me ever working in anything other than healthcare. The only other job that really appeals to me is in intelligence, but I think I'm too old to become a spy!

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

The same issue that's always faced us – being seen and acknowledged as healthcare professionals in our own right. I had hoped that the changes around the COVID-19 vaccination rules would finally achieve that, yet we're still not listed in the 'Health Care Professional' job roles. It frustrates me to this day when I tell people I'm a pharmacy technician and then they immediately refer to me as a pharmacist. I make a point of correcting them. I'm proud to be a pharmacy technician.

Has anyone influenced your career decisions, and if so, who?

I guess my mum, as she was the first person to suggest to a fifteen-year-old me that I might find pharmacy interesting because I loved chemistry!

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

There have been two highlights. Firstly, my team won two Health Tech Awards in 2020 which was a real 'wow' moment!

One was the Major Project Go-Live award – we delivered EPR in just five months. I am very honoured and proud to have played a part in that.

Secondly, a colleague sent me a paper on standards for electronic discharge summaries, suggesting it might be useful. I pointed out to him that my name was on the front as one of the contributors, so that was quite surreal!

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

This is a tough one. At national meetings, I've often been the youngest in the room and sometimes felt that I've had to fight that little bit harder to be taken seriously. For some, there is still a perception that IT is a man's world, so even though a lot of my colleagues are female and experts in their field, people will tend to gravitate towards the men. It's a barrier I work at every day to try and break down.

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

I get super nervous before presenting my ideas or papers to a group of people. It's an integral part of my job, so you'd think I'd be used to it by now, but no, I still get irrationally anxious. I guess I probably always will.

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

Somewhere that's hot and sunny! I cannot wait until we can travel again. I like old cars and used to drag race, so I've been to some unique places around the world linked to that – Bakersfield in California, Malta and even Utah for Bonneville Speed Week.

I still have my old race car and a Dodge Dart, so I'm looking forward to being able to drive those again when things are back to some sort of normality.

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

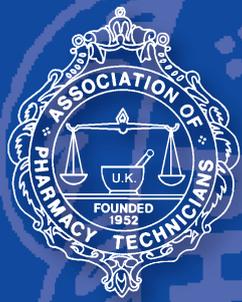
Mostly my husband, it helps that he works in pharmacy as he understands a lot of what I'm talking about, if not the technical side of things. At work, I'd say my whole team have some pretty diverse backgrounds/career histories, so every one of them is helpful in different ways and I'm never stuck for someone to chat through ideas with.

What's next?

Launching ePMA in adult inpatient areas is my main focus at the moment. After that, we will look at rolling it out into other areas of the trust and then moving onto closed loop medicines administration. Health informatics is such a fast moving and ever-evolving field, I haven't thought much beyond this project as we don't even really know what technology will be available in a year or two. That's why it is such an exciting area of work to be in!



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