

Background

The Academic Health Science (AHSN) Network and NHSE/I selected **Polypharmacy Programme: Getting the Balance Right** for national scaling in December 2019, in recognition that the Action Learning Set (ALS) model fills an identified training gap for multi-disciplinary teams to help people stop medicines safely. The programme supports several international and national strategies and policy recommendations including:

- [World Health Organisation's Global Patient Safety Challenge](#), aiming to reduce severe avoidable medication related harm by 50% globally over five years.
- [GP Directed Enhanced Service \(DES\) Contract Specifications](#), [Investment and Impact Fund \(IIF\)](#) and the [NHS long term plan](#) around medication safety.
- [National Overprescribing Review](#) (NOR) Report, recommendations 8, 16, 17 and 18 of the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), including the need for meaningful medication reviews.

What is an ALS?

Action Learning Sets (ALSs) are a structured method enabling small groups to address complicated issues (such as polypharmacy) by meeting regularly and working collectively. The tool is especially suited to learning and personal development at the professional and managerial levels. The ALS approach directly supports Health Education England (HEE) Recommendation 18 of the NOR report.

Key principles of ALS

- Creating the context and environment for empowered action.
- Learning from experience – what has and has not worked.
- A multi-disciplinary approach to addressing complex issues.
- Acknowledging that people in the room have the capability and capacity to effect change.
- Utilising the holistic approach from people present (facilitators and delegates) i.e., clinical professional, real-life experience as well as the academic, evidence-based tools and resources in the room.

Aims of ALS

- Understand from delegates the barriers (practical and cognitive) to systematically stopping medicines that are no longer warranted in patients taking multiple medicines.
- Explore with delegates how some of these barriers can be addressed by GPs and Clinical Pharmacists in practice and support better medication review.
- Provide a deeper understanding of shared decision making and how to incorporate this into medication reviews (especially for older people with multimorbidity).
- Outline some of the many tools available to help prescribers to conduct successful medication reviews and test if a locally developed eLearning tool for high-risk medicines is useful.