

Supporting prescribing rotations for NW Trainee Foundation Pharmacists in 2025/26 - Information for General Practice & PCNs

Dear all,

In January 2021, the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) published the revised [Standards for the Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists](#).

This means, from September 2026, all newly registered pharmacists who have been educated under the new standards will enter the workforce with the training, skills and confidence to provide a range of clinical care to patients, including prescribing of medicines.

Having developed knowledge, skills and behaviours needed by a prescriber during the MPharm degree, the objective for the foundation training programme is that the foundation trainee pharmacists are given the context to demonstrate the capabilities of a pharmacist independent prescriber.

The GPhC therefore require that each foundation trainee pharmacist has a Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP), in addition to their Designated Supervisor (DS). The DPP must be a prescriber. The DPP and DS can be same person, as long as they meet the person specification requirements for both roles. Further information can be found [here](#).

A significant proportion of Trainee Pharmacists are employed in community pharmacy settings, where access to prescribing supervision and assessment is limited by the commissioned service.

Request to General Practice and PCNs

Trainees will need access to a Prescribing Learning Setting (PLS) and a Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP) who is a registered independent prescriber. The aim is that by the end of their rotation, trainees will have completed all their Prescribing Assessment Activities and are therefore suitable for registration as a prescriber.

To prevent the withdrawal of community pharmacy employers hosting a foundation trainee in 2025/26 because of a lack of the available prescribing supervision, we are seeking urgent support from General Practice and PCNs to:

- Complete a survey to identify DPPs in General Practice and PCNs - [Take the survey](#) or scan the QR code.



- Engage with the GM training hub to liaise with Community Pharmacies and agree hosting arrangements.
- Host a foundation trainee in General Practice for an agreed rotation period in 2025/26.

During the training year, trainees need to undertake at least 90 hours of learning focussed on developing and demonstrating the skills and capabilities of a prescriber. In practice, where this is happening in a new environment, this is likely to require at least a 4 to 8 week rotation but could be different depending on your specific arrangements. There is flexibility in the structure of the rotation.

Some of the funding the community pharmacy employer receives for employing a Foundation Trainee Pharmacist may be used as a placement fee, to secure a rotation with access to a PLS and DPP.

PCNs can use the Direct Patient Contact funding option within the ARRS allocation to support an increase in the sessional employment of ARRS Clinical Pharmacists to build supervisory and increase multi-professional DPP capacity.

Foundation trainees will form the future workforce pipeline so we hope that you will be able to offer your support and engage with this process.

Further information and FAQs are available in Appendix 1.

If you have any queries, please contact: nhsgm.pharmacyworkforce@nhs.net

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Appendix 1 – Communications and FAQs

In January 2021, the GPhC published the revised Standards for the Initial Education and Training of Pharmacists. These include a set of new learning outcomes which provide newly qualified pharmacists with enhanced clinical capabilities and enable them to be independent prescribers at the point of registration. The 2025/26 Foundation Training Year is the first year where all these new learning outcomes – including independent prescribing - will be used. Prescribing supervision and assessment will be key during this year, and trainee pharmacists will need access to a Prescribing Learning Setting (PLS) and Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP).

A significant proportion of Trainee Pharmacists are employed in community pharmacy settings, where access to prescribing supervision and assessment is limited by the commissioned service. This represents a significant proportion of our future pharmacist workforce and therefore we must try to support them with access to the appropriate training opportunities needed to successfully complete their foundation training.

You can support this process by partnering with a community pharmacy employer to offer a prescribing rotation with access to a PLS and DPP.

Changes to pharmacist education and training are key to the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan and aim to ensure we have a workforce which can deliver person-centred services that are fit for the future. Successful implementation will produce adaptable pharmacists who will be confident and capable of operating in multi-professional teams across a variety of healthcare settings, to meet diverse and changing patient needs. Facilitating this process effectively also carries a wider benefit to the entire system around recruitment and retention, cross system working, and workforce development.

What is in it for my practice / PCN?

- ✓ Some of the funding the employer receives for employing a Trainee Pharmacist may be used as a placement fee, to secure a rotation with access to a PLS and DPP.
- ✓ There are opportunities to access additional ARRS funding to support an increase in the sessional employment of ARRS Clinical Pharmacists to build DS and DPP capacity.
- ✓ Trainee Pharmacists can support with day-to-day workload within the practice contributing towards vaccinations and immunisations, multiple QOF indicators or the DES.
- ✓ Supporting a prescribing rotation for a Trainee Pharmacist can help provide a sustainable workforce pipeline.
- ✓ Hosting a trainee and watching their development can be a rewarding experience and provides development opportunities to upskill supervisory skills within your workforce. This can help with retention of your own staff.
- ✓ Developing DPP capabilities will enable pharmacists to meet the 'education' domain of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's core advanced curriculum.
- ✓ Working with other partners to provide training helps to build new or develop existing relationships with other healthcare providers in your local area and can increase understanding of community pharmacy services such as Pharmacy First.
- ✓ Getting involved allows you to support the development of the future workforce and showcase primary care's place in healthcare.
- ✓ Where appropriate, practices can host multiple trainees at the same time. This provides economies of scale, increasing the benefits of hosting trainees without creating extra work.

Frequently Asked Questions

What am I expected to provide during prescribing rotations?

During these rotations, trainees will need access to a PLS and DPP. The aim is that by the end of their rotation, trainees will have completed all their Prescribing Assessment Activities and are therefore suitable for registration as a prescriber.

What is a Prescribing Learning Setting (PLS)?

The PLS is where the trainee pharmacist undertakes learning relating to prescribing and completes the Prescribing Assessment Activities, under the supervision of the DPP. This should be an appropriate practice-based learning environment in a prescribing setting that can offer appropriate clinical support.

Who can be a Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP)?

DPPs must be registered independent prescribers, in good standing with their professional regulator, and active prescribers in a patient-facing role. They should have knowledge and experience which enables them to offer appropriate supervision and learning experiences. DPPs for Trainee Pharmacists do not need to have 3 years' prescribing experience to undertake the role.

How long should prescribing rotations be?

During the training year, trainees need to undertake at least 90 hours of learning focussed on developing and demonstrating the skills and capabilities of a prescriber. In practice, where this is happening in a new environment, this is likely to require at least a 4-8 week rotation but could be different depending on your specific arrangements.

What is the structure of a prescribing rotation?

There is no specific model for a prescribing rotation. They could occur in a single block, as a regular attendance (e.g. 1 day per week for 6 months), or a combination of the two (e.g. 2-week induction followed by 1 session per week).

Does the DPP need to be with the trainee for their whole placement?

The DPP is not required to directly supervise the trainee for the entirety of their prescribing rotation. They can delegate to other appropriately qualified members of the healthcare team but should ensure that appropriate clinical supervision is always in place from an appropriate supervisor, and that the Trainee Pharmacist is undertaking a suitable range of activities to develop and demonstrate their prescribing capability.

Does a pharmacist have to be involved in the supervision of the trainee?

As above the DPP does not need to be a pharmacist. Whilst there is no specific requirement to have a pharmacist involved in the supervision of the prescribing rotation, it would be beneficial to allow the trainee to work alongside a pharmacist for a portion of their time. It would also be beneficial for the DPP to have some experience of working with pharmacists.

Where can I find out more?

For more information, please see our [Implementing the Foundation Pharmacist Training Year 2025/26](#) webpage. This contains additional information about access to prescribing environments and DPPs, as well as a document detailing [Prescribing Supervision and Assessment in the Foundation Trainee Pharmacist Programme from 2025/26](#).

We are also working to create a list of community pharmacy employers in the NW who are looking to partner with General Practice and PCNs for prescribing rotations which will be shared locally. Support will also be available at a local level to help with programme design.

A survey has been created to collect details of independent prescribers who have DPP experience as well as those who wish to become DPPs, so that students can be matched with DPPs in relevant sectors. [Take the survey](#) or scan the QR code.



Please note, if circumstances change or you wish for your data to be removed from our database at any time, please email nhsgm.pharmacyworkforce@nhs.net

For those interested in becoming a DPP, Health and Education Cooperative have produced an online learning resource. NHS England and ProPharmAce also offer a limited number of fully funded places for prospective DPPs. Further information can be found at the following link <https://cpe.org.uk/our-news/new-educational-supervisor-training-offer-for-community-pharmacy-professionals/>

If you have any queries, please contact: nhsgm.pharmacyworkforce@nhs.net