

Pharmacy Technician Fact Sheet

What is a Pharmacy Technician?

Pharmacy technicians are senior members of the pharmacy team who manage and prepare the supply of medicines and give advice to patients and customers. Pharmacy technicians complement the work of clinical pharmacists through the utilisation of their technical skillset. They carry out some similar tasks as a pharmacist, working directly with patients and other healthcare professionals. Their deployment within primary care settings allows the application of their acquired pharmaceutical knowledge in tasks such as audits, discharge management, prescription issuing, and where appropriate, informing patients and other members of the PCN workforce. Work is often under the direction of clinical pharmacists, and this benefit is often realised through the creation of a PCN pharmacy team.

What do Pharmacy Technicians do?

- Taking in and handing out prescriptions
- Dispensing prescriptions
- Using computer systems to generate stock lists and labels
- Ordering items
- Receiving, loading, unloading deliveries
- Delivering medicines to other parts of a hospital or health centre
- Selling over-the-counter medicines
- Answering customers questions face to face or by phone
- Pre-packing, assembling and labelling medicines
- Preparing medicines
- Referring problems or queries to the pharmacist

How do Pharmacy Technicians fit into the NHS Workforce?

Pharmacy technicians can practise, provide advice on medicines and review patients medicine history independently. Pharmacy technicians play an important role, complementing clinical pharmacists, community pharmacists and other members of the PCN multi-disciplinary team. Pharmacy technicians are different to clinical pharmacists as they are not able to prescribe or make clinical decisions, instead working under supervision to ensure effective and efficient use of medicines.

How can they help pharmacists/ the system?

Pharmacy technicians increase the numbers of the Primary Care workforce and increase access to quality care for patients. They act in an enabling role, helping to reduce the healthcare team's workload. They bring new talent to the NHS and add to the skill mix within the teams.

What training and qualifications do Pharmacy technicians have?

Pharmacy technicians already hold a BTEC National Diploma in pharmaceutical science/ NVQ/SVQ Level 3 in Pharmacy Services/ National Certificate in pharmaceutical science to be registered with the general pharmaceutical council to apply for roles in Primary Care. To become a pharmacy technician, students take a 2-year training programme combining practical work experience with study, either at college or by distance learning covering courses; human physiology, disease management, actions and uses of medicine pharmacy manufacturing, pharmacy law. Registered pharmacy technicians must keep their skills and knowledge up to date with annual continuing professional development.

The new initial education and training standards for pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians were published in 2017 and the Pharmacy Integration Fund (PhIF) are currently funding a pilot programme which includes training rotations in general practice.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship routes to becoming a pharmacy technician are now the main route of entry, more information of the apprenticeship can be found [here](#).

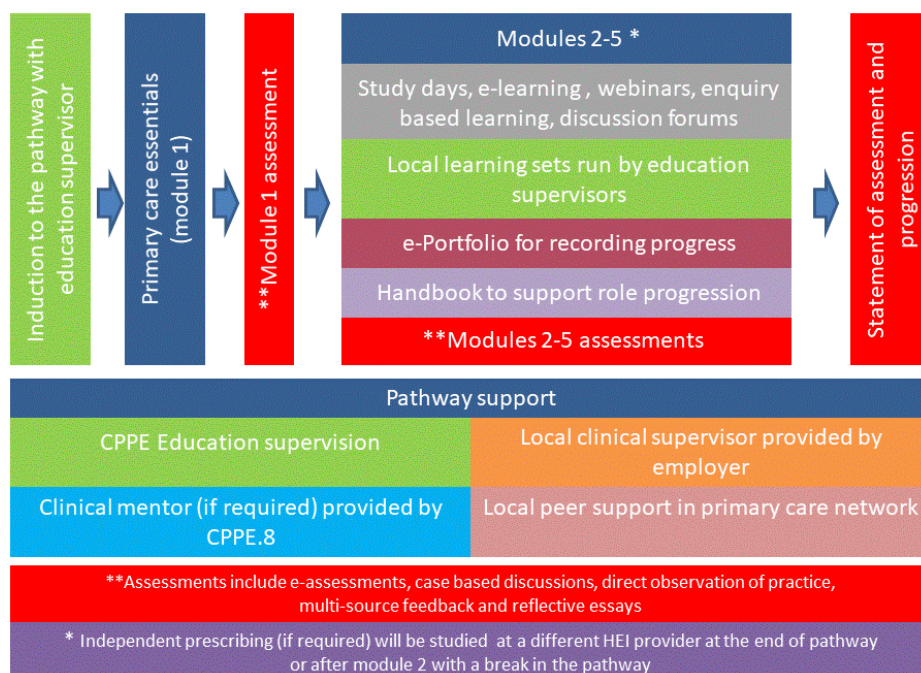
Do pharmacy technicians specialise?

Pharmacy technicians, especially in the hospital sector can specialise in certain areas such as oncology, diabetes, clinical trials etc.

PCPEP (Primary Care Pharmacy Education Pathway)

CPPE is commissioned by Health Education England to deliver training to pharmacy professionals working in Primary Care as part of the Primary Care Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service (DES). The Primary Care pharmacy education pathway has been developed to align the education requirements of the pharmacists and pharmacy technicians with the NHS Long Term Plan and the primary care Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service.

The 18-month pathway builds on the success of the clinical pharmacists in general practice education and the medicines optimisation in care homes pathways and will equip pharmacists and pharmacy technicians with the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience to work in various patient-facing roles in primary care networks as part of a multidisciplinary team. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians will be able to access a range of different study



methods to suit different learning styles, a continuous assessment process and support from supervisors and peers.

Pharmacy professionals who are already enrolled on the Clinical pharmacists in general practice education or the medicines optimisation in care homes pathway will continue with this, but any new applicants employed through the primary care Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service will join the primary care pharmacy education pathway. Pharmacists unable to access PCPEP can access an extensive range of relevant training packages free of charge through the Centre for Postgraduate Pharmacy Education (CPPE).

Source: HEE Pharmacy Team

Funding and ARRS

The ARRS entitles PCNs to access funding to support recruitment across different roles, one being pharmacy technicians. The ARRS is an NHSE scheme and is about recruitment targets and the salary costs for these roles. All roles included in the ARRS are 100% funded. While the 26,000 can essentially be made up of any professions. From April 2020, the pharmacy technician role has been reimbursed at 100% of actual salary plus defined on costs, up to the maximum reimbursable amount of £35,389 over 12 months. It is important to note that there is a limit on numbers eligible for reimbursement, this limit is one individual pharmacy technician per PCN where the PCN's patients number 99,999 or less. Or two individual pharmacy technicians per PCN where the PCN's patient numbers 100,000 or over.

Career Development

Once qualified, many pharmacy technicians join the [Association of Pharmacy Technicians \(APTUK\)](#). The APTUK runs courses, conferences, and seminars where pharmacy technicians can exchange ideas and update their skills. Experienced pharmacy technicians can go on to study to become a pharmacist.

Many pharmacy technicians are extending their roles to work with pharmacists (and other healthcare staff) in helping patients to manage their medicines. These specialist roles involve checking and recording the medication that patients should be taking, ensuring sufficient supplies, and counselling patients to understand how to use their medicines safely on the hospital wards, and when they return home. They can also take additional training and assessment to allow them to perform the final accuracy check of prescriptions before being issued to the patient. In hospital and industry pharmacy technicians manage the technical aspects of dispensing services and manufacturing medicines.

Links to further information

[HEE website](#)

[New roles in Primary Care](#)

[A guide for GPs](#)

[Primary Care Network - Hub](#)