



Briefing on Future Plans for the Pharmacy Workforce

This briefing is about the work NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) is doing nationally with Health Education England (HEE) to develop a new People Plan which ensures the NHS has the right people to fulfil the roles needed to deliver the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

The NHS Long Term Plan and the pharmacy workforce

1. The publication of the NHS Long Term Plan represents an exciting opportunity for the pharmacy workforce. It provides opportunities for pharmacy professionals to play an integral role in the delivery of new models of care, disease prevention and improving patient outcomes. We know from practical experience, the positive impact of pharmacy professionals on patient care as part of multidisciplinary teams in hospitals, care homes, urgent and emergency care, primary care and in the community.
2. Now thousands more clinical pharmacy professionals will be employed in primary care networks (PCNs) over the next five years as part of GP contract arrangements in order to deliver NHS Long Term Plan commitments. This is a significant opportunity for pharmacy and a game-changer which will revolutionise the care offered to people in local communities across England, setting up new community multidisciplinary teams, and dissolving the divide between primary and community health services to create an integrated service for patients.
3. PCNs are a hugely important development; and they are being set up, across the NHS, by July 2019. Each will have a clinical director, whose role will be to engage upwards with the area's integrated care system (ICS) as well as to work collaboratively across the professions and organisations in the network, including pharmacy teams in hospitals, mental health and community pharmacy. Some PCNs already intend to appoint pharmacists as clinical directors.
4. The NHS Long Term Plan sets out how patients and the public will increasingly rely on clinical care provided by pharmacy professionals across all healthcare sectors:
 - Clinical pharmacist prescribers will be a central part of multi-professional teams across PCNs. It is intended that pharmacy technicians will also support this new part of the primary care workforce.
 - Community pharmacy teams will deliver consistent, high-quality care of patients with minor illnesses and support the public to live healthier lives.
 - Hospital pharmacists will continue to be part of specialist teams but will extend their practice into primary care, including providing consultant pharmacist support.
5. Medicines safety will be improved, wastage reduced, and medicines optimised through structured medication reviews led by clinical pharmacists. Clinical

pharmacists in all sectors will increase their activity in clinical research into new and existing medicines and professional interventions.

Advancing Pharmacy Education and Training Review

6. The challenge now is ensuring sustainability and consistency across the country for services we know have demonstrable impact, whilst ensuring workforce supply and development, so we have pharmacy professionals where they are needed with the right skills and support.
7. This means we need a model of education and training that delivers the right pharmacy workforce. A workforce that can adapt to the increasingly complex health and care system, and respond to technological and data advances and changing patient needs.
8. To ensure we have the model right, HEE has carried out a review of the current model of education and training for the pharmacy workforce. As part of the review, HEE worked with partners to consider:
 - The initial education and training pathway for pharmacists and how this could be delivered differently.
 - Foundation training across primary, community and secondary care for clinical pharmacists and how this could be standardised to build on the initial education and training and to meet the future requirements of service.
 - A review of the training of pharmacy technicians to ensure they are competent and confident to advance their practice across primary, secondary and community settings.
9. The Advancing Pharmacy Education and Training Report will include a range of recommendations based on an analysis of existing evidence and reflecting best practice across the career stages. The review process also helped to provide valuable evidence for the development of the People Plan.

The People Plan

10. The [interim People Plan](#) sets out the first steps, including funding and priorities, for 2019/20. A full People Plan will follow the interim plan, translating the national vision into detailed, costed action plans, alongside a detailed implementation plan for the NHS Long Term Plan as a whole. The full plan will follow the government's next Spending Review when the total investment available for education and training and for digital and capital transformation is due to be confirmed.
11. The key themes in the interim plan include making the NHS the best place to work, improving leadership and culture, resolving nursing workforce issues, the future clinical workforce, the role of technology and new roles in the NHS.
12. The interim plan has been developed by the National Workforce Steering Group, chaired by Baroness Dido Harding, which had five working groups. The Pharmacy Sub-Group, chaired by Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Keith Ridge, was one of several professional sub-groups reporting into the Future Clinical Workforce Working Group.

13. The sub-group comprised senior pharmacy and policy leads from the Department of Health and Social Care, NHSE&I, and HEE. A vital process of national engagement was carried out through a Partners' Forum, which met three times from February to April 2019, and which included representatives from national organisations including academia, pharmacy professional and trade bodies, NHS provider bodies and pharmacy regulators.

Vision for the pharmacy workforce

14. The interim People Plan sets out how NHSE&I will introduce new approaches to cross-sector pre-registration and postgraduate clinical training pathways for pharmacy professionals to assure high quality care. These will be underpinned by establishing a common foundation programme for all newly registered pharmacists. It is likely that a professional framework for pharmacy technicians will be developed.
15. NHSE&I will also work with the General Pharmaceutical Council to reform undergraduate and pre-registration training to align with this vision.
16. New training may also be developed to support community pharmacy teams to deliver consistent, high-quality care for patients with minor illnesses.
17. Consistent delivery of these goals throughout the NHS will require clinical and professional leadership across the health and care system. Appointment of senior and experienced NHS pharmacists as clinical directors of pharmacy and medicines in each integrated care system is likely to be an important part of the clinical and professional leadership system and NHSE&I will pilot and evaluate these roles during 2019/20 to develop a sustainable approach.
18. Given the opportunities described in the NHS Long Term Plan, NHSE&I intends to strengthen the image and reputation of pharmacy teams to attract a larger and wider pool of people to the future pharmacy workforce.

Next steps

19. NHSE&I will develop a system wide board to oversee the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan pharmacy workforce plans, to enable a focus on the key activities, and ensure engagement with stakeholders in order to deliver the broader aspirations within the People Plan.