

Transcript

Elspeth Boxall

Hello and welcome to the next in our series of NES Pharmacy podcasts, discussing the changes in the FTY programme for 25/26. Today we're gonna focus on the Period of Learning in Practice, and we have joining us from the NES Prescribing and Clinical skills team, Ailsa MacDonald, who's the Principal Lead for that team and Eleanor Payton, who's one of the Senior Educators. So welcome Ailsa and Eleanor. Thank you very much for joining us today. So, I think, first of all, I think it'd be useful if we can explain a bit more about how the reformed Foundation Training Year looks. Um, I'll go to you first, Ailsa, to explain a bit about that, if that's okay.

Ailsa MacDonald

Thanks Elspeth. Yeah, the reformed Pharmacist Foundation Training Year has many familiar components from the previous years. So, trainee pharmacists still must work aga... out towards the GPhC, common registration assessment and there's the collation of a portfolio which is signed off by their supervisors against the GPhC initial education and training learning outcomes and these are now integrating prescribing. So, in some instances, the emphasis on collating evidence and submitting that up into the portfolio may be more than some supervisors and trainee pharmacists have experienced previously.

But as ever, NES will provide training days to help the trainees prepare for the registration assessment and for their future pharmacist role. Um, however, most learning and opportunities to demonstrate that they are meeting the expected learning outcome standards will come through from the workplace. So, the workplace learning is really important, and it will include the prescribing element which will consist of the period of learning in practice, and it aims to develop the kinda structures, the skills, the techniques and the behaviours that trainee pharmacists will need to be future prescribers upon qualification.

Elspeth Boxall

That's great Ailsa, thanks very much. I think you're right. It's important to know that many elements of the, the training year are gonna be the same. Um, but obviously the big change is the Period of Learning in Practice or PLP, so that's probably where most of the questions are gonna come. Um, so going to yourself, Eleanor, can you explain what the key components of the Period of Learning in Practice are?

Eleanor Paton

Yeah, sure. So, the Period of Learning in Practice is that opportunity for the trainee pharmacist to evidence their competence against the 19 prescribing related learning outcomes. So, these are outcomes that were agreed through stakeholder group discussions as part of NES's preparation for the changes to the FTY programme. The PLP can start sometime between week one and week twenty-six of the training year based on the individual supervision arrangements and the PLP must dedicate a minimum of 90

hours to developing prescribing knowledge, skills and behaviours as part of direct provision of patient care.

PLP can be opportunistic interactions, or it can be planned periods of time, and it's anticipated that in the early stages of PLP, trainee pharmacists will be under close supervision or perhaps observing practice of experienced clinicians. Trainee pharmacists should build towards being more autonomous and more autonomous working during the training year at a pace that's appropriate to them until eventually they're in a place to demonstrate that they're meeting the learning outcome standards.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, thank you Eleanor, that's, that's really interesting and I think obviously important to emphasise that everyone's period of PLP will probably look a bit different depending on themselves, depending on their circumstances. So, I think that's really important to highlight. So, thank you. Um, I think we'll go back to yourself, Ailsa now. Um, what are the main objectives of the period of learning in practice and how do you think they contribute to the overall development of a pharmacist really?

Ailsa MacDonald

Yeah, absolutely. So, I guess we're looking at that, those underpinning skills and behaviours that are going to stand them in good stead with prescribing as they kinda go on into their future careers. So, in essence, the PLP should be focusing on developing primarily their consultation skills and that's gonna include structured history taking, shared decision-making approaches and the ability to identify and address any health literacy considerations for those that aim they're, caring for.

And then secondly, we've got our physical assessment skills, um, which will be supported early on in the kind of NES formal training days, um, with some refresher training, so building on what they've learned um, while they've been undergraduates and then we've got interpretation of investigations and procedures and flowing into that we've got what's both the physical assessment skills and these, um, investigation and procedures, how does that inform their clinical decision making?

So, taking those figures and then assessing individual's risks and benefits for different treatment options that could be possible. And then thinking about appropriate safety netting both from an advice perspective to the patients and about instigating any monitoring of requirements or follow up. And part of that will include clear and effective communication with the wider multidisciplinary team and kinda building an understanding of their role within that to deliver that kinda safe, effective patient care.

And finally, there's the trying to get the trainee pharmacists to recognise their own limits of their practice. So, when is it appropriate for them to treat somebody and when is it more appropriate for them to refer on to another healthcare professional? And that's really gonna be key for them going forward, being safe and autonomous prescribers. And that's probably going to come through developing reflective practice. So, reflecting on those experiences and opportunities that they're gaining through their period of learning in practice and having those good feedback discussions with their supervisors. So those

regular conversations with their trainees that the supervisors can prompt that kinda self-reflection on their treatment choices, um, on alternatives and whether they had considered them all or they may or not have considered some and just kind of reflecting on that, I'd also say that a part of the PLP, it's really important that the trainee pharmacist spends time with a range of prescribers and ideally from various healthcare professions and that's just so that they can gain different perspectives, um, and they can draw upon the differing strengths of individual kind of healthcare professions to help shape their own future practice.

And then by the end then hopefully the trainee pharmacists should have embedded the key prescribing capabilities so that they're able to apply that, eh their knowledge and their prescribers context as it evolves in future that can enable to adapt and, and apply what they've learned in new situations.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, I think, um, there's a lot of important points there, Ailsa, and I guess, um, you know, you've really highlighted that the supervisors are key to, to getting the trainees to reflect on what they're doing and make sure that they are, you know, safety netting and not for the patients and for themselves and I think that maybe takes us to the next point, you know, just to how key the supervisors are. And we maybe need to just explain quite clearly what the different roles are for the supervisors. 'cause obviously we have the DS and the DPP role. So, during the period of learning in practice, maybe Eleanor, can you explain a bit about how they would support the trainees?

Eleanor Paton

Yeah, I'll maybe just start with the DPP role, if that's okay. Um, so the DPP should be supporting the trainee pharmacist to plan and to shape their PLP. Um, at times throughout that PLP, the DPP should then be undertaking those workplace-based assessments, um, known as the supervised learning events or SLEs that some people will be familiar with already. And that's just as a means of monitoring the training pharmacist's progress.

So DPPs are expected then to engage in feedback with their trainees on the progress, um, towards those describing related learning outcomes, identifying what the further learning gaps are, what needs to be addressed, and just in a similar way, um, to what the designated supervisor already would do for, um, the original learning outcomes and for the remainder of them. The DPPs don't need to spend the full 90 hours with the trainee pharmacist at all. Um, that, that's not something that's stipulated and I think Ailsa has mentioned the, um, range of collaborators in the PLP being important. Um, the DPP doesn't also have to organise all the learning opportunities.

However, we do want the DPPs to think about facilitating opportunities, maybe thinking about their own professional networks and considering where other professionals might be better placed to, um, support the trainee pharmacist. So just encouraging that collaboration, especially in areas where the DPP feels they're at a limit of their own competence. So, it's important for them to be reflecting as well, um, on, on their kind of competence and capability and then feedback from these other collaborators ensures

that you get a really holistic overview of the trainee pharmacist's performance if you're seeing it from, um, some other perspectives as well. And then thinking about the designated supervisors.

So, it is the DS responsibility for overseeing the trainee pharmacist progress across all of the learning outcomes. So, they may observe the trainee demonstrating aspects of prescribing related outcomes, for example, around their consultation skills and the DS and the DPP need to work together to try and find ways to communicate effectively throughout the training year regarding the trainee pharmacist's progress. And this will be really important in the lead-up to key appraisal points throughout the year and at the final sign-off where the DPP will be required to give the DS an update on the trainee pharmacist's progress across those prescribing-related learning outcomes and to complete the sign off of these.

Um, and as mentioned earlier, having things like the regular case discussions, maybe thinking about contextual factors that could be encountered in the workplace will prompt the trainee reflections, um, on their experiences and get them to take some learning from that. Um, and that's another kinda key way that supervisors can be involved in supporting their trainees.

Elsbeth Boxall

Thanks, Eleanor. That's excellent. I think that will give people maybe a bit of a clearer idea of the, the two different roles and I guess to expand on that, um, there's probably gonna be lots of different scenarios in different workplaces of how supervision is set up and could you maybe give some examples of the types of supervision arrangements that could be in place? For example, I'm thinking maybe about modular programmes and how people are gonna work that.

Eleanor Paton

Yeah, so a trainee pharmacist on the full learning outcome pathway will require someone to act as the DS, the designated supervisor, and the DPP, but there are a few different arrangements, you're right, that can be, um, put in place. So, we know from supervisor declarations that there are some pharmacists who are eligible to take on both DS and DPP role to support their trainee pharmacists and they want to do so. And when the DS and the DPP role is undertaken by the same person, that's when it's really important to work with those collaborators to support the PLP.

One of those collaborators then needs to take on a role called the second signatory role, and that's as part of the GPhC requirements. And these second signatories provide that holistic overview of the trainee pharmacist's progress at appraisal points and final sign off, but they don't have the same administrative requirements as a DPP or a DS role.

But then there'll be the scenarios where someone doesn't meet the requirements to be a DPP or they don't want to, or they're unable to undertake that aspect of their role. So, they can still act as a DS alone and in that case, the trainee pharmacist would require a separate DPP. I suppose, regardless of what the approach is, the DS needs to ensure that they can spend sufficient time with their trainee pharmacist at the training site.

Um, I know we've mentioned earlier that PLP can start from the kinda first week up until week 26th of the training year. Um, so within that, the trainee pharmacist has to have met with their DPP at least just even have made a plan of what that PLP will look like. But then we've got arrangements for things like split training posts as well to consider.

So, in a split training post, a separate DS is required to be in place for each block of training in a sector which lasts for 13 weeks or more in duration. So, there could be a separate DPP or that could mean that one of the DS's, um, for one of the blocks could take on the joint DS/DPP role if they were appropriately qualified. PLP time can still work across the full 52 weeks of the training. It's not restricted to a particular sector as long as that initial contact is made. Even if a DPP in a sector, um, is later on in the year, some of that PLP can then start prior to them working alongside each other and gives the trainee an opportunity to work with other collaborators.

So, we know split and modular programmes, um, offer additional flexibility in terms of how this supervision is managed and the NES FTY team are really happy to kinda have individual conversations about what might be best for individual training sites. That's excellent, Eleanor. It's a really clear explanation and really good to know that the, the NES team are there to support and, and talk through, um, different, different supervision arrangements that might, um, come up over the years.

Elsbeth Boxall

So that's absolutely brilliant. Thank you. Um, so again, um, Ailsa, I think we'll maybe just have a, uh, go back to yourself and think about the assessments now. So what type of assessments are conducted during the period of learning in practice just to.... and how do those ensure that the trainees are actually meeting the required learning outcomes? Yep. So, all of the, or almost all of the, um, learning outcomes for the GPhC are uh, at the doing kind of level. So really, we're wanting the trainee pharmacists demonstrating that they are doing these skills and behaviours so that they can demonstrate they're meeting the learning outcomes.

So, they need to be involved in providing direct patient care and that can either be face-to-face, um, or it could be remotely through telephone consultations or possibly video consultations. But because it's about doing, therefore, the PLP really needs to be about observation and feedback on how they're developing these underpinning prescribing skills and behaviours and because that feedback then it's really primarily formative, you're wanting them to kind of support them in how do they continually improve and how are they taking their next steps, and that comes through regular use of SLEs, kinda to help that demonstrate and kinda formalise that feedback.

So, we are hoping at NES that SLEs are becoming more familiar now that they're kinda widely used in the Post Registration Foundation programme and they're starting to be used in the core advanced curricula as well. Um, and they are really helpful at framing feedback to trainees on specific aspects of their skills and behaviours. And as we've mentioned before, they're actually really good at kinda prompting that reflection not only on the event itself, but then also how can the trainee address, um, any identified learning

needs, um, or potentially adapt their practice if they come across similar uh, situations in the future.

So, it goes back to that point we were making about enabling the, eh trainees to really build in that reflection so that they're recognising their limits of practice. So, of the, um, the tool types SLE types, then there's um, direct observation tools and there's indirect observation tools. Um, so there's, of the two direct observation tools, the first is called a Mini-CEX, um, which is really effective in providing feedback on the consultation skills, so the history taken and the shared decision making and then the second of those direct observation tools is about, um, procedural skills.

So, it's got called DOPs for short. Um, and that can be used for physical assessment and clinical assessments and thinking about how these inform or performing those skills, uh, informs decision-making in specific patient cases. There's also, as I mentioned, the indirect observation. So that does not involve kind of direct or say observation at a point in time, but rather it allows, um, supervisors to explore, um, the learning at a point after that. So, the main one for that is Case-Based Discussions and that can challenge trainee pharmacists' clinical reasoning.

So, it's about thinking about what was their history taking and their assessments and that interpretation of investigations or the procedures and how did all of them inform that decision making process in terms of making treatment choices, in terms of plan follow up, monitoring and safety netting. So that would be the kind of... the ones we would kinda meet the focus on. But there are another couple of SLE tools that we hope to be able to roll out during the year. One of them would be an ACAT and that allows for combined observations of trainee pharmacists for several patients.

So, we think that this may be useful when a trainee spends an extended amount of time with one workplace collaborator. Um, and another is a case presentation. So, it's quite similar to the case-based discussions though it's used when presenting to a group rather than having those individual conversations with a supervisor and it's just to highlight that NES will integrate the case presentation into the formal training programme. Um, but it may also be used in workplace where there are opportunities to present cases to peers. I appreciate that's quite a lot of different tool types and it could be quite confusing.

So, NES have produced a document that suggests what SLE types may fit best with particular, um, initial education and training learning outcomes. So that's available on the, the TURAS IET communications page and it will definitely be highlighted and shared as part of the supervisor training that where people have to come on as well.

So just thinking bit more about that, um, where, know we've been speaking about Supervised Learning Events there, but if that's not used to evidence the period of learning in practice, then we would expect some feedback, what we have known as a 'feedback ticket' to be sent to the collaborator that the trainee has spent time with and then that would be a, a kind of other way of getting feedback from the collaborators. What we would see is if, and only if, there are issues with receiving ticketed feedback or supervised learning events from collaborators, then any resulting reflective conversations with their

DPP on their learning from that period of learning in practice opportunity that can potentially be used to corroborate, um, some of the evidence and that would be by using a supervisor generic meeting form. So it may be that the trainee chooses, um, these, uh, generic meeting forms to record the reflections as part of their PLP time too, um, just on what they've learned and how that allows them that corroboration.

Elspeth Boxall

Yeah. Yeah, that's great Ailsa. So that's really good just to have a run through of all the different, um, ways that assessments can be carried out, but also hugely helpful to know that there's a reference document on TURAS pages as well that people can refer to. That's, that's incredibly helpful. So, thank you.

Ailsa MacDonald

I think there's maybe one more thing is just that we're trying to be as flexible as possible, so it may be a bit overwhelming, there's lots of different types, but we're hoping that it, it becomes over time you can say, oh, well yeah, that's, that's a good type of form to get feedback in that we know that if somebody's, um, just at the start of their journey, um, and they're observing other, others, then actually maybe it's the ticketed feedback just to say, yeah, they spent time with me and, and this is what we covered is kind of a good way. So, there's plenty of flexibility in the whole thing.

Elspeth Boxall

Yeah, it sounds like you know, that you've, there's options there for everybody, so whatever people feel um, works best in the situation, there should be something that fits. So that's absolutely brilliant. Thank you.

So, um, I guess just to kinda round off, I, I, I think it'd be really useful just maybe to reflect on how, how does this period of learning in practice prepare the trainees for the challenges that they are actually probably gonna face in their future careers as pharmacists prescribers? Um, Eleanor, do you want to come in on that one?

Eleanor Paton

Yeah, sure. So, I mean, as we've been saying, the PLP is all about this developing the range of prescribing capabilities needed as a future prescriber, and this is going come through providing train pharmacists with a structured approach to their consultations and their clinical assessments and just through asking them to really articulate and try and justify their clinical reasoning and prescribing choices. And I think it's really important that trainee pharmacists have repeated practice and feedback in developing these underpinning skills so that they can become competent and confident in themselves.

So not just doing things as a kinda isolated event, you know, being exposed to a variety of contexts and clinical presentations throughout the year is gonna really help them to start to identify key points to be looking out for or to be concerned about so that they know when they may not be the right person to make a decision and maybe when they need to seek help from another healthcare professional.

So again, going back to that point, that Ailsa made, about recognition of your kinda boundaries and limitations. It's also a great opportunity to build relationships with the wider healthcare professional team. And that might come around from asking some people to undertake an SLE. Um, and this obviously gives a bit of a firm footing for building those kind of relationships in the future, um, when they go out as a newly qualified, um, regardless of, um, where they are, but just, you know, giving them that confidence to make those relationships, which is so important when they're starting out their prescribing career.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that sounds absolutely fantastic. I dunno if Ailsa, if you've got anything else to add at all, like, sounds like we've summarised most things, but um, yeah, it's...

Ailsa MacDonald

Yeah, I, I would just say that I think this is a kind of huge opportunity, but it also shouldn't be something daunting. You know, these prescribing learning outcomes that the a trainee pharmacists have to demonstrate, they've largely been part of what they've been demonstrating anyway, um, it's still the underlying skills. So, it's just perhaps taking it to that next level of, um, integrating the prescribing, but the clinical thinking behind it, etc, is the same as what pharmacists have always been doing. So hopefully it won't seem too daunting for them or the supervisors.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, I think that that's absolutely correct and it just, it sounds like, you know, consolidating everything the, the way you've described, it's just gonna give the trainees a huge number of opportunities and... a very positive for the skills that they're gonna come out with at the end of the year. So, it sounds hugely positive and thank you very much to both yourself, Ailsa and Eleanor, for taking the time to so comprehensively explain all that. It's just hugely helpful.

Um, and I think it's also worth - just to reiterate - that if people do still have questions, um, that we still have the question and answer page open on TURAS, you can submit a question and we're gonna do a Q and A podcast, um, in a few weeks, so we will hopefully be answering most of those questions then, but continue to, please, to put in questions if you have any, and the team will, will help answer those. Um, and just also to remind people about the resources that Ailsa referred to on the, the TURAS page, not only, um, helping you with the assessments, but all aspects really of the FTY training year.

There's a lot of resources there. So, thank you very much both of you and thanks to everybody for listening. Well, good luck. Thanks for having us along, Elsbeth. It's been great. Thank you. Yeah, thanks. Bye.