

The First Scottish Training Programme for Dispensing GP Practices in Rural and Island Scotland

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Background

There are over 94 dispensing GP Practices recorded as operating within 13 Health Boards in Scotland, including dispensing GP Practices that work across multiple sites or branch surgeries. Dispensing GP practices provide a vital role in rural and island communities across Scotland, ensuring that patients have access to prescribed medication, even when they live some distance from a Community Pharmacy.

The Scottish Government commissioned National Services Scotland to undertake a Deep Dive¹ into dispensing GP Practices in Scotland. A key recommendation within the published report was the need for a standardised Scotland-focused training programme for staff dispensing medicines in rural & island GP Practices.

Specifically, additional training on how to manage financial processes and reimbursement, including VAT and the impact of changes to the Scottish Drug Tariff on dispensing GP Practices was highlighted as an essential part of the training to be developed.

Why it is needed

Primary care is widely regarded as the cornerstone of healthcare in rural Scotland, serving as the first point of contact for managing the majority of patient needs in rural and island communities².

The role of the rural and island GP is to provide a high quality, safe and effective service. It is an important element of the sustainability of rural and island communities and is highly valued by patients.

Rural and island communities in Scotland continue to face health, economic, and social inequities³. Continued service provision in rural and island communities relies on workforce retention, and accessible, bespoke, in-place rural training is an important factor in enhancing the sustainability of rural and island healthcare.

National training programme(s) are available for dispensing GP Practices, but do not include the Scottish perspective to dispensing GP training such as the Scottish Drug Tariff, and payment schedules.

Methodology

Following an enquiry from Scottish Government requesting training development for GP Dispensing Practices. The National Centre for Remote and Rural Health and Care established a Working Group that met every eight weeks to oversee the programme development. A training development sub-group was also established that met fortnightly, with representatives from: GP Dispensing Practices, Health Boards, Scottish Government, Rural GP Association of Scotland (RGPAS), Dispensing Doctors' Association (DDA), and Pharmacy colleagues.

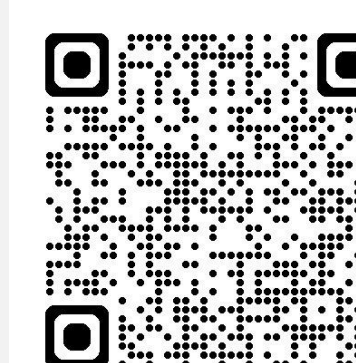
The training development group reviewed and compared available training nationally for comparison and relevance. They contributed to the development of the Scottish Government guidance for Dispensing GP Practices⁴ and developed a training action plan. A training needs analysis was sent to Dispensing Practices to capture the training requirements of staff.

The result is a training package for all staff involved in dispensing medicines. It is the first Scottish perspective of training to support GP Practices, delivering Once for Scotland training that covers:

- Introduction to a Dispensing Practice
- The role of the dispenser (admin) and dispensing checker
- Dispensing Reimbursement
- Example payment schedule
- VAT and Dispensing practices
- Scottish Drug Tariff



Learn more about the Dispensing GP Practices Training Programme at:
<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/87368/>
or scan the QR code below



¹Kerr, L., (2022) A Deep Dive into Dispensing GP Practices in Scotland v4.0, National Services Scotland [Retrieved from: https://www.publications.scot.nhs.uk/files_legacy/sehd/publications/deep_dive_into_dispensing_practices_in_Scotland-v.4.pdf]

²Scottish Government, (2020) Shaping the Future Together: Remote and Rural General Practice Working Group report, Scotland [Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/shaping-future-together-report-remote-rural-general-practice-working-group/documents/>]

³World Health Organization, (2020) Retention of the health workforce in rural and remote areas: a systematic review [Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240013865>]

⁴Scottish Government, (2023) GUIDANCE FOR DISPENSING GENERAL PRACTICES [Retrieved from: <https://www.publications.scot.nhs.uk/files/pca-p-2024-04.pdf>]