

Transcript

Elsbeth Boxall

To the next series of the PSDS Pharmacy Podcasts. In this new series, we're going to hear about the Post Registration programme for pharmacists in Scotland. Today, for our first episode, just to introduce the topic, we're going to be joined by Professor Andrew Sturrock, who's the Director of Pharmacy at PSDS. Roisin Kavanagh, Director of Pharmacy for Ayrshire and Arran, and Matt Barclay, Chief Executive Officer for Community Pharmacy Scotland. So we're going to hear a lot of different perspectives around this.

So I'll go straight to you, Andrew, to outline the programme for us, if you could.

Professor Andrew Sturrock

Thanks so much, Elspeth. So pleasure to be on this podcast today and talk through the new Post Registration programme. So NHS Education for Scotland, as PSD Scotland was formerly known, has worked with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society for some time and we launched a programme aligned to the RPS's foundation curriculum in 2021, and this new programme is a refresh, a replacement for that programme.

So since then, NES, as we were once called, has developed as a new larger organisation called Public Services Delivery Scotland, or PSD Scotland for short and PSD Scotland has been working very closely with the new Royal College of Pharmacy to support their new enhanced curriculum and the new Post Registration programme. So this programme in Scotland is for pharmacists early in their career.

It's now called the Post Registration programme for Pharmacists. And unlike the previous programme, there now isn't the word foundation in the title, and I think that helps with clarity between the different programmes in the pharmacist career pathway. So pre-registration training year became the Foundation Training year, and post-reg foundation has now become the Post Registration programme for pharmacists. So the programme has two pathways. One is a pathway for prescribers, the prescriber pathway, and a non-prescriber pathway.

So we are expanding the audience for this programme in Scotland. However, we know that the majority of newly qualified pharmacists will now enter the register as prescribers following the introduction of prescribing into the initial education and training standards and being incorporated into the Foundation Training year. The programme for a prescriber should take approximately 24 months to complete, after which the assessment is now modular based on the clinical and the non-clinical domains. So domains one and two are the clinical domains, and domains three, four, and five, the non-clinical domains. So just a reminder for everybody that they are leadership and management, education, and research.

So in the managed service across NHS Scotland, we expect all five domains to be completed. However, I think, and Matt might touch on this later in the podcast, we know that many community pharmacists will look to focus, certainly initially, on completing the

clinical domains, so one and two, but may look to progress towards the full completion of the credential and the curriculum through domains three, four and five. So PSD Scotland pharmacy team have developed a structured and supported programme with a whole range of resources, evidence frameworks, Turas Learn pages, educational support sessions, and a library of recordings that will aid pharmacists' learning and development across this programme. Thanks, Elspeth.

Elspeth Boxall

That's brilliant. Thank you very much. That was a really clear outline, and I for one am very glad that you've changed the name because the whole foundation pharmacist thing tripped me up constantly, so that's absolutely brilliant to have that clarified. And it sounds like a really flexible programme that you can dip in and out of, and use, depending on your work environment, you know, you can take different pathways, and that sounds really encouraging.

So I'll go to you, Roisin. Obviously, you're working in the managed sector. How do you feel the new programme for pharmacists, early in their career, will improve patient care in the managed sector?

Roisin Kavanagh

Thanks, Elspeth. So just for people that aren't aware, the managed sector encompasses our hospital settings, so that's acute hospitals, mental health hospitals, other types of hospitals, and also primary care, so our pharmacy teams that work within General Practice.

So in terms of the new programme and what it does for..., not just for our pharmacists in the early stages of their career, but also in terms of improving patient care, I think there's a couple of things. So for me, the most important thing is that assurance that it gives to patients that pharmacists are being trained to a particular standard, and that is that consistent standard across the five domains as Andrew has described.

So that's a really important thing for people to be able to have that confidence in their pharmacist and be able to recognise what they're able to do. I think it also, because it is across the five domains, just gives that well-rounded pharmacist, so that's really important for making sure that they're picking up on those elements around education and training, research, as well as their clinical practice. I think we can never underestimate how important pharmacists are to the wider healthcare team. So that's to our medical staff and our nursing staff and our AHP colleagues in terms of supporting them to be able to do their jobs properly, just in terms of that medicines expertise and that support for all those touch points where medicines are important.

I think the other thing I would say is just the confidence that it can bring to the pharmacists involved in the programme. So being able to get that feedback in terms of how they're practicing and how they're developing is really important as well, and it supports their development by getting that regular feedback and particularly for those that have come onto the register as prescribers, I think it's important that they get that

support in those early stages of being a prescriber because that can be quite a challenging time for people, and it's a new skill that they haven't had to use before. So it's good to be able to give them that framework around them to support them to be able to make sure that they are supporting patient care.

Elsbeth Boxall

Thanks, Roisin. That's really helpful, and you've touched on a lot of different aspects that this programme is going to offer assurance, obviously, for patients, also for the MDT, and really support pharmacists in their development, which is so important.

So, I'll go to you now, Matt, and sort of the same question, really. How do you feel this is going to, this programme for pharmacists early in their career is going to improve patient care in community practice?

Matt Barclay

Yeah. Thanks, Elspeth. Well, I think I'll echo a lot of what Roisin says, to be honest. But we already know that community pharmacy, you know, hosts, I think, the majority of the workforce in Scotland. It's already one of the most accessible parts of the NHS for the people of Scotland.

So people can walk into their local pharmacy without appointment, receive advice, treatment, and support close to home, and community pharmacists are delivering that up and down the country to, you know, hundreds of thousands of patients every week to a, you know, a really high standard. But I think this programme, you know Roisin touched on that it helps pharmacists, I think, build their confidence, competence, and experience at that early stage. And it's needed to ... you know, we've got a clinical ambition, I think, in Community Pharmacy Scotland and the wider profession to deliver, you know, a wider range of clinical services safely and consistently, and I think this programme certainly leans into supporting that.

As more pharmacists develop enhanced clinical skills in prescribing, you know, patients can therefore access care more quickly in their local community, as we're encouraging at the minute. But that would... that can only be improved and enhanced, I think, through, you know, the capability and the confidence of the workforce kind of growing. So I think faster access to advice, treatment, greater continuity of care maybe as well, more opportunities to be managed within their own community. And I think for pharmacy teams, it provides a real structured route to develop their skills and demonstrate their competence.

I think leaning into that bit that Roisin mentioned around assurance for the public around the services that they're getting from the healthcare professionals that deliver the services and for the wider NHS, I think it helps make best use of the pharmacy workforce at a time when we know demand across the system is continuing to grow.

So we, at Community Pharmacy Scotland, obviously think that community pharmacy has a huge role to play, and it needs to change, it needs to evolve to do that. But this

programme serves a significant educational purpose in developing the workforce further to do just that, so that we can expand clinical services and make community pharmacy an even more integral part of local healthcare services, which is one of the policy buzzwords from Scottish government is always local services closer to home.

You can't get much closer than community pharmacy in many instances, you know, at the centre of communities up and down the country, from our rural and island boards to, you know, our areas of high deprivation, etc. So yeah, I think this really does provide an excellent platform to provide that assurance and support practitioners in delivering these services.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's fantastic. Thanks, both Matt and Roisin. I think you've both nicely led on to the next question, touching on very clearly how the pharmacist can be supported to develop through this programme.

So I'll go to you, Andrew, maybe to go into that in a little bit more detail. How do you feel that the programme will affect the development of pharmacists in Scotland? Yeah.

Professor Andrew Sturrock

Thanks, Elspeth, and Matt and Roisin have provided some really good background to where we see this going in both community and the managed service. But of course, we will see pharmacists all join the register, having met the standards which are set by the regulator, the GPhC, for the initial education and training. So that covers undergraduate and foundation training year.

Everyone joins the register with that minimum, I guess level of, minimum standard of, but what we want to look to do is support these pharmacists to develop their skills, and to do so within the workplace as well and it's a very different approach to development compared to perhaps a traditional taught programmes. So lots of opportunities to learn and evidence by what you do in practice.

So this programme fits within that pharmacist career pathway, building on the initial education and training. It's aligned to the Royal College of Pharmacy's new enhanced curriculum as well. So the refresh of this programme, I think it's important to highlight we've had a programme at this stage for a long time in Scotland. It's been very successful, and so many people who've progressed through this programme will now be undertaking roles as educational supervisors, for example and the importance of that has been really clear.

We've done a lot of work listening to the workforce, understanding what's worked and what hasn't worked at this stage, and what's been beneficial to support pharmacist development and we're really keen that this programme, of course, aligns to the enhanced curriculum, but also aligns later in the career pathway as well to the Royal College's advanced and consultant curricula as well, which we're hoping people will then

progress through the enhanced curricula and will start to open portfolios and think about how to continue their development down, down that route.

So all of this is focussed on developing that four pillar working, and the programme designed to provide some structure and some support, but also allow it to be individualised to the place of practice that the pharmacist is working in. So again, when we talk about that four pillar working, we're talking about the clinical elements of pharmacist role, but also the leadership and management, the education, and that research and evaluation capability as well. I think it's important to highlight some ongoing work as well.

So the National Pharmacy Workforce Forum, which is chaired by our Chief Pharmaceutical Officer, Alison Strath, and the Director of Pharmacy in NHS Lothian, Scott Garden, commissioned a key programme of work titled Transforming Roles.

So the first in a series of publications will be published shortly, so not long after this podcast and it will really highlight and support the direction of travel that aligns pharmacist development from that initial education and training space, through enhanced, into advanced, and for some people, down the consultant pharmacist route as well. So the various different curricula and the associated credentialing, which sits alongside that. So I really think that we're starting to get a clearer, I guess, vision and outline of what the career pathway looks like for a newly qualified pharmacist, and they can see the direction, where they're heading, and are able to build on all of the experiences at that undergraduate level, all the way through to the more advanced curricula and advanced roles that pharmacists are undertaking across the service. Thanks, Elspeth.

Elspeth Boxall

That's great, Andrew. Yeah, it's really clear that there's a vision there that aligns with lots of other work that's going on as well, and will be clearer probably for people starting in their career, how they can progress, and I think that is really important.

So again, we've probably touched on this a little bit, but I think we can expand on it. I'll go to yourself, Roisin, first. Can you describe what you see the benefits are for pharmacists completing this programme? If somebody's asking you why they should do it, what would you tell them?

Roisin Kavanagh

So this didn't exist when I was an early careers pharmacist and so as Andrew said, it's been around in different forms for a long time in Scotland. I mean, I'm, yeah, I'm not even going to show my age by telling you how long it is since I remember it coming into being. But I think the main thing is that sort of structured approach to their early careers development, I think is really helpful. You know, it gives them a really good framework to support their learning. It also is really helpful for their supervisors to have, you know, guidelines in terms of what good would look like from an early careers pharmacist and it just helps them along that pathway. And I guess it sets the tone.

As Andrew said, there's a whole career pathway now, and so it's really important that we get in early in terms of that four pillar working. The workplace-based assessment, do you know, the supervised learning events are really important. There are opportunities to reflect on their work, that's really important learning to take them throughout their career and I think just the support that it gives them, the support that's around them to be able to develop from that first day when it's all new, and it can be a little bit, a little bit scary, because you've been taught the theory, but you haven't actually done it in reality, nor have you been the one that's responsible.

So it just kind of supports them through those early stages of feeling maybe a little bit uncertain or maybe a little bit lacking in confidence. It just supports them to develop that and it also then helps them, I think, in terms of thinking about what do they want to do in the future. So they get the opportunity to try out different parts of the system sometimes, different parts of the different specialties and I think that's really helpful for them to just understand, what is it I want to focus on going forward and how might my career develop in the future, which I think is a really good thing and as I said earlier, I think it's really good for our pharmacist prescribers, because this is new for all of us, just in terms of giving them that support early on, so that they are in a safe environment, they're supported to develop their prescribing skills, and that's done in a really safe way, which is important for them and important for patient care as well. Thanks, Elspeth.

Elspeth Boxall

Thanks, Roisin. Yeah, that, that sounds, you know, it does just sound so structured and, yeah, I'm with you, Roisin. It wasn't around when I started either, so I can sympathise.

So it's absolutely brilliant. I think it really will offer people a lot of opportunity going forward and Matt, from your perspective, you know obviously, you actually said the majority of the pharmacy workforce is in community. What benefits do you see for pharmacists in community particularly?

Matt Barclay

Yeah, well, I'm a bit gutted that we're all kind of talking about our age here as well, and where we were when we qualified. Yeah, because it wasn't around when I was a young whippersnapper of a pharmacist either. But I think there is a point there in culture, to be honest, in terms of it's the responsibility of the whole profession to support, you know, not just early pharmacists, but everybody. I think it starts to embed that sense that's coming through from, you know, expectations around all professions of lifelong learning in a structured way, you know, through nationally recognised standards, in this case, through the Royal College and you know course.

So I think it provides that structure, doesn't it, it provides that supported way from moving to having the prescriber qualification, as Roisin was saying, to becoming a confident and experienced prescriber, because it's one thing to prescribe, but it's another thing to develop the judgment, the clinical reasoning, and the experience to use that qualification. I mean, I suppose we all will remember that first day when we were in a pharmacy or in a ward or whatever, and you know, we all became very different

pharmacists just a few years later than we were on that first day, so this is just taking it up in a more formalised way, I suppose, to show that.

Because for the individual pharmacist, it'll provide confidence, professional development and recognising their capabilities through credentialing and Andrew mentioned, actually, and I was quite... I'm going to blow CPS's trumpet a wee bit here because I'm really pleased that some of the feedback that myself and my colleague Adam, in particular, have been feeding into UK and Scottish forums around the flexibility of the credentialing modules, because Andrew did say earlier that maybe the initial focus for people in community pharmacies might be the clinical domains and the other domains as we you know almost test our way with this programme. But I think aspirationally, what we should all be hoping for is that the full credentialing for all pharmacists in time will come, and that'll come with, I suppose...

Because if I'm looking at the employers as well, I think this programme provides a robust framework, as I say, aligned to national standards that can provide them assurance that the pharmacist that they're employing and they have delivering services in their premises are delivering or can deliver to a standard and they have the support within their own workforce to deliver services effectively and develop others, I think, as well, as well as, I suppose, the patient point around that assurance, which we've mentioned before, because there's a number of ... or certainly a few examples in other professions that we need to learn from to say, "This is what we need to embed in professional practice so that we can demonstrate competence, assurance for not just our regulator, but for the general public" and I think, just to finish off, I think the programme would support the evolution of services around prescribing, where we're doing quite well in Scotland, and we seem ahead, but you know, we can't just rest on that and I think that would help develop these services further and develop other clinically focused models of care by ensuring that the pharmacists have the skills, confidence, and evidence of competence to deliver them.

Elsbeth Boxall

Thanks, Matt. That... I mean, I think you've all very clearly outlined the benefits of this programme for patients, early years pharmacists themselves, employers, and indeed other healthcare professionals that we work with.

So I think now looking at a more kind of practical side of it, I'm going to go back to yourself, Andrew. Could you describe, you know, if someone's going to go onto this programme, what is it going to look like for them?

Professor Andrew Sturrock

Yeah, of course, Elspeth and I guess many people will be familiar with the current Post Registration Foundation programme, which includes the access to the independent prescribing training course, which is now removed from the, from the prescriber pathway because, of course, the pharmacists are prescribers on registration.

So it does look different to what it has done previously as a result of that. So there are, of course, a range of outcomes that need to be met, which are detailed within the Royal

College's enhanced curriculum, and we're expecting that it should take, and again, this is probably an average, but it should take up to 24 months to complete. It probably shouldn't take longer than that now that the prescribing element has been removed from the... there's no need to undertake the prescribing course from the universities as part of this. So about 24 months to complete. Some people will work at a different pace to others, and I think that's the beauty of a programme like this as well, that it's designed to support someone around their work-life balance and their individual role and circumstances.

So to help pharmacists on this programme, PSD Scotland have a range of what we call 'activities in practice'. So these are suggestions as to how activities which pharmacists undertake as part of their everyday work can be aligned to help demonstrate completion of those outcomes and again, I think I've mentioned this earlier, but the focus is very much on learning by doing, learning in the workplace and linking to those day-to-day roles which pharmacists are undertaking. So aligning the activities that pharmacists do to practice in their day job makes a lot of sense, and it should be more straightforward for both the pharmacist, their supervisors, their employers to understand the benefits and the expectations around this programme. So we'll of course be doing a lot of work with supervisors and employers as well to make sure that they're fully up to speed with the changes on the programme.

I think what's really important to highlight as well, we know that many of our pharmacists will work in large Health Boards, with dedicated education and training teams, or in large community pharmacy chains as well who have similar structures and of course, the support provided by those teams will be really key to help individuals progress through this programme. But I think, again, it's also important to highlight that many pharmacists, and particularly quite early in their career, can feel quite isolated and that transition from being a student to a foundation trainee to perhaps the responsible pharmacist in a rural island community pharmacy, perhaps, or an independent without that large education and training support can be quite daunting for some people.

So I think that's where PSD Scotland and the team at PSD Scotland have a really important role to provide some of that additional support above and beyond what might be available from the individual employers. So the pharmacists will be supported by members of our team, alongside, of course, their education and training teams. There'll be opportunities for clinical skills training and simulation to help to consolidate that learning, which has already been taking place as part of foundation training and initial education and training. But a whole host of online education sessions, a library of recordings, which again will give people that flexibility in terms of how and when and where they access these education and training resources alongside their other work and life commitments as well.

There'll be a range of milestones to meet and opportunities for the learners and the educational supervisors to review progress through the programme and learners on this programme, again, will receive that active development and learning time. But again, that will be dependent on individual employers as to how that is implemented. But it's a key part of the programme, is to ensure that people have the time and the space in order to

gather evidence and etc, and take part in some of the activities which are offered. So of course, on completion of the portfolio, it will be submitted for assessment by the Royal College. The assessment's now modular in nature, as we've already discussed. So pharmacists will either be able to submit for the full enhanced credential or initially focussed on domains one and two, the clinical domains, and then they may or may not choose to progress onto the full credential assessment following.

So there'll be a lot of resources will be shared over the next few weeks and months as the programme starts and I think its ... its going to be important for us to work with the employers and the supervisors to help them to navigate this transition onto a new programme as well. So we'll be doing that over the next few weeks and months as well, so watch this space, really, as we get ready to launch the programme in the near future. Thanks.

Elsbeth Boxall

Sounds great. Just a great source of support for newly qualified pharmacists and some great resources which people can dip into when it is useful for them. So that sounds really flexible. So, yeah.

So I guess the last question, if someone is listening just now and they want to get involved, what do they do?

Andrew Sturrock

Yeah, of course. So there's information on the PSD Scotland website. We'll make sure we put the links clearly alongside the text around the podcast as well. So look on the PSD Scotland website, programmes for pharmacists early in their career.

There's information on there around registration, and links in order to register on the programme. It's, of course, really important that pharmacists have discussed this with their employer before registering as well and have that named Educational Supervisor when starting the programme.

But I'd encourage anybody who is perhaps struggling to find a supervisor or have been unable to kind of support themselves through that part, please get in touch with the team because we will be able to do as much as we can to help you navigate, navigate all of this.

So I guess there's an email address which everybody can contact as well. So it's still got NES at the start, we need to change that, of course, to PSD Scotland, but it's in the process of transferring across, but nes.pharmacistfp@nhs.scot will go directly to the Post Registration team, who will be able to help support people and again, that's on the webpage as well. So I'd encourage anybody who's got any questions, please get in touch with us. Same goes for any employers who are listening as well, or people who are undertaking the role of Educational Supervisor.

Whenever a new programme is launched, we're obviously really keen that everybody is up to speed with the changes, with the timelines, with the expectations, etc. So please get in

touch with us, and the team will be more than happy to help to navigate that journey onto the programme. Thanks, Elspeth.

Elspeth Boxall

No, thank you all. That's absolutely brilliant. A really clear explanation of how the programme's going to work, I think, and very clear benefits as well that it sounds like it was going to bring to the pharmacy workforce and healthcare in general. So thank you so much for your time, Andrew and Roisin and Matt. Really good to have all your perspectives on this. Really, really helpful. So thank you all very, very much.

Matt Barclay

Thank you.

Roisin Kavanagh

Thank you.

Professor Andrew Sturrock

Thank you. Thanks, Elspeth.