

Pharmacy Technician

Pharmacy technicians are registered professional members of the pharmacy team who prepare and manage the supply of medicines and give advice to patients and customers.

Case study: Richard Chapple

Richard Chapple is Principal Pharmacy Technician for Homecare Services at Royal Papworth Hospital and has been in post since 2013.

Richard worked in the military as a medical logistics specialist, and when the trade transferred to a different regiment he didn't want to transfer, so trained to become a pharmacy technician. As he left the military he saw an advert for the role of homecare pharmacy technician which appealed as it had a lot of logistics, patient care and problem solving, suiting his attributes.

What do pharmacy technicians do?

Richard is responsible for making sure trust homecare patients receive their specialist drugs. There are approximately 2,000 patients over a large geographical area of England and Wales. Some of these are high cost for the following therapy areas:

- Cystic Fibrosis
- Pulmonary Hypertension
- Interstitial Lung Disease
- Immunosuppressant's
- Immunology
- Lung defence
- Antibiotics



What impact do pharmacy technicians have on service?

Better patient care

Patients receiving medication at home are less likely to contract a hospital acquired infection, they also feel safer and more independent which often leads to better outcomes. There is also less travelling to hospital required to collect medication, as most medications from this specialist hospital are not able to be prescribed by the local GP.

Better compliance

Homecare companies do a stock check when arranging patient deliveries and will feed back any excess stock a patient may have, which could highlight a compliance issue. Also patients are more likely to tell the homecare company information about not taking medication correctly rather than the hospital. The homecare company always feed back information gained from patients.

Improved accuracy

All prescriptions are clinically screened before transmission to the homecare company by a specialist pharmacist, which often picks up prescribing errors. The homecare company also screens the prescription.

Once delivery is made and the patient signs for it, a copy of the delivery note is attached to the invoice which will show the homecare team what was delivered and has often shown a discrepancy between what was asked for and what has been delivered, resulting in an investigation.

Cost saving

NHS – All drugs that go through the homecare delivery route are VAT exempt. This means a huge saving for the NHS even after delivery fees are accounted for (a drug costing £2,000 will have a VAT saving of £400 but the delivery could be £50, saving £350). Multiple drugs on the same delivery only incur one drug delivery fee, thus saving even more costs.

Patient – Save time and cost for the patient as they are not travelling to the hospital to collect specialist (non-GP) drugs, often from a great distance (some patients live in Cornwall and Royal Papworth is based in Cambridge).

Richard is particularly pleased in that recently pharmacy technicians have become able to check dispensed prescriptions, which is something that was previously only done by pharmacists.



Expect the unexpected and be prepared to go the extra mile.”

Read more about the role:

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/pharmacy/roles-pharmacy/pharmacy-technician>

Read more about training to become a pharmacy technician:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/medicines-optimisation/training-pharmacy-technicians>