



## Roles in Pharmacy

### Adam Emmott – Pharmacist in the 111 service

Adam Emmott works as an Integrated Urgent Care Pharmacist for Derbyshire Health United (DHU), who provide urgent care and 111 services across Derbyshire and nearby counties. He also works two days a week as a relief pharmacist manager at Well Pharmacy. He earns £20-25 per hour, according to the number of hours worked each week.

Adam (pictured right) liked science at school and enjoyed helping people. This and his experience working in a community pharmacy led him to apply to do a master's degree in pharmacy at Manchester University. There he became more interested in the clinical aspect of the role so decided to do his pre-registration year at Bury Fairfield Hospital, part of Pennine Acute NHS Trust. He wanted to travel after he qualified so worked as a locum in community settings, both beforehand to save money, and then when he returned. This led to a pharmacist manager's job at a Co-op Pharmacy where he stayed for several years, until he had children and wanted a more flexible working life.



Adam has been at DHU for eighteen months and currently works 7.5 hours a week, although he is likely to extend this to 15 hours in the near future.

His role involves working in a call centre where he deals with medical enquiries such as:

- Toxic Ingestions: usually children who have swallowed household products.
- People who have either forgotten to take their medication or have taken it twice.
- Care settings where an individual has been given someone else's medication by mistake.
- Overdoses: these could be accidental or deliberate, and may also raise safeguarding issues, in which case Adam would refer to Social Services.
- Identifying additional problems: a patient rang with a medication query which was quite simple, but Adam then discovered that they were unable to pass urine which was much more serious and got them to go to the Emergency Department.
- Reassuring people that it's safe to go to hospital during the Covid pandemic, when their situation is serious (one positive outcome from Covid is that people seem to have developed better self-care skills rather than dashing off to A+E).
- At the beginning of lockdown Adam received lots of dental queries about paracetamol and other painkiller overdoses, but these have tailed off since dentists have re-opened.

Adam is usually the only pharmacist on duty but there are other people he can ask for advice, such as a nurse advanced clinical practitioner or a doctor. Adam sees his role as supporting and informing a patient's decision-making about medicines by providing them with clear, evidenced-based information.

Supported by DHU and Health Education England, Adam studied Advancing Integrated Urgent Care Practice for Pharmacists at Derby University. This covered:

1. Fundamentals of urgent care - Communication with patients.
2. Developing skills in diagnosing common conditions, history taking, and interpretation of clinical information.
3. Developing leadership and management skills – Quality improvement.

The course lasted a year, finishing in January 2020 and DHU gave him protected learning time which really helped. In Adam's words the course, 'Promoted professional autonomy, developed clinical competence and strengthened my leadership skills'.

His role at DHU means working shifts at a call centre in Derby, although he could also work from the base in Leicester, or from home. There are various rotas with different working options and flexible start times, so he has found it much easier to manage his work-life balance, spend more time with his children and partner, and spend less money on childcare.

## Best bits of the job

The role is very varied so you never know what case will present next, and there are lots of opportunities to develop. Many isolated patients are lonely or scared by Covid so need to talk and Adam often gives people information about the Silver Line – a support service for older people. Patients will often open up more to pharmacists so sometimes Adam identifies that people are struggling and is able to refer them to social services. Similarly, he sometimes identifies where a child is at risk, such as when a parent initially refuses to take the child to the Emergency Department, when Adam has been able to persuade them to take the child. There are circumstances when Adam has had to trigger a safeguarding referral to Social Services because of concerns raised on a call, and although worrying it's good to feel that he has played a part in keeping someone safe.

## Challenges

Some people are upset or rude but that's because they are not in a good place (often that's why they've called) so it's important to acknowledge and appreciate their circumstances.

Overdoses in children can be very distressing but it's important to remain calm and gather information for the ambulance service (in the case an overdose in a school, making sure someone went to meet the ambulance to direct the paramedics to the right place).

It's sometimes difficult to gather all the information needed over the phone, and to begin with Adam found the phone system complicated (such as putting a patient on hold while he spoke to a colleague), but this is getting easier.

Working alone is hard, but there is plenty of support in the role from other colleagues.

## Life outside work

Adam spends a lot of time being outdoors with the family. His children are aged two and five. He also plays the drums and keeps fit by attending boot camp still fitness sessions.

## Career Plans

Adam would like to become an Advanced Clinical Practitioner, and the next step would be to become an Independent Prescriber which he hopes to start in September. He would like to do more face-to-face work in urgent care setting, such as do face-to-face assessments, as he enjoys the flexibility and variety of urgent care.

## Top tips

Don't be put off by out-of-hours working, as it's really flexible for family time. This is a new and unfamiliar role for pharmacists, but there is lots of support from other professionals.