

# Make a difference with a career in pharmacy!

If you are keen to help others, enjoy science and want a career in healthcare, pharmacy could be for you. You need good communication skills to work with the public and patients in a clinical role and as part of a healthcare team.

Click on a character to learn more about their role.



Or use the menu at the bottom of the page to learn about pharmacy in different sectors and settings.



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# Roles in pharmacy: Pharmacist

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As a pharmacist, you combine your expert knowledge of medicines and health to provide care to patients with all types of health conditions.

Pharmacists advise patients on minor ailments, help patients manage long-term conditions and ensure medicines are safe, appropriate and work effectively for the patient.

More and more pharmacists can prescribe medication to patients after careful assessment. They are responsible for adjusting medicines to best support patients manage their health

You supervise pharmacy technicians and pharmacy assistants and work as part of a multidisciplinary team advising health care professionals such as doctors and nurses on the best medicines and care.

### Where will you work?

You might work as part of a healthcare team in a hospital, community pharmacy or general practice. Or you could work in industry, research or a wide variety of other settings.

### Entry Requirements

To practise as a pharmacist you need to study for an accredited Masters degree in Pharmacy (MPharm) at University. After a further one year placement you will be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC).

[> Learn more](#)



Pharmacist

Pharmacy  
Technician

Pharmacy  
support staff



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# Roles in pharmacy: Pharmacy technician

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Pharmacy technicians are key members of the pharmacy and multidisciplinary team who play an integral part in helping patients make the most of their medicines

Pharmacy technicians engage with patients, offering advice and treatment options.

You may be involved in the preparation and supply of medicines, review of medicines or administration of medicines. You might also give advice on treatment options and liaise with other members of the healthcare team.

Many pharmacy technicians are responsible for the final check of dispensed medicines.

#### Where will you work?

Pharmacy technicians work as part of healthcare teams in hospitals, GP surgeries and community pharmacies, but also in prisons, the armed forces and industry.

#### Entry Requirements

To practice as a pharmacy technician, you have to be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC).

To register, you need to have completed a 2 year GPhC approved competency and knowledge based qualification/course whilst working in a pharmacy. This is available as a Level 3 apprenticeship.

[> Learn more](#)



Pharmacist

Pharmacy Technician

Pharmacy support staff



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# Roles in pharmacy: Pharmacy support staff

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Pharmacy support staff work as part of the pharmacy team under the direction of a pharmacist or pharmacy technician and are integral to the delivery of pharmacy services.

Pharmacy support staff roles include pharmacy services assistants, pharmacy porters, delivery drivers and medicines counter assistants. You could assist in ordering stock, selling over-the-counter medicines and responding to patient queries.

You'll be dealing with patients and will need excellent communication skills.

You'll receive training whilst working and be enrolled in a training course working towards a nationally recognised pharmacy services qualification at minimum RQF level 2 or SCQF level 5 in Scotland.

#### Where will you work?

You might work as part of a healthcare team in a hospital or community pharmacy or you could work in a wide variety of other settings.

#### Entry Requirements

There are no set entry requirements to become a pharmacy assistant. Employers usually expect good literacy, numeracy and IT skills. They may ask for GCSEs or equivalent qualifications.

[> Learn more](#)



Pharmacist

Pharmacy  
Technician

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# Where do pharmacy professionals work?

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## Community

Community pharmacy professionals work in the heart of cities, towns and villages. You'll be involved in assessing conditions, dispensing medicines and offering advice to patients and the public. You also play an important role helping to promote health and wellbeing in your community.

You'll also be involved in managing long-term conditions or delivering flu vaccinations. You could manage your own business or work for a larger chain, each with its own rewards and opportunities.

- > [Community pharmacy career info](#)
- > [Julie's story](#)



## Hospital

As a hospital pharmacy professional you are part of a large multidisciplinary team. You will rotate through various clinical specialties such as surgery, the heart (cardiology) or paediatrics (child health) before deciding to specialise in a particular area.

You may prescribe and review medication for patients by making sure patients are not taking too many medicines or are suffering from unnecessary problems. You may attend ward rounds with a team made up of different healthcare professions or even run specialist clinics for patients.

- > [Hospital pharmacy career info](#)
- > [Amy's story](#)
- > [Chloe's story](#)



## General practice (GP surgery)

Pharmacy professionals in general practice might prescribe and review medication for patients with long-term conditions. You can run specialist clinics and help patients manage conditions like asthma and diabetes.

You could be involved in initiatives that encourage healthier lifestyles and support to improve the safety of medications patients take. You could have different levels of contact with patients, for example telephone/video consultations to give advice on medications as well as face to face conversations.

- > [Learn about clinical pharmacists](#)
- > [Steve's story](#)



## Industry

As a pharmacy professional in industry you'll work in companies involved in manufacturing medicines, treatments or devices and technology.

You could be involved in clinical trials, discovery and design of new medicines or developing papers which evaluate the safe and effective use of a medicine. Some pharmacy professionals work in more commercial roles in marketing or sales management.

Industrial pharmacy can be extremely rewarding, often leading to managerial positions and potential for foreign travel.

- > [Read more about Pharmacists in industry](#)

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# Where do pharmacy professionals work?

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## Technical services and clinical trials

Technical services is the part of hospital pharmacy where high-risk or hazardous medications are prepared or processed. Often this involves chemotherapy or Parenteral Nutrition (a specially formulated form of food given through a vein).

Clinical trials involve the trialling of new medicines or existing medicines for a different purpose. You will manage drugs and keep meticulous records according to guidelines and regulations.

- > [Careers info about pharmacy technical services](#)
- > [Read more about pharmacy and clinical trials](#)

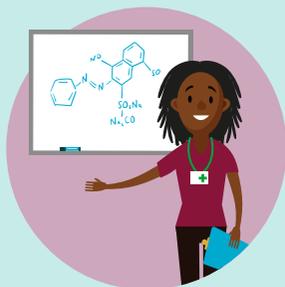


## Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

A CCG is an NHS organisation that buys in hospital and community NHS services for their local population.

As a CCG pharmacy professional you will be involved in making sure patients receive the right medicines based on the most up to date guidelines. You will also be involved in looking after a group of GP surgeries and helping them stay within the budgets they are allocated for prescribing medicines for their patients.

- > [Read more about careers options in primary care](#)
- > [Life in a CCG](#)



## Academia

Academic pharmacy offers a range of possibilities including leading research and delivering innovative teaching. You will have opportunities for leadership roles such as senior university management, or professional engagement such as contributing to national and international pharmacy policy. You will work with students and help them realise their aspirations.

Universities offer an intellectually stimulating and highly creative work environment.

- > [Read more about academic pharmacy](#)



## Procurement

Procurement involves buying medicines before we can give them to patients. This involves working with manufacturers who can make a medicine to meet a specific patient's need, for example a liquid medicine for a patient who cannot swallow tablets.

As a pharmacy professional working in procurement you'll need an understanding of how medicines are made, the law that applies to manufacturing medicines and procurement law all alongside your clinical knowledge.

- > [Read more about pharmacy and procurement](#)

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# Where do pharmacy professionals work?

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> [Read more about mental health and pharmacy](#)

## Mental health

Pharmacy professionals in mental health work closely with patients, as well as doctors, nurses and psychologists to ensure patients receive the ideal medicine to improve their mental well-being. Treatment is often complex, and it is important to consider physical health conditions and what the patient wants when advising on therapy.



> [Careers info for working in a care home](#)

> [Guide to pharmacy in care homes](#)

## Care homes

Pharmacy professionals working in care homes are there to provide services for residents who are not able to care for themselves – a role which many pharmacy professionals find very rewarding.

You would work as part of a team with responsibility for medicines within the care home, ensuring that residents are able to get the most of out their medicines.



## Research

Pharmacy professionals working in research are involved in creating new treatments and evidence.

As well as working in drug discovery and drug delivery, you could conduct research to inform guidelines and best practice.



> [Read about life as a prison pharmacist](#)

## Health and justice

Health and justice settings include prisons, immigration removal centres, young offender institutions and secure children's homes. These sites will usually have a pharmacy that provides medicine, a primary care centre and will offer a range of public health services.

You will deliver patient facing services including prescribing and reviewing medication whilst working with the multidisciplinary team.



> [Read more about remote services](#)

## NHS 111

NHS 111 provides 24/7 care to the public simply by dialling 111. As a pharmacy professional, you will work alongside GPs, paramedics, mental health nurses and more.

You will support patients by sharing expert pharmaceutical knowledge, helping manage their conditions, signposting to other services or providing reassurance through home management advice. There are opportunities to undertake work remotely, at other sites or at home.

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# Opportunities in pharmacy

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## Clinical

Pharmacists can become an Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP). You would complete examinations, interpret tests and diagnose and treat patients with different diseases.

You may choose to become a consultant pharmacist in a specialist area. As an expert in an area, professionals would look to you to provide research, education, leadership and expert clinical practice in this area to drive the profession forward.

- > [A day-in-the-life of a pharmacist ACP](#)
- > [Read more about caring for older people](#)



## Digital transformation and clinical informatics

Pharmacy professionals working in informatics are at the forefront of using data and technology to enhance patient care.

You will work to get the most out of data, technology and gadgets to empower health care professionals to deliver world class health and social care to the public. Your daily activities will range from speaking to patients about their treatments, to designing software, to getting your pharmacy robot to behave itself!

- > [A guide to pharmacy informatics](#)



## Fellowships

Fellowships are a unique opportunity, usually for a fixed period of time, which allow you to develop a range of skills including leadership, strategy and project management. Each fellowship is different with its own benefits, allowing you to learn more in a particular area. There are a range of fellowships on offer to pharmacy professionals including research fellowships, leadership fellowships, digital fellowships, and medicines safety fellowships amongst others.

- > [Read more about pharmacy fellowships](#)



## Education

Some pharmacy professionals may take up specialist education and training roles or become teacher practitioners. This is usually a mixed role consisting of clinical duties alongside teaching.

You can also choose to work in organisations such as universities or national organisations who focus on education of the workforce.

- > [Pharmacy careers in education & training](#)





# Opportunities in pharmacy

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## Leadership and management

There are many leadership and management opportunities for pharmacy professionals. You may aspire to become a superintendent of a community pharmacy or a chief pharmacist of a hospital. Alternatively you may wish to work at a national organisation leading on change or responsible for delivering a programme of work.

- > [A day-in-the-life of a chief pharmacist](#)
- > [Careers advice from a superintendent pharmacist](#)



## Genomics

Genomics is the study of the body's genes and their functions. It helps us better understand health, disease and how people respond to different treatments.

Pharmacy professionals can use this information to personalise choice of medicines for patients. For example, targeted treatments for cancer or predicting risk of serious side effects from medicines.

This is an exciting new area for pharmacy.

- > [Learn more about genomics and pharmacy](#)
- > [NHS guide to genomics](#)
- > [Health Education England genomics guide](#)



## Policy and regulation

Working in policy and regulation will allow you to be directly involved in improving the quality of pharmacy services and making sure that the public are receiving safe and effective pharmacy care.

There are different roles and areas you can work in such as policy and standards, education, inspections and registration - through all of them you will have the opportunity to implement the government priorities and influence change in the pharmacy profession.

- > [Read about inspecting pharmacies for the GPHC](#)



## Public health

Public health is embedded throughout all the roles of a pharmacy professional. Pharmacy professionals working in public health focus on improving the health of the population through the best use of medicines.

You may choose to develop your knowledge and skills to be a public health practitioner or specialise to become a public health consultant. Some pharmacists also contribute to global health through tackling antimicrobial resistance.

- > [Read more about the work of a public health pharmacist](#)
- > [Case study about pharmacists working in global health](#)

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