

Community Pharmacist factsheet

What is a Community Pharmacist?

Community pharmacists are experts in medicine. They are an essential part of the wider health and care system and they work on the front line of health care supporting patients and their families.

Pharmacists are responsible for the medicines supplied to a patient. They advise patients about how they can get the most from their medications and how they can manage illnesses.

They also provide range of clinical service like vaccinations, contraception services and blood pressure monitoring.

What does a community pharmacist do?

The role of a community pharmacist is really varied – so it is difficult to define a “typical day”. However, some of the day-to-day jobs of a pharmacist might include:

- Making sure that patients know how to use or take their medicines safely (i.e. how much and how often to take medicine) and how to get the maximum benefit from their medicines.
- Ensuring that any new medicines a patient is prescribed are safe to use with other medications the patient might also be taking.
- Advising on the most effective treatments for conditions.
- Helping patients manage long term conditions such as asthma, blood pressure and diabetes.
- Recommending changes to prescriptions and giving advice on prescribing. Some pharmacists also prescribe medicines – in the future all newly qualified pharmacists will be able to prescribe medicine.
- Providing information about potential side effects of medicines.
- Monitoring the effects of new treatments.
- Providing services such as blood pressure testing and monitoring and contraception.
- Delivering vaccinations this includes flu vaccinations and travel vaccinations as well as the covid vaccine – which pharmacists have played a key role in delivering.

From 2021 the curriculum for pharmacists is changing. These changes will enable all pharmacists to qualify as prescribers. This exciting change means they will be able to prescribe medicines to patients – and as a result, have an even bigger role in supporting their patients and communities.

How do I become a community pharmacist?

Pharmacists working in England, Scotland and Wales must register with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). There are a number of steps you must take before you can register as a pharmacist:

- The first step is completing a pharmacy degree from an accredited university. The degree takes four year and is a science-based course
- In your fifth year you will need to complete a year of (paid!) training. This year, known as the foundation training year (it was previously called the pre-registration trainee year) will allow you to build your skills and confidence in the workplace.
- The next step is passing the GPhC Registration Assessment.

- Finally, you must meet the fitness to practice requirements for registration as a pharmacist. This means you have the skills, knowledge, character and health necessary to do your job safely.

What are the entry requirements to studying pharmacy?

The entry requirements for a [GPhC-accredited MPharm degree](#) vary between universities. However, you might be expected to have A-B grade A-levels in chemistry and two further A-levels, at least one in biology, mathematics, or physics. Specific details can be found on each University's website."

The entry requirements are set by the individual university offering the MPharm degree. Universities may accept equivalent qualifications, other than A-levels, including qualifications gained outside of the UK. Universities may set other entry requirements for the course.

Five great reasons to become a community pharmacist!

1. I want to help people to get well and work directly with patients
2. I can enjoy a wide range of career opportunities
3. I want to be an important member of the healthcare team
4. I can have job mobility, stability and flexibility
5. I would like to be a highly respected member of my community

What skills and personal characteristics do I need to become a community pharmacist?

- Accurate and methodical with strong numerical skills
- Able to understand and apply the law
- Responsible and of the highest integrity
- Interested in people's health
- Professional
- Willing to supervise others and show great leadership skills
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and social skills
- An ability to multi-task and prioritise