

## Wellington Medical Centre - Clinical Pharmacists

### About the practice



Wellington Medical Centre is one of the largest practices in Somerset with a patient list size of just over 15,000 people.

Like many practices in Somerset, we have a growing patient population, particularly within older age groups and are facing year on year increases in demand. In light of these, we have introduced a number of changes which include:

- Receptionists being trained in signposting skills so as to direct patients to the most appropriate help
- Introducing a broader multi-skilled team which includes 2 Primary Care Practitioners (Paramedic trained), Musculoskeletal physiotherapist time and 2 pharmacists

### Our Clinical Pharmacists

We currently employ two part time pharmacists who cover full days on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays as a job share. The pharmacists are fully integrated as part of the team.

They receive requests for medication checks and queries (sent as EMIS tasks) which relate to hospital discharge summaries, medication reconciliation and putting in place medication monitoring arrangements.

They also include authorising requests for repeat prescriptions. To start small we chose three repeat medication groups - contraception, anti-depressants and medication for hypothyroidism. The pharmacist follows an agreed protocol and reauthorises provided that essential checks and tests have been completed.

We plan to extend this to the larger chronic disease groups over the coming months such as hypertension and respiratory disease.

The pharmacists also have morning and afternoon telephone appointment slots. These can either be booked directly by our receptionists where patients call about medication queries or used by the pharmacists to call patients, carers or care homes about specific medication-related issues.

As well as writing updates in the patient notes, the pharmacists keep a log which allows for easy review

### Suggestions for others considering these roles

- Choose the right person / people for the practice
- Draw up clear protocols about how things will work
- Approach the role flexibly and review regularly
- Provide reception staff with signposting skills so that they can refer patients to the pharmacists directly
- Support the pharmacists and involve them as full team members



### Developing and introducing the role

In developing the role we first looked at the **PCPA guidance** on the use of pharmacists in General Practice which is **endorsed by the RCGP**. This is available here:

<https://pcpa.org.uk/assets/documents/PDF-guide-for-GPs-considering-employing-pharmacist.pdf>

We decided to adopt a steady, phased introduction to the roles and drew up **protocols** with the pharmacists setting out how things would work initially. Each pharmacist has a named **GP mentor** who meets with them at any time and formally on a monthly basis to review progress.

As GPs we have sat and **observed** the pharmacists whilst undertaking the calls to really understand the sort of queries and issues they are dealing with.

The pharmacists are considered **full members of the team** and are involved in team meetings and our monthly practice **Continuing Professional Development** sessions

Throughout the day the pharmacist have **access to the GPs for advice and support**

### Benefits so far

- Almost all medication queries raised by patients and carers are resolved by the pharmacists without the need for GP input (allergies, side effects, interactions)
- Potential safety issues have been avoided which were associated with patients' medication on leaving hospital
- GPs and other members of the team have found it beneficial having pharmacist on site
- We have developed confidence in the roles and are planning for pharmacists to now take on face to face consultations

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