

# GPhC strategic approach to scope of practice

## Scope of practice for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians

Every pharmacist's and pharmacy technician's scope of practice is individual to them. This document sets out the GPhC's strategic aims and regulatory approach to scope of practice. It is designed to help pharmacists and pharmacy technicians think about which professional standards and obligations are relevant when making decisions about and documenting their scope of practice.

### Our strategic and regulatory approaches

Our strategic aims, in relation to scope of practice, are:

- to ensure that patients and members of the public are cared for by confident, competent pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, working collaboratively with each other and with other health and care professionals from different disciplines
- to empower pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to provide trusted, safe and effective pharmacy care
- to support pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to maintain standards and confidently adapt to new demands, whilst also taking care of their own wellbeing
- to support pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to understand what is required of them, so that they can focus on caring for patients and members of the public.

Our approach:

- respects pharmacists' and pharmacy technicians' self-awareness and professional obligation to 'self-regulate',
- recognises that individual professionals know far more about their own practice, and its context, than the regulator does, and
- empowers pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, within safe parameters, to 'own' their practice and – when they need to – to say "No", to others, including employers and patients
- enables individual professionals, and the pharmacy professions as a whole, to innovate and develop their practice within a framework which underpins both their competence and their confidence (and that of their patients, peers, other healthcare professionals and employers).

## **Initial education and training**

As part of their initial education and training, both pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must be able to demonstrate the ability to recognise and work within their own competence, and to seek support when necessary. This is assessed during foundation training or pre-registration training to ensure that new registrants demonstrate this behaviour reliably in familiar, albeit potentially complex, situations.

## **Continuing professional development and revalidation**

As part of revalidation, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have to ensure that their Continuing Professional Development reflects the context of their practice. All three components of revalidation-required activity must be relevant to the registrant's scope of practice. And the mandatory reflective account has to include a brief summary of their practice history over the year in review.

## **Working within the law**

As healthcare professionals, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians work within the law, and that includes any legal restrictions on who is allowed to carry out particular tasks. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are expected to be familiar with any such restrictions that might be relevant to their work, and to work within them.

## **Individual professional accountability**

As empowered professionals, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are accountable for their own practice. That includes the decisions they make about whether particular tasks, or types of tasks, or roles, are within their own actual competence.

## **Making decisions about scope of practice**

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians don't make decisions about their scope of practice in a vacuum, but must take account of any relevant guidance. This includes GPhC regulatory guidance, which we issue to support implementation of our standards. And it also includes guidance issued by authoritative national bodies (such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) and relevant professional leadership body guidance, which we would expect pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to be mindful of, regardless of whether they are members of particular organisations.

## **Documenting scope of practice**

The best way for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to show that have reflected on their scope of practice is to write it down. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who can show they have documented their scope of practice, including the limitations of their current competence, and kept this under regular review, are well-placed to keep themselves and their patients safe, whilst showing that they meet regulatory requirements.

## **The role of employers**

Employers should be mindful of the scope of practice of the members of their workforce when making decisions about which services to offer, bearing in mind their responsibilities as service providers.

We expect any organisation employing or otherwise contracting with pharmacists and pharmacy technicians in their professional capacity to support them to understand, document and work within their scope of practice.

For organisations that run GPhC-registered pharmacies, Standards for Registered Pharmacies require pharmacy owners to ensure that “staff have the appropriate skills, qualifications and competence for their role and the tasks they carry out” and “can comply with their own professional and legal obligations and are empowered to exercise their professional judgement”.

### **Professional duty to maintain, develop and use knowledge and skills**

Our ***Standards for Pharmacy Professionals*** requires pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to maintain, develop and use their professional knowledge and skills. This puts a clear responsibility on pharmacists and pharmacy technicians not to allow their practice to stagnate, but instead to take active steps to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills.

### **Professional titles**

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have worked hard to obtain their professional qualifications and registration. Use of their protected professional titles in communication with patients and colleagues promotes transparency and accountability.

### **Indemnity**

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are under a legal duty to ensure that there is appropriate indemnity cover in place to cover the risks that may arise as a result of their practice. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians declare they meet these requirements, as part of our registration and renewal processes. It is not possible for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians to meet these requirements without being mindful of the scope of their practice and the risks associated with it, and sharing relevant information with their indemnity provider, or employer if they are relying on employer-provided arrangements.