

Future Proofing Pharmacy Workforce; Building Regional Designated Prescribing Practitioner Infrastructure

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#Pharmacy Workforce

#Designated Prescribing Practitioner

#Independent Prescribing

#Collaboration

Introduction



South East (SE), Pharmacy Workforce Leads (PWL) recognised a common challenge: Independent Prescribing (IP) and Designated Prescribing Practitioner (DPP) roles were developing at different paces in different ICSs.

Engagement surveys and scoping showed that there was a need for regional infrastructure to support DPPs and IPs.

This work was instigated as part of the 2022–23 Workforce Transformation Projects designed to support the ambitions of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan,¹ We are the NHS: People Plan 2020/21² and education reforms.

Aim



The project aimed to support the scale and sustainability of the IP workforce regionally through:

- raising awareness of the DPP role,
- avoiding duplication,
- sharing intelligence and
- building a continuous supply of DPPs regionally.

It included co-designing adaptable region-wide resources and establishing networks to enable shared learning, peer support and alignment with Higher Education Institutes' (HEI) programmes.

Methodology

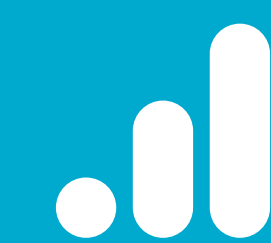
Quality Improvement methodology was used to produce a strategy for project implementation.

Each area conducted IP workforce scoping surveys which identified similar barriers, lack of DPPs, resource gaps and developmental needs.

This informed a collaborative approach, with each ICS focusing on specific aspects of the project. Updates were shared at strategy meetings providing opportunities for learning and knowledge exchange which facilitated broad stakeholder engagement.

Ethical approval was not required as this was not a research project.

Results



- ✓ An IP/DPP Future NHS Platform was adopted regionally creating a platform for shared tools and resources. As of May 2025, the platform has approximately 200 members.
- ✓ A Multi Professional Prescribing Review Tool was adopted by each area and tailored to meet local requirements. This was identified as a governance need for supporting Primary Care for CQC requirements.
- ✓ A gap in IP provision identified in one ICS led to a collaboration between PWL and a HEI to develop a hybrid IP module for community pharmacists.
- ✓ A DPP statement for job descriptions was developed and shared regionally.
- ✓ A joint DPP Project Manager across two ICSs facilitated IP/DPP focus groups supporting the creation of various outputs.
- ✓ Resources such as the DPP Factsheet and Teaching & Training Decision Support Tool were shared regionally.
- ✓ The SE IP Strategy Group which included HEIs helped to instigate conversations to overcome barriers such as variation in methods for vetting DPPs. This was beneficial following the loss of ICS IP leads.
- ✓ The region showcased initial successes of the collaborative approach at the Association of Prescribers Conference in 2023.

Discussion



- Through collaboration shared challenges were tackled with a streamlined approach avoiding duplication and aligning efforts.
- A key component was championing the role of the DPP with ambitions to foster a DPP network and aspirations of codeveloping webinars with current DPPs to provide greater connection and support.
- A limitation to the sustainability and success of projects is potential loss of PWLs which may hinder regional collaboration.
- Success will be measured through the increasing number of IPs and DPPs ensuring a sustainable supply for ongoing development of the workforce.
- Collaboration allowed sharing of expertise and resources efficiently addressing common challenges and ultimately leading to more sustainable and impactful solutions.