

# Pharmacy Technician

Pharmacy technicians are registered professional members of the pharmacy team who prepare and manage the supply of medicines and give advice to patients and customers.

## Case study: Jonty Yazbec

Jonty qualified as pharmacist in South Africa and came to the UK on a working holiday visa not intending to stay very long, so to re-train to register as a pharmacist in the UK would have been expensive and time consuming. Instead he was able to get a job and register as a pharmacy technician under a scheme that recognised his South African qualifications and experience in the UK. Subsequently he met his wife, started a family and is still working for the NHS fifteen years later.

Over the last seven months he has been seconded into the trust's Transformation team as the clinical project manager, working on three separate CQUINs (Commissioning for Quality and Innovation) which includes:

**The Flu campaign for Trust staff:** publicising the need for vaccinations, providing advice on and reporting reactions to the vaccination, organising and supporting vaccination clinics, capturing and reporting data on the campaign.

**Ill health through risky behaviours:** improving the identification of patients on admission who smoke or use alcohol and developing and supporting interventions by doctors and other clinical staff to help address this. The team is currently trying to integrate training for all patient facing staff to enable them to deliver 'Very Brief Advice', effectively ensuring patients who smoke are aware there is support available and sign posting them for the support and pharmacotherapy – Making Every Contact Count.

**Timely recognition and treatment of Sepsis:** ensuring that all patients are screened for sepsis on arrival, incorporating the use of the NEWS2 tool and making sure antibiotics are administered in the golden hour. Each quarter, 150 patients admitted with an infection and 150 patients attending A&E with an infection were audited to ensure compliance. Deep dive



audits were then done to understand where improvements could be made. The Critical Care Outreach team and Jonty launched a sepsis campaign which involved refreshing patient facing staff members' knowledge on the red flags of sepsis, the appropriate treatment protocol and the importance of prompt treatment.

### What do the pharmacy technicians do?

Whilst Jonty was working as a pharmacy technician he was the medicine safety and governance technician. During the time he worked on several projects including introducing a new trust-wide temperature monitoring system and updating controlled drug (CD) medicine cabinets across the trust to ensure they met regulations. Working on these projects gave him valuable experience which helped him to achieve the secondment into the transformation role.

### Impact on patient safety

- The work Jonty carried out during his medicine safety role led to better storage of medicines which has led to improved monitoring and less wastage, thus saving the trust thousands of pounds.
- The flu campaign has helped to reduced staff sickness with subsequent positive impact on patient safety.
- The work on risky behaviours is contributing to improving patient health and reducing complications in their treatment, and is part of a cultural shift within the organisation.
- The Sepsis project has meant that people at risk of sepsis are more quickly identified on admission and then receive more timely treatment.

### One stand-out achievement of the pharmacy technician role

For Jonty, the pharmacy technician role has given him the skills and experience to be able to move into other roles within the trust, to effect changes which improve services and patient safety and also enhance his career options.

### Any recommendations/observations for anyone else in this role?

Jonty says, "Don't be afraid to take on different projects or tasks within and around your department. The constant accruing of knowledge will help you gain insight and experience that can be implemented into many varying roles in the NHS. You never know what one small sidestep can lead to... don't undervalue your abilities or the contributions you can make to the wider organisation."

### Read more about the role:

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/pharmacy/roles-pharmacy/pharmacy-technician>

### Read more about training to become a pharmacy technician:

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/medicines-optimisation/training-pharmacy-technicians>



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