

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: Katherine Watkinson

Katherine Watkinson is the National Pharmacy Support Services Pharmacy Technician at Turning Point. She is also an Investigating Committee Registrant member at the General Pharmaceutical Council and Interim Training Programme Director for Pharmacy Technicians at Health Education England.

Katherine began her pharmacy career in 2005 as a Student Pharmacy Technician at Kings Mill Hospital in Nottinghamshire. She qualified in 2007 and moved to Sheffield to work in Mental Health. Since then Katherine has had the opportunity to work across the country in both mental health and general hospital, moving to specialist roles in education and training.

Since 2018 Katherine has been the National Pharmacy Support Services Pharmacy Technician at Turning Point. Turning Point is a social enterprise which provides health and social care services to people who need support with their drug and alcohol use, mental health, offending behaviour, unemployment or learning disability.

In July 2019 Katherine began a six-month secondment at Health Education England as the Interim Training Programme Director for pharmacy technicians. This role will help plan the future education and training of pharmacy technicians across the Midlands and East of England.

Katherine had always planned to go to university but when she left school personal circumstances meant that she needed to stay nearer to home. She looked for a role which would provide education and training and would have a science focus. Katherine saw the post of Student Pharmacy Technician advertised in a local newspaper and it was the perfect combination of training and paid employment.



Within Turning Point Katherine is responsible for:

- Writing and reviewing procedures relating to medication.
- Writing training materials and competency assessments
- Responding to medication queries
- Liaising with pharmacies that supply medicines to people who use Turning Point services
- Completing medicines audits in services to support them to manage medication correctly.
- Producing reports to check that the medication prescribed is cost effective – she also uses these reports to show outside organisations how the services are running.

Katherine loves this role as no two days are the same and she gets to travel across the country visiting different services.

The work Katherine does at Turning Point helps ensure that all the medicines processes are safe and effective. Katherine reviews information on what is prescribed to ensure that medicines are used in a way which is cost effective. When there are medicines shortages Katherine works with suppliers, manufacturers and prescribers to ensure everyone is still able to get supplies of their medication.

Katherine was awarded the APTUK/AAH Pharmacy Technician of the Year for Leadership in 2015 for work she did in developing and implementing an induction programme for new pharmacy staff.

Her advice for anyone looking to begin a career as a pharmacy technician is to contact your local hospital and community pharmacy and try to arrange a visit so that you can see the variety of roles available in pharmacy. Training as pharmacy technician is a great way to “earn while you learn” and provides a huge range of opportunities across a variety of organisations.



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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>