

MEDIA RELEASE

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LPT combats nurse shortage by introducing ward-based pharmacists

Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust is one of the first trusts in the region to introduce ward-based pharmacists to administer drugs to inpatients. Four pharmacy technicians have been recruited initially, but it is hoped to expand that number so there is a pharmacy technician on every inpatient ward.

They will carry out traditional drugs rounds, administering medicines as prescribed for patients by doctors or nurse prescribers. These drugs rounds can take up to three hours at a time, and have to be repeated up to four times a day.

Having pharmacy technicians will free up trained nurses to do other caring duties, and ultimately should mean the Trust spends less on agency staff.



The initiative was inspired by our need to diversify our workforce. A review conducted by Lord Carter has encouraged the NHS to respond to the national shortage of trained nurses by making better use of other health professions, particularly technicians.

But Andrew Moonesinghe, LPT's pharmacy services manager,

said it would be the right thing to do even if nurse recruitment was easy.

He said the pharmacy technicians already had an in-depth understanding of medicines. They were also in a better position to explain to patients why they needed to keep taking their medicines when they were discharged, which in turn was likely to keep them better for longer.

He said: "It is absolutely good news for the patients. We can use pharmacy skills developed over years to improve patient outcomes and experiences.

“The aim is to have this service across all of our inpatient wards.”

The technicians will be paid exactly the same as qualified nurses (£22,128 to £28,746 per year). They need to be qualified in pharmaceutical sciences and to be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), the professional body which maintains standards in the same way as the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Unlike many trusts, LPT already has ePrescribing. This is computer software that prompts the clinician about what medicine to give to each patient, in what dose and at what frequency. It is a major step forward in patient safety from handwritten paper-based drugs charts.

The first four pharmacy technicians have joined the wards at Coalville Community Hospital, and at the Bennion Centre and the Evington Centre (both in the city). The Trust is currently recruiting for more, and could have up to 35-ward-based pharmacy technicians.

Susan Lees, who has taken up the post at Coalville’s Snibston Ward, said: “I will be covering aspects of medicines’ management, and I will also be carrying out the drugs rounds.

“I have worked in pharmacy for over 15 years. My knowledge and experience of pharmacy will enable me to be the medicines management expert on the ward, improving the patient experience.”

Claire King, ward manager at Coalville’s Snibston ward said: “Susan has become a great asset to the team already. She is working really well.”

To learn more about the project and to hear from Susan Lees, watch this video: <https://youtu.be/2fv6RzuwsNQ> .

To learn more about vacancies for pharmacy technicians, go to www.leicspart.nhs.uk/jobs .

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (LPT) provides community health, mental health and learning disabilities services for the one million people living in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We have a budget in excess of £275 million and employ approximately 5,500 staff. For more information visit: www.leicspart.nhs.uk
2. Raising Health is our registered charity (number 1057361) which raises funds to support LPT’s excellent care initiatives, equipment and innovations which go above and beyond core NHS provision, to enhance the experience of our patients, service users and staff. www.raisinghealth.org.uk .