

Discussion paper on supervising pharmacist independent prescribers in training

Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) response

1. Do you think current supervision requirements should be changed for these reasons? The reasons are:

a. It is right in principle to extend supervision rights to experienced non-medical independent prescribers.

b. It makes sense to be supervised by other PIPs – people who are already working in that role.

c. Supervision capacity needs to increase to allow pharmacist independent prescribing courses to grow to meet service demands.

The RPS agrees with the reasons outlined in this discussion paper for changing the current supervision requirements. We agree that the involvement of a PIP would be very valuable in the supervision of PIPs in training.

We would advocate that trainees should have as much opportunity as possible to gain experience of working as a prescriber in training within a multidisciplinary team. Where possible PIPs in training should have the opportunity to work alongside medical practitioners even when their final sign off is from a non-medical prescriber. We would like to see any changes of the supervision requirements as an evolving process that maintains the active involvement of medical practitioners in the training of non-medical prescribers. If the supervision requirements are extended to pharmacists, the RPS would be pleased to explore the production of guidance and support for pharmacists undertaking IP training and those pharmacist seeking to undertake supervision roles.

We support the view that the supervising prescriber should ideally have experience of working in a similar area of practice to that of the PIP in training. We believe it is important however that PIPs have opportunities to develop generalist prescribing competence as well as specialising as it is vital to look at patients holistically in practice.

Many of our members who are IPs have informed us that by having a medical practitioner involved in their supervision, they have gained additional expertise in patient assessment and diagnosis. It has also enabled them to demonstrate to their medical colleagues how much knowledge and expertise the pharmacist has. In light of this, as well as annual CPD to demonstrate maintenance of safe practice, the RPS will encourage multidisciplinary team working as much as possible through our professional portfolios and support tools, including mentorship between supervising pharmacists and medical colleagues so that the multidisciplinary team links are retained and maintained.

2. Do you agree that supervision rights should be extended to experienced pharmacist independent prescribers?

The RPS agrees that supervising rights should be extended to experienced PIPs provided they are actively prescribing at the time of supervision. There would need to be agreement and guidance over the definition of experienced.

The increased supervision rights for pharmacists would provide additional capacity for more pharmacists to become prescribers. We believe that an increase in the number of pharmacist prescribers is essential so that pharmacists can more actively contribute to positive patient outcomes, particularly for individuals with long term conditions.

We acknowledge that much of the knowledge to enable an individual to prescribe is already built in to the undergraduate degree, and that the intention for many schools of pharmacy will be to further embed the required knowledge in the undergraduate curriculum. We envisage that this knowledge would then be contextualised into practice during the first two years post-graduation (foundation years) which is what the current IP course enables.

3. Do you agree that supervision rights should be extended to other experienced independent prescribers?

Yes, we agree that the supervision rights should be extended to other experienced prescribers as long as they are actively prescribing themselves and working in a relevant area of practice at the time of supervision, this should be as a part of a multidisciplinary training approach.

We are proposing that four measures should be put in place if supervision rights are extended:

- a. Supervisors must have worked in the area in which a PIP in training wishes to learn to prescribe before becoming their supervisor.**
- b. Supervisors must be trained for the role before they begin.**
- c. Supervisors must be mentored for a period of time once supervising.**
- d. Course providers must support supervisors throughout their time as supervisors linked to an accredited course.**

4a. Do you agree that they are the right measures?

We agree that a quality assurance framework for supporting and developing the prescribing supervisor is very important.

We would like further clarity around the training for the role of supervisor and would advocate that if someone is an experienced tutor, then they may not require mentoring for the supervisor role; this requirement could also decrease capacity for current DMPs and be another barrier to increasing our PIP cohort.

We believe that RPS would be ideally placed to develop the standards for supervisors, working with the GPhC and across the health care professions, in line with the document 'A Competency Framework for all Prescribers'. The RPS already has a mentoring scheme in place and this could be adapted and expanded if IP supervisors require mentoring.

Currently it is up to the trainee PIP or the pharmacist's employer to find their supervisor. The discussion paper suggests that the course providers would support the supervisors and that the supervisors would be linked to the accredited course. This would need to be clarified.

4b. Should there be any other measures? If 'Yes', please explain what they should be.

It is desirable that trainees have a broad experience of working as a prescriber in a multidisciplinary team and have enough time working alongside medical practitioners even if it decided that their final sign-off is from a non-medical prescriber.

5. Are there any equality, diversity or inclusion issues you think have been raised by our proposals?

No