**Digital Expert Advisory Group: Case Study**

**Name:** Stephen Goundrey-Smith

**Job title:** Consultant in Digital Pharmacy

**What does your current role involve?**

I am involved in consultancy work on a range of issues relating to digital medicines, pharmacy technology, pharmacy informatics and medicines safety. I have worked with the Professional Records Standards Body (PRSB) on the development of clinical record standards for community pharmacy, which are a prerequisite for electronic systems interoperability. I am also actively involved in the Faculty of Clinical Informatics, having been appointed as a Founding Fellow of the Faculty in 2017. Most recently, I have completed a PhD in ethics of medical technologies, and have a growing interest in the professional implications of artificial intelligence, and the ethical issues relating to large scale, diffuse IT platforms for health and social care, as sociotechnical systems.

**What knowledge, qualifications or skills are required for your role?**

The most important requirements for my role are 1) good all-round knowledge of clinical pharmacy and therapeutics, 2) an understanding of pharmacy workflows and medicines safety from a systemic perspective and 3) an appreciation of how the NHS works at a broader level, and of informatics across the NHS. Although I did a master’s degree in Information Science, which was helpful, the knowledge and skills listed above can be obtained through work experience, in pharmacy, the wider NHS or the healthcare IT sector. That said, there are many health informatics courses available at postgraduate level in the UK.

**How did your career develop into having a digital pharmacy role?**

I have been interested in the use of technology in pharmacy professional practice for much of my professional life. I began my career as a hospital pharmacist after qualifying in 1989, and then completed a full-time MSc in Information Science at City University, London. After that, I worked in medical information in the pharmaceutical industry, and as a locum community pharmacist.

In 2003, I became a specialist analyst working on design of electronic prescribing, pharmacy and medicines management systems and functionality with the healthcare IT firm, iSoft, then one of the National Programme for IT (NPfIT) contractors. This led to the publication of “Principles of Electronic Prescribing” in 2008, the first book-length publication in the world on electronic prescribing. This is now in its second edition, and people still contact me about it today.

In 2009, I was appointed as the Health IT Pharmacist at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, and worked at national level, alongside government, NHS and pharmacy bodies, representing the interests of the pharmacy profession, as the Electronic Prescription Service and the Summary Care Record in England were rolled out, and the community pharmacy information governance agenda was developed. Thus began a working relationship with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society which has continued to date, with my current membership of the RPS Digital Expert Advisory Group. interoperability.

**What advice would you give someone interested in a career in digital pharmacy?**

First, gain solid clinical experience in a patient-facing role; I have no doubt that my broad professional experience in pharmacy has been a sound foundation for my work in pharmacy IT. Second, seek opportunities to gain pharmacy IT experience within your work context, either by getting involved with system implementation and training, or contributing to consultations and conferences. That way, in due course, further opportunities will present themselves. I count it a privilege to have worked in this important area for the last twenty years.