**Digital Expert Advisory Group: Case Study**

**Name:** Darren Powell

**Job title:** Clinical Lead

**Organisation**: NHS Digital

**What does your current role involve?**

I work at a national level in NHS Digital, as part of a diverse team of clinical informaticians within Live Services.

I am a Clinical Safety Officer, involved with the clinical input and support to "live" services such as Summary Care Records, the Electronic Prescription Service, NHS mail, eRS, NEMS and many other technological healthcare systems that support frontline clinicians and patients. I support the assurance process of new systems, both prescribing and dispensing, that wish to connect to and utilise EPS. This involves testing at many stages, critically reviewing hazard logs and Clinical Safety Case Reports alongside our Clinical Safety Engineer colleagues.

We are called in to High Severity Service Incidents (HSSIs) to ensure the clinical impacts of incidents are considered and assessed for current clinical risks. We follow these events to conclusion, ensuring that clinical risks are safety mitigated, and review them in Post Incident Reviews (PIR) to capture Quality Improvement opportunities.

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

I had to undertake training, which was provided by the NHS Digital Clinical Safety Team prior to my starting, to become a Clinical Safety Officer. This provided training in the principles of safety, risk management and risk mitigation, all within the context of health IT and an appreciation of and the ability to implementing the safety standards, DCB0129 and DCB0160.

I've recently become a member of the Faculty of Clinical Informatics and I strongly align to the ethos in the NHS Digital space "Everything we do is considered clinical until proven otherwise".

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

My career has its foundations firmly based in primary care, and more in community pharmacy. I worked in a GP practice during the days of PCTs, I was the first Teacher Practitioner for my company at the University of Bradford and I ran the company Trainee Pharmacist Programme. I've had roles in clinical governance for PCTs and had a significant period in area management for the independent pharmacy group I work for.

I have always had a personal and professional interest in technology and data, and how it can be utilised in healthcare for the benefit of patients and clinicians. So, I was actively involved in the early adoption of EPS in pharmacy as the benefits it would bring were so clear. In terms of data for use by pharmacists, I was involved in the Summary Care Record piloting in community pharmacy and an advocate for its wider rollout. In my area management role, I was responsible for technology projects such as integrating the use of an electronic healthcare incident reporting system into the company. This enabled pharmacy teams to collate near miss events, and report errors to enable us to identify trends and share wider learning from the incidents. This also fed into the National Reporting and Learning System (NRLS) - we were one of the first pharmacy organisations to do this.

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

If you have a passion for healthcare technology, then start building your network of people involved in that space. Reach out and share your passion and enthusiasm for “digital pharmacy”.   
You could attend one of our meetings as a member, look at biographies of the members and reach out to us. Read around the subject and undertake some learning that might help you in future roles.  
Look at some of the online learning available free on e-Learning for Healthcare (e-LfH) around clinical safety.

The skills and experience that a diverse group of clinicians bring to technological development is key to producing clinically safe and effective systems - and I'm pleased that pharmacy can play its part too in this process.