

Frequently Asked Questions

Public Health Standards...tell me more?

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), as the professional body for pharmacy, provides professional standards which are supportive, enabling and also professionally challenging. The Professional Standards for Public Health Practice for Pharmacy inform excellent practice and they can be used in different ways by pharmacists, and their teams, working in a variety of settings and roles.

What's it all for - what do the standards aim to achieve?

Pharmacy teams promote and protect health and well being through their core role and as part of all the services they provide on a daily basis. Public health services have been part of pharmacy practice for many years. However, up until now there have not been any professional standards for public health practice for pharmacy to support the development and delivery of consistently high quality services and evaluation of those services. The nine overarching standards provide a framework to support pharmacists and their teams to improve their public health practice, and shape future services and pharmacy roles to deliver quality public health services and interventions to improve people's health. The standards will also help pharmacy teams, commissioners and those contracting services to design, implement, deliver and monitor high quality public health practice through pharmacy regardless of the pharmacy settings from which services are delivered.

What are professional standards?

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society, as the professional body for pharmacy, provides professional standards which are developed and owned by the profession that describe good practice, systems of care or working. Professional standards are supportive, enabling whilst also professionally challenging. They provide a broad framework to support pharmacists and their teams to develop their professional practice, improve services, shape future services and deliver high quality care across all settings and sectors. The professional standards can be used in different ways by pharmacists, and their teams, working in a variety of settings and roles. In addition to these professional standards, pharmacists and their teams must also consider all relevant legal frameworks and apply regulatory standards and guidance, for example, published by the General Pharmaceutical Council.

How did you develop these professional standards?

The standards have been developed by a task group of the Pharmacy and Public Health Forum, led by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and chaired by its Chief Executive, with input from pharmacy practitioners and experts in both pharmacy and public health and across Great Britain. Colleagues from the Department of Health, the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) and the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) joined pharmacists on this group. The draft standards were published for comment and input as part of an eight week public consultation period and a wide range of responses were received from individual pharmacy practitioners, pharmacy organisations and other healthcare and public health organisations which helped to refine and shape the standards further.

How do the standards align with existing public health standards and frameworks?

The standards align with existing resources and tools for the wider healthcare workforce, the RPS standards mirror the nine core areas of public health practice identified by the Faculty of Public Health (FPH). Aligning the professional standards for pharmacy with the FPH core areas, supports pharmacy practitioners with delivering public health practice that is demonstrably consistent with other healthcare practitioners delivering public health.

What is the scope of the standards?

The standards are applicable to all levels of the pharmacy workforce in all settings e.g. those working at specialist or strategic level, those working at practitioner level and the wider pharmacy workforce. It is recognised that many public health services in pharmacy are delivered by the wider pharmacy team and therefore the professional standards reflect this.

Are the standards relevant to me?

The way in which the different standards will be interpreted will depend on the practitioner's role. Pharmacists and pharmacy teams working in different settings and different levels, e.g. as public health specialists, practitioners or as part of the wider pharmacy workforce, may meet the standards in different ways and to a different level of detail and this is illustrated by the practice examples throughout the document.

How should I use the standards?

The standards can be used in any order. You may wish to start by identifying the standards that are most applicable to you in your daily practice. You may want to use one of the standards as a starting point to develop yourself and your practice, within your local frameworks for delivering public health. Use the supporting resources to see where to find further information and tools to help you develop and deliver a quality public health service. All of the nine overarching standard statements are relevant to the breadth of pharmacy providers; however, some of the supporting statements may be more relevant to some pharmacy practitioners than others, depending on the practice setting, the level at which you practice and the range of public health services you provide. The practice examples illustrate how the standards could be used and interpreted in different pharmacy settings and at different levels of practice.

What is the Pharmacy and Public Health Forum?

This work forms part of work of the Pharmacy and Public Health Forum (PPHF) in England, which was established by Ministers in July 2011. The PPHF leads on developing the pharmacy contribution to public health, taking into account both the Government's and local public health priorities. One of the ministerial priorities for the Forum when it was set up, was the development of professional standards. This dovetailed with RPS's intent to develop professional standards for pharmacy and public health. Other PPHF work streams include commissioning public health services from community pharmacy, evidence base and research, Healthy Living Pharmacy implementation and roll out, work force, training and infrastructure.

How do the standards fit with the community pharmacy contractual frameworks and commissioned or contracted public health services?

The standards are designed to be used with national and local frameworks for delivering public health. The standards are about professional excellence. The assumption is that the standards can be delivered within existing contractual frameworks. However, the standards could be used in discussions with commissioners both nationally and locally, to develop and implement new services or for continuation of existing services. The nine overarching standards in this document provide a framework to help pharmacy teams, commissioners and those contracting services to design, implement, deliver and monitor high quality public health practice through pharmacy. For those who commission or contract for pharmacy public health

services, the standards provide an informative framework that outlines high quality public health services from pharmacy and supports the development and delivery of consistently effective public health services from pharmacy both nationally and locally.

Have these Professional Standards considered the Healthy Living Pharmacy Quality Criteria in England?

There have been close links between each of the Task Groups of the Pharmacy and Public Health Forum including the task group for the roll out of Healthy Living Pharmacies [HLP]. The principles within the quality criteria that underpin the HLP concept have been considered in the development of these standards.

How has the experience with the Healthy Living Pharmacy concept in England informed the development of these Professional Standards?

The experience gained from both the HLP pathfinder work programme and broader rollout has informed the development of the standards and the examples in practice. This is especially relevant in standard 4: Health Improvement.

Will these Standards replace the criteria required to achieve the Healthy Living Pharmacy Quality Mark in England?

Currently the HLP Quality Mark is awarded locally with the HLP Quality Criteria being part of the requirement; as the HLP concept is developed it is expected that the Quality Criteria will be reviewed. The Professional Standards may help inform local implementation of HLP concept as well as inform quality assurance of the Quality Mark, including the quality criteria.

Are the standards intended for use in Scotland?

The standards are intended primarily for use in England and Wales. The Scottish Government launched its vision and action plan "Prescription for Excellence" in September 2013. This vision dovetails and complements the aims and aspirations of Scotland's 2020 Vision for Healthcare. The plan focuses on delivering safety, effectiveness and person- centeredness in pharmaceutical care and medicines and the Society is committed to working with the Scottish Government and other stakeholders to ensure that pharmacists' public health role is developed intrinsically within pharmaceutical care in a context of collaborative and cooperative partnership working with other health and social care professionals, in keeping with the aspirations of Scotland's NHS.

What happens next once the standards are published?

As the professional body for pharmacy, our role includes supporting the ongoing development and implementation of these standards to give pharmacy teams delivering public health services, a framework in which to deliver the best possible outcomes for people. We would be interested to hear feedback from those using the standards in practice, this will help refine the standards and develop further supporting tools. We will also continue to widely engage with other national organisations, within and outside of pharmacy, to further support pharmacists and their teams with developing public health services. The standards will be reviewed after two years or sooner if appropriate.

Any further questions?

If you have any further questions or would like more information about the standards in general or ongoing work, please contact the RPS Support team at support@rpharms.com or 0845 257 2570.