

Transcript

Elspeth Boxall

So hello and welcome to our next series of NES Pharmacy podcasts. For this series, we all will be focusing on the changes to the Pharmacy Foundation Training Year or FTY programme, and we'll be speaking to the key stakeholders from across all sectors to hear about what changes we can expect to see. Today, first of all, we're joined by the Principal Lead Pharmacist for the FTY programme, Gail Craig and Leanne Murphy, who will be able to describe for us the, the background to these changes and explain what support is in place for both trainees and supervisors involved in the programme. So, welcome Gail and Leanne. Thank you for joining us today. Can you introduce yourselves and outline the job role that you have just now with the FTY programme. Leanne, if you want to go first

Leanne Murphy

Thanks very much Elspeth. Yep. My name's Leanne Murphy and I'm one of the principal leads in the foundation training year and kind of key areas that I'm responsible for including curriculum assessment within the FTY, um, Designated Supervisor and Designated Prescribing Practitioner training and support sessions, registration assessment support, and FTY Comms.

Elspeth Boxall

Okay and Gail, what's your role?

Gail Craig

So, my name's Gail Craig. I'm the other job share, um, principal lead and I principally look after the FTY recruitment into the programme, trainee pharmacist support and various elements of quality management through the, the trainee programme.

Elspeth Boxall

That's brilliant. Very helpful to know the background and I think first of all, Leanne, we, we'll start talking a little bit about the, the background to the FTY programme changes and I know there was a webinar recorded on the 21st of January this year to introduce the FTY programme. Leanne, can you maybe briefly recap a bit from the webinar about the key drivers for the changes to the FTY programme?

Leanne Murphy

Of course. So those who joined for the webinar would've seen, um, conversation around about what's led to these changes. So essentially the GPhC set out new standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists in 2021 and these really set to reform the first five years of initial education and that five years includes education from the start of the MPharm through to the end of FTY. So, the goal is to ensure that this initial education and training supports development of skills, knowledge, and behaviours to enable pharmacists to really take on enhanced clinical roles from day one of registration and that will include joining the register as Independent Prescribers.

This is really looking to support the evolving role of the pharmacist in Health and Social Care. It's not sort of; all the changes aren't coming in at once. So, the changes resulting from the standards have been ongoing since 2021. So, the MPharm has evolved and graduates coming out of the MPharm now have a different skillset. They've got a greater focus on clinical application of science throughout the MPharm and the MPharm graduate skills have been built upon throughout university, including through an increase in experiential learning. So, the graduates we're finding now are really entering FTY ready to, to be developed and assessed as prescribers and to become prescribers from day one of joining the register.

So, the changes that we're seeing now in the FTY from 25-26 training year are the final step in the full implementation of these new, um, initial education and training pharmacist standards.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that's a, that's a really good summary, Leanne. I think it is really important to remember, isn't it, that this has, um, been worked towards for a long time and this is just a culmination of a, of a lot of change, um, that we've all been seeing with the, the training programmes. So, I think Gail, what, what do you think are the main change these people are going to see with the actual foundation training year itself now from 25-26?

Gail Craig

Yeah, Elspeth. So, NES are going to be responsible for the delivery of the FTY in a more formal way through the accreditation process by the GPhC. So, employer supervisors and trainee pharmacists will see a shift in those responsibilities that previously lay with the GPhC coming to NES, um, there is only gonna be one route of entry to the FTY, which is via the National Recruitment Process, um, to obtain one of the Scottish Government Funded training posts. So that's the only option available to train in Scotland from this year.

There will be delivery of two FTY pathways. So, Leanne touched upon how the majority of trainees coming through the FTY will be following the GPhC, um, full learning outcomes to become prescribers and registration. But we also are going to accommodate a pathway for those who will be following the interim learning, um, outcomes, um, and won't be able to register as a prescriber and that's to accommodate those who may be started a little bit earlier on their MPharm or those who came through the OSPAP route and they'll be fully supported the same way.

So for those who are following the full learning outcomes to be prescribers, there will be a requirement for them to undertake a period of learning and practice, um, which that allows that development of the prescribing related learning outcomes during the FTY and where all trainee pharmacists will be supervised by a designated supervisor or a DS through the, um, training year, those who are also following those full learning outcomes will also require a DPP, a designated prescribing practitioner and that supervision will be for their PLP time and that DPP will be required to assess the trainee against the prescribing related learning outcomes.

So quite a big change there, um, with an extra layer of supervision and to accommodate that and make sure, um, everybody's following the right, um, training plan, each trainee pharmacist will have that individualised training plan to support, um, the assessment through the training year. So, employers and de, designated supervisors have these available, the pro, training programme frameworks from NES to help support each area of practice to develop training plans and they can use those as a starting point and amend to suit the individual trainee pharmacists to make sure they've got um, in the right one to, to work through their training year.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that's, that's really helpful to have it explained, I think particularly to be aware that there are potentially two pathways and also now potentially two different supervisors as, as, as well. Um, I guess just from my own interest, I've also always wondered, does the, the DS and the DPP, could that be the same person or does it have to be different people?

Gail Craig

Absolutely. It could be the same person if they were appropriately qualified to take on both roles and felt that they had the capacity to do so. So, some trainees will have one person acting in both roles, and some trainee pharmacists will have two separate people taking on the role, just dependent on the circumstances of their individual training site, um, and, and employer.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's great. So, there's a bit of flexibility there, so that's, that's really helpful to know. Um, and Leanne, I'm just wondering, obviously this is, there's a lot, um, to take on board here. What, um, has the NES FTY programme done to change to support these reforms and, and support the, the trainee pharmacists, maybe particularly?

Leanne Murphy

Yeah, thanks Elspeth. So again, it's not one huge change all at once for us in FTY. So, the, the, um, the core programme has been evolving really in recent years in anticipation of these changes. So, there's a few elements that have been woven in already that the trainee pharmacists are experiencing throughout their training. So, for example, from early on in their training, they have a session on consultation skills. So really, um, getting them to reflect on what they've learned at university and how they're going to take that forward through their foundation training year and we're looking to get them up and running with that right from the beginning of training.

They also have their physical assessment skills training early on in the foundation training year as well and again, that's really to get them some hands-on experience building on what they've learned at university, um, taking those skills and, um, refining them and again, we're looking for them to go back into their workplace with their designated supervisor, with their DPP and really get practicing those skills.

We've also introduced the use of SLEs throughout the foundation training year, um, and that's been ongoing over the last couple of years as well and that's really supporting the

supervisors and the trainees to kind of formalise what they're doing and formalise the feedback that they're receiving from their supervisors as well.

The trainees have their virtual discussion group, so throughout the NES FTY programme, they attend virtual discussion groups at different points throughout the year. That involves a group of trainee pharmacists from different, um, areas of practice, all coming together and they're facilitated by an experienced pharmacist. In 25-26, this will be an independent prescriber and really this provides an opportunity for peer learning, so bringing what they've done, um, thinking about their SLEs, challenging each other's decision making skills, so thinking about clinical decision making, um, and thinking about each other's clinical decision making and learning from that and also all of that's guided by the experience group facilitator as well and we're really looking to stretch the, the trainee pharmacist as well with "what if's?".

So, in 25-26 we'll be thinking about things like, um, you know, what if they didn't feel competent to prescribe, what would be their next step? What if they don't want to prescribe, but they're feeling under pressure to prescribe? So, it's really a good opportunity to get open discussions and really have them thinking about their practice going forward. We also have a curriculum and assessment strategy, um, which is a really useful document for both the trainee pharmacists and for their supervisors and it sets out all of the competencies and it gives kind of example activities that they could use to build competence and demonstrate competence to their supervisors. I think it's important to note as well that all the training pharmacists will follow the same core programme, so, the goal is that the trainees coming through the NES FTY from 25-26 will have developed the knowledge and behaviours required to take on prescribing roles early on in their career. So even those who are not on the, um, full learning outcomes pathway will undertake the same activities and they'll be coming out with the same skill set at the end so that they can take on, um, prescribing early on in their, their pharmacist career, and I think as well, it's important to note that although prescribing is the big change in 25-26, and it is going to be a focus at the front of a lot of people's minds, it's really important to remember that the FTY still has all of the other, other elements in it as well that are just as important. So, it's really about thinking about the training pharmacists having the opportunity to develop all the skills that they need, um, to become competent and safe, day one pharmacists, and they've still got their GPhC common registration assessment to set as well at the end of that.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that is, that's a really, a really important point to highlight, Leanne, isn't it? It's like maybe if we don't focus completely on what's changed, but remember, you know, the, the basic foundation has got to be there as well, and it sounds like you've got a lot in place to support the trainees, which is absolutely excellent and I guess maybe just the, the supervisors out there and the DPPs, um, they'll be wondering what's there to support them. So, is there anything new in place, uh, to support them from NES?

Leanne Murphy

Yeah, so obviously we are aware that the, the key to success is going to be the supervisors, um, being able to carry out their role and feeling confident within the role and confident in assessing the foundation trainee pharmacists as well.

So, for, new for 25-26, we've got a new mandatory FTY supervisor induction session, and that'll be for both DS and DPPs and the focus of that session will really be to think about the, um, evidence that you might be supporting your training pharmacist to gather and how you assess that evidence and how you provide feedback. There'll be some thoughts about the level of practice of, um, the trainee pharmacist as well, so what's appropriate for them at this stage in their career and then leading on from that, we'll have a whole programme of support that both DSs and DPPs will be welcome to join throughout the year. So, this will include some sessions such as, um, an introduction to the foundation training year for those who it might be, um, who might be new to it and we'll have like, um, appraisal point discussions.

So, if the DSs or DPPs want to come along, get a bit of support, we'll have discussions there. There'll also be just ongoing support throughout the year. So, the FTY team, each trainee pharmacist has a member of the team assigned to them as their support PEC and that person is there to support the DS, the DPP as well and we've also got ongoing support from the prescribing and clinical skills team as well to bring that, um, that expertise around prescribing and DPP.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's, that's great. So, they're definitely not on their own, there's a big networking, uh, place to support the whole, the whole programme, which is, is really great. Um, I think we, you mean Leanne uh, touched a little bit about, you know, about, um, assessment and appraisal there when she was speaking and I wondered, Gail, could you maybe describe how the, the trainee pharmacist and the FTY programme will be assessed during the year?

Gail Craig

Yeah, of course. Um, so the key thing for the trainees will be to develop that really strong portfolio of evidence with input from a, a wide range of collaborators. So, they're demonstrating their competence against all of those learning outcomes by logging that strong portfolio. and that will all be logged in their digital system, TURAS training portfolio, which can be accessed by the trainees and supervisors. So, the DS will be responsible for the assessment of all of the learn, GPhC learning outcomes.

Um, and then the DPP and DS will combined, um, make an assessment of the 19 prescribing related learning outcomes specifically that'll be covered, um, during that period of learning and practice. And it's important to note that the DPP and the DS will be involved in dual sign off at those appraisal points for the, the trainee, um, at the, the each 13 week interval and then the decision to make that final sign off, if they've met all the learning outcomes, um, will also be done in combination between the DS and DPP so that they feel supported in making that final decision.

One thing that's different now is that NES will, um, support the, the, the supervisors in ratification of that final sign off, um, to make sure that all of the, the various elements of the programme have been met before, um, they are put forward to the GPhC as having completed the sign off, um, which includes having completed the appropriate amount of 52 weeks of time in training, sign off for those learning outcomes and any of the other mandatory elements completed, including their period of learning in practice time um, and that there's no outstanding fitness to practice concerns that that, that, um, anybody needs to be aware of. So just making sure that we are supporting that decision making by, by the supervisors, um, before it goes to the GPhC. Ultimately, as Leanne touched on the, the GPhC, common registration assessment is, is still there, um, for the, the trainee pharmacist to go off and sit. Um, and that's looking at their application of knowledge, um, against the various learning outcomes, um, and clinical areas as well.

So, there's the, the two different elements. So, it's a very thorough assessment that's being made, not just by their supervisors, but also by the, the regulator. Um, but as Leanne touched on, um, earlier as well, it's just important to remember that the trainees then need to be developing against all of those learning outcomes throughout that, that training year to be able to build that portfolio of evidence to, to demonstrate their competence. Um, and the final sign off requires competence to be consistently demonstrated in all of the, the learning outcomes that they're being assessed against.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that's, so that's great. I mean it is, it's, it's really thorough and you know, it's obviously been really well thought out, so I think that gives people a lot of reassurance and um, obviously there's a lot to take in. So, I mean, I wonder if we maybe just want to towards the end here, summarise some top tips and maybe Leanne, you can go first and so what would your, be top tips for your, uh, trainee pharmacist in their foundation training year? What would you highlight for them?

Leanne Murphy

Yeah, so I would say right from the beginning of the year, really take that time to familiarise yourself with the learning outcomes and the mandatory requirements of the training year and start thinking about how you're going to fit those in and spread them out across the year. It's a really busy year. Um, I think the training pharmacists need to take ownership of their learning, so they know what their areas for development are. They need to make sure that they're taking plenty of time to reflect and identify areas for, um, further development, work closely with their DS and DPP and speak up early if they have any concerns or equally if they have any ideas about something that would be supporting their development further and just remember that you can't do it all at once. So set short-term goals and check in on your progress regularly.

So, keep on being honest with yourself. So have a, a good take a moment to reflect and think about how things are going and adapt your plans so your plans are set out, but they, they can be adapted as the year goes on and just remember that it will be a busy year as well. So, I think it's, it's important not to forget to look after yourself and all of that. So,

make sure that they're planning in time to, um, for some downtime and looking after their own wellbeing as well.

Elsbeth Boxall

Thanks, Leanne. That is really good advice, really important. I mean, I remember it being a busy enough year when we did our pre-reg many, many moons ago and it sounds like it's gonna be a lot busier now. So really, it's important to be planning ahead and, and getting prepared. So, um, and I guess also, I mean for the DS and DPPs Gail, it's, it's quite a lot to take on board as well. So, if you were highlighting the top tips or take-home messages for the supervisors, what would, what would your top tips be?

Gail Craig

Yeah, so similar to the trainee pharmacists, get familiar with the requirements early on in the training year and make sure you understand particularly for those who've been involved previously, because for them it is a, it is a change to what's been expected previously. So, we are here to support and happy to be contacted if they're unsure of anything. But the key thing then will be to plan to attend that DS and DPP training that Leanne said, um, is going to be available, um, for the training year, and all of those dates will be on TURAS Learn and for people to get booked onto an appropriate date. Just thinking about involving your colleagues, this is not all down to, to one person who's taken on that, that DS or DPP role.

So, encouraging trainees to seek feedback from others through, um, the supervised learning events through feedback, through spending time with others, 'cause that's going to really, um, enriching that training. Um, the, the, the, the trainees are going to experience, um, if they're, they're getting that out that, um, out there and just plan early. So, the NES Curriculum and Assessment Strategy is available, the training plan programme frameworks are available.

So just thinking about how you're going to deliver that training plan to support your trainee, just to stay on top of all of those mandatory activities, um, as well. And just use the support that's available to you through your employer, through your peers, through NES, um, both the FTY team and the Clinical Skills and Prescribing team are all here, happy to support, um, people who are going to be taking on that really important supervisor role for the FTY.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's excellent Gail. Really, really helpful. We've had lots of really helpful tips there and very, very useful to get a better understanding of the whole background behind the changes, but also the preparation and support that has, is available for everyone involved in the training programme. So, I mean, ongoing, you know, as you've already alluded to, there's gonna be lots of ongoing support throughout the year and we are planning through NES to run a question-and-answer podcast episode and are keen to answer any questions that people have regarding FTY programme developments.

So, um, if people would like to submit a question, then we'll go to the meeting notes for this podcast and click on the link to submit your question. Um, and there'll also be questions and answers added to the Q & A document on the FTY pages, I think, which you guys are looking after. Um, so really all remains to say is a huge thank you to Leanne and Gail for taking the time today to explain all the, the background and also thanks to everyone listening, um, for your support for the FTY programme and hopefully you found this podcast useful to give you a bit of background and some helps and tips.

So, thank you everyone.