

Transcript

Elspeth Boxall

So, hello and welcome to the next in our series of NES Pharmacy podcasts. We're focusing still on Advanced Practice and today we are joined by Kim Moore who's from Ayrshire and Arran NHS Trust and has recently credentialed in Advanced Practice, while working between the education sector and primary care. So welcome, Kim, can you start by telling us a bit about your current roles?

Kim Moore

Hiya, yeah, of course. I should say I've actually got a couple of different roles, um, so, um, it's a bit more complicated. So, I work half the week for University of West of Scotland as a lecturer on their Independent and Supplementary Prescribing Modules, which are for NMC and HCPC registrants and on that I mainly teach Pharmacology and then the other half of the week I work in, as you said, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and I work as a Senior Prescribing Development and Education Pharmacist, which is a really varied role. So, I lead our local Experiential Learning as well as supporting, um, our kind of local pharmacists who are working towards their Advanced Practice and I'll also sometimes be involved in other things like our local FTY and Post Reg programmes as well as organising things like our local bite-size education sessions and somehow in amongst that I do manage to fit in a clinical session in Primary Care as well.

Elspeth Boxall

That does sound really varied and busy, Kim, so, um, sure it was probably quite challenging to think about fitting in your own Advanced Practice credentialing within that. So, what do you think motivated you to work towards an Advanced Practice credentialing?

Kim Moore

I suppose if I'm completely honest with you originally it was because I was asked to set up a peer support group around the time that GPCP framework was moving across and I was thinking about the RPS advanced practice accreditation and to be honest, it felt a little bit hypocritical to run the sessions without actually starting to work on the RPS myself, but actually, um, I was quite recently into that kind of education role at that point and I realised that getting the evidence across the different domains might actually help me to develop myself and become a bit more rounded in that role and as a pharmacist in general, and I guess once you actually get started with it and get past the initial stage where it feels really overwhelming, I actually found it was quite satisfying to start building up the evidence and the skills so, um, I actually really managed to get quite into it after the kind of getting over those first hurdles.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that's... I mean, that's what I think a lot of people find isn't it's just initially the, the initial overwhelm of it all. But yeah, what you've described is really motivating that it felt quite good once you, you got started and was there any particular resources that you really you found really did help you with that?

Kim Moore

Well, at the time when I was starting, which I kind of started about, um, I guess I started December, which would have been December 22. So, it took me about a year and a half to do it. So, at that time in kind of 2023, Ailsa at NES was running kind of drop-in sessions for anybody to come along to around kind of advanced practice and it kind of focused on different domains each time and that was really good because it gave you, it gave me some good ideas from what other people were doing and the suggestions that were given but it also helped to kind of break down the portfolio and make it feel a bit more manageable, so you could kind of focus on one thing at a time and it helped me to get my head around how much evidence was needed. It really hammered home to me that idea of quality over quantity because I suppose the temptation is to just throw everything at the portfolio and hope that that's a good idea, but actually it helped me to try sort of push towards kind of having less evidence that was more about the quality and I never really felt like I could look at the resources before that, like even looking at that RPS handbook for the portfolio, I think it's about 80 pages long and that really kind of felt quite intimidating and every time I'd open it, I'd be like nah I'm just going to close that again um, but once I started breaking it down into smaller chunks, it did feel a lot more manageable and then we had that kind of local peer support teams channel like within Ayrshire and Arran and that was good for just having, like, wee informal catch ups and people sharing resources and quite a lot of people had done the GPCP, so they were able to give some kind of advice about what that had to be like, and that was quite transferable across to kind of RPS.

I did find that as they started coming out that looking at the exemplars for the different types of SLEs, so there are some on the NES site, and there's some on the RPS site as well. I found they were quite helpful for kind of gauging the level I was writing at and trying to decide if my evidence was at the right level or kind of had written in enough depth, although I have to admit I did fit, I always find the RPS one's quite hard to find in the site and I always have to kind of rummage around until I can find them again, but they are definitely there and in some ways, I think because there was actually so many resources both on the RPS site and on the NES site, actually I tried not to let myself look at them for too long because I think you can just end up down a bit of a rabbit hole just looking at resources constantly and not actually doing anything, so I tried to just dip in to look up

something specific rather than just spending loads and loads of time kind of preparing and beginning almost getting overwhelmed by the volume of resources that were available.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that's, that's good advice actually. Again, just not letting yourself get overwhelmed by not making it too complicated. Just kind of using each resource as you require it but yeah, I mean, there's certainly a lot of resources on the, the NES website that we can direct people to and we will put links in at the end, but, um, I mean, I think you've probably touched on this a little bit already, but I mean what were the main kind of barriers you came across and how did you overcome those?

Kim Moore

I think I probably will be repeating myself a little bit, but I can't imagine I'm alone when saying that the hardest part was actually just getting started and not letting myself get overwhelmed by the different aspects of the portfolio. I think as well – because I was one of the first people in our board that was working on it – I think if there hadn't been the NES, NES sessions, it would have been quite tempting to give up because you're kind of doing it on your own and you're not quite sure what direction you're going on, but actually, see not knowing anybody else that was doing or as far along and not having that direction of what was the absolute best way to do it just kind of meant I got on with it and did it my own way and sort of okay there was the odd thing I had to change later on, but it actually kind of gave you a bit of freedom and I basically just worked through the SLEs one at a time, looked at the templates and tried to decide what I might actually be able to put in for that, that SLE. What might be a good piece of evidence for it, just in my opinion and then I'd go and find a collaborator and usually just be very honest, that I hadn't done one of these before and I wasn't quite sure how it was meant to work and then we would just generally work it out between the two of us, and to be honest, it generally worked out quite well that way, although I did soon, I'll admit, learn just how long completing a LEADER SLE took, so I did owe a few favours after that when we'd spent about an hour writing up SLEs for the LEADER ones, but most of them are a lot quicker than that, um, and I think because the portfolio can feel quite overwhelming, because there's the different domains and all the different SLEs and file uploads and different things to get your head around, I just picked a domain and stuck to that for the first few months.

So, for me and my role, I picked education and I was like, I'll just focus on those learning outcomes, make a wee list of the evidence I already have; try and fix it to learning outcomes and match it to try to use some different SLEs, so I had some varied evidence and that helped me just to feel a bit more like I actually knew where things were on the portfolio and I could semi-confidently remember what the different acronyms and things stood for and at that point I was like, okay, I'm ready to start looking at the rest of the

portfolio. I don't feel as overwhelmed by it now and I think with it being the five different domains, like, I think most people are not going to feel like they are equally confident in all the different domains, and I suppose that can put you off a little bit at the start.

Um, there is going to be a barrier I suppose to completing at least one of the domains, but I suppose for me probably in opposition to most people, some of my biggest challenges were actually the clinical domains, which I suppose are most people's bread and butter. I do, do a regular clinical session but it's such a small part of my working week that I was worried I wasn't advanced enough and then if I was, was it going to take me years and years and years to actually get my evidence? So, I guess for a start it's important to realise that you just need to be that entry level advanced in each domain and you might get feedback that your entry level in some domains and strong in others and certainly for me that's how my feedback came out, those first two domains, the clinical ones I accredited at entry level. I mean, I had still endeavoured to have that quality evidence that was showing some breadth but it was, of course, it was never going to be as strong as it is for someone who works their full week in clinical, um, and my strong, the domains I got accredited for with feedback saying that they were strong, ended up being education, which wasn't hugely surprising, and somehow – and I'm really still not quite sure on this – research, um, and of course, obviously everyone still needs to meet all the different learning outcomes and have that quality feedback.

But I think if I had realised earlier on in the journey about the fact that some of the domains were going to be accredited, you know, you could get credit at that entry level, um, I think that would have made it all feel a bit more achievable and like I would get there eventually. I think in the end it was probably sheer stubbornness that made me submit rather than necessarily being 100% sure I actually had enough evidence and I think once you know you're going to struggle to get evidence in a certain area, you just have to put yourself out there for opportunities like for example, in the practice I got my column changed and started seeing some patients face-to-face rather than via the phone.

Towards the end, I begged I think what I felt like every pharmacist I knew to either come and see me in practice or let me come to their practice and see one of their patients. I think by the time I actually submitted, I owed at least half a dozen people, opportunities for evidence in education or had SLEs to complete feedback for where I had promised to spend time with people. But honestly, working together to support each other really does make a big difference and I think it helps everybody to kind of come together and to be honest, there's a whole load of pharmacists in Ayrshire and Arran that helped and supported me to actually get my portfolio over the finish line. I think it's important to remember it is a bit of a team effort and everyone's supporting each other on that journey.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that's... it's a really a good way to look at it. I think, Kim, that's... it's really quite a positive experience from that point of view. Then it's, you know, it is a team effort, and you know you've, you've had help along the way, but then you're going to, to help others on their journey. So, you know really good for relationship building and networking and so that's just like almost, you know, and a bonus of, of the whole process really. So, some really good, good tips there, um, and I think just what you said about, you know, starting with maybe with some easy wins just to build your confidence with the, the practical side of the portfolio in an, in an area you're confident in; I think that's, that seems like a really, a really good way to approach it as well and I think what I wanted to ask a little bit about was obviously we've talked about the, the difficulties but and again, I think you've already probably alluded to some of this, but you know, having gone through this journey, what do you feel you have gained from the Advanced Practice journey? What has it given you as a pharmacist?

Kim Moore

I think probably confidence is the biggest thing: that ability to push myself to do something new. I mean, for those like leadership and research learning outcomes, how many times did I have to, like, put myself out to try something new, to do something new until it almost became natural to do that and to kind of stretch myself in my job and I think I have become more rounded in my roles as well and I like to think that in a small way I might also have supported a few other people in their, their journey, like loads of people supported me and hopefully I've also been able to support other people, which is a really nice feeling to have.

Um, and I think I'm now much more ready to reach out to someone I don't know than I ever would have been before. Like I would always feel really uncomfortable or unsure about reaching out to people I hadn't really met professionally. But now I feel like it's just like I see opportunities to build those relationships, which I think is great, and I've definitely, like, built my own and expanded my network of kind of professional contacts and stuff, um... and I think I've developed in my own role. I'm sure, hopefully, I'll keep continuing to do that, but I definitely feel like I've advanced my education strategies, my leadership abilities. I like to think I'm more open now to reflecting on what else I can do and what I can change within my practice and seeing that as that a good thing.

I even feel like as much as I struggle the most with this domain, probably I feel like I've developed clinically. I feel like I've pushed myself around working autonomously and again, reflecting and being honest with myself, maybe about why I wanted to pass something on or discuss with another healthcare professional and, like, looking back, I can admit that it probably wasn't always for the right reason. But I think I'm also become more

comfortable about the fact that even in primary care, where everything's sort of your business, not everything is going to fall within your scope of practice and that's okay. So, I think like it's, it's been really, I feel like surprised, like in a good way, I've developed in kind of across all the different domains and I've kind of felt, feel that's reflected and hopefully it will help me focus on how I can continue to develop myself. Definitely taking a little bit of a break now after doing the accrediting but hopefully, like, I'll help me keep wanting to develop myself and my career.

Elspeth Boxall

Yeah, that's a really good reflection, I think. As, as you said, like you've... something that you thought you were maybe, like, was your weaker point, you know you've really felt that's developed through doing this, which is, is obviously exactly probably what we're supposed to find and that, that is really positive that you have. So, I guess just to finish off, I mean you've given us some really good practical tips I think already Kim, but if you, you know, you really could give people your top tips for a successful advanced practice journey what would they be?

Kim Moore

I was actually asked this just after I've, I did finish my accreditation and I'm still going to stick with this one, which I always say whenever anybody asks me this question. I think a lot of what we're probably doing our roles already does fall into that advanced practice category and sometimes it's just trying to make yourself realise that what you're doing is already at that level and in my opinion, if you're having one of those days where everything is complicated, you're running horribly behind, that thing that you thought was going to take 10 minutes turned into an hour and a half of your life that is gone, then I would say console yourself. You might be having a bad day, you might be having an awful day, but you almost definitely have got something to write up in your portfolio. So scribble yourself a wee note and then when you're calmed down and you're not pulling your hair out, you can write up that evidence and certainly that's where I got tons of mine from as I'd like be like that just took me so long and then I'd be like, well, actually, I can write that up, that's a nice complicated case or that, that patient interaction, there's lots I can pull out of that and I actually found it also helped me to feel better about those days.

So, I would have previously categorised as bad and sort of written it off and then I would actually see I actually made a big difference; I did something that was worth doing in that day. So that would probably be one of my big ones, that can change a little bit how you maybe view some of your days and, and how they've gone, and I guess – and we've already sort of touched on this – but I would also really recommend trying to get local buy-in. If you're going to start doing your portfolio, make sure your line manager and your team know about it. Prepare them for the fact that you're going to inundate them with requests

for SLEs and opportunities to do things and even let them know that you're still trying to work it all out and it's going to be a bit of a work in progress.

Maybe even try your luck and see if there's someone you work with that might also want to work towards their accreditation as well, and I think it can help you feel a bit more confident about going ahead and asking for feedback if you know lots... everyone knows that this is what you're working towards and why you're doing it.

I'll admit that can sometimes come along with a bit of a mixed blessing and that people will send you emails all the time about things that you may want to be involved in for your advanced practice, it felt a little bit like going back to pre-reg and always hearing that phrase of that's a pre-reg job, do you want to go and do that, but it was good for getting evidence and getting opportunities that maybe you hadn't done or wouldn't have come your way otherwise. I was lucky my line manager was really supportive and she was really good-natured about us working together, about how to complete ACATs and LEADERS and expert mentor reports and all these different things and I was lucky as well that just in general I managed to get a really wide pool of respondents, but having their support made a huge difference and I think you probably need to do a little bit of that work yourself as well, just to get that buy-in and let people know what it is you're doing and what you're interested in and what's involved with it and really just do a little bit at a time.

Set yourself a goal; set yourself little deadlines so that you know that you're going to kind of keep working on it, but I would say don't worry too much if they start moving a little bit. Just keep setting a new deadline. Keep continuing doing a little bit of time. I originally told myself I was going to submit it in February, then had a look at my portfolio and had to be a bit more honest with myself; realised that was not realistic and said no, I'll definitely put it in in May. Then everything went up in the air between February and May and again I had to shift the goal posts to that August submission, but by that point I was so determined and essentially made myself a week-by-week plan of what I had to gather to actually finish pulling my portfolio together and admittedly, I think I was still completing MINICEXs about a week before I submitted, but having those deadlines, and even if you were moving them, it did just kind of keep me motivated and keep me like, thinking about it and on my agenda and I would say given that I was still completing those MINICEXs about a week before I submitted my final tip would be, and having really learnt this the hard way, is make sure that you do leave a few weeks at the end before submission for tidying up your portfolio.

I think when I met Ailsa a few weeks before I was submitting, she was probably a little bit horrified about what I had left to do, even though I had a plan. But she hid it very well and I did manage to submit and to be fair, it was actually only really in those last couple of weeks of doing the portfolio that I had to do any of the portfolio in my own time. I was really rigid about blocking off, even if it was just tiny wee gaps, for advanced practice in my

diary and as far as possible - obviously, it didn't always work but as far as possible – not letting them be the first thing to go when other stuff happened. I think at the end of the day you do have to prioritise the portfolio and make that time for it, even if you're only carving out a 15- or 20-minute chunk um, and I think that way it lets you just very slowly pick away the portfolio and start to see progress, even if it's just a small amount at a time. So, I guess that would be my, my main thoughts.

Elspeth Boxall

No, that's absolutely brilliant. Kim, I think. Yeah. You know, you've given us all a lot of really practical tips and hopefully we are all a little less overwhelmed now because, eh, you've given us those tips, so thank you very, very much for your time. We'll, we'll definitely put up the links to some of those resources to talked about on the, the NES website and I think also, I think you alluded to as well that it is really important for people to go away and find out what local support is available to them in terms of, there might be, you know, teams channels available or, you know, a local champion. So that's, that's another place for people to start, but have really enjoyed talking to you, Kim. You've been absolutely brilliant and really a great perspective on the whole advanced practice journey. So, thank you so much for your time. Thank you.

Kim Moore

Thanks, Elspeth.