

"Having worked in hospital pharmacy for 25 years, I applied for a senior clinical pharmacist post in general practice"

Steve worked in hospital pharmacy for 25 years but was keen for a lifestyle change and to use his medicines expertise in [primary care](#) ^[1].

Steve Williams

Senior clinical pharmacist

Employer or university

Westbourne Medical Centre and The Adam Practice



How I got into the role

Expand / collapse

I was particularly keen to use my wealth of experience to try and reduce some of the medicines-related harm that causes avoidable hospital admissions. Having worked in hospital pharmacy for 25 years, the NHS was introducing a major national pilot scheme for clinical pharmacists to work in general practice so I applied for a senior post on the beautiful Dorset coast.

What I do

Expand / collapse

There are five main aspects to this role. I:

1. deal with day-to-day clinical enquiries from clinicians such as GPs, nurse practitioners, district nurses about medicine choices for patients
2. update all the medicines on the GP computer system for patients over age 60 when they are discharged from hospital. This usually involves speaking to the patient themselves to check understanding of what has happened to their medicines, and sometimes the community pharmacy
3. work to improve the safety and efficiency of repeat prescription systems to help patients and the practice itself
4. use my medicines expertise and prescribing qualification to perform annual medication reviews for patients on multiple medicines, in particular patients in care homes
5. get involved in reviewing and improving the quality of prescribing, for example use of antibiotics to achieve initiatives set by local or national bodies such as [NICE](#) ^[2]

The best bits and challenges

Expand / collapse

My biggest success has been getting two other general practices in the area to employ a pharmacist within the national pilot scheme. The practices had been considering it for a while but, having me in the role, and my passion for pharmacists improving patient care, demonstrated to them just how important these roles are going to be in general practice.

The biggest challenge has been going from a senior role in the NHS to feeling as though I'm new again and going back to basics!

Life outside work

Expand / collapse

Moving to this role has meant a move to live by the sea and I love all the opportunities it has brought me and my family, for example dog walking, fishing, kayaking and swimming.

Career plans and top tips for others

Expand / collapse

I'm raring to go! I'm looking forward to helping more and more patients who take too many medicines now that I understand more about how things work in general practice and the GPs realise just how useful I can be.

I'm about to start participating in a research project, led by the University of Belfast, studying the benefits of clinical pharmacists working in general practice. It's exciting and I hope it will kick start getting a better understanding of the need for pharmacists in general practice to improve the care of patients who take multiple medications for several long term medical conditions.

If you're considering a career in pharmacy, or wanting a change from hospital or community pharmacy, I'd say you'll never look back! You'll be able to fully realise your potential as a medicines expert and the practice and the patients will be astonished about how much you know and how irreplaceable you are.

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/pharmacy/roles-pharmacy/pharmacist/real-life-story-steve-williams>

Links

[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Primary_care [2]
<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NICE>