

The Community Pharmacy Independent Prescribing Pathfinder programme

May 2024 update

What is the Independent Prescribing Pathfinder (IP Pathfinder) programme?

West Yorkshire ICB is part of the NHSE [Independent Prescribing Pathfinder \(IP Pathfinder\) programme](#). The programme has been introduced by NHSE to inform the commissioning framework required to introduce independent prescribing into NHS community pharmacy services. The IP Pathfinder will explore how community pharmacists and their teams can deliver an integrated clinical service aligning prescribing activity with general practice and the population needs of local communities.

This national IP Pathfinder programme provides the opportunity to influence the future of independent prescribing within NHS community pharmacy and to test the different ways that independent prescribing in community pharmacy will benefit patients and the public.

Developing the clinical skills of pharmacists as prescribers and pharmacy technicians with enhanced clinical skills to deliver clinical services is a key strategic aim for NHS England to create access for patients and enable capacity across primary care.

IP Pathfinder recorded event

Members of the WY IP Pathfinder Steering Group recorded an event to provide an overview of the West Yorkshire IP Pathfinder Programme. The recording can be accessed here:

<https://youtu.be/7shtCH8XHOc>



Programme update

Since our last update in January the WY IP Steering Group has been progressing the required governance, site assurance processes and developing the clinical models, alongside ensuring the community pharmacy IP Sites have the required support in place, including clinical and peer support for the independent prescribers, digital solutions, and operational matters such as prescribing codes. We are pleased to report that the key elements are now in place.

The community pharmacies participating in the programme, the IP Sites, have also been busy ensuring that they too have the required governance, processes, and procedures in place to provide independent prescribing. The majority of our ten IP Sites are either ready to go-live with independent prescribing or will be ready to go-live within May.

Due to a national delay in the provision of the Electronic Prescribing System (EPS) most of our sites have not been able to start actively prescribing for patients. This is impacting on all 42 ICBs participating in the programme. Whilst this delay is disappointing, we are using this time to work with our IP Sites to develop a non-prescribing model so support cardiovascular risk assessment.

The key purpose of the IP Pathfinder programme is to develop, implement and learn. The Steering Group also find it is helpful to remind themselves that this is a Pathfinder – so will face challenges and barriers as we develop the programme!

Pathfinder noun *path·find·er*

: one that discovers a way

especially: one that explores untraversed regions to mark out a new route



WY Community
Pharmacy Independent

Previous briefings can be accessed here

Feedback from our live IP Pathfinder Site

We do have one IP Site who has been granted national permission to use GP IT to provide the IP Pathfinder programme and following close collaboration with their local GP Practice are now live and providing IP consultations to patients.



The IP Pathfinder Programme is enabling us to make the most of the clinical skills of pharmacists as independent prescribers. Patients are benefiting from improved access and more streamlined care, while as a practice we can focus more on patients with complex needs.

It's been inspiring to see how the expanding role of community pharmacists can play in the detection, prevention, and management of conditions like cardiovascular disease. This is a huge win for patient care and population health management.

Pioneering this new model of care in partnership has certainly taken persistence and problem-solving along the way. Overcoming these initial challenges has taken shared effort but is paying off in a more connected local healthcare system for patients.

Dr Phil XIU, GP at Alwoodley Medical Centre



I am so proud and honoured to be part of this novel NHS IP Pathfinder service - leading the way to a brighter future for community pharmacy with increased job satisfaction, better utilisation of our skills and increasing primary care access.

The GP surgery has been very supportive in getting this IP Pathfinder off the ground and it has been a real collaborative achievement. Throughout the process we have walked in each other's shoes gaining mutual respect, building great professional relationships and a confidence in how capable as pharmacists we are to improve patient care. As a pathfinder programme and one of the first to go-live we did experience barriers and challenges, but we didn't give up but collaborated, sought support from others to help, we challenged every no, we offered solutions, and we didn't let it dampen our enthusiasm to reach the end goal; and we did it!!

Even at this early stage, I've already helped many patients which has released GP appointments for other patients. Using my clinical skills but also not forgetting the practical side for example, identifying a patient who isn't compliant instead of prescribing an additional medication to treat their condition. Occasional patients are still on guard regarding speaking to a pharmacist rather than a doctor, but once I explain we are part of a multidisciplinary team with different expertise and they have been navigated to the best healthcare professional to help them, I have them on-board; once the consultation is finished, they are thanking me for my advice and help.

Getting to this stage has been a teamwork effort of dedication and persistence, where everyone's skills, strengths and expertise have pulled together to launch this Pathfinder so one can only dream of the real benefits we will see in patient care and to our organisations when the IP Pathfinder Programme leads to something more permanent and widespread in the future.

Fiona Burns, Community Pharmacist and Independent Prescriber at Alwoodley Pharmacy