

## Case Study: Building Success with Pharmacy First

Todmorden Group Practice, located in Upper Calder Valley PCN (serving 16,064 patients), has been working closely with Amanda Smith, Advanced Service Facilitator at Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire (CPWY) to embed the Pharmacy First Service into everyday patient care. With support from Amanda at CPWY, the practice has enhanced their referral process, strengthened relationships with local pharmacies, and improved patient access to timely treatment.

### Feedback from the practice about the Advanced Service Facilitator support provided by CPWY

*"Engaging with Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire has been of benefit for our practice and our patients. The hands-on support from the CPWY Advanced Service Facilitator - from in-person training to ongoing, tailored guidance as our systems and processes evolved. Their practical expertise helped our staff build confidence, understand referral criteria clearly, and overcome early challenges with referral failures, while the integrated TPP in-workflow referral system has made referrals quicker. Pharmacy First is now an integral part of how we manage patient demand, improving access, streamlining care pathways, and freeing GP time for more complex needs. Working with CPWY has enhanced both our workflow and the care we deliver to our community."*

**This Pharmacy First support offer is available to every GP Practice within West Yorkshire.**

As part of the WY ambition that all WY GP practices should regularly make Pharmacy First referrals as part of Modern General Practice, West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board has worked closely with colleagues at CPWY to ensure there is expertise which can be deployed to GP practices that want to embed Pharmacy First as part of their access pathways.

CPWY has three Advanced Service Facilitators dedicated to support both GP practices and community pharmacies implement Pharmacy First, as well as other services such as the Hypertension Case-Finding Service (BP Check) and the Pharmacy Contraceptive Service.

The team can support with hands on and face to face support for all colleagues involved in these services. **Please get in touch with Phil Wiles [phil@cpwy.org](mailto:phil@cpwy.org) to book some support with one of the Advanced Service Facilitators.**

The case study below captures the key learning and reflections from Todmorden Group Practice in their experience of working with a CPWY Advanced Service Facilitator.

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### **Starting the Journey**

- The Advanced Services Facilitator for Calderdale, Amanda visited the practice to meet with Operations Manager, Antony Radley. They discussed the available pharmacy services and how the practice could use them more effectively to improve patient access.
- Amanda Smith visited the practice in February 2025 to meet their Patient Services Adviser (PSA) team and provide some additional training.
- In-person training has built confidence and understanding of how Pharmacy First could be used more successfully. The interactive session enabled the PSAs to discuss previous challenges they had experienced when referring patients into the service, increasing their understanding of how to apply the criteria for conditions which can be referred to community pharmacies.
- Early collaboration ensured staff felt supported and empowered to make referrals.

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### **Moving from First Referrals to Routine Use**

- Initially, the practice faced some referral failures but saw the benefit in working on these issues to strengthen their processes, alongside other professionals. Also, due to mixed success making referrals, confidence to make referrals was low (as they kept being sent back by the pharmacy). The additional training provided by Amanda, clarified the process and interpretation of the criteria. This led to more successful referrals which in turn, built confidence in referring.
- By staff improving their understanding of the detail of the referral criteria and how to present information clearly, the quality and relevance of the patient's condition was communicated more effectively to community pharmacy colleagues.
- Amanda acted as a conduit between the practice and pharmacies, helping both sides understand each other's processes and challenges. This support is available to all GP practices.
- This partnership led to a steady increase in successful referrals each month.

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### **Overcoming Barriers**

- The ability to have open and honest conversations with Amanda allowed any problems to be addressed quickly.
- Feedback loops between the practice and pharmacies improved referral success rates. This was well supported by Amanda.
- Lessons learned from early challenges were applied to similar patient cases, further strengthening outcomes.

## **Adapting Referral Processes**

- The PSA team have consistently used the automated system for referrals.
  - When SystmOne introduced its Pharmacy First updated system in Summer 2025, Amanda returned to provide further hands-on training and helped the PSA team to understand the new process, so they could continue to make referrals effectively.
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## **Benefits for Patients, Staff, and GPs**

- Patients benefit from quicker access to treatment for eligible conditions.
  - The PSA team is empowered to make referrals, freeing GP time for complex cases.
  - High quality conversations between the PSA team and patients about how the service works helps patients understand the value of Pharmacy First in improving access and reducing pressure on GP appointments, further allowing GP's time to see patients with higher acuity needs.
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## **Sustaining Growth**

- The PSA team is highly motivated by doing their best for the practice and patients, and they have enhanced their skills, confidently encouraging patients to use Pharmacy First Service.
  - Referral data is reviewed with Amanda when needed, ensuring the practice stay aligned with central reporting.
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## **Advice for Colleagues**

- Seek support from CPWY to engage with your local pharmacy contractors early.
  - Build strong communication channels with pharmacy colleagues.
  - Start small if needed, then grow confidence and referral numbers over time.
  - Remember, Pharmacy First improves patient access and strengthens collaboration across primary care.
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## **Looking Ahead**

- The practice monitor achievements monthly subject to the provision of data and recommends discussing achievements at regular intervals.
  - Pharmacy First is now a key part of the practice's solution to managing patient demand and see the importance of being focused on the benefits the service has to offer.
  - Ongoing collaboration between GP practices and pharmacies is essential to sustaining success and delivering the best care for your community.
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