

Survey of Pharmacists Working in General Practice 2019

Survey Aims

The main aim of the survey was to get a sense of how the primary care landscape has changed since the previous [survey from 2017](#) and how recent developments are affecting GP pharmacists.

There have been various developments across the four nations of the UK in the past two years - including the commitment in Scotland to pharmaceutical care through the Achieving Excellence Strategy, and most recently the announcement of the formation of Primary Care Networks (PCNs) in the new GP contract for England.

The survey focussed on five areas:

- Prior experience and cross-sector working
- Work patterns and employment status
- What the pharmacist's role is in the practice
- Training and supervision
- For those in England, the perceived impact on their role from the formation of PCNs

The survey was open for 5 weeks over May and June of 2019, and the link was distributed via email to our members, by social media, and disseminated to primary care contacts.

It was open to any pharmacists working in a GP practice: part-time or full-time, and regardless of employment status. Respondents did not have to be a PDA member.

Headline findings

66% of respondents were paid at a salary equivalent to band 8a or above (71% in England and 77% in Wales)

Over 50% of practising GP pharmacists in England have not had access to the 'Clinical Pharmacist' training pathway

Findings and Analysis

Demographics

We had 740 responses that were broadly representative of population levels across the four countries (proportionally slightly lower per head of population for England and higher for Northern Ireland).

% of UK population	Survey 2019	Population stats	Survey from 2017
England	81%	84%	77%
Northern Ireland	8%	3%	7%
Scotland	7%	8%	8%
Wales	4%	5%	8%

Whilst we don't know the exact number of pharmacists working in general practice, and therefore how representative this sample is, it can be assumed to be a good response based on:

- it appears to have been distributed widely across the UK
- from contact details left by responders we could ascertain that it reached non-members as well as members

Job title

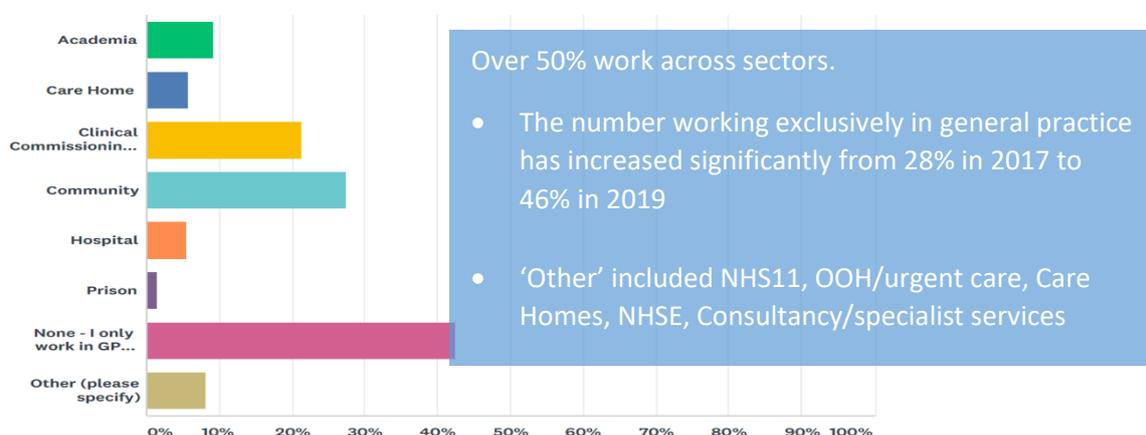
The job title varied considerably across the UK: In England the term 'clinical' was reflected in job titles for 43% of respondents. It appears to be used less in Scotland (28%) and Wales (23%) and barely at all in Northern Ireland where only 4% said it reflected their job title. Practice Pharmacist and Practice Based Pharmacist were the more commonly used titles outside of England.

Experience

Across the UK, over 90% had been registered for 5 years or more.

46% of pharmacists had been working in general practice for less than two years, which would indicate that significant numbers are moving into the sector. However, this has reduced since previous survey where it was 56%, suggesting a lower rate of recruitment.

Cross-sector working



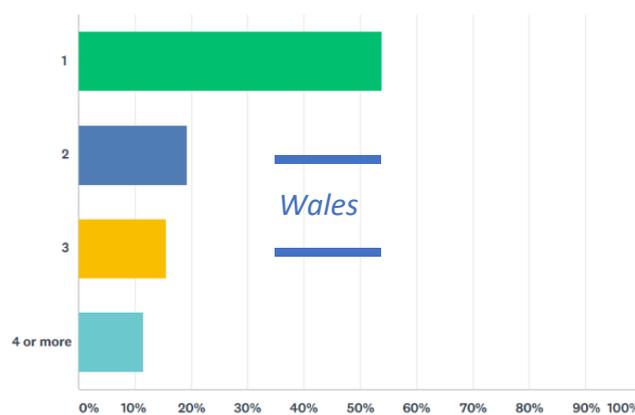
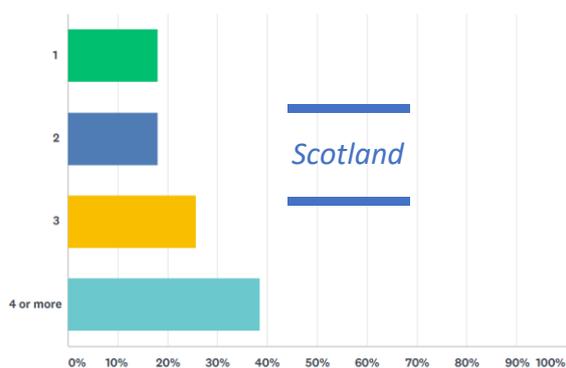
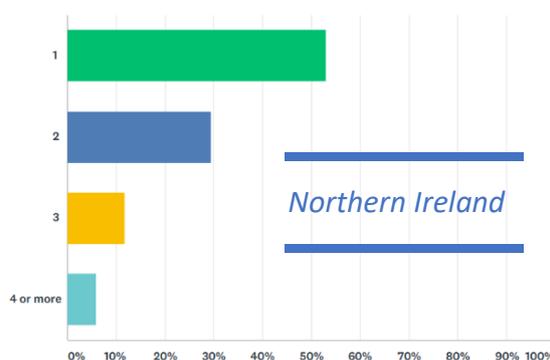
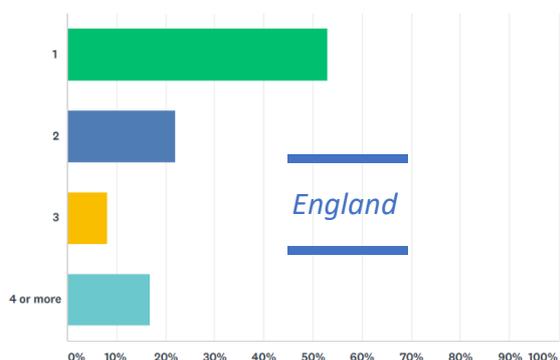
Number of hours per week working in a GP practice

The greatest variation was found to be in England compared to the rest of the UK with the largest proportion of full-time employment in Northern Ireland and Wales.

	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	UK
4 hours or less	1%	0	0	0	1%
5 to 16 hours	18%	0	13%	15%	16%
17 to 32 hours	36%	39%	31%	23%	35%
32 hours or more	45%	61%	56%	62%	48%

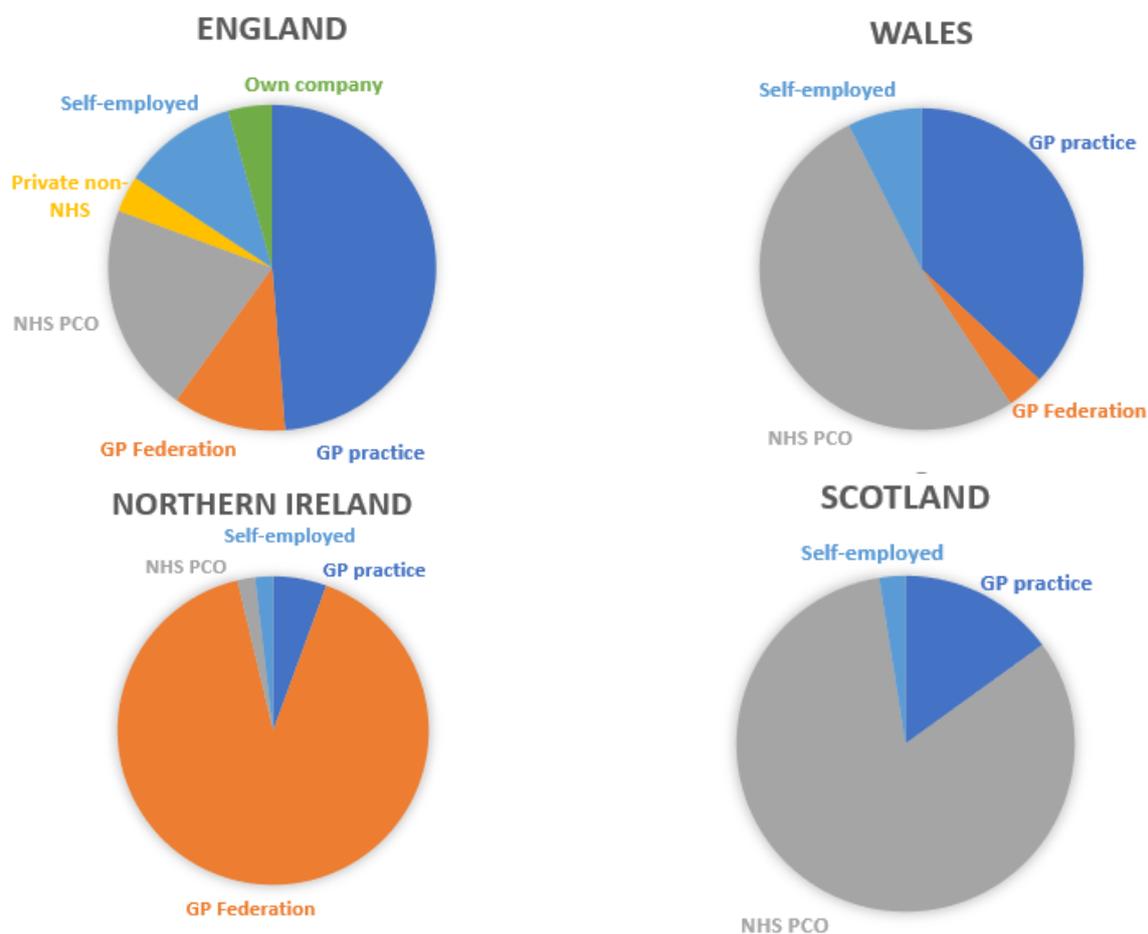
Number of practices worked in on a regular basis

Notably more multi-practice working in Scotland currently, but it will be interesting to see how Primary Care Networks in England impact on this in the future.



Employment Status

The greatest variation in method of employment was found to be in England – noticeably different to the other UK countries.



NB: NHS PCO (primary care organisation) would include Health Boards, Commissioning Services Units (CSU), Clinical Commissioning Groups, or NHS Trusts

Salary

Across the UK 66% of respondents were paid at a salary equivalent to band 8a or above. There is significant regional variation:

- England: 71% of respondents are paid at a salary equivalent to band 8a or above (24% as 8b or 8c)
- Northern Ireland: None of the respondents were paid above a band 8a; the majority (65% said that their salary was band 7 equivalent)
- Scotland: 51% paid at band 7 or equivalent and 44% at band 8a
- Wales: 77% of respondents were paid at a salary equivalent to band 8a or above (27% as 8b or 8c)

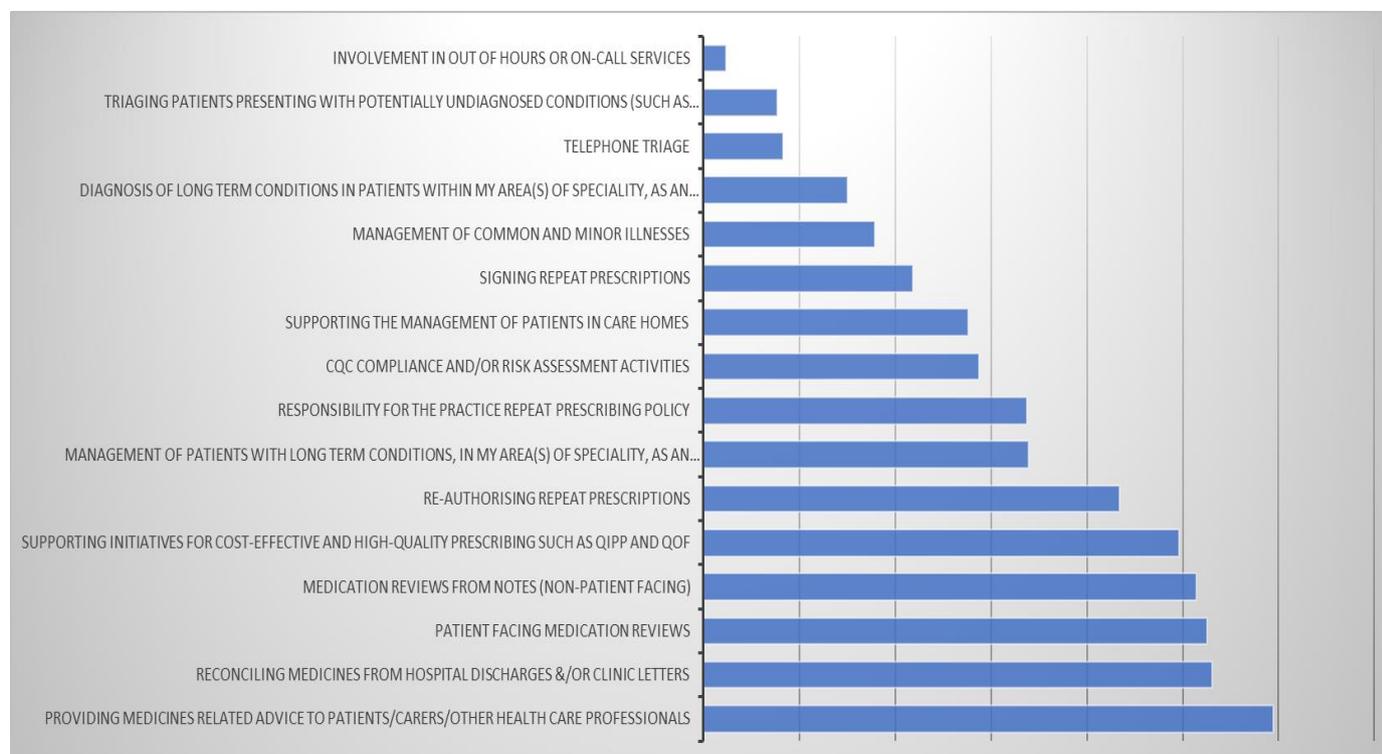
Training and Qualifications

Across the UK 85% of respondents were either independent prescribers (IPs) or working towards the qualification. The lowest proportion of IPs was in Wales (60%), and the highest proportion was in Scotland (97%).

Whilst 58% had a post-graduate qualification, or were working towards one, only 14% had pursued Advanced Clinical Practitioner training.

In England 48% have been, or are, enrolled in the CPPE Clinical Pharmacists or Care Home pathway and 37% stated that they were currently part of the programme. Notable that over 50% have not had access to the 'Clinical Pharmacist' training pathway. Especially in view of the results below which showed that the role in practices was very similar for all GP pharmacists.

Regular services provided in their role in GP practice



The most commonly provided services were:

- Providing medicines related advice
- Reconciling medicines from discharges and letters
- Medication reviews (patient facing and from notes)
- Supporting initiatives for cost-effective and high-quality prescribing

Very similar to the results from the last survey

Appraisals and Supervision

Across the UK 27% of respondents had never had a formal appraisal, but over 50% had one at least once a year.

80% felt adequately supported through ongoing supervision and training to carry out their role.

25% felt that they had been asked to expand their role into areas which they did not feel confident to undertake.

Reasons for inadequate supervision or training included:

- Lack of designated funding for clinical supervisor
- No universal access to national level training (exclusive to NHS funded roles)
- Lack of integration in the practices – particularly when working across more than one
- Lack of GP support or understanding as to the need for supervision

How pharmacists feel about their role

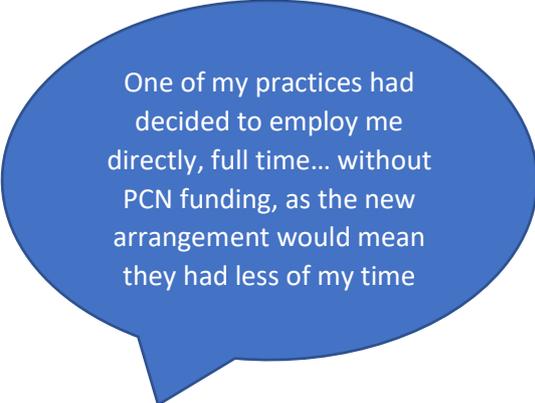
80% of respondents agreed that “The wider team at the practice(s) where they worked perceived their role as providing leadership on medicines related services and prescribing and 78% felt that they were regarded as the “expert in medicines” by patients.

Over two-thirds considered themselves as having a leadership role in promoting safe prescribing.

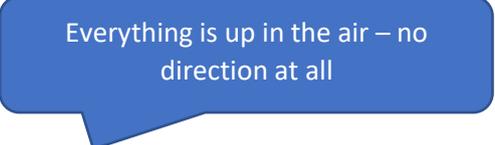
61% regularly recorded interventions in order to demonstrate their performance.

Survey participants in England were asked if they anticipated a change in their employment status due to the new GP Contract and formation of Primary Care Networks?

Whilst the majority of pharmacists (52%) did not think the formation PCNs would impact on their employment status many comments highlighted uncertainty and lack of clarity. Quite a few commentators stated that they were “not sure”, whilst some anticipated changes to their contract, employer and the nature of their work.



One of my practices had decided to employ me directly, full time... without PCN funding, as the new arrangement would mean they had less of my time



Everything is up in the air – no direction at all



I will have a new contract, my employer will change and my work may change