General Pharmaceutical Council

Unregistered pharmacy staff – Medicines Counter Assistant programme

National Pharmacy Association

Report of a reaccreditation event
November 2018

Event summary and conclusions

Provider	National Pharmacy Association
Course	Medicines Counter Assistant (known as Interact)
Event type	Reaccreditation
Event date	8 November 2018
Accreditation period	January 2019 – January 2022
Outcome	Approval

The accreditation team agreed to recommend to the Registrar of the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) that the Medicines Counter Assistant (Interact) programme provided by the National Pharmacy Association should be reaccredited for a period of three years. |
Conditions	There were no conditions.
Standing conditions	Please refer to Appendix 1
Recommendations	No recommendations were made
Registrar decision	The Registrar of the GPhC accepted the team's recommendation and approved the reaccreditation of the programme for a further period of 3 years.
Key contact (provider)	Leyla Hannbeck, Director of Pharmacy
Accreditation team	Ms Leonie Milliner, (event chair), Chief Executive Officer, Association for Nutrition

Ms Donna Bartlett, (accreditation team member - pharmacy technician), Locum Technician, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals

Dr Ruth Edwards, (accreditation team member - pharmacist), Head of Professional Experience, Aston Pharmacy School

Ms Laura McEwen-Smith, (accreditation team member - pharmacy technician), Principal Pharmacy Technician; Health Education Kent Surrey & Sussex Pharmacy Education |
| **GPhC representative** | Mr Chris McKendrick, Quality Assurance Officer, GPhC |
| **Rapporteur** | Mrs Jane Smith, Chief Executive Officer, European Association for Cancer Research |

Introduction

Role of the GPhC

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the statutory regulator for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and is the accrediting body for pharmacy education in Great Britain. The accreditation process is based on the GPhC's Accreditation and Recognition of unregistered pharmacy staff training programme(s) – interim guidance (September 2018).

The powers and obligations of the GPhC in relation to the accreditation of pharmacy education are legislated in the Pharmacy Order 2010. For more information, visit:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/231/contents/made

Background

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA), 'the provider', is a trade association for independent community pharmacy owners in the UK. It offers a range of support staff training courses and was originally accredited by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain to offer a Medicines Counter Assistant programme. The programme was reaccredited by the GPhC in 2011 and again in 2014. As a result of the 2014 visit, the NPA medicines counter assistant (Interact) course was reaccredited for a further period of three years. There were no conditions and the accreditation team identified as an area of strength the progress made by the NPA since the previous accreditation. This three year period was extended by a further year due to the GPhC consultation on the safe and effective pharmacy team.

In line with the GPhC's process, an event was scheduled for 8 November 2018 to review the programme's suitability for further reaccreditation.

Documentation

Prior to the event, the provider submitted documentation to the GPhC in line with the agreed timescales. The documentation was reviewed by the accreditation team and it was deemed to be satisfactory to provide a basis for discussion.

The event

The event was held at the GPhC offices in London on 8 November 2018 and comprised a number of meetings between the GPhC accreditation team and representatives of the NPA. A pre-visit meeting was held by teleconference on 26 October 2018 where the content of the submission and mapping of the programme was discussed.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Key findings

Section 1: The training programme

The team was satisfied that all four criteria relating to the training programme are met. (See Appendix 2 for criteria)

The programme is taught at RQF level 2 / SCQF level 5 or equivalent and meets the requirements of the following units of the Pharmacy National Occupational Standards (NOS):

- Unit 4 Provide advice on non-prescribed medicines and products – throughout Part A and B
- Unit 5 Receive prescriptions – Part A
- Unit 15 Assist in the issuing of prescribed items – Part A

The team reviewed the provider's mapping document (Appendix 3) which cross references the requirements of each of the three units of the national standards with the programme content. The provider had responded to the team's feedback prior to the event and provided an updated mapping document to confirm the amendments and additions that would be made to the materials. The team was satisfied that, with these changes, all areas are covered and are mapped appropriately.

The programme is delivered via distance learning, with students having the option of a paper or online version. It comprises two parts, Part A and Part B, which are both assessed formatively and summatively. Students work with a supervising pharmacist, part of whose role is to explain the relevance of the learned material with the workplace. The SVP signs a declaration on the front of each marking form, when submitting student assessments, which states that they have witnessed the student applying their knowledge in the workplace.

The programme and all assessments are developed by the provider's Education and Training Pharmacists, all of whom are registered with the GPhC. All students can work through the programme at their own pace, within a period of 6-12 months. Extensions are available for students who need additional time, up to a maximum of three years.

Section 2: Academic and management structures

The team was satisfied that all four criteria relating to the academic and management structures are met.

A full review of the programme is carried out annually by the programme team. If important or urgent developments are identified between these reviews, then a programme addendum is produced. This is published on the provider's website and students are informed.

Patients and the public are involved in the process of programme review at an organisational level via patient forums. Relevant feedback from these is passed to the pharmacy team and taken on board in developing the programme. Indirect feedback also comes from the provider's telephone advice service which takes calls from pharmacists around the UK.

The course assessments consist of:
- Inter-text activities throughout the two textbooks which are reviewed by the SVP. 10% of workbooks are sampled to ensure that marking is consistent and appropriate.
- Formative end of chapter multiple choice questions to be completed by the student once they have studied the relevant chapter. These are marked by the Supervising Pharmacist. Although the provider views these as formative assessments, as they must be passed in order to progress, they could be considered summative.
- Two summative assessment papers to be completed by the student once they have completed Part A and Part B respectively. These are marked in-house by the NPA Member Services team (for the paper-based course) or online by the Learner Management System (for the online

course).

The provider has processes in place to ensure the integrity and security of the assessments, given that there are a limited number of papers which are recycled. These include the monitoring of the online students forum to reduce the likelihood of information sharing.

A process in also in place in the event that a student is unhappy with the feedback provided by the supervising pharmacist in the end of course progress report. Supervising pharmacists are supported in making assessment decisions through a written guide containing a section on coaching and how to give feedback. Leadership training, which includes a section on giving feedback, is available through the provider and supervising pharmacists are encouraged to take this course if a need is identified.

There is a three-stage appeals process, with work re-marked from scratch at each stage, by the course lead, the QA pharmacist and finally the Education and Training Manager. Students confirmed that they are aware of the appeals process and of how to raise concerns more generally. Processes are also in place for dealing with suspected plagiarism or malpractice.

Students with special learning needs are identified through the enrolment process and arrangements put in place, taking into account, for example, whether the student has had a formal diagnosis with recommendations and any adaptions that have been made previously. The provider has a range of suggested adaptations and support mechanisms including extra time in assessments and allowances for spelling errors.

Section 3: Resources

The team was satisfied that all eight criteria relating to the resources are met.

The programme is delivered and managed by both the NPA Education and Training department and the NPA Member Services department, led by two senior managers. The Education and Training department is made up of a team of Education and Training pharmacists, a QA Pharmacist, an NVQ3 Centre Manager and e-learning developers. The Member Services department supports students and members, and provides administrative support for the programme. Staff involved with developing the course keep up to date with current educational and pharmacy practice by undertaking online learning and through contact with subject experts.

A workforce development strategy is being prepared for 2019 onwards which will outline the support and resources planned for each of the unregistered pharmacy staff training programmes. This will include a review of the names of the individual programmes. Any planned name changes must be notified to the GPhC before they are introduced.

The provider uses a bespoke customer relationship management IT system to record student data from the point of enrolment through to completion. This also records details of any calls, emails or letters regarding extenuating circumstances and requests for course extensions.

Students are issued with certificates in the GPhC's approved format within 14 working days of successfully completing the programme.

The student's in-store named Supervising Pharmacist is responsible for tutoring and mentoring the student, as well as marking the multiple choice assessments, and signing off the student after completing all modules on the End of Course Progress Report. The Supervising Pharmacist is provided with a detailed written guide at the beginning of the course. Students can also access support through the provider's head office, by telephone or email.

The majority of students are still choosing the paper version of the programme. A new e-learning platform will be launched in early 2019 which students will be encouraged to use. Some students indicated that they preferred the paper version of the course, noting that it is not reliant on internet access and also provides a resource to refer back to once the course is completed.

Students are encouraged to give feedback on the programme through an end of course feedback form. Robust processes are in place to act on feedback received. Students who had completed the programme confirmed that they were satisfied with the experience and had found the programme helpful and well-structured.

Appendix 1 – Standing conditions

The following are standing conditions of accreditation and apply to all providers:

1. The record and report include other comments from the team, and providers are required to take all comments into account as part of the accreditation process. The provider must confirm to the GPhC that required amendments have been made.
2. The provider must respond to the definitive version of the record and report within three months of receipt. The summary report, along with the provider's response, will be published on the GPhC's website for the duration of the accreditation period.

3. The provider must seek approval from the GPhC for any substantial change (or proposed change) which is, or has the potential to be, material to the delivery of an accredited course. This includes, but is not limited to:
   a. the content, structure or delivery of the accredited programme;
   b. ownership or management structure of the institution;
   c. resources and/or funding;
   d. student numbers and/or admissions policy;
   e. any existing partnership, licensing or franchise agreement;
   f. staff associated with the programme.
4. The provider must make students and potential students aware that successful completion of an accredited course is not a guarantee of employment.
5. The provider must make students and potential students aware of the existence and website address where they can view the GPhC's accreditation reports and the timescales for future accreditations.
6. Whenever required to do so by the GPhC, providers must give such information and assistance as the GPhC may reasonably require in connection with the exercise of its functions. Any information in relation to fulfilment of these standing conditions must be provided in a proactive and timely manner.

Appendix 2 – Accreditation criteria

GPhC accreditation criteria for unregistered pharmacy staff training programme(s)

Section 1: The training programme

1.a   For the MCA provision, the programme content is mapped to unit 4 (SFHPHARM04), unit 5 (SFHPHARM07) and unit 15 (SFHPHARM32).

1.b   For the DA provision, the unit(s) are relevant, specific and mapped clearly to the programme being developed.

1.c   For the MCA and DA 'combined' provision, the programme content is mapped to unit 4 (SFHPHARM04), unit 5 (SFHPHARM07) and unit 15 (SFHPHARM32) and additional units are relevant, specific and mapped clearly to the programme being developed.

1.d   The programme(s) is (are) aligned and thought to the Pharmacy National Occupational Standards (NOS) at RQF level 2 / SCQF level 5 or equivalent.

1.e   For each unit, the transfer of underpinning knowledge into the workplace is demonstrated through the use of a variety of methods.

1.f   Assessments have been developed by subject experts from the Pharmacy sector and directly relate to the relevant units of the Pharmacy National Occupational Standards (NOS) at RQF level 2 / SCQF level 5 or equivalent.

Section 2: Academic and management structures

2.a   Assessment process and strategies assure appropriate standards in assessment and that students are able to demonstrate fitness for purpose.

2.b   In the processes of programme review and development, the training provider has taken account of advances in pharmacy practice and developments potentially impacting on pharmacy.

2.c   Course regulations include procedures for appeals against assessment decisions.

2.d   Course regulations include procedures for dealing with suspected plagiarism and/or malpractice.

Section 3: Resources

3.a   Buildings, human, equipment, and other resources available to the training provider are sufficient for the effective delivery of the course to the numbers of students on the course, and overall.

3.b   Record keeping systems are able to generate data on candidates completing, completion rates, student sector of practice, and disability.

3.c   Systems are in place for issuing certificates of completion to successful students in the GPhC's approved format.

3.d   There is an appropriate mix of tutors, mentors and assessors.

3.e   The student has access to a personal tutor or tutors for academic guidance and pastoral care.

3.f   The student is instructed in the use of information resources.

3.g   There are adequate student feedback mechanisms in place.

3.h   The training provider seeks to provide the student with a positive learning experience.

Appendix 3 – Mapping

Unregistered staff training programme(s) mapping

Revisions to the mapping contained in the original submission were made by the provider before the event took place. These revisions have been incorporated into this Report.

4	Provide advice on non-prescribed medicines and products			
	General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Learning Outcomes			
	To demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this NOS, assistants should be able to apply:	**Name of document and unit/module number**	**Page number(s)**	**Accreditation team use only**
4.1.	A working knowledge of the Standard Operating Procedures and the importance of adhering to them at all times	Part A Chapter 1	19-45-	Maps
4.2.	A working knowledge of the importance of working within the limits of your competence and authority, when to seek agreement or permission from others and when to refer on to an appropriate person	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 3 Part A Chapter 4 Part A Chapter 5 Part B Chapter 6 Part B Chapter 7 Part B Chapter 8 Part B Chapter 9	6, 15, 19 -25 91 113 133 8, 14-15 38, 50, 55 68, 108	Maps
4.3.	A working knowledge of the current health and safety legislation and how it applies to	Part A Chapter 2	73-82	Maps

	the working environment			
4.4.	A working knowledge of the legal, organisational and policy requirements relevant to your role, the role of others in your organisation and the activities being carried out	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 2	19 – 20, 37-40 57 - 58	Maps
4.5.	A working knowledge of the relevant national and local guidelines, policies and procedures that are available and how and when they should be accessed	Part A chapter 1	19-22	Maps
4.6.	A working knowledge of the importance of adhering to information governance policies and maintaining confidentiality when sharing information about individuals with others	Part A chapter 1	24,57	Maps
4.7.	A working knowledge of the duty to report any acts or omissions that could be detrimental to individuals, yourself, colleagues or your employer	Part A Chapter 2	66, 67	Maps
4.8.	A working knowledge of the methods of enabling effective communication and supporting individuals to communicate their needs, views and preferences	Part A chapter 1	9-11	Maps
4.9.	A working knowledge of the when and how to use the relevant protocols for the safe sale of medicines	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 4 Part A Chapter 5 Part B Chapter 6 Part B Chapter 7 General advice throughout all clinical chapters of the course	16-17 112 132, 142 7, 13 37	Maps
4.10.	A working knowledge of the main actions and side effects of the active ingredients within the most commonly used non-prescription medicines	Part A Chapter 3 Part A Chapter 4 Part A Chapter 5	89, 92, 93, 94, 95-100 116, 117-128, 129 134-136 137	Maps

		Part B Chapter 6	18, 26, 140-143		
		Part B Chapter 7	36, 38-39 43-44, 46, 65, 70, 73 74,		
		Part B Chapter 8	84, 9196, 104-106,108-109, 111,		
		Part B Chapter 9			
4.11.	A working knowledge of the different classes of medicines	Part A Chapter 1	12-15	Maps	
4.12.	A working knowledge of the interactions, cautions and contraindications of commonly used non-prescribed medicines	Part A chapter 3 Part A Chapter 4 Part A Chapter 5 Part A chapter 6 Part A chapter 7 Part A chapter 8	Done by topic, each topic will have mention	Maps	
4.13.	A working knowledge of the which medicines or products are liable to misuse or abuse by individuals	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 3 Part A Chapter 5 Part B Chapter 9	15 96, 97 135 84, 114	Maps	
4.14.	A working knowledge of the how to give advice on the appropriate use of non-prescribed medicines and products	Part A chapter 3 Part A Chapter 4 Part A Chapter 5 Part A chapter 6 Part A chapter 7 Part A chapter 8	Done by topic, each topic will have mention	Maps	
4.15.	A working knowledge of the how to maintain the privacy of the individual when asking questions related to their needs	Part A Chapter 5 Part B Chapter 6	133 11	Maps	

4.16.	A working knowledge of the use of appropriate questioning techniques to obtain relevant information	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 4 Part A Chapter 5 Part B Chapter 6 Part B Chapter 7 General advice throughout all clinical chapters of the course	16-17 114 133, 7, 13 37	Maps
4.17.	A working knowledge of the divergent needs of individuals	Part A Chapter 1 Also embedded throughout all clinical chapters (ch3-ch9 inclusive)	9, 15, 10-12	Maps
4.18.	A working knowledge of the sources of information that can be accessed and the information that can be given to individuals by you and other colleagues	Student Guide Part A Chapter 1	 19, 31-35,57	Maps
4.19.	A working knowledge of the when you should refer for information/advice and to whom	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 3 Part A Chapter 4 Part A Chapter 5 Part B Chapter 6 Part B Chapter 7 Part B Chapter 8 Part B Chapter 9	15 89,91,96 107,109,110,113,114,115, 117,127,133,135,136 7,8,13,14,18 3648,49 , 50,52,53, 55,56 64, 65,66,70,71 ,74,75,76 85, 89,91,, 100, 108	Maps
4.20.	A working knowledge of the importance of recording, storing and retrieving information in accordance with organisational procedures	Part A chapter 1 Part A chapter 2	15, 24, 43 52, 57, 80	Maps

5	Receive prescriptions			
	General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Learning Outcomes			
	To demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this NOS, assistants should be able to apply:	Name of document and unit/module number	Page number(s)	Accreditation teams commentary
5.1	A working knowledge of the Standard Operating Procedures regarding the receiving and retrieving of prescriptions and the importance of adhering to them at all times	Part A Chapter 1	25,29- 31	Maps
5.2	A working knowledge of the importance of working within the limits of your competence and authority, when to seek agreement or permission from others and when to refer on to an appropriate person	Part A Chapter 1 Also embedded throughout all clinical chapters (ch3-ch10 inclusive)	15, 22-25	Maps
5.3	A working knowledge of the current legislation relating to prescription charges and exemptions and differences in practice across the UK	Part A Chapter 1	31-33	Maps
5.4	A working knowledge of the legal, organisational and policy requirements relevant to your role, the role of others in your organisation and the activities being carried out	Part A Chapter 1 And throughout both Part A and B	5 8, 79-80	Maps
5.5	A working knowledge of the relevant national and local guidelines, policies and procedures that are available and how and when they should be accessed	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 2	19-45 48-62 79-80	Maps
5.6	A working knowledge of the importance of adhering to information governance policies and maintaining confidentiality when sharing	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 2	24, 25, 41 57	Maps

	information about individuals with others			
5.7	A working knowledge of the duty to report any acts or omissions that could be detrimental to individuals, yourself, colleagues or your employer	Part A Chapter 2 Part A Chapter 1	66, 67 25-31	Maps
5.8	A working knowledge of regulations and procedures relating to different types of prescriptions and medicines	Part A Chapter 1	26- 30	Maps
5.9	A working knowledge of methods of enabling effective communication and supporting individuals to communicate their needs, views and preferences	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 2	9-11 63	Maps
5.10	A working knowledge of the different types of prescribers	Part A Chapter 1	26-27	Maps
5.11	A working knowledge of the different types of prescriptions and when they are used	Part A Chapter 1	26-30	Maps
5.12	A working knowledge of the different ways of receiving prescriptions	Part A Chapter 1	30	Maps
5.13	A working knowledge of the details required on a prescription and why they are necessary	Part A Chapter 1	28-30	Maps
5.14	A working knowledge of exemptions and how individuals can claim refunds, including the use of official forms and prepayment certificates	Part A Chapter 1	32-34	Maps
5.15	A working knowledge of the transactional and administration procedures as required by government regulations and those that apply to your workplace	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 2	-25, 26, 30, 31, 33-36, 39 74-83	Maps
5.16	A working knowledge of the importance of recording, storing and retrieving information in accordance with organisational procedures	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 2	24, 35-36, 41,43 51,56,57	Maps

15	Assist in the issuing of prescribed items			
	General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Learning Outcomes			
	To demonstrate knowledge and understanding in this NOS, assistants should be able to apply:	**Name of document and unit/module number**	**Page number(s)**	**Accreditation team use only**
15.1	A working knowledge of the Standard Operating Procedures and the importance of adhering to them at all times	Part A Chapter 1	35-41	Maps
15.2	A working knowledge of the importance of working within the limits of your competence and authority, when to seek agreement or permission from others and when to refer on to an appropriate person	Part A Chapter 1	, 29-35 35-36	Maps
15.3	A working knowledge of the current health and safety legislation and how it applies to the working environment	Part A Chapter 2 Part A Chapter 1	53, 73-74 37, ,	Maps
15.4	A working knowledge of the legal, organisational and policy requirements relevant to your role, the role of others in your organisation and the activities being carried out	Part A Chapter 1	6, 35-39	Maps
15.5	A working knowledge of the relevant national and local guidelines, policies and procedures that are available and how and when they should be accessed	Part A Chapter 1	6, 35-39	Maps
15.6	A working knowledge of the importance of adhering to information governance policies and maintaining confidentiality when sharing information about individuals with others	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 2 Part A Chapter 1	24 57 25,26	Maps

15.7	A working knowledge of the duty to report any acts or omissions that could be detrimental to individuals, yourself, colleagues or your employer	Part A Chapter 2 Part A Chapter 1	66, 67 35,36	Maps
15.8	A working knowledge of methods of enabling effective communication and supporting individuals to communicate their needs, views and preferences	Part A Chapter 1 Also embedded throughout all clinical chapters (ch3-ch9 inclusive)	9-10	Maps
15.9	A working knowledge of the current ethical and legal requirements that govern the issuing of a prescription	Part A Chapter 1	7-8, 11, 24,25,28, 29, 35-39, 41	Maps
15.10	A working knowledge of the importance of confirming the individual's identity before issuing dispensed items	Part A Chapter 1	33-35	Maps
15.11	A working knowledge of the importance of providing relevant information on the prescribed item within your scope of practice	Part A Chapter 1 Part A Chapter 1 Also embedded throughout all clinical chapters (ch3-ch9 inclusive)	30 32 37-39	Maps
15.12	A working knowledge of how medicines are administered and how to safely store them	Part A Chapter 1 Also embedded throughout all clinical chapters (ch3-ch9 inclusive)	36-38	Maps
15.13	A working knowledge of the importance of ensuring that the appropriate packaging is used for issued medication	Part A	37	Maps
15.14	A working knowledge of the importance of recording, storing and retrieving information in accordance with organisational procedures	Part A Part B	34, 41, 43, 53, 57 121	Maps

Assessment summary		
Assessment method	**Pass mark**	**Weighting**
End of Chapter MCQ	70%	30%
Part A and Part B summative MCQs	80%	70%
Total		**100%**