

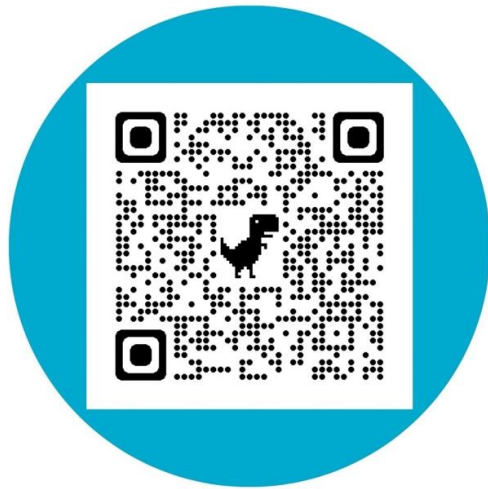
Introduction to the NHS Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS)

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Head of the NHS SPS

26th September 2024

The first stop for professional medicines advice

Register with the website



Register by scanning
the QR code
or visit
[www.sps.nhs.uk/
register/](https://www.sps.nhs.uk/register/)



Objectives

- How we came about
- Describe the role within SPS as an NHS England commissioned service
- Describe the resources SPS have which support front line staff

VISION & MISSION – TO BE THE FIRST-CHOICE PROVIDER TO THE NHS OF INFORMATION AND EXPERT ADVICE ABOUT MEDICINES AND THEIR USE

Supports the NHS to develop best practice systems of work related to buying, making and using medicines

Provides leadership, instructive and informative specialist input and operational support to the sourcing, supply and use of medicines across the system

Strengths borne out of connecting national expertise with policy teams and arm's length bodies to ensure consistency and high standards

Supports both regional and local connections to ensure outputs resonate with and support local NHS organisations which deliver care to patients

What year was Specialist Pharmacy Services formed?



What year was Specialist Pharmacy Services formed?

1974



**Specialist
Pharmacy
Service**

- There was no reason why pharmaceutical services in some of the smaller hospitals should not be provided from larger centres.
- The small scale upon which the work of pharmacists has hitherto being organised has led to a duplication of effort, inflexibility in the deployment of resources, lack of economy of manpower, materials and equipment.
- Regional advisory committee of pharmacists would be able to ensure that pharmaceutical activity was co-ordinated on a regional basis

NOEL HALL 1970

Operational productivity and performance in English NHS acute hospitals: Unwarranted variations

An independent report for the Department of Health
by Lord Carter of Coles

1974

Historical Disciplines

- Medicines Procurement
- Medicines Information
- Medicines Evaluation
- Pharmaceutical Quality Assurance
- Quality Control
- Medication Use and Safety
- Radio-pharmacy

2014

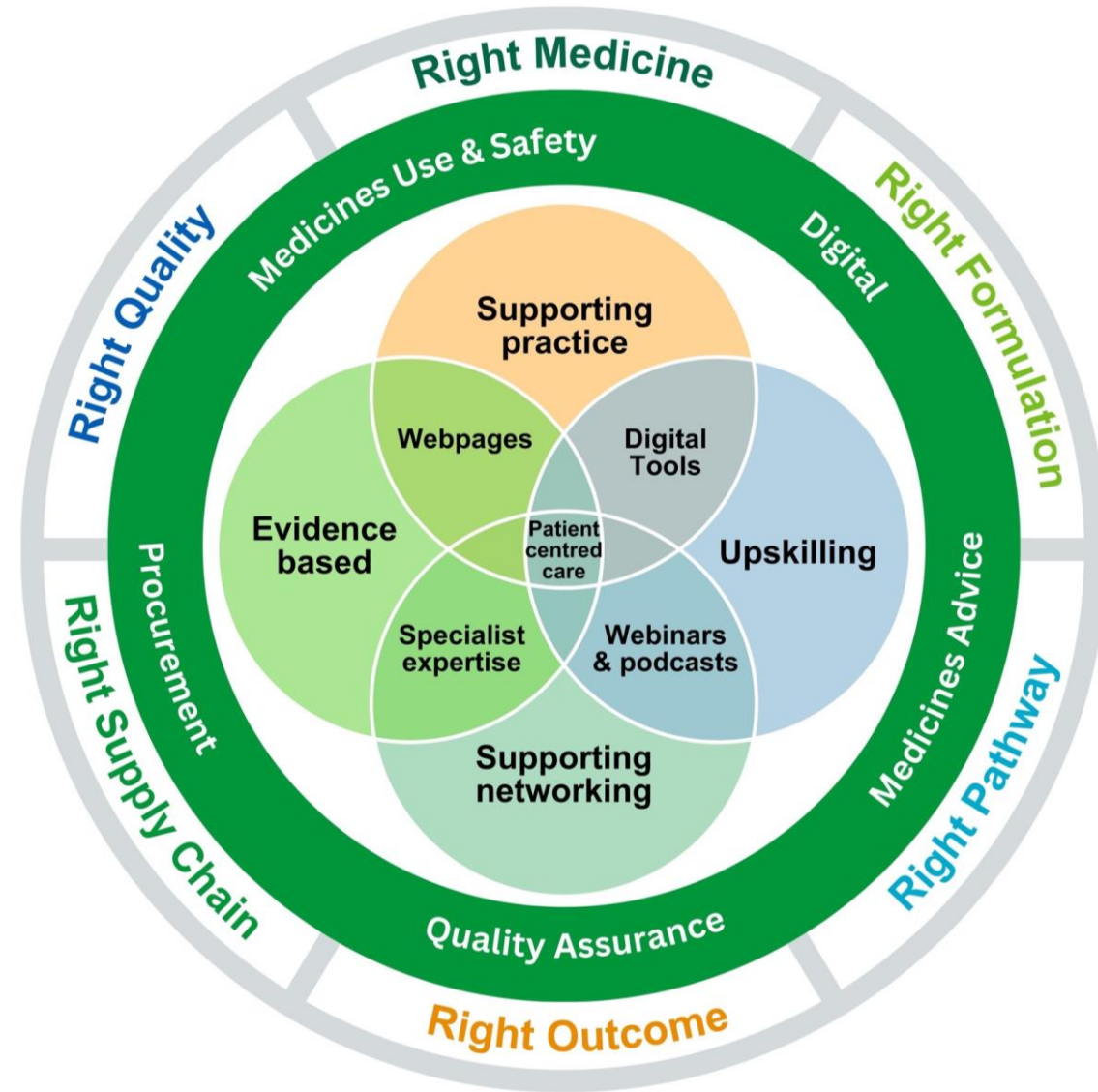
The Review of Specialist Pharmacy Services in England (May 2014)

A single NHS Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS) that is commissioned nationally deployed regionally and more locally and delivered through three core functional groupings

- Medicines Information
- Medicines Assurance (Pharmaceutical Quality Assurance and Procurement)
- Medicines Safety

Working together to do once and share

- Commissioned by NHS England
- ~100 WTE pharmacists, pharmacy technicians & support staff
- Employed by one of several host provider Trusts in England
- Span all 7 NHS England regions
- Develop best practice systems of work relating to buying, making and using medicines





SPS in numbers

Doing once for the system during 2023/24

7.6 million

page views on the SPS website
400-500 website visitors every 30 minutes
during working hours

60k

registered website
users

32k

horizon scanning updates
underpinning SPS and
NHSE Medicines Value
and Access team outputs

£640k

cost avoidance in staff time
using the SPS fridge tool to
access information not in the
SPC

1001

Medication Safety Activists
attended a Safe Use of Valproate
webinar, sharing best practice
across the system

74

National PGD/protocol templates
maintained and available for use, 23
of which enabled the Pharmacy First
consultation service to 'go live'

560

Patient Group Direction
(PGD) queries answered

80%

of NHS Trust aseptic units use
iQAAPS to record external
audits, identifying common
and emerging themes

16,248

views of unlicensed medicines
resources supporting patient-
centred treatment decisions

11,051

views of pharmaceutical
waste resources supporting
sustainability

£70.4 m

saved by supporting
implementation of 7 key generic
and biosimilar molecules across
secondary care

Medicines Advice Team (MA)

We provide specialist advice about medicines for health care professionals and policy makers. We are able to offer the NHS a “do once and share” approach and an individual patient approach.

Medicines
Optimisation

Supply Chain

Horizon
Scanning

Medication
Safety

Clinical Advice

Clinical Enquiry Answering

Medicine
queries for
HCPs

Support to
PCNs, GPs,
ICBs

System
intelligence for
proactive work

Providing individualised support to primary care professionals in a timely and efficient manner to deliver safe, effective and cost-effective use of medicines.

Enquiry answering service



0300 770 8564



asksp.s.nhs@sps.direct



www.sps.nhs.uk

- Healthcare professionals in primary care (including community pharmacy) in England can get in touch using a single contact number & email address
- We're open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Medicines
Advice
Service
2023/24

1.4 million
page views

75 webpage
updates

192 medicines
supply issues
handled

1,500
breastfeeding
pages
reviewed

Horizon
scanning advice
for 200+
medicines

12 Evidence
summaries to
support MSOs

50 Weekly
Update emails
produced

8,600 enquiries
answered for
health care
professionals

200 Medicines
Awareness
Daily bulletins
published



Specialist
Pharmacy
Service

@NHS_SPS

pharmacy-service

Supply Chain Support

Outputs that support the system to access cost-effective medicines and achieve financial recovery.

Biosimilar
webpages

Generic switches
pages

Clinical advice
on shortages

Advice on
Medicine Supply
Notifications

Recommended across the site

Preparing to use ustekinumab biosimilar

Introducing biosimilar ustekinumab needs planning. Work with the multidisciplinary team to ensure familiarity with the area and develop an implementation plan.

Ustekinumab · 16 July 2024

Good governance when implementing ustekinumab biosimilar

Governance should consider processes for approval, procurement and supply, prescribing and administration, monitoring, and pharmacovigilance.

Ustekinumab · 2 August 2024

The licence and supporting evidence for ustekinumab biosimilars

Ustekinumab biosimilars (Pyzchiva, Uzpruvo, Wezenla) are licensed. Learn about the indications, available formulations, supporting evidence and differences.

Ustekinumab · 2 August 2024

Prescribing and using thiamine to prevent refeeding syndrome

Intravenous thiamine for prevention of refeeding syndrome should be reserved for those with intestinal failure where the oral or enteral route is unavailable.

Thiamine · 2 May 2024

Using and prescribing thiamine in alcohol dependence

Intramuscular and intravenous thiamine can be used to prevent complications of alcohol dependence such as Wernicke's encephalopathy.

Thiamine · 6 June 2024

Prescribing and ordering available pancreatic enzyme replacement therapies

The availability of pancreatic enzyme replacement therapies (PERTs) varies currently. Use our resources and mini-tool to find matches for licensed products.

Supply · 17 July 2024

Prescribing available medicines to treat ADHD

The availability of medicines used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) varies currently. Supply content is maintained regularly by DHSC.

Supply · 27 September 2023

Horizon Scanning Service

Prescribing
Outlook

Horizon
scanning
database

Bulletins

Supporting NHS providers, ICBs and NHSE in financial planning, recovery, innovative pricing strategy, and development of government strategies.

Medicines Use & Safety Team (MUS)

Supporting the safe use of medicines across the NHS by providing resources and outputs that prevent duplication, and by developing and facilitating professional networking opportunities.

**Medicines
Governance**

**Medicines
Safety**

**Medicines
Optimisation**

**Medicines
Network
Leadership**

Medicines Governance

- Subject matters experts in PGDs & medicines mechanisms
- Develop & maintain template PGDs, including Pharmacy First PGDs
- Medicines Policy & Governance principles

Medicines Optimisation

- Subject matter experts in primary care, mental health & multimorbidity
- Develop & deliver resources for the pharmacy workforce to support clinical decision making
- Medicines Optimisation Opportunities

Medicines Safety

- Lead Medication Safety Officer Network
- Inform & inspire medication safety initiatives across the system
- Develop resources to reduce risk associated with medicines

Medicines Network Leadership

- Working across all workstreams to facilitate networking opportunities
- Develop & deliver webinars, podcasts and videos

Medicines Governance

Patient Group Directions

74 national PGD & protocol templates maintained with an estimated national cost avoidance of £1.7million; 560 PGD queries answered



Pharmacy First

23 national PGDs & 1 protocol developed, supporting NHS England key objective



PGD explainer videos

short videos about PGDs & medicines mechanisms, & their use in practice



Pharmaceutical Waste

11,051 views of these resources, supporting sustainability & the green agenda



Unlicensed medicines

16,249 page views supporting patient centred treatment decisions

Medicines Safety

- MSO Support – 8 MSO webinars and 3 Medication Safety Across the System (MSATS) webinars; 22 buddy partnerships put in place



- MSATS – safe use of valproate – if one of the 1001 webinar attendees made an intervention that prevented one unintended pregnancy, the cost avoidance could be up to £2.5million
- Resources published to outline risks with rasburicase and with liquid oral phenobarbital



2709
HCPs
attended
the webinars



73.6% were
pharmacists
or pharmacy
technicians



403: average
message in
the chat per
webinar



Recordings
were accessed
1229 times up
to the end of
Mar '24



Associated
resources were
accessed **3692**
times up to the
end of Mar '24



91%: very
happy/happy
with the
usefulness of
the webinars



87% stated
that webinars
had met
expectations



99% would
recommend
webinars to a
colleague



Of MSOs were
happy with the
proposal to replace
a regular webinar
with an MSATS

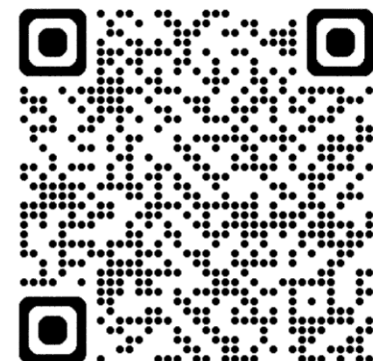
Medicines Optimisation



Information
resources for
managing
medicines in liver
impairment



Defining and
understanding
medication
adherence



Pharmacy technician
coffee break
conversations
podcasts



Antidepressant
switching

Medicines Networking Opportunities

Webinars & Events

6166 attendees at 15 webinars, with 98% willing to recommend our events to a colleague

Webinar resources

Our webinar recordings and associated resources have been viewed almost 7000 times

Facilitating networking opportunities

200-1000 attendees & 200-450 chat messages per webinar

On the couch webinars

Informal discussion between primary care & specialist pharmacists on a specific topic, attendees join in via a facilitated chat box. Popular format: interactive, responsive, minimal speaker preparation



Exemplar: Webinars and Podcasts

➤ Webinars

- **5 June: Navigating difficult conversations with confidence** – explores why conversations with patients and colleagues can be challenging. Speakers will share insights and strategies to enhance confidence.
- **26 June: Managing complexities of medication use across care boundaries** – exploring the risks for patients on complex or specialist medicines moving across care boundaries with a focus on strategies to reduce harms.



➤ Podcasts:

- **Pharmacy technician podcast series:** further discussions with Pharmacy Technicians about their roles and the difference ways they provide patient care.
- **Managing liver impairment:** delivered in collaboration with the British Hepatology Pharmacy Group.

Quality Assurance Team (QA)

Providing specialist quality assurance and improvement advice to pharmacy professionals who make, store, distribute and source medicines to support safe patient care

Making Medicines

- Audit of Aseptic units
- Supporting regulatory inspections
- Outreach support
- Regulatory advice
- Extemporaneous dispensing

Purchasing medicines

- Supporting national contracts
- Unlicensed medicines
- Defective medicines
- Liaison with regulators
- Purchasing for quality & safety

Storage & Distribution of medicines

- GDP support to NHS stores
- Safe & secure handling of medicines
- Cold chain
- Temperature excursions

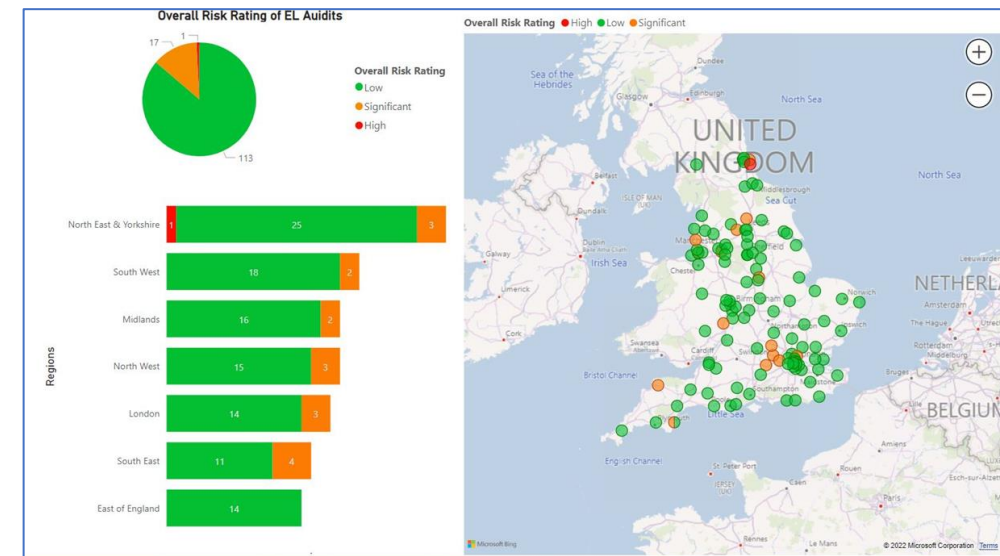
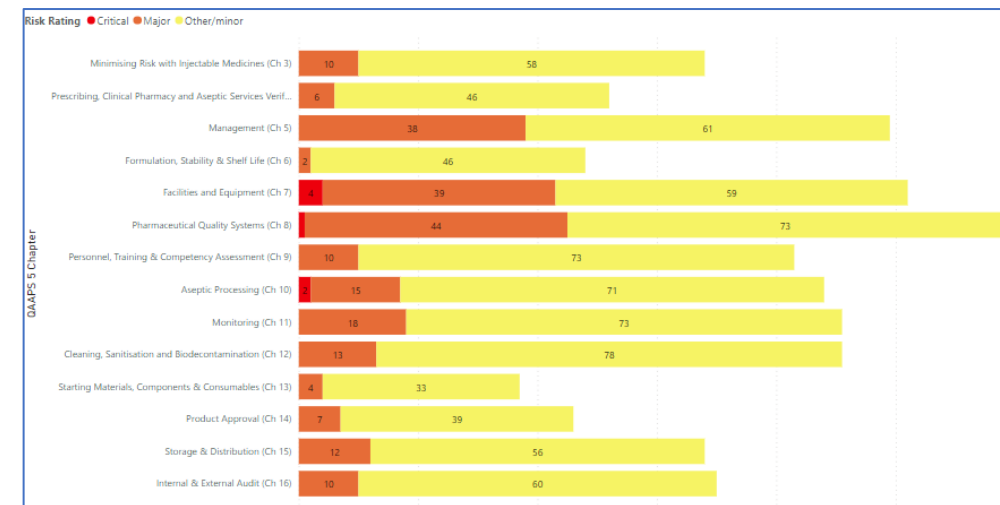
iQAAPS

What is iQAAPS:

- iQAAPS is a digital system to support oversight and external audit of unlicensed NHS pharmacy aseptic preparation.

Benefits of iQAAPS:

- It provides a live picture of the current risk status of aseptic units across the country, with situation reports available to key stake holders including RQA's, RCPs, SPS leads and CQC.
- Trends in common audit deficiencies can be identified and used to inform development of SPS resources e.g. guidance, example SOPs and training videos.
- Units submit monthly quality indicator data into the system, allowing benchmarking of services and assurance that units are in a state of control.



Temperature control for medicines

Situation:

Many enquiries about effects of temperature excursions on medicines

- Covid vaccines
- High value medicines
- Short supply medicines
- Refrigerated and ambient
- In pharmacy and in clinical areas

Temperature control



Temperature monitoring



Webinar



SPS QA response:

“Prevention is better than cure!”

- Project team approach cross-SPS
- Developed series of articles
 - understanding temperature control
 - fridges, freezers and ambient storage
 - transport
 - validation and mapping
 - monitoring
 - managing excursions
- Live webinar on temperature control (recording available)
- Continue responding to individual requests for advice

Numbers:

Web page views: **21,618**

Webinar attendees: **490**

Webinar views (total users since 18/4/24): **7,899**

Next steps:

- Additional resources for managing excursions



Strategic

NHSE

DHSC

MPSC
(CMU)

Spec
Comm

SPS Procurement

SPS Procurement

SPS Procurement

SPS Procurement

Hospital
Trusts

Pharmacy
Procurement
Teams

Chief
Pharmacists

Others...

Operational

The Medicines Supply Tool

<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/home/tools/medicines-supply-tool/>



The first stop for professional medicines advice

One stop shop on current medicines shortages

About · Mitchell, Kate · 

GuidanceEventsPodcastsPlanningTrainingPublicationsToolsSearch

MonitoringMedicines SupplyMCA StabilityFridge stability tool

Shortage Type

All ShortagesDiscontinuedUnavailableSupply ReturningResolved

Filters

Last updatedImpact tierBNF chapter

Filter medicines

Medicine	Impact tier	Status	Anticipated re-supply date	Last updated
Levemir InnoLet (insulin detemir) 100units/ml solution for injection 3ml pre-filled disposable devices	2 · Medium impact	Discontinuation	–	3 Apr 2024
Fiasp FlexTouch (insulin aspart) 100units/ml solution for injection 3ml pre-filled pens	2 · Medium impact	Unavailable	3 Jan 2025	3 Apr 2024
Tresiba (insulin degludec) FlexTouch 100units/ml solution for injection 3ml pre-filled pens	3 · High impact	Unavailable	31 Dec 2024	3 Apr 2024
Insulatard InnoLet (insulin isophane human) 100units/ml suspension for injection 3ml pre-filled disposable devices	2 · Medium impact	Discontinuation	–	28 Mar 2024

Prescribing available medicines to treat ADHD

Published 27 September 2023 · Last updated 30 April 2024 · See all updates

Topics: Atomoxetine · Dexamfetamine · Guanfacine · 5 more

The availability of medicines used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) varies currently. Supply content is maintained regularly by DHSC.

This article forms part of a series

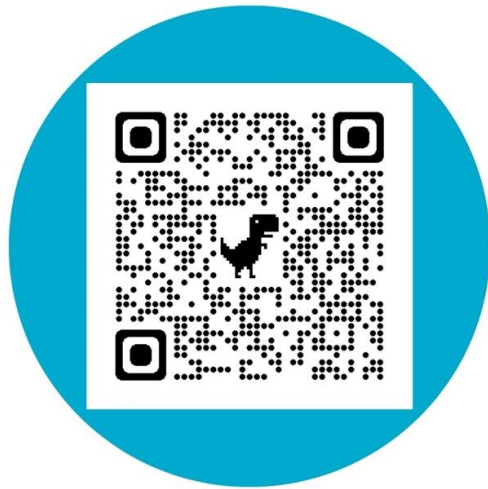
Continuing management of the ADHD medicines shortage

- Supporting system response to the ADHD medicine shortage
- Considerations when prescribing guanfacine
- Considerations when prescribing modified-release methylphenidate
- Prescribing available medicines to treat ADHD

Searchable tool for all presentations of a molecule that may be in short supply, e.g. insulin

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