

Independent Prescribing and Paramedics: FAQs.



Wessex Primary Care Training Hubs

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Independent Prescribing and Paramedics: FAQs- June 2019.

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Introduction

In the United Kingdom paramedics are regulated by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). The HCPC set the [standards of conduct, performance, and ethics](#); [the standards of proficiency](#); [the standards for continuing professional development](#); [the standards of education and training](#), and the [standards for prescribing](#) for the professions they regulate. To remain on the HCPC register, registrants must demonstrate that they continue to meet these standards as this is how their fitness to practice is determined.

From the 1st April 2018 legislation was changed to allow paramedics working at an advanced level of clinical practice to become independent prescribers. The purpose of this document is **not** to provide detailed guidance on implementing paramedic prescribing in primary care, but as a quick reference to provide answers to some of the more common questions which are being raised across the Wessex region.

Detailed guidance can be found in the College of Paramedics [Guide to implementing paramedic prescribing within the NHS in the UK](#). The content of this document is based on this guide (with the College's permission) and we strongly recommend that all employers who are considering recruiting a paramedic independent prescriber, or who wish to develop a paramedic member of their current workforce fully acquaint themselves with the content of this comprehensive guide. We also recommend that employers and potential paramedic independent prescribers read the College of Paramedics [Practice Guidance for Advanced Paramedic Independent Prescribers in the Safe Use of Medicines](#).

Definitions

Independent Prescribing is defined as prescribing by an appropriate practitioner (doctor, dentist, paramedic, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, podiatrists optometrist diagnostic and therapeutic radiographer) responsible and accountable for the assessment of patients with undiagnosed or diagnosed conditions and for decisions about the clinical management required, including prescribing medicines¹

Advanced Clinical Practice is defined as being delivered by experienced, registered health and care practitioners. It is a level of practice characterised by a high degree of autonomy and complex decision making. This is underpinned by a Masters level award or equivalent that encompasses the four pillars of clinical practice, leadership and management, education and research, with demonstration of core capabilities and area clinical competence.

Advanced clinical practice embodies the ability to manage clinical care in partnership with individuals, families, and carers. It includes the analysis and synthesis of complex problems across a range of settings, enabling innovative solutions to enhance people's experience and improve outcomes²

¹ College of Paramedics (2018), *Improving Patients' Access to Medicines: A guide to Implementing Paramedic Prescribing within the NHS in the UK*. Available at:

<https://www.collegeofparamedics.co.uk/publications/independent-prescribing> (Accessed 26th June 2019)

² Health Education England, NHS Improvement and NHS England (2017), *Multi-professional framework for advanced clinical practice in England* Available at: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Multi-professional%20framework%20for%20advanced%20clinical%20practice%20in%20England.pdf> (Accessed 26th June 2019)

Frequently Asked Questions.

Can all paramedics apply to become independent prescribers?

Paramedics must be practising at an advanced level of clinical practice, as defined by Health Education England (HEE), NHS England (NHSE), NHS Improvement (NHSI) and the Allied Health Professions (AHPs) professional bodies in the definition on page 3.

Will paramedic prescribers be annotated on the HCPC register?

A paramedic prescriber must have their name held on the HCPC register, with an annotation signifying they have successfully completed an approved programme of preparation and training for independent and supplementary prescribing.

What are the entry requirements for a paramedic to gain access to an independent prescribing programme?

Table 1: Entry requirements to an independent prescribing programme for HCPC registrants.³

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be registered with the HCPC in one of the relevant Allied Health Professions
AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be professionally practising in an environment where there is an identified need for the individual to regularly use independent prescribing or supplementary prescribing
AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to demonstrate support from their employer/sponsor* including confirmation that the entrant will have appropriate supervised practice in the clinical area in which they are expected to prescribe
AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to demonstrate medicines and clinical governance arrangements are in place (<i>in their place of work</i>) to support safe and effective supplementary and/or independent prescribing
AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have an approved medical practitioner, normally recognised by the employer/ commissioning organisation as having: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Experience in the relevant field of practice Training and experience in the supervision, support, and assessment of trainees Has agreed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the student with opportunities to develop competences in prescribing. Supervise, support and assess the student during their clinical placement.
AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have normally at least 3 years' relevant post-qualification experience in the clinical area in which they will be prescribing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be working at an advanced level of clinical practice. (<i>see definition on page 3</i>)
AND

³ Allied Health Professions Federation (2018) *Outline Curriculum Framework for Education Programmes to Prepare Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, Therapeutic Radiographers, Paramedics as Independent /Supplementary Prescribers*. Available at: <http://www.ahpf.org.uk/files/Joint%20OCF%202018%20update%20College%20of%20Paramedics%20March18%20minor%20error%20corrected.pdf> (Accessed 26th June 2019)

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be able to demonstrate how they reflect on their own performance and take responsibility for their own Continuing Professional Development (CPD) including development of networks for support, reflection, and learning.
AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In England and Wales, provide evidence of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or in Northern Ireland, an AccessNI check within the last three years or, in Scotland, be a current member of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) scheme.
<small>*If self-employed, must be able to demonstrate an identified need for prescribing and that all appropriate governance arrangements are in place</small>

Can a paramedic undertake a prescribing programme at any university that offers an existing independent prescribing programme?

The HCPC sets out the standards in respect of prescribing training for paramedics, and will only validate new recordable courses against these. Only successful completion of programmes approved by the HCPC will lead to annotation on the HCPC register as a paramedic prescriber. Therefore, the programme must have been approved by the HCPC for paramedic entry before a member of that profession can enter the programme.

What is the academic level of study of an independent prescribing programme?

Approved education programmes leading to annotation on the relevant professional register as an independent and supplementary prescriber must be a programme of preparation at a minimum of degree level (level 6), but more usually at Masters level (level 7).

What is the duration of an independent prescribing programme?

Programmes comprise of a minimum of 26 days at a Higher Education Institution, plus 12 days “learning in practice” during which a supervising designated medical practitioner will provide the student with supervision, support, and opportunities to develop competence in prescribing practice.

For distance learning programmes, there must be a minimum of 8 face to face taught days (excluding assessment) plus 10 days protected learning time.

What will paramedics be able to prescribe after successful completion of an independent prescribing programme and annotated on the HCPC register?

Paramedics who have successfully completed an independent prescribing course may prescribe any licensed medicine, for any medical condition within their clinical competence, scope of practice and level of experience.

Will paramedics be able to prescribe controlled drugs?

Subject to changes to the Misuse of Drugs Act, paramedic independent prescribers may be permitted to prescribe certain controlled drugs to be administered via specified routes. Further details can be found in Annex E of the College of Paramedic Guide to Implementing Paramedic Prescribing within the NHS in the UK page 43 (available [here](#))

Which HEIs in Wessex have been approved by the HCPC to offer paramedic entry to prescribing programmes?

The University of Southampton and Bournemouth University have received approval from the HCPC to allow paramedic access onto their prescribing programmes. The University of Portsmouth University are not currently approved by the HCPC.

Is funding available for paramedics to access prescribing programmes in Wessex?

HEE Wessex Primary Care Training Hubs (formerly known as Community Education Provider Networks (CEPNS)) have funding available that paramedics (and other AHPs) can apply for if they are working within a primary care setting and can provide evidence that they meet **all** the entry criteria shown in Table 1. Individual HEIs may also have their own additional pre-programme requirements, which applicants must also meet.

How do paramedics apply for funding to access a prescribing programme in Wessex?

Paramedics working at an advanced level of clinical practice within primary care settings across Wessex are invited to complete and submit the HEE Wessex Primary Care Training Hubs application form and commitment statement found in Appendix 1. Successful applicants will also need to complete the individual HEIs application form for entry on to the module.

If you have any further questions that are not answered in this document or the College of Paramedics Implementation Guide please contact:-

Andy Sharman

**Primary Care Learning Environment Lead– Allied Health Professions & Physician Associates
Southampton and New Forest Region**

Health Education England, working across Wessex

Southern House | Otterbourne | Winchester | Hants | SO21 2RU

T. 01962 718461

M. 07775 582902

E. andy.sharman2@hee.nhs.uk

W. [Wessex Primary Care Training Hubs](#)

 @ExmoorDipper

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Application Form and Commitment Statement

Application for Funding for an Independent Prescribing Programme.

Name	
HCPC registration number	
Address	
Contact number	
Contact email	
Name of Employing Organisation	
Name and address of Practice in which you are working	
Name of Supporting Practice Manager or Lead GP	
Contact email for supporting Practice Manager or Lead GP	
Contact number for supporting Practice Manager or Lead GP	
Essential Requirement	
Name of Approved Designated Medical Practitioner (DMP)	
Contact email for DMP	
Contact number for DMP	
Educational Qualifications (include dates and grades)	
When did you commence your current role within primary care?	
Describe how undertaking an independent prescribing programme will enhance:	

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- Your own clinical practice	
- The patient experience	
- Improve outcomes for patients	
- Improve quality	
Please include how you will identify the time required to study for this development? Study leave, personal time etc	
Any further supporting information?	
Name and contact details of one referee to support your application	
By signing the application form below, I confirm that I meet all the entry criteria to gain access to an independent prescribing programme in line with the Allied Health Professions Federation's <i>Outline Curriculum Framework for Education Programmes to Prepare Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, Therapeutic Radiographers, Paramedics as Independent /Supplementary Prescribers</i>⁴ found in Table 1.	
Signed	
Date	

⁴ Allied Health Professions Federation (2018) *Outline Curriculum Framework for Education Programmes to Prepare Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, Therapeutic Radiographers, Paramedics as Independent /Supplementary Prescribers*. Available at:

<http://www.ahpf.org.uk/files/Joint%20OCF%202018%20update%20College%20of%20Paramedics%20March18%20minor%20error%20corrected.pdf> (Accessed 26th June 2019)

Commitment Statement

Commitment Statement from the Applicant

If my application is successful I understand that by accepting the funding I am committed to undertake the independent prescribing programme and if I fail to attend the study days or submit the required academic work then I will be required to pay back 100% of the module costs.

SignedDate.....

Commitment Statement from the Employing Line Manager

I understand that by accepting the funding the applicant is committed to undertake the independent prescribing programme and if they fail to attend the study days or submit the required academic work then they will be required to pay back 100% of the module costs:

Signed.....Date.....

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