



Sian
Taylor

Clinical

Pharmacy Technician

What does your job entail?

I work at ward level within a huge multidisciplinary team consisting of Doctors, Nurses, and Physiotherapists among many other health care professionals. The role involves many duties, but my main role is to compile an accurate drug history for all patients who are for planned admission to the hospital. Compiling a drug history involves assessing the patient's medical notes, speaking with the patient and/or those who might help assist the patient with their medicines as well liaising with medical staff involved in the patient's care. This is to help me establish what medications the patient was taking prior to admission. This helps to ensure the patient is prescribed the correct pre-admission medications on the in-patient kardex. It also helps the Pharmacist and Doctor evaluate whether the patient's treatment is effective in meeting the patient's needs. I also check prescriptions for patients being discharged.

How did you get into this line of work?

I always knew that I would work in healthcare, I just didn't know in what capacity. After leaving school I completed a B-Tec in Health and Social care thinking that I might study Midwifery at some point in the future. I then began working at a local community pharmacy, purely by chance. You will hear a lot of Pharmacy Technician's say that they 'fell into' pharmacy. After two years in this role, I worked in a MoD medical centre in Germany, where I completed the NVQ level 3 in Pharmacy Sciences.

Outline your career to date

From starting in community pharmacy and spending my student Pharmacy Technician years in Germany, I began working for the Southern Health and Social Care Trust as an Integrated Medicines Management Pharmacy Technician in 2004. This was a very new service in the trust, and I was privileged to be there from its very early days, being only the third technician working at ward level (the first being the lead technician for this service). I have worked in all areas of the department and have experienced a management role. There are plenty of opportunities for Pharmacy Technicians if you are willing to try new things. From starting in community pharmacy and spending my student Pharmacy Technician years in Germany, I began working for the Southern Health and Social Care Trust as an Integrated Medicines Management Pharmacy Technician in 2004. This was a very new service in the trust, and I was privileged to be there from its very early days, being only the third technician working at ward level (the first being the lead technician for this service). I have worked in all areas of the department and have experienced a management role. There are plenty of opportunities for Pharmacy Technicians if you are willing to try new things.

Tell us about your qualifications and training

After leaving school I completed a B-Tec in Health and Social care. This gave me a good insight into what working in a health care role would look like. Whilst working in the community pharmacy I completed a course in herbal remedies and advising on over the counter medicines. I completed the NVQ level 3 in Pharmacy Sciences which took two years. Since qualifying I have completed many accredited courses enabling me to final check prescriptions, assess patients own drugs for reuse and to compile drug histories. There are many e-learning modules which I complete to ensure that I keep myself and others safe whilst working. These include safeguarding vulnerable adults, fire safety, infection prevention and many more.

What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

To do this role it's essential to have excellent communication skills as you come into contact with so many different people. There is a skill in being able to adapt my method of communication depending on each individual and their needs. You need to be very organised and able to prioritise and you also need to be able to work well with others. I think a desire to help people and to have genuine empathy is definitely needed.

What is the best advice you've ever received?

I think the best advice I've ever received is to not be too hard on myself. I think in the health service there are always new challenges to face and overcome. Things change so much. Sometimes we can fix them and sometimes we can't. It's about trying our best and trying to adapt to new situations. The great thing about my job is that I work within such a big team so there are always people around for support and guidance.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love spending time with my family. I am married and have two children who are 11 and 9. We try to get out for walks whenever we can. I also love to catch up with friends for a coffee and a chat.

What advice would you give your 16 year old self?

Be more confident and trust your judgment. To not worry too much about the direction my career would take. It all worked out in the end, and I feel privileged to have had the opportunities that I've had over the years.