

Return to practice

Frequently asked questions

Return to practice

- [What is return to practice?](#)
- [Who can support my return to practice?](#)

Registration of pharmacists

- [How do I return to practice if I'm not registered as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician?](#)
- [I was on the RPSGB non-practising register – what do I have to do to register?](#)
- [I took a career break and came off the register – what do I have to do to register?](#)

Continuing professional development

- [What knowledge and skills do I need before I return to practice?](#)
- [What courses are available if I want to return to community pharmacy practice?](#)
- [Can I access CPPE learning materials if I am not on the register?](#)
- [Do I need to pay for the *Return to practice* course?](#)
- [I would like to attend a *Return to practice* course but cannot afford the fee; is any help available?](#)
- [What if I need to cancel my place on the course?](#)
- [What opportunities are available for work shadowing?](#)
- [I am struggling financially while I prepare to return to practice. Can I claim benefits?](#)
- [How can I meet the requirements for continuing professional development \(CPD\) after my career break?](#)

Returning to work

- [How do I apply for a job?](#)
- [How do I find out about jobs that are available?](#)
- [Do I need an NHS Smartcard?](#)
- [I'd like to work as a community locum pharmacist – where can I find out more about this?](#)
- [Do I need to take a registration certificate with me when I work?](#)
- [Do I need personal indemnity insurance?](#)
- [Where can I find information on tax and National Insurance?](#)
- [If I work as a locum, do I need sickness cover?](#)
- [I have not worked as a pharmacist for a while and am anxious about returning to practice. Is there someone I could talk to?](#)
- [As a community pharmacist, what do I need to do to work in hospital pharmacy?](#)

February 2015

Return to practice

What is return to practice?

There are many reasons why people may decide not to work for a period of time. For example, you may be working in another profession, or you may have taken time off to bring up a family, care for a relative, recover from a period of illness or go travelling. It may be that you have always worked as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician but wish to change your sector of practice. If this applies to you and you are considering a return to the workplace, you need to make sure that you can practise safely and competently.

It is worth visiting the [return to practice section of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society \(RPS\) website](#). This resource provides general information on returning to practice as well as tips on work shadowing and mentoring support.

[Return to top](#)

Who can support my return to practice?

The RPS provides a number of opportunities for networking with pharmacists. For example, there are online groups and [local practice forums \(LPFs\)](#) where you can contact others in your chosen sector and find out what competences are required. Some LPFs have a dedicated contact for return to practice and you can find this on the RPS website.

RPS also hosts a network for pharmacists who have either returned to practice in the past or are thinking of doing so in the future. The [online network](#) is open to all RPS members and provides a forum to exchange views on return to practice issues and share ideas on improving the return to practice experience. They also provide information about mentoring.

The RPS support service can answer enquiries about all aspects of pharmacy and produces guidance and support documents. It is also developing return to practice support for members. RPS support can be contacted on 0845 257 2570 (RPS members only).

As well as attending our residential *Return to practice* course, you may be able to get support from your local CPPE tutor. To contact your local tutor, visit: www.cppe.ac.uk/about-cppe/find-a-tutor

The National Association of Women Pharmacists (NAWP) supports both men and women returning to practice and pharmacists changing sector of practice. They can assist with work placements and provide networking opportunities, and they offer a mentoring scheme. For further information, visit the [NAWP website](#).

[Return to top](#)

Registration of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians

How do I return to practice if I'm not registered as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician?

If you are not currently registered as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician in Great Britain, you will need to register with the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC). You will need to complete the relevant paperwork and pay the appropriate fee. For further information and to register, visit the [GPhC website](#).

[Return to top](#)

I was on the RPSGB non-practising register – what do I have to do to register?

If you were on the RPSGB non-practising register when the RPSGB demerged on 27 September 2010 you would not have been transferred to the GPhC register, so you will have to apply to join it. The GPhC doesn't have a non-practising register. You will need to make sure you meet the requirements for registration before you apply to join, and you may need to complete additional education, training or experience.

[Return to top](#)

I took a career break and came off the register – what do I have to do to return to the register?

You must submit a portfolio of evidence to the GPhC as part of the registration process. CPPE provides [free workshops to support you in gathering evidence](#) for your portfolio. These run three times a year and you can attend a face-to-face workshop or two evening webinars. You will also find that many of the activities undertaken at the *Return to practice* course will provide you with evidence for your portfolio.

[Return to top](#)

Continuing professional development

What knowledge and skills do I need before I return to practice?

You have a professional obligation to be competent to practise in your chosen area. You will need to identify the skills and knowledge you already have, what gaps there are in your knowledge and experience and how you plan to fill these gaps. For example, if you plan to return to community practice you will need to be aware of changes in legislation, changes to the pharmacy contract and newly re-classified medicines.

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's [Foundation Practice Framework \(FPF\)](#) supports pharmacists at all levels to achieve professional skills and behaviours that will enable you to keep up to date and continue to advance your practice. Using this framework can help you identify any gaps in your knowledge or skills.

There is a similar [framework available for pharmacy technicians](#) in medicines management.

You might also find it useful to read journals and access recent RPS guidance to identify changes in practice.

[Return to top](#)

What courses are available if I want to return to community pharmacy practice?

We run a four-day residential course (two blocks of two days) aimed at pharmacy professionals who have been out of practice for more than a year and those changing sector. If you decide to book a place on the course, you will be asked to sign a declaration stating that you intend to return to community pharmacy and provide NHS services within the next six months. The charge is £450 for the four-day course. This is a subsidised course and is significantly funded by NHS Health Education England. Further details are available at: www.cppe.ac.uk/career/return-to-practice

If you live in Wales please contact [WCPPE](#) as they have a limited number of bursaries available to support pharmacists who intend to return to NHS practice in Wales.

If you intend to return to community practice, we recommend that you undertake learning on NHS repeat dispensing and that you gain accreditation to provide medicines use reviews (MURs), as these will increase the likelihood of employment. CPPE provides a learning programme and e-assessment for NHS repeat dispensing and an e-assessment for MURs.

[Return to top](#)

Return to practice

Frequently asked questions

Can I access CPPE learning materials if I am not on the register?

If you are not on the GPhC register and you want to access CPPE programmes, you can do so by registering on the CPPE website. You will then be able to buy programmes that are available to purchase.

If you are on the GPhC register, are living in England and have registered with CPPE, you will not have to pay for the majority of our programmes, as they are funded by Health Education England.

If you are registered with the GPhC but practise outside of England, you will be able to access some of our learning programmes and all of our e-assessments. To access other learning materials, you will need to buy programmes that are available to purchase.

[Return to top](#)

Do I need to pay for the *Return to practice* course?

The fee for this four-day course is £450. This is a two-stage residential course and the fee includes two nights' accommodation and meals, as well as all the pre-course reading materials and learning programmes. This is a subsidised course and is significantly funded by NHS Health Education England.

If you live in Wales please contact [WCPPE](#) as they have a limited number of bursaries available to support pharmacists who intend to return to NHS practice in Wales.

[Return to top](#)

I would like to attend a *Return to practice* course but cannot afford the fee; is any help available?

If you are or have been a registered pharmacist and you are in financial hardship, you may be able to receive financial assistance from [Pharmacist Support](#). You can find out more about Pharmacist Support in our [Supporting you](#) pathway.

[Return to top](#)

Return to practice

Frequently asked questions

What if I need to cancel my place on the course?

Please read the following information, which is our cancellation policy for the *Return to practice* course.

- Bookings will only be processed subject to acceptance of CPPE's right to charge a fee for late cancellations and non-attendance.
- All cancellations must be notified to CPPE head office in writing. Acceptable means of communication include letter, fax and email.
- CPPE will acknowledge receipt of your cancellation within seven working days.
- If your cancellation is received 30 days or more prior to Day 1 of the course, this will result in a reimbursement of the course fee.
- If a cancellation is not received 30 days prior to Day 1 of the course, CPPE reserves the right to retain 50 percent of the course fee and will reimburse the remaining 50 percent.
- If a cancellation is received on Day 1, or you fail to attend any of the four days, CPPE reserves the right to retain the full course fee.
- Should you wish to appeal your cancellation charge, you can do so in writing. Your appeal will be reviewed by the cancellation team. CPPE reserves the right to waive the fee under certain circumstances.

[Return to top](#)

What opportunities are available for work shadowing?

We have worked in partnership with Day Lewis to develop the Supported Training Placement Programme. This programme has been designed to meet the needs of pharmacists returning to the workforce after a significant break.

Day Lewis offers a limited number of one-month work placements to pharmacists who have completed our *Return to practice* programme. During this time you will be assessed and mentored by an experienced Day Lewis pharmacist who has been trained to supervise returners. You will receive a workbook consisting of exercises for you to complete throughout your placement.

On successful completion of the programme you will receive a certificate of training from Day Lewis. Find out more by e-mailing: RTW@daylewisplc.co.uk

Your [RPS local practice forum](#) (LPF) is an excellent place to make contact with members from all sectors and at all levels of practice in your locality. There may be a member who can help you look for shadowing opportunities, or you can approach your LPF lead to make contacts. You can contact your local LPF from the RPS website.

It may also be worth approaching pharmacies locally to enquire about work shadowing opportunities, but bear in mind that busy pharmacies may not have the capacity to accommodate you.

[Return to top](#)

I am struggling financially while I prepare to return to practice. Can I claim benefits?

Depending on your circumstances, you may be entitled to claim benefits. If you are or have been a registered pharmacist, [Pharmacist Support](#) can provide free, confidential telephone advice on benefits entitlement. If you have built up debts while you have not been working, Pharmacist Support can also provide free and confidential help from a debt adviser and may be able to provide financial assistance. For further information on benefits and debt advice, visit the Pharmacist Support website.

[Return to top](#)

How can I meet the requirements for continuing professional development (CPD) after my career break?

The [GPhC website](#) has information on CPD, including the standards, a framework for recording and frequently asked questions. In the review section there is information about what you need to submit if you have an incomplete CPD record due to maternity leave or illness.

The [RPS website](#) has a section dedicated to CPD with resources, case studies and frequently asked questions. CPD support and advice is also available from RPS support on 0845 257 2570 (Monday to Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm) or by emailing: support@rpharms.com

[Return to top](#)

Returning to work

How do I apply for a job?

If you haven't already done so, you should put together a CV which details your skills, knowledge and experience. Don't forget that even if you haven't practised as a pharmacist for some time, you may have developed other skills, such as budgeting, negotiation or listening skills. You may also wish to describe your plans for updating your knowledge and skills and list any relevant courses you have attended.

You can find information on preparing a CV by visiting the [National Careers Service website](#).

[Return to top](#)

How do I find out about jobs that are available?

Jobs may be advertised in the [Pharmaceutical Journal](#) or on the websites of multiple pharmacy groups. If you want to find out about jobs in primary care or in hospital pharmacy, the majority of these are advertised on the [NHS Jobs website](#).

[Return to top](#)

Do I need an NHS Smartcard?

You will need to have an NHS Smartcard to enable you to use the Electronic Prescription Service (EPS). You can obtain a Smartcard by applying to your local registration authority. The registration authority will ask you to provide at least three forms of identification, including proof of address and your GPhC registration number.

[Return to top](#)

I'd like to work as a community locum pharmacist – where can I find out more about this?

Many pharmacies only engage locums they know personally, so you should use local CPPE or RPS events as an opportunity to network.

It may be worth having business cards printed and paying a personal visit to pharmacies in your locality to drop them off.

Other resources include:

- the [Pharmacists' Defence Association \(PDA\) booklet](#) entitled, *Rights and responsibilities*
- the [LocumVoice discussion forum](#) for locum pharmacists to discuss current issues
- the ['Being a community locum pharmacist'](#) article from *PJ Careers*.

The following locum agencies may provide you with opportunities for locum work:

- [PPLS Pharmacy Locums](#)
- [New Directions Pharmacy](#)
- [Total Locum](#)
- [PL-UK](#)
- [CP Locums Recruitment](#)
- [Pharmaseekers](#)
- [Nightingale Pharmacy Services](#)
- [Capital Locums Ltd](#)

[Return to top](#)

Do I need to take a registration certificate with me when I work?

Registration certificates issued by RPSGB prior to 2010 are no longer valid, as the regulator is now GPhC. In order to lawfully conduct a retail pharmacy business, a registered pharmacist must be in charge of the registered pharmacy as the responsible pharmacist. You are required to display a responsible pharmacist notice, which you can download from the [GPhC website](#).

[Return to top](#)

Return to practice

Frequently asked questions

Do I need personal indemnity insurance?

The GPhC standards require registrants to ensure that all their work, or work for which they are responsible, is covered by appropriate professional indemnity cover.

Providers of indemnity insurance include the [Pharmacists' Defence Association \(PDA\)](#) and the [National Pharmacy Association](#).

[Return to top](#)

Where can I find information on tax and National Insurance?

Information on tax and National Insurance is available on the [HM Revenue and Customs website](#). This is particularly important if you plan to be self-employed.

[Return to top](#)

If I work as a locum, do I need sickness cover?

We cannot advise you on whether you require any particular type of cover, but policy providers include the [Pharmaceutical and General Provident Society](#) and [CBG Group](#).

[Return to top](#)

I have not worked as a pharmacist for a while and am anxious about returning to practice. Is there someone I could talk to?

If you are or have been a registered pharmacist, you might find it useful to contact Listening Friends. This is a free and confidential telephone service provided by Pharmacist Support and staffed by volunteer pharmacists. All the volunteers are trained in listening skills and dealing with people under stress. They are also all pharmacists, so they understand the particular pressures of the pharmacy profession. Contact Listening Friends on 0808 168 5133.

[Return to top](#)

As a community pharmacist, what do I need to do to work in hospital pharmacy?

A good starting point for changing your sector of practice would be to find out more about hospital pharmacy by having a chat with a hospital pharmacist. They may also be able to assist you in identifying local opportunities for gaining experience in hospital pharmacy, such as work shadowing. The RPS online hospital pharmacist group and LPFs provide networking opportunities for pharmacists working in different sectors.

[Return to top](#)