

Identifying improvement opportunities through process mapping in the south-east Edinburgh pharmacotherapy hub

Background

Between 2024 and 2025, the south-east Edinburgh pharmacotherapy hub expanded the team by recruiting additional pharmacy technicians and pharmacy support workers (PSWs). In March 2025, the hub moved to a new, permanent location. While this transition brought some short-term disruption but also presented an opportunity for reflection and improvement.

Aim

The team aimed to understand challenges with their current ways of working and test changes to improve efficiency in the hub.

Activity

A process map detailing the timing and management of immediate discharge letters (IDLs) was completed. This activity helped the team identify areas where technician allocation to practices could be made more efficient. As a result, pharmacy technicians were allocated to a consistent group of practices, allowing them to remove their morning huddle. Technicians were then able to carry out medicines reconciliation from the pharmacotherapy hub for their allocated practices, on days they were not working in the practices.

Impact

- **Improved communication:** Practices now have named technicians as their point of contact at the hub.
- **Increased efficiency:** Technicians know which practices they will support each day, enabling them to begin medicines reconciliation upon arrival.
- **Enhanced use of technician expertise:** By processing more IDLs at the hub, technicians can free up time during in-practice days to focus on more advanced pharmacotherapy tasks.

Feedback

- Seven GPs from the hub were surveyed and all responded that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement:

'The hub has reduced my workload associated with the medicines reconciliation of immediate discharge letters.'

- One GP described the pharmacy hub support as ‘invaluable’, highlighting that the hub has improved their capacity to focus on more complex tasks.

‘I have more time to deal with complex referrals and focus on other prescribing issues such as serial prescribing, developing an antidepressant review system, and working on frailty.’

Next steps

The hub lead pharmacists will repeat the practice survey on a quarterly basis to monitor the effectiveness of the hub and identify further improvement opportunities.

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