

# Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey 2024

Key Findings





# Survey of the Community Pharmacy Workforce 2024

## Survey aims

Collate quantitative workforce data, from community pharmacy contractors' annual submissions.

Provide data to support planning and delivery of clinical services, for the benefit of patients and the public.

## Survey output

An overview of the reported community pharmacy workforce in numbers, at a set point in time.

## Your Next steps

Access the data at [Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey - data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk/dataset/community-pharmacy-workforce-survey-2024)

Use the data to inform future investment in education and training, and effective workforce planning.

# Survey principles and data trends



- The survey is returned by contractors\* and reflects the staffing model for a typical week.
- There may be some double-counting, e.g. locum workforce and pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians.
- The survey is not a census and cannot report on workforce information for individuals.
- Data from 83% of pharmacy premises could be used from 2024 to develop the data trend.
- The 2024 survey questions are available on the: [Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey website](#).
- The publication of the data includes detail on the approach to calculations and the caveats.
- Access the data at: [Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey - data.gov.uk](#) and also as a dashboard.

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\*Contractors who do not submit a response are followed up via the usual contracting monitoring routes



# Definitions and context

- **Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)** is the recognised approach to describe workforce hours because it reflects the available workforce to deliver patient care.
- **Headcount (HC)** is used to indicate number of individuals in each role within the workforce.
- **Vacancy rate** is calculated as FTE vacancies/establishment (staff in post + vacancies). Respondents are asked to include only those posts which are long standing, i.e. > 3 months and without anyone appointed to post.

The vacancy rate for foundation trainee pharmacists and pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians are not requested based on experience gleaned from earlier surveys and the current model of training.

- Pre-registration trainee pharmacy technicians may be using a former job title while completing their training , e.g. dispensing assistant so there is no vacancy in the establishment.
- Foundation trainee pharmacist vacancies are fixed-term training posts. Therefore, data received has the potential not be a true reflection of established staffing. The capacity for foundation trainee pharmacists can be identified through the posts submitted via the National Recruitment Scheme (Oriel).
- **Locum workforce:** Locums were reported as pharmacy technicians or pharmacists who are either (i) part of the workforce model or (ii) fill a session due to the employed pharmacy technician or pharmacist being unavailable. Locum pharmacy technicians and pharmacists are included when referring to all pharmacy technicians and pharmacists.

# Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey: An Insight

## Headlines compared to 2023

The shape of Community Pharmacy Workforce is outlined below;

- 5% increase in number of **pharmacists** (HC 28,763 compared to 27,487 in 2023) with a 12% decrease in use of **locum pharmacists**, accompanied by 18% increase in employed pharmacists (FTE). Since 2022 there is increase in the average FTE pharmacist, in each pharmacy (1.61 to 1.79)
- The number of **Independent Prescribers** continues to grow (up 34%) to 1996 (FTE), this is 1 in 5 pharmacy premises
- 22% increase in **pre-registration trainee Pharmacy Technicians** (218 FTE)
- The following roles all have a decrease in vacancy rates (VFTE) – 12% pharmacists, 26% pharmacy technicians, 37% accuracy checkers, 35% trained dispensing assistants and 25% trained counter assistants.

However;

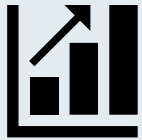
1.64 1.79

- 4% reduction in **total workforce** (FTE) since 2023.
- With a decrease driven in **support staff** both trained counter assistants and drivers are down by 23%
- 1% reduction in **Pharmacy technicians**, but drop is slowing compared to 2021-23, with headcount at about 5,000

The data provides evidence that community pharmacy has the potential to align with the 10 Year Health plan, by building upon the prescribing capability of pharmacists and strengthening the clinical facing role of pharmacy technicians with a focus on prevention to treatment and hospital to community.

The number of pharmacists has increased since 2023, there is considerable growth in Independent Prescribers and a commitment to training Pharmacy Technicians is illustrated. On a broader note, the participation rate is consistent with 2023 return and the employment model for pharmacists has seen a reduction in locum pharmacists.

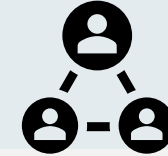
# Reported findings: Compared to 2023 reported data



The number of **all pharmacists** increased to 28,763 from 27,487 in 2023 (headcount) **Pharmacy technician** headcount continues to be close to 5,000 with a slight (-1%) decrease. The number of **Independent Prescribers** has grown to 2,513 individuals. An increase to 9% of pharmacists in the community.



811 people completed pharmacy technician training and had not joined the GPhC register. This warrants further exploration to understand the potential growth in the pharmacy technician workforce if registered.



The reported numbers of **total workforce have decreased by 4%** from 2023, using FTE. This decline is driven by reductions in trainee dispensing assistants (-22%), trainee (-27%) and trained (-23%) medicines counter assistants and pharmacy delivery drivers (-23%).



FTE figures show a reduction in **locum pharmacists\*** (-12%).

FTE figures show an expansion in **locum pharmacy technicians\*** (13%).



There is a mixed picture for **trainee roles**; growth in **pre-registration trainee pharmacy technician posts** (22%) and a slight reduction for **Foundation trainee pharmacist** (-2%) FTE compared to 2023.



The highest 2024 reported **vacancy rates**:  
Accuracy checkers (20%)  
Trainee dispensing assistants (17%)  
Trainee medicines assistants (17%)

\*Locums were identified as people who are either (i) part of the workforce model or (ii) fill a session due to the employed pharmacy professional being unavailable. There might be some possible double-counting of the locum workforce. Locums are included when referring to total counts of each professional group



# Next steps

- The data is available at: [Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey - data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk/dataset/community-pharmacy-workforce-survey)
- Use the data to inform future investment in education and training, and effective workforce planning, across all sectors of pharmacy
- Find out more on the [Community Pharmacy Workforce Survey webpage](https://www.nhs.uk/communities/pharmacy-workforce-survey)
- Read [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the 2024 survey
- Contact [england.pharmacyteam@nhs.net](mailto:england.pharmacyteam@nhs.net) with any additional enquiries

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## Thank You



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