PhSC
Pharmacy Schools Council

Consensus Statement on Clinical Tariff in England

From September 2022, undergraduate pharmacy in England has been eligible to receive the education and training tariff ('clinical tariff'), which is a nationally mandated price for activity delivered by clinical placement providers and for which they are directly paid. Placements in the NHS, managed sector, general practice or primary care networks, community pharmacies, and other healthcare providers delivering NHS contracted services are all eligible for clinical tariff.

The inclusion of pharmacy on the list of professions eligible for clinical tariff means that English schools of pharmacy are now able to plan clinical placements within the MPharm degree that are supported by clinical tariff payment. The development of clinical placements will support the reforms and new learning objectives set out by the General Pharmaceutical Council in their 2021 'New standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists'. These standards describe how pharmacy students can safely and effectively develop and practise their clinical skills in a placement setting and aims to move student placements from being observational to participative.

Clinical tariff prices are set by the Department of Health and Social Care and funding is administered by Health Education England. While the English schools of pharmacy welcome the inclusion of pharmacy in the list of professions eligible for clinical tariff, the current payment level for clinical tariff in England is much lower than the tariff received for placements for medical students.

The Pharmacy Schools Council is concerned that the payment expectations for placements, particularly in general practice settings where higher levels of payments are received for medical students, will impact on the ability to secure pharmacy placements in this sector. In addition, the low level of clinical tariff may lead to competition between schools of pharmacy who may feel pressurised into paying more than clinical tariff for their general practice placements. While it is anticipated that this will be less of an issue in the three devolved nations where payment for pharmacy placements is aligned more closely with the medical tariff, the exact differences in overall placement funding across the four nations is not completely clear at this stage.

The Pharmacy Schools Council's view is that sufficient placements must be made available so that students from all schools of pharmacy can have similar placement opportunities. Further, it is desirable for students and trainees from other healthcare professions to have opportunities to learn alongside and from pharmacy students. Pharmacy students should be viewed by training providers as contributors to the work force rather than simply being observers. It is proposed therefore to explore the use of validated certification systems, such as microcredentialing, for pharmacy students during their MPharm course so that they can, for example, administer vaccines.

The Pharmacy Schools Council believes that, in England:

- **Payment for pharmacy training placements should not be more than that offered by clinical tariff.**
- **When undertaking placements in general practice, pharmacy students should be taught by pharmacy professionals or other non-medical staff to ensure the clinical tariff can back fill the relevant staff positions.**