

Community Phlebotomy Service

Training and Competency Requirements

The Community Phlebotomy Service requires practices to ensure that all staff undertaking venepuncture are appropriately trained, competent and supported.

Practices remain responsible for maintaining local competency records and ensuring that staff work within their professional competence.

Who does this apply to?

This guidance applies to:

- GPs
- Practice Nurses
- Nursing Associates
- Healthcare Assistants
- Phlebotomists
- Any member of staff undertaking venepuncture within General Practice

The service applies to:

- Adults aged 16 years and over
- Young people aged 12 years to 15 years and 364 days

New Staff

All new staff undertaking venepuncture should:

- Attend the Training Hub approved Introduction to Phlebotomy Programme (or equivalent recognised programme)
- Complete the associated competency workbook
- Undertake supervised practice within their practice
- Be formally signed off as competent before undertaking independent practice
- Maintain evidence of competency

Existing Staff

Existing competent staff should:

- Maintain evidence of competence
- Complete a venepuncture update every 18 to 24 months
- Participate in ongoing competency review and appraisal processes

Where competency has lapsed, refresher training should be undertaken before venepuncture activity continues.

Venepuncture in Young People Aged 12 Years to 15 Years and 364 Days

Practitioners undertaking venepuncture in this age group must:

- Hold current adult venepuncture competency
- Have completed required venepuncture updates
- Hold safeguarding children training appropriate to their role
- Understand consent, parental responsibility and Gillick competence
- Understand the management of anxiety and needle phobia
- Be competent in the use of appropriate equipment, including 21–25G butterfly devices where clinically indicated
- Be able to recognise and manage vasovagal episodes
- Understand when referral to specialist paediatric services may be appropriate

Where practitioners have not previously received training covering consent, Gillick competence or young person assessments, additional learning should be completed before undertaking venepuncture on this age group.

Good Practice Expectations

Practices should:

- Ask about needle anxiety when booking appointments
- Consider longer appointments for young people where appropriate
- Consider whether topical anaesthetic products such as Ametop or Emla may be appropriate
- Ensure clinicians have access to suitable venepuncture equipment
- Ensure referral pathways are available where venepuncture cannot be safely undertaken within primary care

Equipment

Practices should ensure access to:

- Standard venepuncture equipment
- Butterfly devices (21G–25G) where clinically appropriate
- Appropriate dressings and consumables
- Sharps disposal systems
- Any locally agreed topical anaesthetic products

Governance and Competency Records

Practices should maintain:

- Training records
- Competency assessments
- Refresher training records
- Local sign-off documentation where used

The maintenance of these records remains the responsibility of the individual practice as part of its existing governance arrangements.

Suggested Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

A suggested Northamptonshire General Practice Venepuncture SOP is available to support practices.

Practices may:

- Adopt the SOP in full
- Adapt it to local arrangements
- Incorporate relevant sections into existing local procedures

Current Training Courses

The Training Hub currently offers:

- Introduction to Phlebotomy Programmes
- Venepuncture Refresher and Update Training

Support Available

Practices with training or competency queries should contact the Training Hub directly.