Today I am going to talk about current developments in non-medical prescribing in the cancer care setting and the impact that the increase in diagnoses, survivorship and newer therapies are having on current service provision. I will also discuss supporting new prescribers to develop confidence and competence and how to comply with the NMC Code of Practice for revalidation. I will discuss the Royal Pharmaceutical Society Competency Framework and how it should inform practice to ensure delivery of best care. I will then talk about my experience of prescribing during the COVID 19 pandemic and finish with an outline of the benefits of non-medical prescribing in cancer care.

Cancer incidence in the UK has increased by 12% since the early 1990s and is predicted to continue to rise. In addition cancer survival has doubled in the last 40 years. Treatments are becoming more complex and are often delivered over longer periods of time. As such there is an increasing pressure to provide quality care to the numbers of patients needing to be seen both on treatment and in follow up clinics. Non-medical prescribers are well placed to develop these services.

All Non-medical prescribers are now working from The Royal Pharmaceutical Competency Framework, supporting non-medical prescribers to practice safely and effectively. The Framework was updated in 2021 and can be used to demonstrate competence at any level of experience. For nurses, use of the framework demonstrates adherence to the NMC Code of Practice and can be used for revalidation. It is an essential tool to support new prescribers in developing the skills needed to become a non-medical prescriber.

COVID 19 has had a huge impact on the way services are delivered. Remote consultations are now common place and, as a prescriber, we must be sure to deliver the same safe, effective service to the patient, ensuring adherence to the Competency Framework. In Cancer Care services have been developed to deliver medications direct to the patient as well as programmes designed to support patients with self-administration of some sub-cut therapies.

The benefits of non-medical prescribing in cancer care are clear. Examination of the literature reveals the extent of well evaluated clinics that have been set up and run by non-medical prescribers. There appears to be no detriment to patient care and with the reduction in junior doctor hours and the increase in patient numbers, there is a place for multi-disciplinary, non-medical clinics to continue to expand, leaving Consultants free to concentrate on complex cases and for patients to have access to experienced clinical staff, with whom they can build ongoing relationships.