



## Pearl Chemist Group

Pearl Chemist Group started out in 2001 as a single branch in Tooting. It's slowly grown over time and now has 20 pharmacies across South West London and Surrey. The family-run group is one of the fastest growing independent pharmacy groups in the area. They employ 150 members of staff, dispense 180k items per month and offer a range of NHS services.

### The Solution

The group decided to put in place a hub and spoke model for its repeat prescription service. They initially installed the FLOWRx Connect software and sortation station at their hub in Tooting which interfaced with their Robotic Dispensing System and PMR.

This initial investment allowed them to grow the number of services they were able to offer instore. Following this growth, they were able to scale up to the FLOWRx Hub solution, investing in an Automatic Labelling Unit which scans and labels medication at the rate of 25 packs per minute.

More recently the group rolled out FLOWRx Instore software which uses barcode scanning to manage orders within branches.

### The Challenge

The growth of Pearl Chemist Group, coupled with change to a more service driven contract for pharmacy, prompted the pharmacy to look at what they did and how they were set up. While the dispensing workload covered the bills, the group identified that they were going to need to make some changes if they were to deliver more services whilst continuing to dispense the same volumes.

To identify where the change was required, they looked at pressure points within stores and where there was a risk including safety, staff productivity and retention.

They established that the dispensing part of the business was taking more and more time with pharmacists spending up to 90% of their day on this task in some stores. This left no capacity to deliver patient facing services.

***“Pharmacy is always reactive, we are not proactive enough. We are scared of investment and we shouldn't be. You have to spend money to be able to do something you are going to get rewarded for at a later stage. Yes, any automation needs investment but rewards will come over time and we are now starting to see it pay off.”***

**Mayank Patel, Chief Superintendent Pharmacist and owner of Pearl Chemist Group.**

*“The future is services and that means looking to the horizon. This is not about saving money, it’s about providing a better service.”*

**Mayank Patel**

## The Results

The FLOWRx Hub solution currently dispenses around 60% of prescription items for all 20 pharmacies in the group. The operation runs 9am to 7pm Monday to Friday with a split lunch break and is running at around 30-50% capacity. It produces around 18,000 packs per week for 3,500 patients giving plenty of scope for ramping up.

Automation and the approach to implementing it at Pearl accelerated growth of the business and the group has not suffered from the workforce challenges currently facing community pharmacy in the UK. Pharmacy time in store has been freed up to deliver a range of services including hypertension, new medicines service, travel clinics and vaccination clinics.

Next steps include launching ear micro-suction and phlebotomy services.

## The Impact



Average reduction of **30%** of time spent in store on dispensing



Average reduction of **30%** of pharmacist’s time carrying out clinical accuracy checks in store



Pharmacists spend an average of **50%** more pharmacy time with patients in store



New pharmacy branches joining the group can be firmly established within a **matter of days** rather than 4 months



Average totes of stock coming into store and needing to be managed reduced from 6 totes to **2 totes** with only **10%** of pharmacy time in store now spent on stock management