

Declaration of Competence Factsheet

This factsheet describes what the Declaration of Competence system is, why it is needed and how pharmacy professionals may be able to use it to demonstrate their competence to deliver locally commissioned services.

1. What is the Declaration of Competence system?

The Declaration of Competence (DoC) system has been developed to help registered pharmacy professionals (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) to deliver sustainable quality pharmacy services to patients. It provides a self-assessment framework which enables pharmacy professionals to assure themselves, commissioners and employers that they are competent and meet the requirements to provide a service. It is supported by a robust learning and assessment pathway.

2. Why was DoC developed?

The concept of the DoC system stemmed from the self-declaration approach of the new medicine service. Under the previous accreditation system, primary care trusts developed services and then determined the training and assessment requirements for pharmacy professionals to deliver them. The commissioning of most local services has now transferred to local authorities and clinical commissioning groups. For some commissioners it is their first experience of working alongside pharmacy.

Pharmacy can make a significant contribution to local healthcare services, but the lack of funds and manpower to deliver training is a challenge. As a consequence, local commissioners were looking for support to ensure that pharmacists were competent to deliver services and the Community Pharmacy Competence Group (CPCG) was formed to do this.

3. Is the DoC system approved?

After an initial pilot period in the North West of England, the Declaration of Competence (DoC) system is now supported for use across England by Health Education England and is endorsed by NHS England and Public Health England.

The DoC system has been developed by the Community Pharmacy Competence Group (CPCG) with key engagement from the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) and Health Education North West and includes representation from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), Health Education England, NHS England, Public Health England and key pharmacy stakeholder organisations.

4. What does it mean for the pharmacy professional?

Pharmacists and registered pharmacy technicians are professionally responsible for keeping their knowledge and skills up to date and relevant to their roles and responsibilities (as set out in the General Pharmaceutical Council's *Standards of conduct, ethics and performance*).

The DoC system guides pharmacy professionals through a structured approach of self-assessment that allows them to reflect on the learning and training they have completed and the practice experience they have gained, in relation to a specific service. Any gaps in competence can be addressed by working through elements of the learning and assessment pathway.

Once the pharmacy professional is confident they meet the competencies within the framework they can print and sign their own personal declaration statement, which can be used as evidence to assure commissioners and employers they have worked through the system.

If the service is not currently commissioned locally, then working through the DoC system will enable the pharmacy professional to be 'service ready' and also provide assurance of competence in daily practice.

5. What does it mean for pharmacy?

The DoC system empowers pharmacy to take a proactive approach in engaging with commissioners to seek opportunities for new and innovative community pharmacy services and allows the profession to be 'service ready', rather than waiting for training opportunities.

6. What does it mean for commissioners?

An increasing number of commissioners across England are already using the DoC system. By including the DoC system within service specifications and accessing the pharmacy professional's personal declaration statement, the commissioner can be assured that the pharmacy professional has taken steps to work through the system and takes professional responsibility for their own competence to provide the service.

The main learning and assessment is developed and delivered by the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) based at the University of Manchester. Training delivered by employers and other training providers may also be used to demonstrate competence.

7. What does the DoC system look like?

There are three parts to the DoC system.

- **Part A** includes the suggested learning and assessment for the service.
- **Part B** is the DoC framework which lists the key knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of all pharmacy professionals providing the service and where the pharmacy professional records their evidence to demonstrate competence.
- **Declaration:** The final part is the Declaration of Competence statement that pharmacy professionals must print and sign to acknowledge professional responsibility that they are competent to deliver the service.

8. How should a pharmacy professional complete the DoC system?

- i. **Visit Part A.**
 - Review the suggested learning and assessment.
 - Reflect on their previous learning, experience and assessment.
 - Consider what learning has recently been completed as part of their CPD and which areas of learning and development may need updating.
- ii. **Visit Part B.**
 - Work through the DoC framework.
 - Review the competencies and complete each section with evidence and information of the learning, experience and assessment, and other training they have completed to meet each competency. By doing this they will identify any gaps in competence. If a pharmacy professional cannot answer a question to their own satisfaction (for example, *Do you understand the pharmacotherapy for the full range of emergency contraception and appropriate clinical guidance relating to these?*) then they should undertake some extra learning. This may include referring to other resources, such as National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance.
- iii. Use the information in **Part A** to identify the learning and assessment resources required to fill the gaps in competence and complete the relevant learning and assessment.
- iv. Revisit and complete the DoC framework in **Part B**, noting down the additional learning completed as appropriate.
- v. Access, print and sign the **Declaration of Competence statement** from the [CPPE website](#). This is pre-populated with the CPPE personal learning and assessment completed for the service, with the dates of completion. Remember to add details of other learning to the declaration (for example, from employers).
- vi. Keep the signed Declaration of Competence statement on the pharmacy premises and make available to employers, commissioners and others when requested.
- vii. Work through the DoC system every three years, or sooner, if stipulated on the DoC, the service level agreement or in the contract with the commissioner.

NB Pharmacy professionals must ensure that the use of the DoC system is allowed under the service specification/service level agreement (SLA). They should also check whether there are any additional training requirements specified by the commissioner.

9. What happens to the personal Declaration of Competence statement?

The signed statement should be kept on the pharmacy premises and made available to employers, commissioners and others when requested. Locum pharmacists should ensure that each contractor is aware they have signed the declaration for a particular service.

10. If the pharmacy professional has been providing the service for several years, can they automatically sign the statement?

Signing the personal Declaration of Competence statement, purely based on having provided the service for several years, would constitute a false declaration. The CPCG have been advised that the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) would view a false declaration by a pharmacy professional as a breach of the standards of *Conduct, ethics and performance* and therefore this would become a GPhC disciplinary matter. Even the most experienced practitioners should work through the DoC system to assure themselves that they remain competent.

However, it may be that previous learning and assessment and the experience of delivering the service over a number of years means that the pharmacy professional will be able to answer 'yes' to the majority of questions in Part B. As a result the amount of new learning *may* be minimal, but this will be for the individual professional to determine.

11. Is workshop attendance an essential part of DoC?

Workshop attendance is not necessarily an essential part of the DoC. Using the DoC means the pharmacy professional is certifying competence to deliver a service. If they have attended a workshop previously then they should make their own judgement as to whether additional workshop attendance would be beneficial to update and refresh local knowledge or other skills, such as consultation skills.

However, some commissioners may insist that a particular workshop is attended as part of the service specification/agreement and pharmacy professionals should ensure they check local requirements to see if this is the case.

12. Apart from learning, assessment and workshops what else can be done to support competence?

Pharmacy professionals are encouraged, whenever possible, to use additional methods to assure competence and develop practice. Examples include peer review by an experienced colleague who already delivers a successful quality service or work-shadowing of a fellow healthcare professional in a similar role (for example, shadowing the role of a sexual health nurse). It is important to remember that employers often provide access to training and some pharmacy bodies (for example, the Royal Pharmaceutical Society) also provide access to events where knowledge can be updated and maintained.

The DoC recording system and many of the training programmes and assessments are provided through the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE). Access to the [Declaration of Competence area of the CPPE website](#) also provides guidance for pharmacy professionals and commissioners on the DoC system.

13. How often should pharmacy professionals work through the DoC system?

Personal competence level should be maintained and kept under continual review by keeping up to date with new guidance, standards and learning programmes and assessments. This is particularly the case when patient group directions (PGDs) are involved, which may change regularly – you should always be working to the most recent PGD.

The full DoC system should be completed at least every three years, or sooner if stipulated in the DoC, your service specification or in the contract with your commissioner.

14. Where do I go if I want to find out more, or if I want to work through the DoC system?

You can access information relating to the DoC system by accessing the Declaration of Competence area of the [CPPE website](#). If you have any further detailed questions that cannot be resolved by reading the briefings on the CPPE website or the DoCs themselves, then you can email:

- Stephen Thomas at: sthomas@rowlandspharmacy.co.uk or
- Lesley Grimes: lesley@cppe.ac.uk