

Declaration of Competence (DoC) system for Community Pharmacy Services – Information for Commissioners

Background

Historically, community pharmacy professionals (pharmacists and pharmacy technicians) were required to complete an accreditation process in order to provide services commissioned at a local level by primary care trusts (PCTs). In order to support provision of consistent services and to minimise bureaucracy for service commissioners and community pharmacies, PCTs across the North West of England collaborated with local pharmaceutical committees (LPCs) and other partners via the Harmonisation of Accreditation Group to develop an accreditation process for individual services which was available for any commissioner to adopt.

The Declaration of Competence system

As responsibility for commissioning community pharmacy services at a local level passed to new commissioners in 2013, a number of areas decided to adopt a Declaration of Competence system which provides pharmacy professionals with a framework against which to self-assess their competence.

This mirrors the approach taken for the nationally commissioned NHS New Medicine Service and it adopts key elements of the previous North West Harmonisation of Accreditation process. The key competencies used in the previous model have been adopted as the main framework on which to develop the self-assessment tool.

The approach complements the General Pharmaceutical Council's policy that pharmacy professionals are responsible and accountable for maintaining and improving the quality of their practice by keeping their knowledge and skills up to date and relevant to their role and the services they offer. Additionally, pharmacy professionals should recognise the limits of their professional competence in order to identify their future development.

The Community Pharmacy Competence Group, now known as the Pharmacy Competence Group (PCG), in conjunction with the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) have developed a series of Declaration of Competence documents (DoCs) for locally commissioned services.

National support for the Declaration of Competence system

The Declaration of Competence system is now supported for use across England by Health Education England and endorsed by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

DoC is also supported by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and a number of national community pharmacy organisations, including the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), and the Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK).

What does this mean for commissioners?

As a commissioner, you may expect pharmacy owners to take responsibility for ensuring that each person who provides a service from their pharmacy is competent to do so. Pharmacies commissioned to provide services for your organisation may use the DoC system to assure themselves that their staff have the necessary competencies to provide the service.

Alternatively, you may require evidence to be provided by pharmacy owners in order to provide assurance that pharmacy professionals they employ have reflected on and completed the appropriate learning and assessment steps in order to self-declare their competence to provide a service. The DoC system would support this approach.

How does the *DoC* system work?

Pharmacy professionals wanting to provide a service complete a self-assessment framework. The competencies within the framework cover the clinical, ethical, cultural and legal aspects of providing each service.

By working through the self-assessment and reflecting on each individual competency, pharmacy professionals are able to identify gaps in their knowledge and skills. Details of the recommended learning and assessment which meet the individual competency requirements for the service (eg, CPPE learning programmes, assessments and in-house training) are signposted in the framework and these can be used to fill any gaps in an individual's knowledge and skills.

Having worked through the relevant DoC, pharmacy professionals can print and sign their personally generated declaration statement via the CPPE website. This statement includes details of relevant CPPE learning programmes they have accessed and assessments they have successfully completed.

The process should be undertaken by pharmacy professionals at least once every two years, or sooner if stipulated in the DoC, the service specification or in the contract with the commissioner, as evidence of continuing professional development and maintenance of competence.

Which services are covered?

Individual DoCs for a range of services are available on the [CPPE website](#), including:

- Alcohol use identification and brief advice
- Chlamydia testing and treatment
- Emergency contraception
- Improving inhaler technique
- Minor ailments
- Needle and syringe programmes
- Stop smoking
- Supervised consumption of prescribed medicines
- Vaccination
- Weight management

This list is regularly updated with new services.

Want to use the DoC system when you commission a service?

If you wish to use the DoC system for a service you commission or plan to commission from community pharmacies, you are free to adopt the system using the DoCs available on the [CPPE website](#) under the *Commissioners* tab. We recommend that you first discuss this with your [local pharmaceutical committee](#) in order to seek their support for use of the system. A requirement to use the DoC system could be included in the service agreement you make with community pharmacies.

Please let the Pharmacy Competence Group know that you are using the DoC system and provide us with feedback on how the system worked for you and your community pharmacies. Please send feedback to CPPE (info@cppe.ac.uk).

Need more information?

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions relating to this system, or you would like information about how CPPE's education and training supports the concept, please email CPPE (info@cppe.ac.uk).