

# OVERVIEW: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS TO SELF-DECLARE COMPETENCE

The Community Pharmacy Competence group supports staff working in community sectors of pharmacy across the North West. The group was set up in 2013 and is responsible for taking forward work to enable community pharmacists to complete Declarations of Competence (DoCs), in order to deliver locally commissioned services. This work builds on that of the Harmonisation of Accreditation group (HAG), which enabled harmonised requirements across PCT boundaries, providing quality assurance, reducing duplication and streamlining PCT training requirements.

Engagement and learning has taken place between commissioners, employers and pharmacists across the North West, with commissioners in Manchester (where the project was piloted) giving positive feedback. Other regions are also interested in using these documents, and engagement at a national level, within Health Education England (HEE) and Public Health England (PHE) has also occurred. As a result national recognition is being sought and a more formal project is planned to review impact alongside further roll-out.

## Background

### Harmonisation of Accreditation (HAG) Group

HAG was created in 2006 by a group of primary care trust (PCT) medicine management leads, pharmacy contractor representative bodies and the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE), which is part of the University of Manchester. HAG's purpose was to harmonise accreditation requirements for locally commissioned services across PCT boundaries, which would mean that pharmacists only needed to accredit once. Their accreditation had reciprocity in other PCTs who recognised the HAG process. This benefitted community pharmacists by providing them with an accreditation 'passport' for services across all but one PCT in the North West Strategic Health Authority (NW SHA) footprint.

It also helped to streamline PCT training requirements. Initially HAG worked as a subgroup of the Workforce Development Group (WDG) of the NW SHA. This later changed to a subgroup of [Pharmacy Workforce North West](#), which is a network supported by the NW Pharmacy Workforce Development team.



When PCTs ceased to exist a new accreditation method was sought, as it became clear that clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and local authority commissioners did not have the time, budget or skills to accredit community pharmacists. The result is that the HAG documentation, developed over many years, has been converted into a self-declaration mechanism.



- Set up a mechanism which would allow community pharmacists to deliver locally commissioned services to an accepted standard, by developing a process by which they could assure themselves, their employers and commissioners of their competence
- Provide a structure which would reassure commissioners that community pharmacists who had self-declared their competence were able to deliver locally commissioned services
- Avoid duplication of effort for commissioners and pharmacists by creating a single recognised process

### Key Stages of Set-Up

The group was set up in Spring 2013 and is accountable to Health Education North West's (HENW) Board. It was agreed at the first meeting that a new process was needed and that self-declaration was the most obvious way of achieving this. Some of the group had been involved in the HAG process and were therefore familiar in the elements which would need to be included, if such a process were to go ahead. It was felt that the HAG documents could be relatively easily converted into a self-declaration model.

Considerable engagement has taken place across the North West and at a national level to discuss this approach. Commissioners have been resoundingly positive. In the early days of the project the self-declaration process was used across Manchester to allow pharmacists delivering an emergency contraception service to self-declare. Commissioners and pharmacists both reported their satisfaction with the process.

### How it works

Group meetings are held approximately every two months and work is circulated electronically between meetings for comment. A work programme has been developed to plan which services need to have self-declaration documents developed and in which order. The group are gradually converting HAG documentation into a self-declaration format, starting with the most common locally commissioned services. During the conversion process there is wide engagement to ensure that the documents are both acceptable and up-to-date. The group then approves the documents and they are published on the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education's website ([www.cppe.ac.uk/services](http://www.cppe.ac.uk/services))

### Resources

Indirect financial funding has been received in the form of project and administrative support, including the ability to access time from the Pharmacy Workforce Development team's project director and his administrator, who book and pay for meeting rooms. All other members of the group have been released by their employers at no cost to the project.

### Key Challenges

- Developing the first self-declaration document went through many iterations, which was a time-consuming process that delayed the launch and subsequent roll-out of the DoCs.
- Ensuring commissioners were happy with the approach meant a large number of discussions with many commissioners to gain acceptance. These discussions were mainly led by colleagues from CPPE and the project director of Pharmacy Workforce North West.
- Ensuring that the mechanism will allow pharmacists to demonstrate competence and that it is not simply a tick box exercise required time-consuming road-testing
- Gaining national recognition has become a very bureaucratic exercise and is still in process (as at April 2014)

### Key Learning

As with the HAG process, detailed engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders has been crucial in gaining acceptance of the approach.

- Develop a compelling narrative about the expected benefits of the work at an early stage
- Engage a large number of people early in the process and use the narrative to describe what is going to happen and to gain agreement
- Have a core group of people working on the project, but ensure that there is wide stakeholder engagement to ensure continued buy-in
- Use networks to spread the message to those who are not using the documents, but who could influence their uptake or who may be affected by their introduction.

## Sustainability

Commissioners across the North West are now including in their service level agreements and contracts a requirement for competence to deliver the service to be assured by completing the self-declaration process. The process has been publicised, increasing pharmacists' awareness.

## Next Steps

- Complete DoCs for the remaining services
- Maintain the documents to reflect any changes in recognised quality standards or learning enhancements
- Work with commissioners to develop new DoCs for new services

## Further Links

- Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education  
[www.cppe.ac.uk/services](http://www.cppe.ac.uk/services)
- Pharmacy Workforce North West  
[www.pharmacyworkforcenw.nhs.uk](http://www.pharmacyworkforcenw.nhs.uk)

## Glossary of acronyms

- Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE)
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- Declarations of Competence (DoCs)
- Harmonisation of Accreditation group (HAG) – superseded by Community Pharmacy Competence group
- Health Education England (HEE)
- Health Education North West (HENW)
- North West Strategic Health Authority (NW SHA)
- Public Health England (PHE)
- Primary Care Trust (PCT)
- Workforce Development Group (WDG)

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