

# **Community Pharmacy Assurance Framework Guidance**

## 1. Introduction

The Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) of the Department of Health commissions Pharmaceutical Services for the population of Northern Ireland and these services are in turn provided by over 500 community pharmacy contractors. The [Pharmaceutical Services \(NI\) Regulations 1997](#) specify Terms of Service for elements of pharmaceutical service provision and further services are defined within elective contract arrangements and individual service specifications.

In order to provide an assurance that patients and members of the public receive safe, effective and high quality pharmaceutical services, SPPG in collaboration with Community Pharmacy NI (CPNI) developed a Community Pharmacy Assurance Framework (CPAF). This framework was first implemented in 2016. The CPAF process has been reviewed and updated in order to continue to adequately reflect the requirements of community pharmacies. This guidance document details the steps in the assurance process.

## 2. Aims of the Assurance Framework

The aim and purpose of the framework is to monitor compliance with Terms of Service, service specifications, related professional standards and best practice guidance to ensure that patients and members of the public receive safe, effective and high quality pharmaceutical services.

## 3. Overview of the Framework

CPAF consists of an annual declaration completed by each community pharmacy contractor, and a short visit undertaken by SPPG staff on a three yearly basis. The declaration and visit include questions based on service requirements, relating to legislation including the Terms of service, relevant service specifications and professional guidance. The overall outcome from the assurance process is confirmation of the pharmacy's compliance with the framework.

A summary flowchart describing the process is included in Appendix 1. All relevant documentation can be accessed at the following links:

- BSO website: <https://bsc.hscni.net/directorates/operations/family-practitioner-services/pharmacy/contractor-information/contractor-communications/hscb-services-and-guidance/assurance-framework/>
- Primary Care Intranet: <http://primarycare.hscni.net/community-pharmacy/practice-quality-system/assurance-framework/>

## 4. Assurance Declaration Form

The Assurance Declaration Form is issued annually by SPPG to all community pharmacy contractors. Contractors then have 4 weeks to return the declaration form to their local SPPG office.

The Community Pharmacy Assurance Declaration is a self-assessment tool, designed to provide assurance on a number of core service indicators, related to relevant legislation and guidance for provision of pharmaceutical services. A copy of the pharmacy's practice leaflet and complaints SOP may also be requested for submission with the annual declaration.

The following topics are covered in the declaration:

- Hours of provision of pharmaceutical services
- Business continuity
- Complaints procedure
- Dispensing
- Pharmacy services inc. Palliative Care
- Consultation area for additional services
- Practice Leaflet
- Record keeping
- Current medicine safety issue – Valproate
- Medicines Adherence

## **5. Selection of pharmacies for assurance visits**

Each quarter a number of pharmacies in each LCG area will be selected for an assurance visit by SPPG staff. The basis of selection of pharmacies for visits will be:

1. Community pharmacy contractors who have never had a CPAF visit to date
2. Community pharmacy contractors who did not receive a letter of compliance from a previous visit
3. Random selection

Very occasionally visits may be arranged with community pharmacy contractors where further assurance is sought as a result of one of the following:

- Reported adverse incidents and serious adverse incidents
- Reported complaints from service users
- Concerns raised by whistle blowers or other healthcare professionals
- Information reports from SPPG including prescription data, payment and monitoring information for elective services

## **6. Arranging an assurance visit**

SPPG staff will contact contractors via the individual pharmacy when they have been selected for an assurance visit to arrange a suitable date and time. Appropriate notice of the visit will be given. The visit will be conducted in person with a SPPG pharmacy adviser. If this cannot be facilitated, there will be the option to undertake the visit, virtually via Zoom.

If being conducted virtually, SPPG will send the pharmacy secure email a Zoom invite link prior to the visit date. The community pharmacy contractor can join the meeting by clicking on this link or if

they have the Zoom App installed, then they can key in the meeting ID when the app is launched. Additional guidance on 'How to join a Zoom meeting' will be shared prior to the visit.

## **7. Preparation for a visit**

Prior to the visit, a copy of the visit protocol will be sent to the pharmacy secure email. If the pharmacy is a multiple, the appropriate head office contact can be copied in to all email communication.

The visit protocol provides detail of the topics and questions that will be covered during the visit. This should be reviewed in preparation and supporting documentation made readily available for discussion during the visit.

During the visit, the pharmacist may be required to provide evidence of records to support certain aspects of the assurance process. There is a legislative basis for SPPG to inspect that records are being maintained for health service business. However, SPPG do not need to see any patient identifiable data and no patient level data should be removed from the pharmacy.

If the visit is being carried out virtually, SPPG staff will not be able to directly observe evidence of record keeping. Instead, pharmacists are asked to review the visit protocol in advance and have relevant examples ready for discussion. As before, the pharmacist will not need to provide names or other patient identifiable data to SPPG staff and there is no necessity to send any patient level data to SPPG.

## **8. The visit**

The assurance visit will be conducted by a SPPG pharmacy adviser.

If relevant, the contractor should ensure that the regular responsible pharmacist is available for the duration of the visit. An additional fee of £230 can also be claimed for locum costs if necessary. The contractor or another representative can also participate if desired.

The visit should last approximately 45 min, during which time the SPPG pharmacy adviser will discuss the questions on the visit protocol with the pharmacist. This will include a review of how processes work practically in the pharmacy and evidence or documents/records to support this may be requested for discussion. Any issues raised from the submitted assurance declaration will also be discussed.

The SPPG pharmacy adviser will make brief notes on the visit protocol for sharing after the visit. Any follow-up actions will be discussed and agreed with all participants. In exceptional circumstances, additional information may need to be sought by the SPPG pharmacy adviser after the visit.

## **9. Visit Report and Action Plan**

A report will be issued within 2 weeks of the visit summarising all areas discussed. If there are no follow-up actions identified during the visit, a letter detailing compliance with CPAF will be issued alongside the report.

Alternatively, if there are areas for improvement noted during the visit, these will be highlighted in the report. Any agreed actions will be summarised in an accompanying action plan. The community pharmacy contractor will then have 4 weeks to work towards completing the agreed actions and submitting the action plan. There is the option to respond to SPPG with any concerns in relation to either the report or action plan and the SPPG pharmacy adviser will then work with the community pharmacy contractor to resolve these.

When all actions identified in the visit have been completed and the action plan accepted by SPPG, a letter of compliance with the requirements of the framework will be issued.

## **10. Addressing areas of concern**

Areas for improvement will be addressed at the visit in the first instance, in order to agree an action plan. The SPPG pharmacy adviser can provide advice and offer support to implement this plan, including sharing of good practice where necessary.

In cases where there is a dispute between the community pharmacy contractor and the SPPG over an issue of compliance, e.g. the contractor does not accept that there is an issue of non-compliance, the contractor and SPPG are unable to agree an action plan or SPPG does not agree that a problem has been sufficiently remedied, the issue may need to be escalated within the relevant organisations or through an agreed independent third party in order to reach a resolution.

## **11. Funding Arrangements**

Payment of £1200 will be made to each pharmacy for compliance with CPAF for each year. Where the SPPG identifies failure to comply, the SPPG reserves the right to recover all, or part of, this funding via an adjustment to the pharmacy's BSO payment account.

Where required, funding will be available to cover locum costs for the day of the visit. This will enable the regular pharmacist to be available for the entirety of the visit and allow sufficient time to prepare. Payment will be made upon receipt of a claim form, signed by, or on behalf of, the contractor.

## **12. Review of the Framework**

The framework will continue to be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current and fulfils its purpose.

### 13. Contact Details

#### Strategic Planning and Performance Group, Department of Health

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the framework with a SPPG pharmacy adviser, please contact your local Primary Care Office to speak to a pharmacy adviser. The details of each local office are detailed below.

<i>Contact Details for Local Primary Care Offices:</i>				
<b>Belfast</b>	<b>South Eastern</b>	<b>Southern</b>	<b>Northern</b>	<b>Western</b>
12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS	12-22 Linenhall Street Belfast BT2 8BS	Tower Hill Armagh. BT61 9DR	County Hall 182 Galgorm Road Ballymena BT42 1QB	Gransha Park House 15 Gransha Park Clooney Road Londonderry BT47 6FN
Tel: 028 9536 3926	Tel: 028 9536 3926	Tel: 028 9536 2104	Tel: 028 9536 2812	Tel: 028 9536 1082
<a href="mailto:pharmacyservicesbelfast@hscni.net">pharmacyservicesbelfast@hscni.net</a>	<a href="mailto:pharmacyservicesse@hscni.net">pharmacyservicesse@hscni.net</a>	<a href="mailto:pharmacyservicessouth@hscni.net">pharmacyservicessouth@hscni.net</a>	<a href="mailto:pharmacyservicesnorth@hscni.net">pharmacyservicesnorth@hscni.net</a>	<a href="mailto:pharmacyserviceswest@hscni.net">pharmacyserviceswest@hscni.net</a>

#### Community Pharmacy NI

If you require any clarification, advice or support from CPNI, please contact 028 9069 0444.

## Appendix 1 – CPAF process flowchart

