

# Maintaining Competency in Prescribing

## An outline framework to help nurse supplementary prescribers



March 2003

In November 2001, the National Prescribing Centre (NPC) published the first edition of *Maintaining Competency in Prescribing: An outline framework to help nurse prescribers* which presented the competencies for nurses qualified to prescribe from the Nurse Prescribers' Formulary for District Nurses and Health Visitors (NPF) and the Nurse Prescribers' Extended Formulary (NPEF).

This original framework is being used to:

- ❑ help Higher Education Institutions identify learning outcomes for components of curricula to prepare nurses to prescribe
- ❑ help individual qualified nurse prescribers, and their managers, identify continuing professional development needs
- ❑ inform commissioning, development and provision of continuing professional development programmes
- ❑ support local recruitment and selection processes and inform appraisal systems

During the summer of 2002 the original framework was re-engineered in preparation for the implementation of supplementary prescribing by nurses and pharmacists.

The framework presented here:

- ❑ identifies the competencies needed by nurse supplementary prescribers, many of which are the same as those needed by nurses who are qualified to prescribe from the NPF and / or NPEF
- ❑ is an addendum to, and should therefore be considered as an integral part of Maintaining Competency in Prescribing: An outline framework to help nurse prescribers
- ❑ is likely to be incorporated into any future editions of Maintaining Competency in Prescribing: An outline framework to help nurse prescribers
- ❑ should be considered alongside the Department of Health document entitled *Supplementary prescribing by nurses and pharmacists within the NHS in England - A guide for implementation (March 2003)* which is available from [www.doh.gov.uk/supplementaryprescribing](http://www.doh.gov.uk/supplementaryprescribing)

Any queries or comments on this new framework should be directed to Trudy Granby at [trudy.granby@npc.nhs.uk](mailto:trudy.granby@npc.nhs.uk)

## THE CONSULTATION

CLINICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL KNOWLEDGE	ESTABLISHING OPTIONS	COMMUNICATING WITH PATIENTS
<i>Has up-to-date clinical and pharmaceutical knowledge relevant to own area of practice.</i>	<i>Reviews diagnosis and generates treatment options for the patient within the clinical management plan. Always follows up treatment.</i>	<i>Establishes a relationship based on trust and mutual respect. Sees patients as partners in the consultation. Applies the principles of concordance.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understands the medical conditions being treated, their natural progress and how to assess the severity of disease</li> <li>○ Understands different non-pharmacological and pharmacological approaches to modifying disease and promoting health, desirable and undesirable outcomes and how to identify and assess them</li> <li>○ Understands the mode of action and pharmacokinetics of medicines, how these mechanisms may be altered (e.g. by age, renal impairment) and how this affects dosage</li> <li>○ Understands the potential for unwanted effects, (e.g. adverse drug reactions [ADRs], drug interactions, special precautions and contraindications), and how to avoid/minimise and manage them</li> <li>○ Maintains an up-to-date knowledge of products in the British National Formulary (BNF) and drug tariff (e.g. doses, formulations, pack sizes)</li> <li>○ Appreciates the misuse potential of drugs</li> <li>○ Applies the principles of evidence-based medicine, and clinical and cost-effectiveness</li> <li>○ Understands how medicines are licensed, monitored (e.g. how ADRs are reported) and supplied</li> <li>○ Understands the public health issues related to medicines use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Takes a comprehensive medical history and undertakes an appropriate physical examination</li> <li>○ Builds a complete medication history including complementary medicines, herbal remedies, OTC medicines</li> <li>○ Reviews the working or final diagnosis by systematically deciding between the various possibilities (differential diagnosis)</li> <li>○ Requests, and interprets, relevant diagnostic tests</li> <li>○ Views and assesses the patient's needs holistically (e.g. psychosocial, physical)</li> <li>○ Considers no treatment, non-drug and drug treatment options (including referral and preventive measures)</li> <li>○ Assesses the relationship between multiple pathologies, existing medication and contraindications of treatment options</li> <li>○ Assesses the risks and benefits to the patient of taking/not taking a medicine (or using/not using a treatment)</li> <li>○ Selects the most appropriate drug, dose and formulation for the individual patient</li> <li>○ Makes changes within the clinical management plan in light of ongoing monitoring and patient's condition</li> <li>○ Establishes and maintains a plan for reviewing the therapeutic objective and end of treatment</li> <li>○ Considers repeat prescribing options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approaches the consultation in a structured way</li> <li>○ Listens to and understands patients' beliefs and expectations</li> <li>○ Understands the cultural, linguistic and religious implications of prescribing</li> <li>○ Adapts the consultation to meet the needs of different patients (e.g. for age, level of understanding)</li> <li>○ Deals sensitively with patients' emotions and concerns</li> <li>○ Creates a relationship which does not encourage the expectation that a prescription will be written</li> <li>○ Explains the nature of the patient's condition and the rationale behind, and potential risks and benefits of, treatment options</li> <li>○ Helps patients to make informed choices about their treatment</li> <li>○ Negotiates an outcome of the consultation that both patient and prescriber are satisfied with</li> <li>○ Encourages patients to take responsibility for their own health and self manage their conditions; involves carers and advocates where appropriate</li> <li>○ Gives clear instructions to the patient about their medication (e.g. what it is for, how to take it, where to get it from, possible side effects)</li> <li>○ Checks the patients' understanding of, and commitment to, their treatment</li> </ul>

This is an **outline** framework of prescribing competencies relevant to all nurse supplementary prescribers. The statements in this framework should be interpreted in the context in which individual or groups of nurse supplementary prescribers are prescribing, taking into account their scope of practice.



## PRESCRIBING EFFECTIVELY

PRESCRIBING SAFELY	PRESCRIBING PROFESSIONALLY	IMPROVING PRESCRIBING PRACTICE
<p><i>Is aware of own limitations. Does not compromise patient safety, justifies prescribing decisions.</i></p>	<p><i>Works within professional and organisational standards.</i></p>	<p><i>Actively participates in the review and development of prescribing practice to improve patient care.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Accesses and interprets all relevant patient records to ensure full knowledge of the patients' management</li> <li>○ Knows the limits of own knowledge and skill, and works within them</li> <li>○ Knows when and how to refer back to, or seek guidance from, the independent prescriber, another member of the team or a specialist</li> <li>○ Prescribes a medicine only with adequate, up-to-date knowledge of its actions, indications, contraindications, interactions, cautions, dose and side-effects</li> <li>○ Checks doses and calculations to ensure accuracy and safety</li> <li>○ Knows about common types of medication errors and how to prevent them</li> <li>○ Understands the need for and makes accurate, clear and timely records in shared patient notes</li> <li>○ Writes legible, clear and complete prescriptions, which meet legal requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understands the scope of own prescribing responsibility in the context of a shared clinical management plan</li> <li>○ Accepts personal responsibility for own prescribing and understands the legal implications of doing so</li> <li>○ Ensures that the patient has consented to be managed by a prescribing partnership</li> <li>○ Prioritises and manages case loads effectively</li> <li>○ Uses professional judgement to make prescribing decisions, based on the needs of patients and not personal considerations</li> <li>○ Understands how current legislation affects prescribing practice</li> <li>○ Prescribes within current professional codes of practice</li> <li>○ Keeps up-to-date with advances in practice and emerging safety concerns related to prescribing</li> <li>○ Keeps prescription pads safely and knows what to do if they are stolen/lost</li> <li>○ Maintains patient confidentiality</li> <li>○ Interacts with the patient in an appropriate setting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Takes responsibility for own CPD</li> <li>○ Reflects on own performance, learns (e.g. from critical incident monitoring) and changes prescribing practice</li> <li>○ Willing to share and debate own and others prescribing practice</li> <li>○ Challenges inappropriate practice constructively</li> <li>○ Develops own networks for support, reflection and learning</li> <li>○ Understands and uses tools to improve prescribing (e.g. audit, review of PACT data)</li> <li>○ Reports prescribing errors and near misses</li> <li>○ Establishes professional links with practitioners working in the same specialist area</li> </ul>

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## PRESCRIBING IN CONTEXT

INFORMATION IN CONTEXT	THE NHS IN CONTEXT	THE TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL CONTEXT
<i>Knows how to access relevant information. Can critically appraise and apply information in practice.</i>	<i>Understands, and works with, local and national policies and services that impact on prescribing practice. Sees how own practice impacts on the wider NHS.</i>	<i>Works in partnership with colleagues for the benefit of patients. Is self-aware and confident in own ability as a prescriber.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understands the advantages and limitations of different information sources</li> <li>○ Accesses and uses relevant, up-to-date information both written (paper/electronic) and verbal</li> <li>○ Critically appraises the validity of information (e.g. promotional literature, clinical trials)</li> <li>○ Applies information to the clinical context (linking theory to practice)</li> <li>○ Uses relevant patient record systems, prescribing and information systems, and decision-support tools, (e.g. PRODIGY)</li> <li>○ Regularly reviews evidence behind therapeutic strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understands the principles behind supplementary prescribing and how they are applied in practice</li> <li>○ Understands the purpose, contents and limits of individual patient clinical management plans</li> <li>○ Knows how local health service organisations work and interact</li> <li>○ Works within local frameworks for medicines use, as appropriate (e.g. formularies, and guidelines, local delivery plans)</li> <li>○ Works within the NHS organisational code of conduct when dealing with the pharmaceutical industry</li> <li>○ Understands drug budgetary constraints at local and national levels</li> <li>○ Understands national NHS frameworks for medicines use, (e.g. National Institute for Clinical Excellence [NICE], National Service Frameworks [NSFs], medicines management, clinical governance, IT strategy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proactively negotiates with the independent prescriber to develop clinical management plans</li> <li>○ Relates to the independent prescriber as an equal partner</li> <li>○ Maintains the integrity of the prescribing partnership</li> <li>○ Thinks and acts as part of a multidisciplinary team</li> <li>○ Establishes working relationships with colleagues to ensure that continuity of care is not compromised</li> <li>○ Listens to and respects the views of colleagues</li> <li>○ Establishes credibility with colleagues</li> <li>○ Recognises and deals with pressures that might result in inappropriate prescribing (e.g. pharmaceutical industry, patients and colleagues)</li> <li>○ Is adaptable, flexible and responsive to change</li> <li>○ Negotiates the appropriate level of support for role as a nurse supplementary prescriber</li> <li>○ Provides support and advice to other team members, where appropriate</li> </ul>
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