

# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES — ROLE OF THE CPPE IN SUPPORTING NHS REPEAT DISPENSING ARRANGEMENTS

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*The NHS Plan announced the development of a repeat dispensing scheme nationwide by 2004. Since July 2002 the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education has been working closely with colleagues to produce a national training package on the repeat dispensing arrangements. This is aimed at all health care professionals and their relevant practice staff and is being facilitated by experienced tutors in the pathfinder sites. The roll out of this training began in April 2003. This article concentrates on the processes followed by the CPPE in designing and developing the training materials. Legislation for the repeat dispensing arrangements came into force on 7 May 2003*

The role of the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education in developing and delivering materials to support the continuing professional development of pharmacists is well known. Since 1991, the CPPE has produced high quality learning resources, offered through workshops and open learning, to meet the changing needs of the workforce. Since the publication of "Pharmacy in the future", the CPPE has taken on further work in designing materials to support the implementation of new services. This includes supporting the community pharmacy medicines management project and the introduction of training as NHS Direct incorporated community pharmacy referral.

## BUILDING IN QUALITY

With the repeat dispensing arrangements, we recognised that we were moving from a topic-specific area of learning to a service-specific area and so were keen to make sure that we built on our reputation for quality.

This was achieved through the support and knowledge of a wide range of experts, the experience of those who had been involved in repeat dispensing pilots, our colleagues in other national organisations and, not least, the input from our target learner group, consisting in this case of general practitioners and pharmacists, and their practice staff.

## IN THE BEGINNING

Early meetings at the Department of Health made it clear that the repeat dispensing training package needed to be focused heavily on delivery of a service and not on the essential and customary clinical input that pharmacists provide. The CPPE would be providing training that would bring GP

practices and pharmacies together, sharing ways of working and learning from each other about how challenges would be tackled as they arose.

In July 2002, a discussion paper on educational proposals to support repeat dispensing was produced by one of us (JMD, the first tutor engaged by the CPPE on a full-time contract with a specific remit for programme design and support). This paper reviewed the previous work done by repeat dispensing pilots and put forward an outline training programme. It was tabled to the CPPE management team and agreement was reached on how the work would be taken forward. The paper was subsequently shared with members of the design team and the DoH.

## LEARNING NEEDS ANALYSIS

### — LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

A key challenge in learning design is to make sure both that the materials meet the needs of the learner and that appropriate and adequate coverage of the subject is achieved. To do this, the CPPE follows through an analysis of learning needs at the early stages of designing our materials.

Table 1 lists the people who attended our first needs analysis meeting, with a brief explanation of their roles and remit. Many of them had direct involvement in the early repeat dispensing pilots, or would be engaged in delivery once the pathfinder sites went live. We also included a number of

CPPE tutors so that we could share their expertise in what could be delivered comfortably as the materials were collated. Two members of the professional development team at the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee were also able to share their expertise with us, and further support from the National Pharmaceutical Association was also welcomed.

The needs analysis meeting enabled us to put together the core content of the workshop and consider which elements would be delivered best in the pre-workshop preparation or post-workshop implementation undertaken in each practice. A variety of teaching methods was incorporated into the workshop design but the main focus was on small group, problem-based learning.

## VALIDATION OF CONTENT

Two important checks were carried out after the first draft of the workshop was written.

- Did it meet the stated learning objectives?
- Did it cover the content, agreed by the needs analysis team?

To check this, the early draft was shared for comment with a representative group from the needs analysis team and a new group, consisting of practitioners who were likely to attend the training and offer the service.

At the beginning of October 2002, the department held a workshop for the successful pathfinder sites. This outlined the details of the scheme and gave us an opportunity to gain opinion and comment from the nominated primary care trust repeat dispensing leads.

All of the feedback was collated and incorporated into the training materials where appropriate.

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## TESTING THE WORKSHOP

Following a meeting with the DoH at the end of January 2003, it was believed that the regulations were nearing their final form and a decision was made to go ahead with piloting the workshop. Because the pathfinder sites vary widely in size from single practices to whole PCT areas, we decided to pilot the workshop in a small and a large site.

The pilot allowed us not only to check that the workshop ran properly, but also to identify what could be done to improve the learning outcome. Using specific assessment forms for the pilot sessions, both for the participants and the facilitators, we were able to introduce some final adjustments to the running order and content of the session.

## BOOKING ARRANGEMENTS

Paul Gray, head of information technology at the CPPE, has designed a new booking system to enable non-pharmacists to access the courses. This allows the local repeat dispensing leads to maintain control over the planning of and attendance at each event.

The system asks non-pharmacists to register and produces a unique identifier that allows them to book specific courses. Before the session is run the register can be printed and checks can be made to ensure that:

- All those who have booked are entitled to attend
- All those who should be attending are doing so

As well as ensuring consistency across the professions attending the session, the computer system also maintains records of continuing education for all those who register.

## SHARING WHAT WORKED — “TRAIN THE TRAINERS”

Perhaps one of the biggest opportunities that the CPPE continues to meet is helping our tutors learn from others. Each training session brings its own difficulties and obstacles. The CPPE holds “train the trainer” events for the specific purpose of exploring how we can make our sessions as successful as possible from the outset. Four sessions for repeat dispensing were organised at various venues throughout England.

Recognising that many of our tutors and the repeat dispensing leads would have uncertainties over, or be seeking clarification on aspects specific to the regulations, we invited Susan Grieve, from the DoH, to speak at these sessions. This greatly added to the content and relevance of the sessions for all those who attended.

## MONITORING PROGRESS

Special evaluation forms were designed for this programme to allow us to feedback qualitative data to the repeat dispensing

**TABLE 1: ROLES AND REMIT OF THE NEEDS ANALYSIS TEAM MEMBERS**

Name	Role	Purpose
Alison Astles	Pharmaceutical adviser, Sefton and Bootle Primary Care Trust	Project manager for Sefton repeat dispensing pilot
Sheila Beaumont	Community pharmacy adviser, Brighton and Hove PCT	Practice experience
Tina Billett	Regional lead nurse prescribing, South West region	Nurse input
Mike King	Head of professional development and local pharmaceutical committee services, Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee	PSNC support
Janet McDonald	LPC secretary, East Riding and Hull Local Pharmaceutical Committee	Experience in service development in Hull and East Riding
Debra Metcalf	Community pharmacist, Bishop Auckland, County Durham	CPPE tutor
Barbara Parsons	LPC liaison officer, PSNC	PSNC support
Andy Riley	Pharmaceutical adviser, South Staffordshire Health Authority	Project manager for the National Pharmaceutical Association repeat dispensing pilots
Karen Rosenbloom	Lecturer in pharmacy practice, University of Derby	Educational design
Jenny Webb	NHS service development manager, National Pharmaceutical Association	NPA support
Janice Mason-Duff	Programme design and support, Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education	Project manager and writer
Matthew Shaw	Assistant director, CPPE	
Rob Swallow	Educational development, CPPE	Educational design

leads in each PCT and to provide a summary report to the DoH. To date, 27 PCTs have booked 60 sessions via our website booking arrangements.

Forty-four repeat dispensing workshops have been run across England and the evaluation forms analysed. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

The key benefit stated by participants is the improvement in communication that learning together allows, so we continue to promote the joint workshop to facilitate this multidisciplinary development.

## NEXT STEPS

The regulations state that pharmacists must undertake appropriate training in order to participate in repeat dispensing. At present, the CPPE has produced a workshop training programme. We hope to continue to support the implementation of repeat dispensing by producing “commonly asked questions” using feedback from the facilitators and tutors at the workshop sessions. The CPPE is also developing open learning resources for locum pharmacists, deputising GPs and practice staff, in order to maximise access to the training materials. This will ensure greater equity of access, but must be combined with local meetings to maintain benefit.

## ONLINE SUPPORT

All repeat dispensing leads are encouraged to use our web-based discussion forum to raise questions, propose solutions and share good practice. Access to the forum can be easily gained through the CPPE website [www.cppe.man.ac.uk](http://www.cppe.man.ac.uk) following the link for repeat dispensing.

The site also contains regularly updated information about repeat dispensing.

## SUMMARY

Our experience of designing and delivering the materials for the repeat dispensing arrangements has been a great learning opportunity. We are confident that the materials that we have provided to the pathfinder sites meet their needs and are pleased that the feedback which we have received to date supports this. Recognising that the needs of our users will continue to change, we look forward to being involved in revising our materials to support future waves of pathfinders.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** Throughout our work on the repeat dispensing arrangements, we have been fortunate to gain feedback and constructive comments from Susan Grieve, Department of Health.