

CPD diary: industrial pharmacist increasing efficiency

Janet Halliday is director of research and development at Controlled Therapeutics (Scotland) Ltd, East Kilbride, where she has worked for 17 years. Her group is responsible for taking ideas from their first concept to the end of Phase II clinical trials. Dr Halliday is a keen bridge player.

Reflection A while ago, we urgently needed to send out a business development report on a major product development project. The table of contents needed amending but there was no one around that week who knew how to do it. Our reports can be over 80 pages long so having a good table of contents is essential. All our scientists write their own reports (it is more efficient) so word processing skills are important. I realised we needed to improve in this area.

Planning I asked our secretarial department to suggest someone to give a seminar on amending and constructing tables of contents. I also asked our human resources department about other options and they came up with an external course. As recommended in "Plan and record", I usually organise my personal development plan for the whole year but it can be tricky going back to the it and putting in actions.

Action The seminar was attended by about eight people and lasted one hour. The short course lasted a day.

Evaluation The advantage of learning in-house is having access to advice when required, but the external course gave me access to knowledge not held by my colleagues. One tip I learnt was that it is easier to build the table while the report is written rather than retrospectively.

As a result of my action, I was able to undo a badly constructed table of contents and build a new one for a business development document on pilocarpine. My boss has found out that I have this skill and has asked for my help with



his reports.

Recording Pharmacists do small bits of learning all the time — they find out what they need to know and get on with it. The leap to CPD is to record what you have done. I was involved in the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's CPD pilot so I have been doing online recording for about two years. It is easier than writing out a hard copy, which is harder to update and amend. Every month, I enter a new record and update two or three. This is mostly done outside work but, occasionally, I do it during the working day and my company supports this. It takes me about 20 minutes to complete an entry.

The CPD website was updated this year, to include competencies for industrial pharmacists. This is excellent. Before, we only had the general competencies to guide us and had to fit what else were doing into a general topic. Pharmacists in industry often have monthly reporting activities, and these can act as a useful trigger to update your CPD records.