

# Independent Prescribing

## Recruitment starts for the next course

The next independent and supplementary prescribing course for pharmacists will start in April 2009. While this may seem a long time away, there are some arrangements that you will need to make prior to starting the course; for example, getting the support of your employer, obtaining a designated medical practitioner and deciding which therapeutic area(s) you wish to prescribe in. This all takes time and will require discussion with a local GP practice or hospital consultant.

### How do I become an independent prescriber?

Pharmacists who wish to become independent prescribers must undertake an accredited training course. The course must follow the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) outline curriculum and consist of a minimum of 26 days training (approx. 8 day workshops and 18 days distance learning) plus a minimum of 12 days in-practice training.

Full eligibility criteria can be downloaded from the NICPLD website, however in summary, all entrants to the course must:

- be registered with PSNI as a practising pharmacist in Northern Ireland
- have at least two years post registration experience in patient orientated practise in hospital, community or primary care
- identify a clinical area in which to practise as a prescriber
- have up-to-date clinical knowledge in the area they wish to prescribe.

### What does the course involve?

NICPLD will provide the course in independent prescribing and it is free of charge to pharmacists. The qualification gained will be a postgraduate certificate in independent prescribing and will allow pharmacists' names to be added to the PSNI annotated register of prescribers. Pharmacist independent prescribers will also be able to practise as supplementary prescribers. There will be no separate supplementary prescribing course.

The curriculum will consist of 6 modules (listed opposite) that will be delivered by the internet, book-based distance learning and live workshops, and is run

over a six-month period. The PSNI require continuous assessment throughout the course, although there is no final examination.

### Pharmacy independent and supplementary prescribing course

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Module 1 | Development of a clinical management plan (CMP) as part of a multidisciplinary approach to patient care |
| Module 2 | Influences on and psychology of prescribing   |
| Module 3 | Disease management  |
| Module 4 | Physical examination skills and patient monitoring  |
| Module 5 | Evidence-based practice and clinical governance in relation to supplementary prescribing                |
| Module 6 | Legal, policy, professional and ethical aspects   |

### How does in-practice training work?

Completion of training is dependent upon a minimum period of 12 x 7.5 hour days mentorship by a designated medical practitioner (GP or hospital consultant). This need not be undertaken in one block of time. Nonetheless, pharmacists must keep a log of their activities during the in-practice training, at the end of which they must be signed off by their designated medical practitioner as being competent to prescribe.

### What next?

You can download more detailed information about independent prescribing and the course from the NICPLD website. Application forms may also be downloaded from the website and completed applications should be returned to NICPLD by 21st November 2009.



NI Centre for  
**Pharmacy Learning  
& Development**

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## Keynote lectures

# Neurological disease

The focus of this term's keynote lectures is the more commonly encountered neurological diseases. Each lecture will examine best practice in managing these conditions, emphasising an evidence-based approach to improving patient care.

**Multiple Sclerosis** (Dr Stanley Hawkins, October 7)

**Epilepsy** (Dr John Craig, October 14)

**Parkinson's Disease** (Dr David Craig, October 21)

Lectures will be held at NICPLD, School of Pharmacy, and will run from 8.00pm – 9.30pm. Full details of these lectures can be found on [www.nicpld.org](http://www.nicpld.org) and in the latest course brochure.

The car park of the Medical Biology Centre (MBC) is available to those attending the keynote lectures and is accessed by turning into Jubilee Road (this road leads to the City Hospital). When you turn into Jubilee Road take the first driveway entrance on the left side, situated about 10 yards from the traffic lights. This takes you into the MBC car park and you are able to park at the rear car park, outside NICPLD.

A map showing the location of NICPLD is available on our website.



Our new Freepost address is: **FREEPOST NICPLD**. That's all there is, no road name or postcode

# The new look online

On 1 August 2008 NICPLD's new website went live. While we have given the website the same modern look and feel as our literature, we have also taken the opportunity to make it easier to use and have added new features.

For live workshops, each course summary now contains a map showing how to get to the course venue. The map displays in a light box, which means when you close the light box you go back to the course summary. The same technology is used to display course details. We have added the number of places that are currently available on each course and if the number of places available is shown as zero, you can still apply to go on the waiting list.

On the old website you had to go into 'Your portfolio' to access multiple choice questions (MCQs) associated with live and distance learning courses. Now the MCQ link is on each course summary. Once you have logged in you just select the course you have completed and click on the 'Enter Answers' link. MCQs for live workshops and regional courses only become available after you have attended them. Completing MCQs for COMPASS therapeutic notes, online courses and video lectures is also easier. Once you have logged in you have automatic access to MCQs.

More downloads are now available from the website. You can download a PDF version of all current topics of COMPASS therapeutic notes. Application forms and

information can be downloaded for the independent prescribing course, the hospital vocational training programme and CPD grants.

All video lectures are now available online (we have discontinued the CD-ROMs) and can be viewed using Windows Media Player. Lectures take a few minutes to load up, but once loaded you can easily go back and review material again, if you wish. Again, access to MCQs for these courses is automatic, once you have logged in.

*We will be using more email reminders and ask that you check your email address is up-to-date under the 'My account' menu.*

Also under 'My account' you can print a certificate of the NICPLD courses you have completed. We have changed the dates associated with this certificate so that they are the same as the Pharmaceutical Society's CPD year, 1 June 2008 – 31 May 2009.

We would be happy to get feedback from you on the new website and any suggestions you may have for improvements or additional features.

## A new addition



Heather Bell, Assistant Director for Live Education and Training, is currently on maternity leave and Maureen McCann is covering for Heather until mid-2009. Maureen has a background in community pharmacy and has recently completed a PhD at the School of Pharmacy in Belfast.

## VT for hospital pharmacists

A vocational training (VT) programme has just been introduced by NICPLD that will provide structured work-based training and experience for new hospital pharmacists.

Trainees joining the VT programme will develop a portfolio and undertake practice activities in the workplace, which will help them to develop and demonstrate their competence in the following four rotational areas:

- dispensary
- technical services
- clinical/medicines management
- clinical effectiveness

Throughout the programme a workplace mentor will support trainees, and local trainers will facilitate their learning as they rotate through each area. The workplace learning will be complemented by a series of workshops and online resources.

In most cases trainees will complete the VT programme in two academic years, after which each trainee will undertake a formal assessment.

Pharmacists completing the VT programme will be exempt from the first year of the postgraduate clinical pharmacy course run by the School of Pharmacy at Queen's University.

## Distance learning MCQs

As distance learning courses become out-of-date they are replaced with new versions. Currently, you can still submit your answers to MCQs from obsolete courses and receive credit for hours of learning; **however, this has changed from 1 July 2008**. Six months after a course becomes obsolete we will remove its MCQs from our database. This means that you will no longer be able to submit your answers to an out-of-date course for marking.

If you have an out-of-date course and intend to complete it you should submit your answers by 1 January 2009.

## CPD Grants

NICPLD facilitates other opportunities for CPD by contributing towards fees (up to 50%) to enable pharmacists to participate in courses, workshops or conferences related to their professional development. Funding is not limited to formal university courses – applications are encouraged for attendance at short courses or conferences related to your practice. Funding covers course/conference fees, but does not cover travel and subsistence.

Application forms for CPD grants can be downloaded as word documents from the NICPLD website. Applications can be made at any time of the year.



[www.nicpld.org](http://www.nicpld.org)

