

Community Pharmacy Patient Survey

NPA guidance notes



Supported by an educational grant from Actavis



Contents

Introduction

Section A – Your contractual obligation

1.1 The contractual obligation to conduct a patient survey

Section B – How to meet your contractual obligation: basic mechanics

2.1 Introduction to this section: options for how to do the survey

2.2 The 'DIY' option

2.3 The supported option

Section C – Practical advice on conducting the survey effectively

3.1 Advice on when to run the survey

3.2 Advice on how to invite responses

3.3 Advice on how to understand the survey results

3.4 Advice on how to prioritise actions

Section D – Adding value

4.1 Introduction to this section

4.2 Using the survey to improve customer/patient relations

4.3 Using the survey to improve your own practice

4.4 Using the survey to develop services

Section E – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

5.1 Frequently Asked Questions

Appendices:

A – Suggested 'record sheet', for your internal use

B – Suggested format for feeding back to your Primary Care Organisation

C – Suggested explanatory note to give to patients

Introduction

Geographical coverage

This toolkit relates to pharmacies in England and Wales¹. Throughout the document we refer to Primary Care Organisations (PCOs), which should be understood to mean Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) in England and Local Health Boards (LHBs) in Wales.

Purpose of this document

This guidance document is intended to help pharmacists comply with their contractual requirement to undertake an annual patient survey. It contains practical tips on how to meet that essential service obligation efficiently and effectively.

Carrying out an annual patient survey is potentially a very useful platform for enriching your relationship with patients and significantly improving your pharmacy practice. Section D of this guidance - Adding Value - contains ideas and practical suggestions about how this might be achieved.

Throughout the document, we use the term patient rather than 'customer', as the survey relates to the patient experience of accessing NHS services.

Section A describes your contractual obligations which are set out in full on the Department of Health and PSNC websites (www.psnc.org.uk/patientsurvey) sections B, C, D, and E contain tips and tools to help you implement your survey and gain maximum benefit from better engagement with patients.

¹ As at the 12th of May, the official guidance had not yet been released on the use of the Community Pharmacy Patient Questionnaire in Wales. We have been advised that the Welsh Assembly Government and Community Pharmacy Wales have agreed that the questions themselves will be used in the Welsh version of the patient questionnaire. However as there may be a delay in the enforcement of the questionnaire in Wales, due to the need to include the NHS Wales Logo and to create bi-lingual versions of all official forms, members are advised not to use the English version of the forms or to start their surveys until they receive official guidance from CPW.

Section A – Your contractual obligation

1.1 What pharmacists must do to meet their contractual obligations

The NHS community pharmacy contractual framework agreed between the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), the Department of Health (DH) and the NHS Confederation (NHS Employers) is made up of three different service levels – essential, advanced and enhanced.

As part of the essential services tier, pharmacies are required to carry out an annual patient survey, based on a national template. The minimum sample size of returned questionnaires varies in line with dispensing volume as described in the table below:

Average Monthly Prescription volume	Minimum number of returned Questionnaires
0 – 2000	50
2001 – 4000	75
4001 – 6000	100
6001 – 8000	125
8001+	150

The pharmacy should review survey results and consider changes which could improve service provision. The pharmacy will share with the PCO the area where the survey identified the greatest potential for improvement and the action being taken to improve performance, along with the areas in which the pharmacy is performing strongly.²

In March 2007, the DH published notes entitled *Clinical governance system acceptable to the Secretary of State – approved patient satisfaction survey and manner in which it is to be undertaken*. The notes are available on the DH and PSNC websites, but we reproduce the main provisions below, for your convenience, as well as the DH-approved questionnaire (pages 3 and 4), which you can cut out and photocopy (not forgetting to insert your pharmacy name and address):

- Pharmacists must undertake a patient survey annually (using the approved questionnaire)
- Contractors may add additional questions if they wish, provided they are related to healthcare provision.
- The questionnaire must be free from adverts.
- The questionnaire shall be accompanied by an explanation as to what it is for, how to complete it, options for it to be returned and what will be done with the responses provided.
- There must be at least two choices as to how questionnaires can be returned. This may include as one option either to return it to a location other than the pharmacy or replying electronically

²As at the 12th of May the requirement to report to PCOs is not yet set in regulations

- The survey shall be distributed from the premises to which it refers.
- Surveys shall be distributed only to persons who have received NHS services from the pharmacy.
- Surveys shall be distributed in a way which 'reasonably reflects the pharmacy's business profile', for example:
 - it is unacceptable to survey all patients who have received an MUR but none who have received an enhanced service.
 - distribution should be even over the opening hours of the pharmacy, including weekends and extended hours where applicable
 - where the pharmacy delivers a significant number of prescriptions to patients' homes, consideration needs to be given to ensure a suitable distribution of survey questionnaires to these patients.

You will need to complete the survey by the end of March 2008 and by the end of March in subsequent years.

There are other contractual obligations on pharmacies in respect of patient and public involvement, but the above is the minimum requirement to meet the obligation in respect of the patient survey.

Community Pharmacy Patient Questionnaire

This section is about why you visited the pharmacy today

Q1 Why did you visit this pharmacy today?

To collect a prescription for: Yourself Someone else Both OR

For some other reason (please write in the reason for your visit):

If you did not collect a prescription, please go to Q3.

Q2 If you collected a prescription today, were you able to collect it straight away, did you have to wait in the pharmacy or did you come back later to collect it?

Straight away Waited in pharmacy Came back later

Q3 How satisfied were you with the time it took to provide your prescription and/or any other NHS services you required?

Not at all satisfied Not very satisfied Fairly satisfied Very Satisfied

This section is about the pharmacy and the staff who work there more generally, not just for today's visit

Q4 Thinking about any previous visits as well as today's, how would you rate the pharmacy on the following factors? Please tick one box for each aspect of the pharmacy listed below, to show how good or poor you think it is:

ANSWERS:	Very poor	Fairly poor	Fairly good	Very good	Don't know
a) The cleanliness of the pharmacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The comfort and convenience of the waiting areas (e.g. seating or standing room)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Having in stock the medicines/appliances you need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Offering a clear and well organised layout	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) How long you have to wait to be served	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Having somewhere available where you could speak without being overheard, if you wanted to.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5 Again, including any previous visits to this pharmacy, how would you rate the pharmacist and the other staff who work there? Please tick one box for each aspect of the service listed below, to show how good or poor you think it is:

ANSWERS:	Very poor	Fairly poor	Fairly good	Very good	Don't know
a) Being polite and taking the time to listen to what you want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Answering any queries you may have.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The service you received from the pharmacist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) The service you received from the other pharmacy staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Providing an efficient service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) The staff overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Pharmacy and address

Page 1 of 2



Q6 Thinking about all the times you have used this pharmacy, how well do you think it provides each of the following services?

ANSWERS:	Not at all well	Not very well	Fairly well	Very well	Never used
a) Providing advice on a current health problem or a longer term health condition.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Providing general advice on leading a more healthy lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Disposing of medicines you no longer need	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Providing advice on health services or information available elsewhere	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7 Have you ever been given advice about any of the following by the pharmacist or pharmacy staff?

Stopping smoking.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Healthy eating.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Physical exercise.....	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Q8 Which of the following best describes how you use this pharmacy?

This is the pharmacy that you choose to visit if possible.....

This is one of several pharmacies that you use when you need to.....

This pharmacy was just convenient for you today

Q9 Finally, taking everything into account - the staff, the shop and the service provided - how would you rate the pharmacy where you received this questionnaire?

Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent

Q10 If you have any comments about how the service from this pharmacy could be improved, please write them in here:

These last few questions are just to help us categorise your answers

Q11 How old are you?

16-19 20-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

Q12 Are you... Male Female

Q 13 Which of the following apply to you:

You have, or care for, children under 16

You are a carer for someone with a longstanding illness or infirmity...

Neither

Thank you for completing this questionnaire



Section B – How to meet your contractual obligation: basic mechanics

2.1 Introduction to this section: options for how to conduct the survey

There are three options available to contractors:

- 1 Print, implement and analyse the questionnaires yourself.
- 2 Print and implement the questionnaires and outsource the analysis of results and reports.
- 3 Outsource the print, implementation, analysis and reporting of results. The NPA has approved two companies to provide members with an outsourced solution, one of which offers a paper-based service and the other an electronic service. These services are outlined in section 2.3, below.

Pharmacy contractors will probably need considerable time and an amount of expertise to pursue options one or two. Option one might be characterised as the 'Do it yourself' option and is described below:

2.2 The 'DIY' option: print, implement and analyse the questionnaires yourself

Materials

Before you run the survey:

- Print off the questionnaires. You will need to ensure that your results meet the requirements of the pharmacy contract; therefore, you will need to collect a minimum sample size of returned questionnaires, which varies in line with dispensing volume, as set out in Section A, above. You will need to print more than the required number of returned questionnaires, as inevitably not all copies distributed will be returned for analysis.
- To accommodate patients whose first language is not English, you may need to provide translated versions of the questionnaire. For the visually-impaired, you should provide a large-print version (a large print Microsoft Word version of the questionnaire can be downloaded from www.psn.org.uk/patientsurvey). NHS translation services can be accessed through NHS Direct at <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/articles/article.aspx?articleId=1152>
- If you plan to use the post as a method of questionnaire return, obtain reply-paid envelopes (one per questionnaire, for confidentiality). You can apply for a Freepost account and reference number through Royal Mail. www.royalmail.com
- Provide patient awareness information on how to complete the questionnaire and why the survey is taking place (for example, a poster and leaflets to increase patient understanding of the questionnaire).
- To carry out the survey, you will need to provide pens, somewhere for patients to write (e.g. a clipboard), and a ballot box for collecting questionnaires.

Running the survey

When a patient visits the pharmacy for an NHS-funded service, ask them if they would be willing to complete a questionnaire. You (or, more often, counter support staff) will need to explain to the patient that the questionnaire asks about the patient's views of the pharmacy and the quality of care they have received, and will help the pharmacy improve its service. Reassure the patient that the survey is completely anonymous.

Ask the patient to complete the questionnaire after the service has been provided. It would be helpful to give them access to seating, if possible, although some will choose to complete the questionnaire at home and either return it to the pharmacy on their next visit or use a freepost envelope.

Collecting responses

There must be at least two choices as to how questionnaires can be returned. For most pharmacists, probably the two simplest methods are:

- The patient can place the questionnaire into the ballot box provided. (We would suggest you encourage the patient to use this method, as this prevents the possibility of patients simply forgetting to return their completed questionnaire.)
- The patient can post the questionnaire directly back to you using a freepost envelope.

Analysing and reporting on the data

1. Once you have collated the completed questionnaires, count them to ensure you have the minimum number for the pharmacy contract. If not, print and collect further questionnaires from patients.
2. Design an appropriate worksheet to most clearly, comprehensively and accurately reflect the results of your survey. Appendix A of this document describes a template for such a worksheet. You can download it from www.npa.co.uk and modify as you wish.
3. Manually enter all data (both numerical and written comments) from the individual questionnaires.
4. Check the accuracy of your data entry.
5. To maximise the value of the survey, if possible break down scores and patient comments according to different criteria (e.g. age or gender). Use of spreadsheet software may assist you in conducting this analysis.
6. Represent all data in the form of tables and graphs for all staff members to easily understand and discuss.

Working with your results

1. Discuss your results with your team, using the tables and graphs you have generated. Identify areas in which you are performing well and areas which could be improved.
2. As you may not have any national benchmarks with which to compare your results, you may wish to confer with other pharmacies to evaluate your performance.
3. Produce an action plan based on your findings.

Sharing results with your PCO

The pharmacy is required to share with the PCO the area where the survey identified the greatest potential for improvement and the action being taken to improve performance, along with the areas in which the pharmacy is performing strongly.

There is no nationally prescribed format for reporting to the PCO, although your PCO may have a format it wishes to suggest. Otherwise, a simple table like that included as Appendix B to this document should be adequate.

2.3 The supported option: Outsourcing the implementation, analysis and reporting of results.

There are a number of survey specialists who are offering a service to help pharmacy contractors to conduct the patient survey. The NPA has researched and approved two companies, both with extensive experience in healthcare-related surveys, to help you manage this requirement of the pharmacy contract.

Customer Research Technologies (CRT) provide an electronic touchscreen option, which is a simple way for your patients to express their views with little effort on your part. CRT then analyses the results and provides you with a comprehensive report which will enable you to feedback results to your PCO and patients.

CFEP-UK Surveys will provide a complete paper-based questionnaire pack and supporting materials to make the survey process hassle-free. You will receive a high quality report, with comparisons to national benchmarks, customised results poster and guidance on how to interpret your results.

For more information about both NPA approved services or to register for either service, contact Raina Jordan r.jordan@npa.co.uk, telephone 0800 856 3413.

Section C – Practical advice on conducting the survey effectively

3.1 Advice on when to run the survey

You need to complete the survey by the end of March 2008 and by the end of March in subsequent years. Do not underestimate how long it will take to obtain the necessary number of returned questionnaires - leave yourself a cushion of at least two months before the deadline. In fact, we recommend you make plans for running the survey as soon as possible.

You do not need to conduct the survey over a single period, although you will probably find it helps with planning to schedule a period – or several periods - of survey activity. The length of time to schedule is also up to you but you risk losing focus if the process drags on. Overall, the survey may take several weeks to run.

3.2 Advice on how to invite responses

Many contractors will wish to ask counter assistants to approach patients, however the optimum skill mix will of course vary from one pharmacy to another.

Before data collection, go through the background and purpose of the patient survey with the counter assistants (or whoever it is within your pharmacy that will be approaching patients) so that they feel confident to undertake the task. Properly motivating your staff to take part may be the single most effective thing you can do to increase uptake, to more easily meet your required minimum return.

DH-sponsored pilots of the patient survey suggest that you will probably need to hand out three times as many questionnaires as you need to get back, in order to achieve the necessary minimum return.

The requirement to select patients in such a way as to reflect the whole spectrum of the patient profile is described in Section A. Whilst distributing evenly over the opening hours of the pharmacy, you might find it easiest to ask every third customer if they would participate, rather than try to achieve a 'scientifically' random sample of respondents. This also gets over any feelings of awkwardness that you may feel at picking people out!

You may wish to devise and stick to an 'opening line' when approaching patients – again, this will give more confidence to whoever is gathering the data. For example, "We are asking patients what they think about the services provided at this pharmacy – and we'd be grateful if you would take a few minutes to fill out a questionnaire."

In addition, don't forget the requirement that the questionnaire 'shall be accompanied by an explanation as to what it is for, how to complete it, options for it to be returned and what will be done with the responses provided.' This explanation need not necessarily be verbal, and you may find it more efficient to hand over a written note - you may wish to adapt Appendix C of this document for this purpose.

3.3 Advice on understanding the survey results

When receiving feedback it is all too easy to look at the overall pharmacy rating or to dwell on negatives. It is important to look at the survey report as a whole and to devote some time to look at the scores for each component, and the respondents' individual comments to develop an overall picture of the service you provide as seen from the perspective of patients visiting your pharmacy. From this it will be possible to pinpoint areas which are performing well or those which may need some positive change.

If receiving survey results from a survey organisation, agree in advance who will be responsible for opening them and then sharing results with staff. The pharmacist or pharmacy manager will usually be the most appropriate person. This will enable you to manage the internal communication surrounding the results – avoid misleading, partial accounts that could potentially impact negatively on staff morale. Most people tend to look straight at the overall score and compare this with the benchmark mean - this means 50% of people will always feel disappointed as they are below mean. If the survey company provides quartile ranges this is a better way of looking at benchmark results with Q1 being below average, Q2-3 being average and Q4 above average. Look closely at any comments made – they complement the themes outlined in the statistical results and often pinpoint the key issues!

From the report it will be possible to ascertain the degree of satisfaction with different aspects of the pharmacy, which will help with fine tuning strategies, and can be broadly categorised into these sections:

- The pharmacy – its environment and the efficiency of its operations, from the patients' point of view
- The people who work at the pharmacy – how they interact with patients
- The services provided at the pharmacy, including the quality of advice given

Appendix A of this document describes a format in which you can collate your findings under these headings. This is downloadable from the NPA website www.npa.co.uk

Best practice to follow if at all practical for your pharmacy

Experience in general practices that have undertaken patient surveys as part of GP contractual arrangements suggests it is a good idea to discuss survey results with the whole team, however large or small this group is. The results are a reflection of the patients' perspective on all aspects of the service, and this is everyone's business. The discussions about survey results provides an opportunity for everyone to contribute their ideas and reflections about the results, and to develop a better understanding of the pressures faced by other members of the team.

If possible, it is most productive to discuss the results at a time when the pharmacy is closed. It is important to agree the outcomes expected from such group discussions, and to make these clear at the beginning of the meeting. Celebrate success! Your survey results may well identify areas where there is a high level of patient satisfaction about which the pharmacy team can be proud. Most survey reports will reveal at least some good news – and staff's attention should be drawn to the positives. You may even wish to invite a group of patients to discuss the results (see later section on 'Sharing results with patients'). Maintaining a dialogue with patients will help clarify any uncertainties arising from the results, and provide an ongoing patient perspective on plans for improvement.

To get a complete picture, which includes all perspectives, it is useful to involve all the relevant people, i.e. pharmacist, pharmacy staff and patients, in deciding upon an action plan.

3.4 Advice on how to prioritise actions

Don't rush to conclusions or actions – reflect on the feedback with your pharmacy team and seek their insights into the feedback.

Look for practical and realistic goals first – that means simple goals that are easily achieved and then encourage further improvement. Remember 'success breeds success' – don't try to be too ambitious at the start as lack of progress or failure is demoralising

You might find it helpful to divide areas for improvement into categories, in order then to consider possible actions (see also Appendix A):

Serious or urgent areas of concern

Identify any urgent or serious concerns. Consider solutions that can be put in place immediately, where possible. However, the issues that emerge from the survey that are difficult to resolve are usually those that require significant new investment – financially, or in the form of staff training, staff reorganisation, or changing mindsets about how to approach tasks.

Small-scale problems & suggested solutions

Identify simple problems for which remedial action is straightforward. Identifying small problems and simple solutions will be useful for building confidence among the pharmacy team for tackling the larger issues. Many issues can be addressed and solved by minor changes to existing procedures or practice at little or no cost.

Problems requiring further information & support from the Primary Care Organisation

It may not be possible to resolve all the issues raised by the patients' survey results within the pharmacy. Further information, support or action from the Primary Care Organisation may be required. The PCO might be willing to supply training, for example on communication skills. Your LPC might be able to help make the case for funding to support training, and may even arrange training. In rare cases, the PCO might even be willing to invest in premises or capital equipment.

The following table includes examples of areas of concern identified by patients about GP services, and specific improvements that were suggested to address these issues – arising from GP surveys. We believe the table gives an *indication* of the scope and scale of actions that might typically arise from surveys in community pharmacy.

Problem	Suggested improvement
There are too many options on the surgery's answer phone message.	A more user-friendly answer phone message.
Information about the surgery's services is scattered around the notice board.	Accessible practice Website.
The toys in the waiting room are a hazard to older patients.	Reorganisation of the waiting room to accommodate old and young patients safely.
The waiting room is very stuffy, but the surgery is on a noisy main road.	Installation of Vent-Axia in waiting room.
Patients do not know how long they are likely to wait in the surgery to see the doctor, and don't like to leave the waiting room to find out.	Introduction of system to inform patients about likely waiting times on arrival at surgery.
Patients are not sure about who does what in the practice.	Leaflet explaining responsibilities of various staff within the practice produced.

Section D – Adding Value

4.1 Introduction to this section

The obligation on the pharmacy is to meet the contractual requirement as described in Section A. Beyond the strict terms of the contractual obligation, pharmacists may wish to undertake other, related activity, to make the most of this platform to improve services. Section D therefore discusses adding value to the survey. We acknowledge that some of the suggestions in this section will not be practical for all pharmacy contractors.

Benefits of patient involvement

Although understandable, given workload pressures on pharmacies, it would be a missed opportunity to view the patient survey as a tick box exercise that happens once each year and that represents the total patient involvement in the pharmacy. Greater patient involvement in healthcare means having an ongoing relationship and dialogue with patients and welcoming patients as partners in making improvements to services.

It is increasingly acknowledged that for health care to be patient-focused and effective, patients must play a part in service planning and implementation at a number of different levels. This can be at service provider level, such as the individual pharmacy, through to primary care organisation and NHS Trust level. The acknowledgement of the value of patients' input is underpinned by Government policies and initiatives.

Engagement with patients by service providers may be seen in terms of three phases, as shown in the diagram below:

Phase 1 – informing

Keeping the public up to date on proposed or planned changes in services.

Phase 2 - consulting

Gaining views of the public/service users, e.g. through questionnaires, focus groups, citizens juries.

Phase 3 – working in partnership

Keeping the public up to date on proposed or planned changes in services.

Involving patients at the higher levels, via systematic feedback and further discussion, can lead to tangible differences in the quality of the health care experience. Such differences could give you a competitive advantage, and also within the context of the wider primary care 'marketplace'.

Although health care professionals may be able to identify some of the problems within their service, they can benefit greatly from hearing other perspectives, particularly those of users of the services provided.

4.2 Using the survey to improve customer/patient relations

Sharing results with patients

As a result of doing the survey, the pharmacy has a responsibility (although not a contractual responsibility) to provide feedback to the people who found time to give their opinions about the service.

The most successful businesses and organisations usually enjoy excellent customer relations. This does not mean always providing everything the customer wants. In fact, customers are often more understanding and discerning about limitations than we realise. Some customers even like to get involved in helping organisations meet the sometimes unrealistic expectations of other customers.

There are a variety of ways in which the results of the patient survey can be shared with patients.

These include:

- Produce simple posters for display in the pharmacy.
- Produce a single sheet of A4 summarising the results and put it in with all prescriptions and purchases for a period of time.
- Publication of an 'easy to read' one-off newsletter available in the pharmacy for patients to take away. This would include 'headline findings' and could act as an invitation for anyone wishing to work with the pharmacist to implement any changes resulting from the survey.
- Publication of the results of the survey on your Website, if you have one. This can also have provision to ask for further feedback and ideas about changes.
- A one-off meeting to explain the findings to an invited group of patients.
- Setting up a group, including pharmacy staff and customers, to discuss the results and agree methods of communicating results to other patients/customers. This group could develop an ongoing action plan to implement changes.

Developing a patient reference group

Resources permitting, pharmacies may wish to consider the establishment of a patient reference group to assist in spreading the message about the results of surveys to other patients and also to engage in a constructive and positive dialogue with the pharmacy about how improvements can be achieved. Aim for 3-6 people. A mix of gender, age, race and working/retired people is desirable, as well as someone with a physical disability and/or sensory impairment.

Survey organisations such as CFEP-UK Surveys will be able to give advice on setting up a patient reference group.

4.3 Using the survey to improve your own practice

Of course, just doing the survey does not in itself bring about future improvement in scores. Rather, such improvement occurs only when there is a concerted effort by pharmacy staff to put into action strategies which are targeted at specific areas in need of change.

The survey can act as a baseline measurement, which in subsequent years can be used to show whether improvements have been made. When developing an appropriate way of auditing, choose simple things that you can measure easily, such that you can later measure percentage improvement in performance.

Clinical audit

The survey could help you identify an area you wish to examine in a clinical audit – helping you comply with another component of the Clinical Governance section of the pharmacy contractual framework (ES8).

Continuous Professional Development

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (RPSGB) is introducing mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for pharmacists. The process of undertaking a patient survey and understanding the results is a great opportunity for pharmacists and technicians to add to their CPD.

CPD could be related to the results of the survey – the feedback you receive leading you to reflect on your practice and thereby giving you a start-point for planning, action and evaluation. Alternatively, it could be applied to the process - for example, if the pharmacy is having trouble getting people to complete the forms, your development need might be about learning different ways to recruit patients for a survey and to then apply what you have learned to your situation.

The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) has prepared a short guide to using the survey outcomes to inform CPD. This was published in Community Pharmacy News, April 2007 www.psnc.org.uk/cpn

4.4 Using the survey to develop services

Comments received in response to the survey – and possibly followed up with a customer reference group - may give you ideas for new services that you may wish to provide, whether privately or within the NHS. Furthermore, if the survey reveals patient demand for enhanced services, this could be a lever to persuade your PCO to invest in the local pharmacy network.

When considering your portfolio of services, you would wish to take into account at least the following criteria:

- Would the service address a local priority – i.e. is there a demand, either from the PCO or from patients directly?
- Would the service play to community pharmacy's strengths (e.g. accessibility and face-to-face service) and to your own pharmacy's particular strengths?
- Is your existing staff resource capable of delivering the service?
- Are your premises capable of hosting the service?

Your questionnaire responses might well give you insights that can be applied to your assessment of these and other criteria.

Section E – Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

5.1 FAQs

Q Do we have to participate in the survey?

A Yes – it is part of the clinical governance requirements of the contractual framework.

Q. When should I do the survey?

You will need to complete the survey and report to the PCO by the end of March 2008 and by the end of March in subsequent years. Do not underestimate how long it will take to obtain the necessary number of returned questionnaires - leave yourself a cushion of at least two months before the deadline. In fact, we recommend you make plans for running the survey as soon as possible.

You do not need to conduct the survey over a single period, although you will probably find it helps with planning to schedule a period – or several periods - of survey activity. The length of time to schedule is also up to you, but bear in mind that overall, the survey may take several weeks to run.

Q Will we get paid any money for completing the survey?

A The funding for this is included in the global sum for essential services. You will need to bear the direct cost of running the survey – whether you decide to ‘do it yourself’ or whether you take up support from a survey organisation.

Q Do we have to use the national template survey as published by the Department of Health?

A Yes – this has been agreed nationally between PSNC and the Department of Health. The use of a national set of questions will allow you to compare your results with similar pharmacies (the survey companies who are providing support to contractors will provide benchmark data with the individual results for each pharmacy participating with them). The questions in the national template survey have been piloted in pharmacies; the contractors involved in the testing found that they provided useful results.

Q Do I need to amend the template questionnaire before I use it?

A Yes – you will need to add your pharmacy name and address where indicated.

Q Can I amend the formatting of the nationally agreed questionnaire, including adding my pharmacy logo?

A Yes - but it is probably wise to ensure that any changes to the formatting do not make the questionnaire excessively long, as this may reduce the likelihood of patients filling it in.

Q Can we add additional questions to the questionnaire for our own interest?

A You can add your own questions to the standard set published provided they are related to the provision of healthcare services (see below). Constructing questionnaires is not as straightforward as it seems; you may want to seek assistance from a specialist survey company in drafting any additional questions. Bear in mind that there is likely to be an additional cost to analysing additional questions, if you are outsourcing analysis to a survey organisation.

Q After Qu.10 the template states that additional questions relating to healthcare service provision can be inserted if required. What topics could be included in this section?

This could include questions on the following topics:

- essential, advanced or enhanced services
- the location of the pharmacy
- access to the pharmacy
- customer service
- services related to Pharmaceutical Services such as prescription collection and/or delivery services

We do recommend that only a small number of additional questions be added to prevent the questionnaire becoming too burdensome for patients to complete. We suggest that no more than five be included.

Q. Which member of the pharmacy team should collect the data?

A. Many contractors may find it efficient to ask counter assistants to approach patients, however the optimum skill mix will of course vary from one pharmacy to another.

Q Will the PCO or DH provide the questionnaire forms?

A The template is available on the PSNC website www.psn.org.uk/patientsurvey. We have also included it in section A of this document. The pharmacy can print out versions of this form or use a commercial survey provider who will do this for you as a part of their service.

Q Which patients should we give the questionnaire to?

A Select patients in such a way as to reflect the whole spectrum of the patient profile, as described in Section C above. Distribute evenly over the opening hours of the pharmacy. You might find it easiest to ask every third customer if they would participate. Do not be tempted to cherry pick patients you think will give you a good score! The evidence actually tends to show this does not have the desired effect.

Q Who will see my survey results?

A. A summary of the results needs to be sent to your PCO, as set out in Section A of this document.

The full results are 'owned' by whoever has management responsibility for the pharmacy and conducts the survey. If you receive a request for your results under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act and are not happy to share the results – discuss your position with your LPC or with PSNC/CPW. PSNC will issue guidance on this matter. In the meantime, background information is available at www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk and www.wales.nhs.uk/foi

Q Do I have to share the full survey scores with my PCO

A Not under the terms of the contractual requirement – you only have to share the key findings and planned actions.

Q Can patient comments be identified back to them if they make serious allegations?

A No, unless the patient chooses to enter their details on the questionnaire – it would be most unusual for them to do so. The survey should be considered anonymous rather than confidential.

Q Can I publish my own results and use them in advertising material

A Of course – within professional guidelines. You should however consider whether this would in effect result in the publication of commercially sensitive information relating to your business.

Q Are the questionnaires available in different languages?

A Commercial survey providers have a range of languages available. CPW are discussing the need for a bilingual version with the Welsh Assembly Government contact info@cpwales.org.uk for the latest situation.

Q Can we help patients to fill in the questionnaire

A Where possible patients should complete questionnaires themselves, but limited assistance for those with poor eyesight or explaining general concepts is OK. Staff need to give impartial guidance to patients should they ask for help with the questionnaire.

Q Can surveys be completed by a patient representative on behalf of a patient?

A Surveys completed by a carer or other patient representative are acceptable, except where the pharmacist reasonably believes that the response was submitted without the patient's consent.

Appendix A – Record sheet (For your internal use, not for reporting to the PCO)

This sheet is available to download from the NPA’s website www.npa.co.uk. It is too large to be included as a hard copy in these guidance notes.

This sheet enables you to collate the raw data drawn from your returned questionnaires, using the five bar gate counting method. It also shows how you might categorise actions arising from the survey. From here, you may wish to go on to present the data in graphs and charts as the basis for discussion and analysis within the pharmacy team.

If you elect to use the services of a survey company, you will not need to collate the raw data, as they will do this task for you and also present the results diagrammatically.

Appendix B – Suggested format for feeding back to your PCO

This sheet is available to download from the NPA's website www.npa.co.uk.

Community Pharmacy Patient Questionnaire Feedback to

_____ PCT/LHB

Name and address of Pharmacy _____

Year (April-March) over which the survey was conducted _____

Areas where the pharmacy is performing strongly	Brief commentary
1	
2	
3	

Area where the survey identified the greatest potential for improvement	Brief commentary	Action being taken to improve performance
1		

Appendix C – Explanatory note to hand out to patients (please adapt)

This sheet is available to download from the NPA's website www.npa.co.uk.

Community Pharmacy Patient Questionnaire

At *Anywhere Pharmacy* we always try to provide you with the best possible service.

We are asking NHS patients to fill in a short questionnaire about the service we provide. The questionnaire is anonymous.

Please help us by completing the attached questionnaire. Your views are important to us. It will only take a few minutes to complete.

Please (insert methods of returning the survey, e.g. place the survey in the collection box on the counter/return the survey using the freepost envelope etc.)

We will use the results of this survey to improve the services we provide at this pharmacy.

Thank you

Pharmacist name/Pharmacy Name

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Sue Taylor, Devon LPC, for her valuable comments on drafts of this NPA toolkit. We are also grateful for input from PSNC and CPW.

National Pharmacy Association

Mallinson House
38-42 St Peter's Street
St Albans
Herts
AL1 3NP

t 01727 858687

www.npa.co.uk



Supported by an educational grant from Actavis

