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Standards for education providers and registrants

# Standards for the use by orthoptists of exemptions to sell and supply medicines

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# Foreword

We are pleased to present the Health and Care Professions Council's standards for the use by orthoptists of exemptions to sell and supply medicines.

We developed these standards alongside recent changes to the Human Medicines Regulations 2012, to enable registered orthoptists who are appropriately trained to sell and supply certain prescription only medicines on their own initiative to patients as part of their professional practice. These entitlements are known as 'exemptions'.

The standards have two purposes. They set out our expectations of education providers delivering training to orthoptists in using these medicine exemptions. They also set out the knowledge, understanding and skills we expect an orthoptist to demonstrate when they have completed this training.

These standards were developed with the input of key stakeholders, including the British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS), orthoptic education providers and members of the AHP Medicines Project Board, led by NHS England with the four country administrations. We also consulted on the standards and are grateful to all those who gave their time to help us in shaping the standards and ensuring they are fit for purpose.

We are confident that these standards will play a key role in supporting safe and effective practice by orthoptists who use medicine exemptions.

The standards are effective from 23 November 2016.

# Introduction

This document sets out the **standards for the use by orthoptists of exemptions to sell and supply medicines**.

These standards have two purposes.

- They set out the systems and processes that an education provider delivering training for orthoptists in the use of exemptions must have in place in order to deliver the training safely and effectively.
- They also set out the knowledge, understanding and skills that an orthoptist must have when they complete their training in the use of exemptions and which they must continue to meet while using the exemptions in practice.

These standards are set at the threshold level we consider necessary to protect members of the public. We have numbered the standards so that you can refer to them more easily; however the standards are not hierarchical and are all equally important for practice.

## About exemptions for orthoptists

The law designates some medicines as prescription only medicines, which normally need to be prescribed by a doctor or another prescriber before they can be given to a patient. However there are also a number of exemptions which enable some groups of professionals to sell, supply or administer certain prescription only medicines without the need for a prescription.

Exemptions were introduced in 2016 for registered orthoptists to be able to sell and supply certain prescription only medicines on their own initiative, in the course of their professional practice.

If you are an orthoptist, you should only use exemptions in your practice if you have completed post-registration training which we have approved and have a mark or 'annotation' on the HCPC Register to show that you have done so.

These standards relate only to the use of exemptions set out in medicines legislation. They do not cover independent and supplementary prescribing, or the supply or administration of

medicines via a Patient Group Direction. There is further information about the use of medicines on our website at [www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/medicinesandprescribing](http://www.hcpc-uk.org/aboutregistration/medicinesandprescribing)

It is important that orthoptists always understand the legal basis on which they are selling or supplying medicines.

## How the standards will be used

We will assess relevant education and training programmes against the standards set out in the first part of this document. If a programme meets the standards we will grant open-ended approval, subject to on-going monitoring.

We will also take into account the standards in the second part of this document when considering concerns raised about the competence of an orthoptist who uses medicine exemptions in their practice.

## Our expectations

These standards are set at the threshold level to ensure that orthoptists who have undertaken the relevant training have the knowledge, understanding and skills which are necessary for safe and effective use of medicine exemptions.

The standards set out in this document complement information and guidance issued by other organisations, such as professional bodies. In addition, these standards do not replace the other standards we set for registrants and orthoptists will need to draw on those to support their wider practice beyond the use of medicines.

We expect you to continue to keep to the HCPC **standards of proficiency for orthoptists; standards of conduct, performance and ethics; and standards for continuing professional development**. We publish these in separate documents, which you can find on our website.

## **Practice placements**

The standards contain a requirement for training programmes to include ‘practice placements’. By this we mean a period of practice-based learning which forms an integral part of the programme. It is not a requirement for this to take place in a separate setting or organisation from the rest of the programme, or for a discrete period of time during the course of the programme. We have used the term ‘practice placement’ for consistency with the other standards we set for other post-registration training programmes (such as the standards for prescribing).

In developing these standards we engaged with orthoptic education providers on the expected format of training programmes which would be developed. These stakeholders indicated that the practice-based part of those programmes would likely be undertaken within the orthoptist’s own workplace, provided there is the opportunity to demonstrate the required knowledge, understanding and skills included in the standards.

However, the education provider must maintain oversight and accountability of this practice-based component, including approving and monitoring its quality, appropriateness and safety.

## **Language**

We have included a glossary of some of the terms used in the standards at the end of the document.

## **Reviewing the standards**

We keep our standards under continual review. Therefore we may make changes to these standards in the future to take account of changes in the sale and supply of medicines by orthoptists. We will always publicise any changes to the standards, for example by publishing notices on the HCPC website and informing relevant professional bodies.

# Standards for education providers

## Admissions

- A.1 The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.
- A.2 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including appropriate academic and professional entry standards.
- A.3 The admissions procedures must apply selection and entry criteria, including accreditation of prior (experiential) learning and other inclusion mechanisms.
- A.4 The admissions procedures must ensure that the education provider has equality and diversity policies in relation to applicants and students<sup>1</sup>, together with an indication of how these will be implemented and monitored.

## Programme management and resources

- B.1 The programme must have a secure place in the education provider's business plan.
- B.2 The programme must be effectively managed.
- B.3 The programme must have regular monitoring and evaluation systems in place.
- B.4 There must be a named person who has overall professional responsibility for the programme who must be appropriately qualified and experienced and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be on the relevant part of the Register.
- B.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff in place to deliver an effective programme.
- B.6 Subject areas must be taught by staff with relevant specialist expertise and knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, 'students' means registered orthoptists completing a training programme in the use of exemptions.

- B.7 A programme for staff development must be in place to ensure continuing professional and research development.
- B.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.
- B.9 The resources to support student learning in all settings must effectively support the required learning and teaching activities of the programme.
- B.10 The learning resources, including IT facilities, must be appropriate to the curriculum and must be readily available to students and staff.
- B.11 There must be adequate and accessible facilities to support the welfare and wellbeing of students in all settings.
- B.12 There must be a system of academic and pastoral student support in place.
- B.13 There must be a student complaints process in place.
- B.14 Throughout the course of the programme, the education provider must have identified where attendance is mandatory and must have associated monitoring mechanisms in place.
- B.15 Service users and carers must be involved in the programme.

## **Curriculum**

- C.1 The learning outcomes must ensure that those who successfully complete the programme meet the standards for orthoptists using exemptions in legislation for the sale and supply of medicines.
- C.2 The programme must reflect the philosophy, core values, skills and knowledge base as articulated in any relevant curriculum guidance.
- C.3 Integration of theory and practice must be central to the curriculum.
- C.4 The curriculum must remain relevant to current practice.

- C.5 The curriculum must make sure that students understand the implications of the HCPC's standards of conduct, performance and ethics on their use of exemptions in legislation for the sale and supply of medicines.
- C.6 The delivery of the programme must support and develop autonomous and reflective thinking.
- C.7 The delivery of the programme must encourage evidence-based practice.
- C.8 The range of learning and teaching approaches used must be appropriate to the effective delivery of the curriculum.
- C.9 When there is inter-professional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

## **Practice placements**

- D.1 Practice placements must be integral to the programme.
- D.2 The length of time spent in practice placements must be appropriate to support the delivery of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- D.3 The practice placements must provide a safe and supportive environment.
- D.4 The education provider must maintain a thorough and effective system for approving and monitoring all practice placements.
- D.5 There must be an adequate number of appropriately qualified, experienced and, where required, registered staff in the practice placements.
- D.6 Practice placement educators must have relevant knowledge, skills and experience.
- D.7 Practice placement educators must be appropriately registered, unless other arrangements are agreed.
- D.8 There must be regular and effective collaboration between the education provider and the practice placement provider.

- D.9 Students and practice placement educators must be fully prepared for the practice placement environment, which will include information about an understanding of:
- the learning outcomes to be achieved;
  - the timings and the duration of any practice experience and associated records to be maintained;
  - expectations of professional conduct;
  - the professional standards which students must meet;
  - the assessment procedures including the implications of, and any action to be taken in the case of, failure to progress; and
  - communication and lines of responsibility.
- D.10 Learning, teaching and supervision must encourage safe and effective practice, independent learning and professional conduct.
- D.11 A range of learning and teaching methods that respect the rights and needs of service users and colleagues must be in place throughout practice placements.

## **Assessment**

- E.1 The assessment strategy and design must ensure that the student who successfully completes the programme has met the standards for orthoptists using exemptions in legislation for the sale and supply of medicines.
- E.2 All assessments must provide a rigorous and effective process by which compliance with external-reference frameworks can be measured.
- E.3 Professional standards must be integral to the assessment procedures in both the education setting and practice placement setting.
- E.4 Assessment methods must be employed that measure the learning outcomes.

- E.5 The measurement of student performance must be objective and ensure safe and effective use of exemptions in legislation for the sale and supply of medicines.
- E.6 There must be effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure appropriate standards in the assessment.
- E.7 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for student progression and achievement within the programme.
- E.8 Assessment regulations, or other relevant policies, must clearly specify requirements for approved programmes being the only programmes which contain any reference to an HCPC protected title or part of the Register in their named award.
- E.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for a procedure for the right of appeal for students.
- E.10 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the HCPC Register.

# Standards for orthoptists using exemptions in legislation for the sale and supply of medicines

Orthoptists must:

- 1 Understand pharmacodynamics, pharmacokinetics, pharmacology and therapeutics relevant to medicines use within their professional scope of practice and how these may be altered by certain characteristics
- 2 Understand the legal context relevant to the use of exemptions in legislation for the sale, supply and administration of medicines, as well as current local and national policy and guidance concerning medicines use
- 3 Understand the differences between the sale, supply and administration of medicines using exemptions, other supply / administration mechanisms and prescribing mechanisms
- 4 Understand the various pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches to disease management relevant to their practice and the risks and benefits of each option
- 5 Understand the importance of shared decision-making with service users to encourage self-care and adherence with medicines advice
- 6 Be able to make a decision about whether to sell or supply medicines using exemptions, based on a relevant examination, assessment and history taking
- 7 Be able to undertake a thorough, sensitive and detailed patient medical history, including an appropriate medication history
- 8 Be able to communicate information about medicines clearly with service users and others involved in their care
- 9 Be able to evaluate each potential treatment option with respect to an individual service user, taking into account relevant factors, the service user's circumstances, co-morbidities and other medicines taken

- 10 Be able to demonstrate safe use of medicines
- 11 Be able to undertake drug calculations accurately
- 12 Be able to monitor response to medicines and modify or cease treatment as appropriate within their professional scope of practice, including referral to another professional
- 13 Be able to identify adverse medicine reactions, interactions with other medicines and diseases and to take appropriate action
- 14 Be able to recognise different types of medication error and respond appropriately
- 15 Understand antimicrobial resistance and the roles of infection prevention and control

# Glossary

## **Antimicrobial resistance**

This refers to the ability of micro-organisms (such as bacteria, viruses and parasites) to withstand attack by antimicrobial medicines which kill or inhibit the growth of these micro-organisms (such as antibiotics, antivirals and antimalarials).

## **Exemptions**

Specific pieces of law allowing certain listed medicines to be sold, supplied and / or administered to patients by certain health professionals without the need for a prescription or another appropriate supply or administration framework.

## **Orthoptist**

A health professional specialised in diagnosing and treating visual problems involving eye movement and alignment. They are registered with the Health and Care Professions Council.

## **Pharmacodynamics**

A branch of pharmacology concerned with the study of the action or effects of drugs on living organisms.

## **Pharmacokinetics**

A branch of pharmacology concerned with the study of the way medicines are taken into, move around and are eliminated from the body.

## **Pharmacology**

This is the scientific study of characteristics, properties, uses and effects of drugs, particularly those that make them medically effective.

## **Practice placement**

The period of practice-based learning which forms part of a training programme. This may take place in an organisation or setting separate from the rest of the programme, or if appropriate could take place at the trainee's workplace.

**Practice placement educator**

This is an appropriately registered and experienced person at the practice placement who takes responsibility for the orthoptist's participation in this part of the programme. This may or may not include day-to-day supervision or assessment of the orthoptist in practice.

**Prescribing**

To authorise supply or administration to a patient of a prescription only medicine, following assessment and decisions about clinical management of the patient where required. This can only be done by a professional who is able, under the law, to act as an independent or supplementary prescriber. The use of exemptions to sell, supply or administer medicines is not the same thing as prescribing.

**Sale (of medicines)**

This means giving a medicine to a patient in exchange for payment. Orthoptists who are trained to use medicine exemptions can sell certain medicines in the course of their professional practice. The sale of medicines occurs in private practice.

**Supply (of medicines)**

This means to give a medicine to a patient. Orthoptists who are trained to use exemptions can supply certain medicines in the course of their professional practice. This can include enabling the patient to self-administer it.

**Therapeutics**

The branch of medicine concerned with the treatment of disease or alleviating pain or injury.

# Notes

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Park House  
184 Kennington Park Road  
London SE11 4BU

tel +44 (0)300 500 6184  
fax +44 (0)20 7820 9684  
[www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)

**To request this document in Welsh  
or an alternative format,  
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