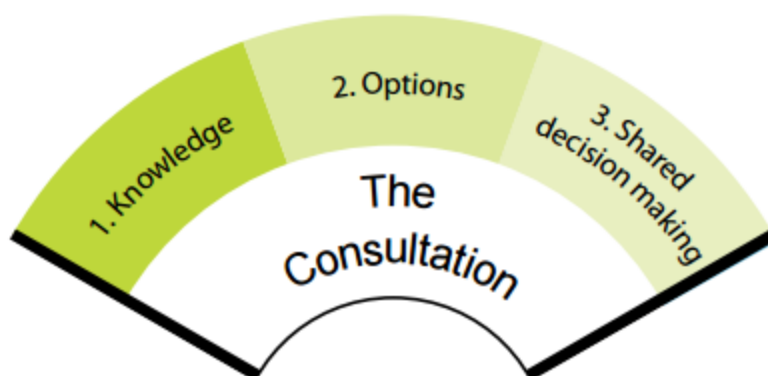


The prescribing competency framework

Domain A: The consultation



Competency 1: Knowledge

Has up-to-date clinical, pharmacological and pharmaceutical knowledge relevant to own area of practice.

1. Understands the conditions being treated, their natural progress and how to assess their severity.
2. Understands different non-pharmacological and pharmacological approaches to modifying disease and promoting health, identifies and assesses the desirable outcomes of treatment.
3. Understands the mode of action and pharmacokinetics of medicines and how these mechanisms may be altered (e.g. by age, renal impairment), and how this affects treatment decisions.
4. Understands the potential for adverse effects and how to avoid/minimise, recognise and manage them.
5. Uses up-to-date information about relevant products (e.g. formulations, pack sizes, storage conditions, costs).
6. Applies the principles of evidence-based practice, including clinical and cost-effectiveness.
7. Aware of how medicines are licensed, sourced and supplied, and the implications for own prescribing.
8. Knows how to detect and report suspected adverse drug reactions.
9. Understands the public health issues related to medicines and their use.
10. Appreciates the potential for misuse of medicines.
11. Understands antimicrobial resistance and the roles of infection prevention, control and antimicrobial stewardship measures as outlined in the [ARHAI and PHE Antimicrobial Prescribing and Stewardship Competences](#)

This is an outline framework of prescribing competencies relevant to all prescribers. The statements in this framework should be interpreted in the context in which individuals are prescribing, taking into account their scope of practice.

[†] *Antimicrobial stewardship* — Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection ([ARHAI](#))

Competency 2: Options

Makes or reviews a diagnosis, generates management options for the patient and follows up management.

12. Takes an appropriate medical history and medication history which includes both current and previously prescribed and non-prescribed medicines, supplements and complementary remedies, and allergies and intolerances.
13. Undertakes an appropriate clinical assessment using relevant equipment and techniques.
14. Accesses and interprets relevant patient records to ensure knowledge of the patient's management.
15. Makes, or understands, the working or final diagnosis by considering and systematically deciding between the various possibilities (differential diagnosis).
16. Requests and interprets relevant investigations.
17. Considers all treatment options including no treatment, non-pharmacological interventions and medicines usage.
18. Assesses the effect of multiple pathologies, existing medication, allergies and contraindications on management options.
19. Assesses the risks and benefits to the patient of taking or, not taking a medicine or treatment.
20. Where a medicine is appropriate, identifies the different options.
21. Establishes and maintains a plan for reviewing the therapeutic objective, discharge or end point of treatment.
22. Ensures that the effectiveness of treatment and potential unwanted effects are monitored.
23. Makes changes to the treatment plan in light of on-going monitoring and the patient's condition and preferences.
24. Communicates information about medicines and what they are being used for when sharing or transferring prescribing responsibilities/information.

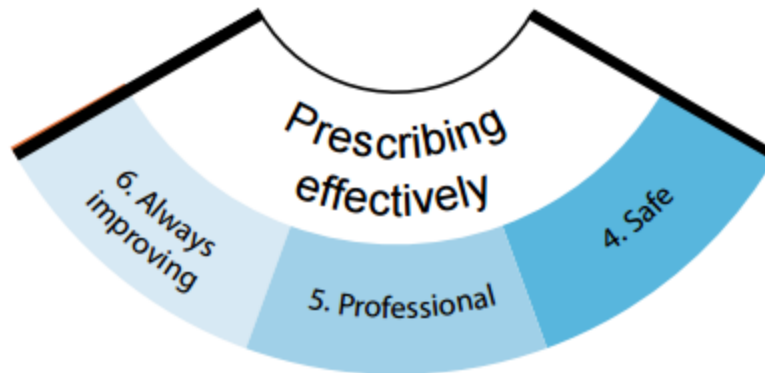
Competency 3: Shared decision making (with parents, care-givers or advocates where appropriate)

Establishes a relationship based on trust and mutual respect. Recognises patients as partners in the consultation.

25. Identifies and respects the patient's values, beliefs and expectations about medicines.
26. Takes into account the nature of peoples' diversity when prescribing.
27. Undertakes the consultation in an appropriate setting taking account of confidentiality, dignity and respect.
28. Adapts consultations to meet needs of different patients (e.g. for language, age, capacity, physical or sensory impairments).
29. Deals sensitively with patients' emotions and concerns about their medicines.
30. Creates a relationship which does not encourage the expectation that a prescription will be supplied.
31. Explains the rationale behind and the potential risks and benefits of management options.
32. Works with patients to make informed choices about their management and respects their right to refuse or limit treatment.
33. Aims for an outcome of the consultation with which the patient and prescriber are satisfied.
34. When possible, supports patients to take responsibility for their medicines and self-manage their conditions.
35. Gives the patient clear accessible information about their medicines (e.g. what it is for, how to use it, where to get it from, possible unwanted effects).
36. Checks patient's understanding of and commitment to their management, monitoring and follow-up.
37. Understands the different reasons for non-adherence to medicines (practical and behavioural) and how best to support patients. Routinely assesses adherence in a non-judgemental way.

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Domain B: Prescribing Effectively



Competency 4: Safe

Is aware of own limitations. Does not compromise patient safety.

- 38. Knows the limits of their own knowledge and skill, and works within them.
- 39. Knows when to refer to or seek guidance from another member of the team or a specialist.
- 40. Only prescribes a medicine with adequate, up-to-date awareness of its actions, indications, dose, contraindications, interactions, cautions, and side effects (using, for example, the BNF/BNFC).
- 41. Accurately calculates doses and routinely checks calculations where relevant, for example for children.
- 42. Keeps up to date with advances in practice and emerging safety concerns related to prescribing.
- 43. Knows about common types of medication errors and how to prevent them.
- 44. Ensures confidence and competence to prescribe are maintained.
- 45. Makes accurate, legible and contemporaneous records and clinical notes of prescribing decisions.
- 46. Effectively uses the systems necessary to prescribe medicines (e.g. medicine charts, electronic prescribing, decision support).
- 47. Writes legible, unambiguous and complete prescriptions which meet legal requirements.

Competency 5: Professional

Ensures prescribing practice is consistent with scope of practice, organisational, professional and regulatory standards, guidance and codes of conduct.

- 48. Accepts personal responsibility for prescribing and understands the legal and ethical implications of doing so.
- 49. Makes prescribing decisions based on the needs of patients and not the prescriber's personal considerations.
- 50. Knows and applies legal and ethical frameworks affecting prescribing practice (e.g. misuse of drugs regulations, prescribing of unlicensed/off label medicines).
- 51. Takes responsibility for own learning and continuing professional development.
- 52. Maintains patient confidentiality in line with best practice and regulatory standards and contractual requirements.

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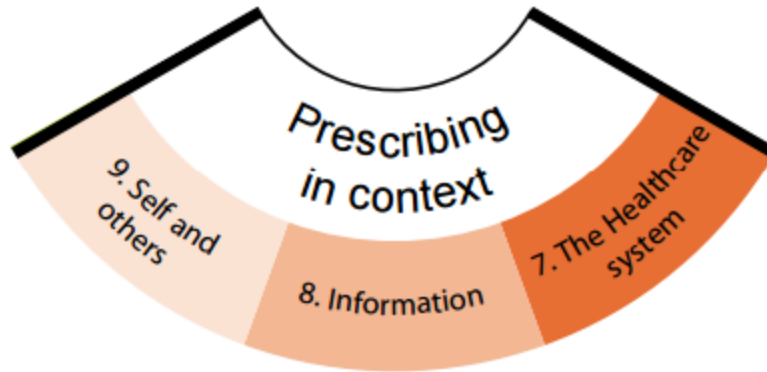
Competency 6: Always improving

Actively participates in the review and development of prescribing practice to optimise patient outcomes.

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| 53. Learns and changes from reflecting on practice. |
| 54. Shares and debates own and others prescribing practice, and acts upon feedback and discussion. |
| 55. Acts upon colleagues' inappropriate prescribing practice using appropriate mechanisms. |
| 56. Understands and uses tools to improve prescribing (e.g. review of prescribing data, audit and feedback). |
| 57. Reports prescribing errors and near misses, reviews practice to prevent recurrence. |
| 58. Makes use of networks for support, reflection and learning. |

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Domain C: Prescribing in context



Competency 7: The healthcare system

Understands and works within local and national policies, processes and systems that impact on prescribing practice. Sees how own prescribing impacts on the wider healthcare community.

- 59. Understands and works within local frameworks for medicines use as appropriate (e.g. local formularies, care pathways, protocols and guidelines).
- 60. Understands the need to work with, or develop, safe systems and processes locally to support prescribing, for example, repeat prescribing, transfer of information about medicines.
- 61. Works within the NHS/organisational or other ethical code of conduct when dealing with the pharmaceutical industry.
- 62. Understands budgetary constraints and prioritisation processes at local and national level (health-care resources are finite).
- 63. Understands the national frameworks for medicines use (e.g. *NICE, SMC, AWMSG and medicines management/optimisation).
- 64. Prescribes generically where appropriate, practical and safe for the patient.

Competency 8: Information

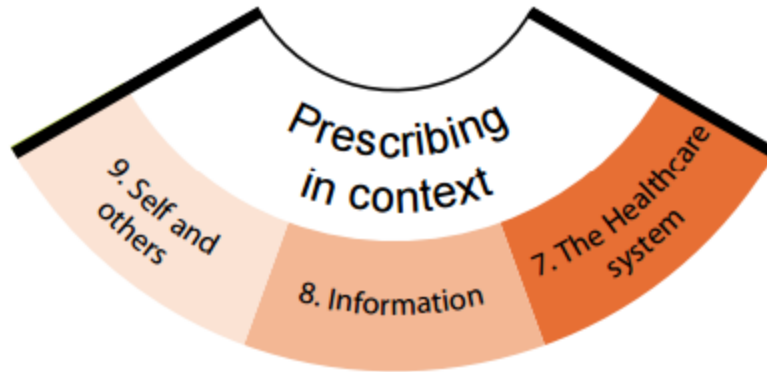
Knows how to access relevant information. Can use and apply information in practice

- 65. Understands the advantages and limitations of different information sources available to prescribers.
- 66. Accesses relevant, up-to-date information using trusted evidence-based resources.
- 67. Regularly reviews the evidence base behind therapeutic strategies.

* NICE – National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
SMC – Scottish Medicines consortium
AWMSG – All Wales Medicines Strategy Group

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Competency 9: Self and others

Works in partnership with colleagues for the benefit of patients. Is self-aware and confident in own ability as a prescriber.

68. Thinks and acts as part of a multidisciplinary team to ensure that continuity of care is developed and not compromised.
69. Establishes relationships with other professionals based on understanding, trust and respect for each other's roles in relation to prescribing.
70. Recognises and deals with pressures that might result in inappropriate prescribing (for example, pharmaceutical industry, media, patient, colleagues).
71. Negotiates the appropriate level of support and supervision for role as a prescriber.
72. Provides support and advice to other prescribers where appropriate.