

Continuing **professional** DEVELOPMENT
a guide to getting started



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making cpd work for you

Welcome to the RPSGB guide to getting started on Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

It may seem a bit strange that we've decided to publish a beginner's guide when CPD has been around for a few years now. Well, the latest information in 2005 suggests that over half of all practising pharmacists are recording their CPD.

But this also means that just under a half of all pharmacists aren't recording their CPD yet. There may be pharmacy technicians who are in the same position. If you haven't got to grips with recording your CPD yet, then this guide is for you.

We can reassure you that it's not too late to start recording your CPD – it's never too late. What is more, pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who have a go at recording their CPD generally find that it's much easier than they expected.

We're sure that by the time you've worked through this guide you will feel confident that you can undertake and record your CPD.

welcome

how to use this guide

The guide is split into three booklets:

making cpd work for you

a journey round the cpd cycle

making sense of your cpd record

1

2

3

As you work through each booklet you will find these additional sections:

Helpful hints 

a summary of useful tips and techniques

Moving forward 

your action plan

3

Link to RPSGB competences

Completing this guide will contribute to the following RPSGB General competences for **pharmacists**:

G3 Being personally effective

G3b Reflecting on own performance and taking responsibility for self-development

G3g Setting and achieving personal and professional objectives

G5 Upholding quality and continuous improvement

G5e Adopting a reflective approach to practice

G6 Helping others to learn and develop

G6l Being a positive role model

It may also cover some of your sector-specific competences.

Completing this guide will contribute to the following RPSGB areas of competence for all **pharmacy technicians**:

TG2 Managing your work and self-development

TG4 Maintaining and improving the quality of your service

It may also cover some of your sector-specific competences.

If you don't know what we mean by competences then don't worry - we'll tell you more later.

Using this guide

We'd advise you to use this guide flexibly to suit your own style of learning. There is no right or wrong approach, but remember that the purpose of your work is to feel confident that you can undertake and record your CPD. Use that as your measure of whether your approach to using this guide is working!

We recommend that you start with Booklet 1: *Making CPD work for you* which will help you to work out what's hindering you from getting on with your CPD. Finding out (and dealing with!) your own barriers is a key step. The rest of the booklets will help you to overcome these barriers. You can then join the ranks of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who are already benefiting from recording their CPD – and there are benefits!

As we mentioned earlier, there are many barriers to getting started with CPD. This section is about exploring some of those barriers and giving you some ideas for how they can be overcome.

We have included some reflective exercises, which we hope will help you to sort your own thoughts on CPD and help you to move forward.

We hope that you'll enjoy working through this booklet and that you'll gain a better understanding of what CPD involves. But if you want more help and information don't forget the useful contacts which you will find listed on the outside back cover of each booklet.

Throughout this guide we will use the term 'CPD entry' to refer to a single entry and 'CPD record' to a group of entries.



Where are you with your CPD?

Let's imagine that we could split the whole population of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians into three groups:

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Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who record their CPD

These will range from those who've made just one or two entries, to those who regularly make CPD entries. The majority are probably in-between – people who make entries every now and then; who are willing to have a go but who still have some anxieties about whether their CPD record is 'ok'.

If you're in this group then you're ahead of the game, even if you've just made one CPD entry. If you can submit a CPD record (made up of a number of individual entries) to the Society when asked to do so, you will be given feedback to help you develop your CPD, and support to help you to improve your record in the future.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who *don't* record CPD because they don't know or understand what's involved.

They may have heard some things about CPD that have put them off. They may feel too apprehensive to find out more. Some may even be ashamed to admit that they haven't got started yet.

If you're in this group then you've done the right thing by picking up this guide. Most pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who find out more about CPD are pleasantly surprised – it's generally not as complicated as they think it will be. It is important that you get round to having a go at recording your CPD. Not submitting a CPD record (made up of a number of individual entries) to the RPSGB when asked to do so is like not paying your retention fee – you will not be allowed to stay on the practising register.

Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who *won't* record CPD because they don't want to and can't see the need for it.

Some pharmacists and pharmacy technicians just can't see any benefits to undertaking CPD.

They may be feeling rebellious. Others will feel that it's just too much effort, given that they're near the end of their careers or if they're not working in a traditional pharmacy role.

If you're in this group then you have a choice. Some of you will decide to join the non-practising register – this will be a decision that only you can make. But we hope that most of you will want to stay on the practising register. In that case it is important that you get round to having a go at recording your CPD. Not submitting a CPD record (made up of a number of individual entries) to the RPSGB when asked to do so is like not paying your retention fee – you will not be allowed to stay on the practising register.



We record our CPD



We don't understand what's involved



We can't see the point

At this early stage, where do you think you fit in?

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OK, so now you've clarified where you are - how do you feel about your CPD? Haven't thought about it? Have a look at the CPD ladder – which rung are you on?

Enthusiastic

I've made a few entries and got some positive feedback. I know I'm on the right track.

No worries

I've made a few entries and it seems pretty straightforward.

Bit anxious

I've made a few entries but I don't know if they're ok – I don't want to do any more just in case they're wrong.

Really worried

I don't know where to start – I've heard that it's really hard but if I don't do it then I'll get struck off, I can't afford that so I need to do something, but what....?

Desperate

I don't know where to start – I've heard that it's really hard. I'll put it off for a bit longer – it may never happen.

We know that people who have started recording their CPD feel an overwhelming sense of relief. The more they do, the better they feel. Our research has shown that in general, pharmacists who undertake and record their CPD feel more confident and competent. We're sure that the same will be true for pharmacy technicians.

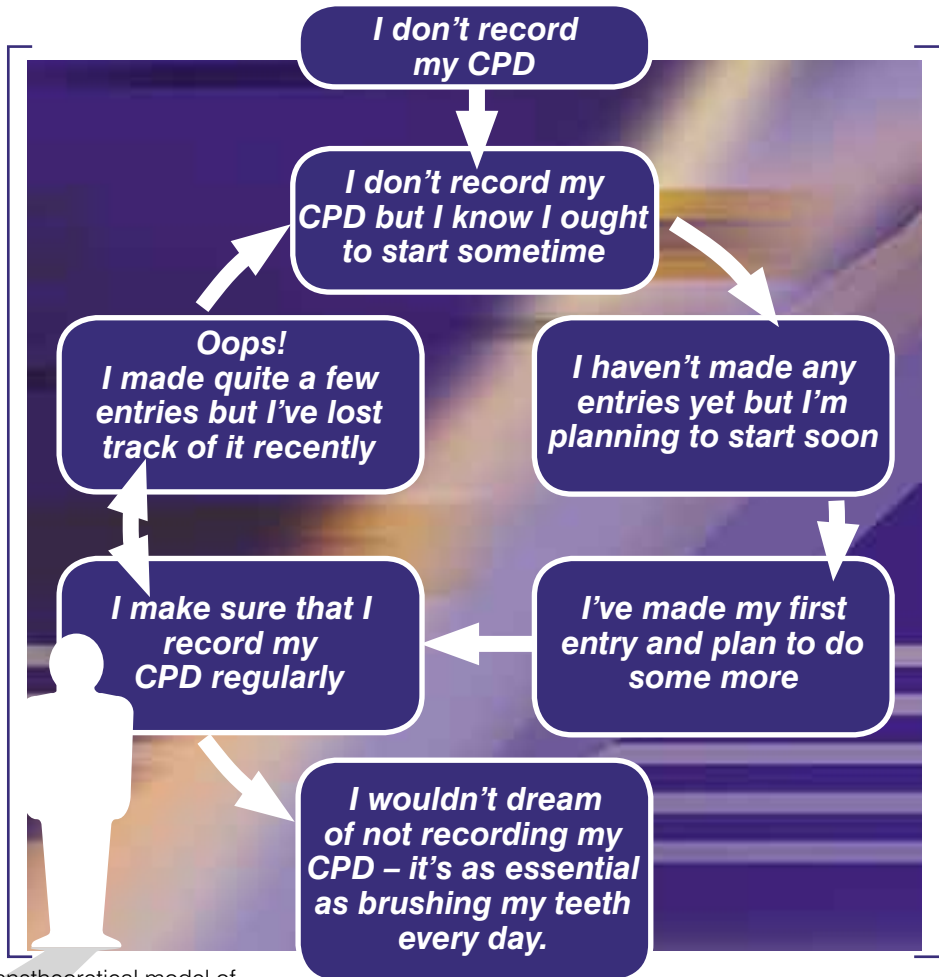
Whichever rung of the CPD ladder you're on, there is always potential to change and to move towards greater involvement with CPD.

Now that you've thought about where you are on the ladder, let's have a look at how you can climb up the rungs!

Have a look at the next cycle – it shows the stages that people go through when they're considering making a change, whether it's taking up exercise, changing the wallpaper or deciding to get to grips with CPD!

The key is to take it a step at a time – we don't expect everyone to become CPD experts overnight!

Which stage are you at on this cycle? Be honest with yourself. Do you want to move to a more positive stage of the cycle? If the answer's 'Yes' then what do you think would need to happen for you to achieve that move?



Adapted from the Transtheoretical model of change, Prochaska and DiClemente

Assessing the barriers

Let's take a look at some of the barriers that may get in the way of our CPD.

Here are some common reasons that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians have come up with for not getting started on their CPD.

We've spoken to hundreds of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, as well as people from other professions that are also implementing CPD. These are very human concerns and they crop up again and again. Luckily for us, we've also spoken to hundreds of people who've found ways around these issues to successfully complete their CPD record.

Do some of these comments sound familiar? What's your biggest barrier to getting started?

- "I don't understand what CPD means"**
- "I don't know what to record"**
- "I don't know how to make a CPD entry"**
- "I don't understand the recording system"**
- "I'm so confused about the competences"**
- "What should I write?"**
- "It's too personal"**
- "It's just a passing fancy"**
- "I go on lots of courses and I keep my certificates"**
- "I'm doing a diploma"**
- "I don't think that I'm doing any CPD that I can record"**
- "I've got no time"**
- "No-one's paying me to do it"**
- "No-one else is doing it"**
- "I don't like computers"**
- "I don't have a good enough internet connection"**
- "My manager's not interested"**
- "The RPSGB will spy on my CPD entries"**
- "How will I know if my CPD entries are right?"**
- "What if I do it wrong?"**

Let's have a look at these barriers in more detail

“ I don't understand what CPD means ”

CPD stands for Continuing Professional Development – just break it down:

Continuing: ongoing, lifelong, and not likely to disappear any time soon!

Professional: to do with your work

Development: changes for the better

So CPD is the process by which you are always changing for the better.

We'll look at this in more detail in Booklet 2.

“ I don't know what to record ”

In general it's better to make CPD entries about small, everyday things. Many people feel that entries must be worthy, clinical and all at diploma level – that's just not true. Your CPD record should reflect your day-to-day life as a pharmacist or pharmacy technician. Remember that just about any activity that helps you to improve your practice can be recorded as CPD.

We'll look at this in more detail in Booklets 2 and 3.

“ I don't know how to make a CPD entry ”

The main thing to remember at this point is to stay calm and just have a go. If you follow the questions on an RPSGB approved format (either on paper, online or on desktop) then you've got a very good chance of making a decent CPD entry.

We'll look at this in more detail in Booklet 3.

“ I don't understand the recording system ”

The recording system can seem a bit bewildering at first – there are a lot of questions and it may seem too complicated. Remember that the questions are there to support you in making a CPD entry – they're not an exam paper! The key to making a decent entry is to answer the questions as honestly as possible.

If you find any questions that don't seem to apply then leave them out at first – you can always come back to them later when you've become more used to the system.

We'll look at this in more detail in Booklet 3.

“ I’m so confused about the competences ”

OK – let’s see if we can sort that out.

Competences are basically the things that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians need to be able to understand and do in order to perform effectively.

(Watson, Gallagher *Managing for Results* CIPD 2005)

Imagine that the competences are like a picture of a typical (and very desirable!) pharmacist or pharmacy technician.

They describe in detail the sorts of qualities that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians may aspire to.

Like many pictures, you may find that you’re not a perfect match – that doesn’t matter. Pharmacists or pharmacy technicians work in many different roles, so not all the competences will apply to you – that’s ok. First of all, look at the competences and decide which aren’t relevant to you or your practice. Then have a look at the ones that are left. Think about whether there are any that you’re lacking or that you’re less confident about. These can be useful signposts

for where your CPD could be heading in the future.

Competences are only one way of deciding where you need to develop in the future. We’ll look at the others later.

Remember - you don’t need to tick off each and every competency in order to be a pharmacist or pharmacy technician. It’s ok to just pick the ones that seem most relevant to your practice. There are different sorts of pharmacist or pharmacy technician so there are different groups of competences. This means that not all of them will apply to you.

If ‘competency confusion’ is stopping you from getting started then leave the ‘competency’ box blank in your CPD entry for now. It’s far more important that you have a go at making some entries. You can always come back to the ‘competences’ a bit later on when you’ve got your head round them!

We’ll look at this in more detail in Booklet 2.

““ What should I write?””

That's a big question. You can write about any learning experience that helped you to change your practice for the better. Remember to keep it simple.

We'll look at this in more detail in Booklet 3.

““ It's too personal””

That's right! Your CPD record is about you and your development, so it's important that you write about yourself. Your record is confidential and no one can look at your entries unless you give them permission. This includes the RPSGB. When it comes to submitting your CPD record to the RPSGB for review, YOU choose which entries you submit.

““ It's just a passing fancy””

No it's not! CPD is not likely to go away. Because it's about changing for the better (and about recording that change) it's hard to see how it could ever disappear. Pharmacy,

along with many other professions, is using CPD as a way of demonstrating that it's keeping up-to-date and continuing to provide a safe and effective service to its users.

““ I go on lots of courses and I keep my certificates””

That's great – keep on with that. Continuing education, such as workshops or open learning, is an important way of achieving your CPD. Later on we'll look at how you can turn attendance at a course into a CPD entry, or even several CPD entries!

We'll look at this in more detail in Booklet 3.

““ I'm doing a diploma””

Excellent – we hope that it's going well. Diplomas and other formal study programmes are an important way of achieving a change for the better. There is a good chance that a Diploma will yield several CPD entries – just remember to keep it simple.

“ I don't think that I'm doing any CPD that I can record ”

We don't believe that for a second! If you can think of something that you do better or more efficiently today than you did a few months ago then you've learnt something that you could record as CPD. If you've had to look up an answer to a query from a patient, then that can be recorded as CPD.

CPD can be achieved through informal as well as formal, ways of learning – this can include just looking things up in a standard reference book such as the BNF, talking to a colleague or reading a journal.

We'll look at this in more detail in Booklet 2.

“ I've got no time ”

A lot of people say that. For most of us it's true, so what's to be done?

Well, the reality is that recording our CPD is essential if we want to stay on the practising register. This means that we'll need to work out what we'll have to do in order to make room for CPD. Before you consider that, let's work out how much

time you're likely to need.

RPSGB surveys from the CPD pilot study showed that, on average, completing a CPD entry takes 30 minutes and that most pharmacists made an average of one entry per month. We're pretty certain that pharmacy technicians will be no different. So, this is what you should be aiming for – 30 minutes per month.

So, how will you find 30 minutes per month? That's a question that only you can answer. Remember that it doesn't have to be 30 minutes in one go – it's fine to spend five minutes here and there working on your record as long as you complete an average of one CPD entry a month.

“ No-one's paying me to do it ”

That's between you and your employer, or the organisation that commissions your service. Some organisations feel that being up-to-date is a personal professional obligation; others feel that it benefits their 'business' to support CPD. Have you asked them whether they can support your CPD in some way?

We like to think that if you're always changing for the better then your continually improving service will be recognised and rewarded. You may already find that CPD is integral to the clinical governance requirement of your professional role in the NHS, or under the new pharmacy contract.

““ No-one else is doing it ””

It may feel that way but it's just not true. We estimate that over 20,000 practising pharmacists are already recording their CPD – that's over half the practising membership. We know that many pharmacy technicians are getting to grips with recording their CPD. We reckon that this number is increasing every day. Of course, CPD is not unique to pharmacy – most professions (certainly those in touch with the NHS) are undertaking CPD.

““ I don't like computers ””

Fair enough! It's not essential for you to keep your CPD record on computer – if that's what's putting you off then stop worrying. We'd rather that you kept your CPD record on paper than not keep a record at all. If you decide to keep a

paper CPD record then it's important that you use an RPSGB approved format.

You can copy forms from the *Plan and Record* folder that would have been sent to you in the last few years. If you can't find it then give the RPSGB a call to get a new one.

Remember that if you keep a paper CPD record you **MUST** keep a copy somewhere. "The dog ate my record" will not be accepted as a reason for you not to submit a record when the RPSGB asks you to!

If you feel like a challenge then why not use 'learning how to use a computer' as your first CPD entry and have a go using the online or desktop recording system.

If you want to read more about the technology then why not get a copy of the RPSGB's *CPD User guide*. You can get a new copy from the CPD team (call 020 7572 2540) or you can download a copy from www.uptodate.org.uk



“ I don't have a good enough internet connection ”

That is a problem in some areas. One of the biggest benefits of using the online recording system is that it is regularly backed up and your CPD record is always secure. One thing that you may find helpful is to have a clear idea of what you want to write before you connect to the online system and to save your CPD record frequently.

If your connection seems impossible then why not try out *CPD Desktop*? *CPD Desktop* uses the same recording format as the online version. The main difference is that with desktop you don't need an internet connection and you keep your record on your own computer. This solves the problem with connection, but remember that you'll need to do regular backup copies. "My computer was hit by lightning" will not be accepted as a reason for you not to submit your CPD record when the RPSGB asks you to!

If you want to read more about the technology then why not get a copy of the RPSGB's *CPD User guide*. You can get a new copy from the CPD team (call 020 7572 2540) or you can download a copy from www.uptodate.org.uk

“ My manager's not interested ”

That's a real shame – there's good evidence to show that CPD can produce big improvements in individual and organisational performance. So, not only are you changing for the better but your manager's results will improve as well.

You'll have to decide on the best approach to take with your manager. You may find it helpful to tell them about how CPD benefits you and makes you better in your job. If that doesn't work then it may be worth looking for someone else who'll take an interest – your colleagues may surprise you!

“ The RPSGB will spy on my CPD entries ”

We can't emphasise this enough – your CPD record is confidential! The RPSGB cannot spy on your record. The computer system does not warn them if your entries don't look too good (though the online system can generate feedback for your eyes only).

Some pharmacists have found it useful to share their CPD entries with their peers and get some feedback and support. But remember, it's up to you to decide which entries you share.

This is explained in more detail in the *CPD User guide*.

“ How will I know if my CPD entries are right? ”

As we've said before, if you have an honest go at answering the questions in the RPSGB's approved recording format, then you're likely to make a decent CPD entry.

One way to check out your record is to use the 'Personal review of CPD Record' form to check through your entries. You'll find this in the appendices of the RPSGB's *Plan and Record*.

The personal review form is a summary of the qualities that the RPSGB are looking for in a CPD record. Those qualities are all to do with how you're getting round the CPD cycle. If you can, work with a colleague to go through each other's CPD entries using the personal review form – this will give you a more objective view. Remember - your CPD record does not have to be clinical.

You can get copies of the personal review form from the *Plan and Record* folder, or you can download it from the CPD website – www.uptodate.org.uk

If you keep your CPD record online then you will be able to get some limited feedback straight away. We'll let you know when this service becomes available. Otherwise the RPSGB will ask you to submit your record every three to five years and will offer you detailed, positive and developmental feedback.

We'll look at this in more detail in Booklet 3.

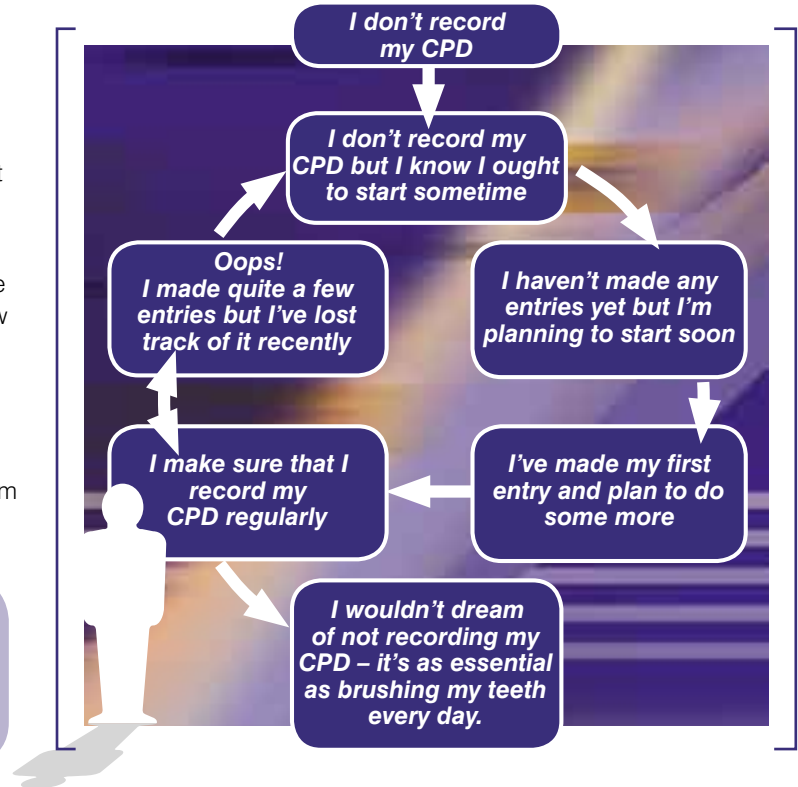
“ What if I do it wrong? ”

It's not the end of the world. The main thing is that you do have a go at making a CPD record and have some entries ready to submit when the RPSGB asks you to do so. Remember that CPD is about learning and we're confident that you can learn to do it right!

It's actually quite difficult to make a poor CPD entry if you use the RPSGB system, once you get the hang of it. As we mentioned earlier, use the personal review form to see how you're doing.

If you submit a poor record to the RPSGB then you'll be offered detailed feedback to help you develop your CPD entries and be given an opportunity to improve them. If you're still struggling, then you may be offered support from a RPSGB CPD facilitator. You can't be struck off just for making a poor CPD record.

How do you feel now? Do your barriers feel a bit less daunting? Do you remember the cycle of change? Where would you put yourself on this cycle now?



HH helpful hints

1. Don't panic!
2. Keep it simple.
3. Get onto the CPD website and have a go – no one can spy on your work and you may well get the hang of it.
4. If you can get online, browse around the information on the home page. There are case studies that explain how real people have tackled their CPD, along with feedback from the RPSGB's reviewers.
5. While you're online, try the tutorials that lead you through each step of the recording process.
6. If you don't fancy the website then don't just sit back - do something different – order *CPD Desktop* or copy some of the paper forms from your *Plan and Record* and get writing.
7. Think about how you can find 30 minutes per month to complete a CPD entry.
8. Jot down ideas for CPD entries as you go along – this makes it easier when you come to doing a full entry.
9. Don't leave it until the last minute before you make some CPD entries. If you leave it until the RPSGB asks to see your CPD record then you'll need to take a month off in order to make enough entries!



your action plan

In this booklet we have worked our way through the barriers to CPD – hopefully you're feeling a bit less mystified now.

So, where do you see yourself going next? Here are a few options to get you started:

“I'll read some more of the booklets.”

Great idea – which booklet will you read next? How will you make the time?

“I'll log on to the CPD website and have a look. I might even make a CPD entry!”

Fantastic – do you know how to get on to the website? Do you have your log-in details? If not, when will you get the information from the RPSGB so that you can get started? (Call 01225 323663)

“I'll get hold of CPD desktop and give it a go.”

Good plan – do you know how to get hold of it? If not, when will you get the information from the RPSGB?

“I'll dig out my 'Plan and Record' – maybe it's time I opened that box I got from the RPSGB.”

That's a good place to start – do you remember where you filed it? Can you find your *Plan and Record* folder? If not, when will you order another copy from the RPSGB? (Call 020 7572 2540)

“I'll make my own plan thanks.”

Fair enough – what have you got in mind? How will you make this happen?

“I've decided not to do anything for now.”

WHAT?! Actually, that's fine, it is up to you to decide when you're ready to move on with CPD. We'd obviously encourage you to make a note of when you'll come back to it – remember, it's not going to go away!

Your plan

What will you do?

When will you do it?

How did you get on?

What next?

notes

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With contributions from the staff of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain



useful contacts

We hope that you've enjoyed working through this booklet and that you have gained a better understanding of what CPD involves. But if you want more help and information don't forget these useful contacts:

Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

The CPD team can provide you with information and advice on all aspects of your CPD. A wealth of information is also available at www.uptodate.org.uk

CPD Team, Post Registration Division
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
1 Lambeth High Street, London SE1 7JN

Tel: 020 7572 2540 Fax: 020 7572 2506 Email: cpd@rpsgb.org

CPD Technical Help desk

The CPD Technical Help desk can offer assistance on technical matters in relation to use of CPD Online and CPD Desktop.

Before you give them a ring why not check the technical FAQs in the Help section of the online recording system. You may find the answer there.

Tel: 01225 323663 Fax: 01225 323664 Email: helpdesk@coacs.com
www.uptodate.org.uk