

ROYAL PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY

Reflective Account for Non-Patient Facing Roles. Making the most from your reflective practice

Why reflect?

We have all been subconsciously reflecting most of our life. Reflective practice can improve our knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours as a practitioner. Here, we show how you can get more from reflective practice and an examples of a good and a not so good reflective account. The reflective account is a new requirement from the General Pharmaceutical Council as part of our revalidation submission (refer to reflective account section of website).

Reflection is personal and there are different ways you can reflect. It is important to reflect on both positive and negative experiences so you can develop as a professional. Reflection helps learning, development or improvement of practice for the benefit of your service-users.

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is undertaken by all health professionals. In pharmacy it is defined as 'the critical evaluation of practice and learning to find ways to benefit further the people using your services'. It's not a tick-box exercise, it's about recognising our strengths and weaknesses and using this to guide your life-long learning. Experiences that could be reflected upon include:

- Compliments or complaints
- Feedback
- Reading articles
- Attending meetings
- Conversations with colleagues or other people
- Exploring feelings or emotional reactions
- Participation in workshops, seminars or conferences
- Understanding near misses or errors

How do I reflect?

There are several stages to reflection. It is useful to be able to describe the **what, where and who** – this helps you to think about the subject/situation in detail and helps clarify events, actions, feelings, thoughts or beliefs. It is an opportunity to recapture an event or an example of an area of practice for the purposes which serves as a springboard for you to explore your practice i.e. what happened exactly and in what order, where were you at the time and who else was involved? What part did you have to play? What was the final outcome?

Describe **why** things happened as they did. Consider intended and unintended consequences of the situation/area of practice – this assists with cause and effect – the why aspect of practice or 'so what?'

It is good practice to think about whether you could have **done anything differently**. With the benefit of hindsight how would you have managed the situation/area of practice differently? For instance: is there anything you could have tried that may have improved the situation, or was there anything you did that was particularly important in the situation? It is easy to remember the things that you did not do and it is often the things that you did well that are not remembered.

What will you do differently in the future - how will this change your practice?

This is probably the most important stage in reflecting. You need to list everything you have thought of before to learn and improve your practice for the benefit of your service-users. As well as thinking about what you would do differently in that specific situation, also think whether you have thought of any transferable knowledge or skills you can be used in similar situations.

Here are a bad and a good example of a reflective account based on how a professional might meet the **Effective Leadership** standard in the GPhC Standards for Pharmacy Professionals.

A bad example of a reflective account

1. Provide a reflective account of how you met one (or more) of the GPhC's standards for pharmacy professionals. The GPhC will tell you which standard(s) to choose from each year.

Describe briefly about your area of work (the setting of your practice and your main roles).

Describe briefly who the typical users of your service(s) are.

Describe how you meet the standards for pharmacy professionals we have selected.

Give a real example(s) taken from your practice to illustrate how you meet the standards we have selected.

As part of my role, I look after the Education and Training budget for our team. We were coming to the end of the financial year and we had money left over which I was keen to use. I know many of my colleagues had identified training needs in their PDRs but had not managed to organise any training. Therefore, I contacted my team members to highlight this fact and asked them to choose something from a list of courses I had found. This met the standard "*effective leadership*" as I am contributing to the education, training and development of the team and others for whom I have some responsibility. As a result of this, two of my team members chose to attend a formal project management course which has helped them execute a recent project that they were responsible for. The results have been impressive!

A good example of a reflective account

1. Provide a reflective account of how you met one (or more) of the GPhC's standards for pharmacy professionals. The GPhC will tell you which standard(s) to choose from each year.

Describe briefly about your area of work (the setting of your practice and your main roles).

Describe briefly who the typical users of your service(s) are.

Describe how you meet the standards for pharmacy professionals we have selected.

Give a real example(s) taken from your practice to illustrate how you meet the standards we have selected.

I am a pharmacist working in a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which oversees the implementation of local prescribing formularies in line with my STP footprint. I am also the Education and Training lead for our CCG which means I champion the development of our 10 pharmacists.

My service users are the pharmacists within my project team and also the 10 pharmacists who rely on me for their Education and Training opportunities.

(Who, what, and why)

Part of my role is to ensure that the Education and Training budget for our team is appropriately managed. I will liaise with our team to identify their learning needs for the following 12 months and find learning opportunities that meet these needs.

It was approaching the end of our financial year and I could see that a number of our team had not organised any personal development opportunities. If the team did not use the allocated resource, it would be lost and this seemed to be a waste of money and a lost opportunity for personal and professional development.

I compiled a short list of courses that I felt would be useful to members of my team and circulated them via email. As a result of this, two members of my team managed to secure places on a formal project management course which would feed into their roles, supervising various work streams that our team was working on.

One member has recently completed a project implementing a local prescribing formulary for primary and secondary care and the execution of the project, including the deliverables have definitely benefited from the additional training he has undergone. The project was finished on time, within budget and presented exceptionally well to our stakeholders. By contributing to the education, training and development of the team I have demonstrated how I have met the standard "*effective leadership*".

When I noticed that we hadn't utilised our training resource for this year, I was initially concerned that we might lose this and the impact it would have upon next year's allocation. I was also slightly frustrated with my team for not prioritising this within their work to ensure that they continue to develop professionally and personally. However, I can understand that this would fall to the bottom of their list as they are all so busy with their day jobs that it can often be difficult to find the time to prioritise such matters.

(Why did it happen?)

As mentioned, it can often be difficult for team members to find the time and headspace to think about their own personal development, whilst trying to deliver on projects that they are responsible for. It is also difficult for some members of my team to see the value in attending additional training courses unless they can see a tangible benefit to their work. Both of these could have contributed to the fund not being used.

Additionally, I may have struggled to focus on supporting others with their learning as it has slipped as an organisational priority, again due to external pressures and workload. Therefore, I have not been as proactive in supporting others as I should have been.

(Could you have done anything differently?)

I think that I could've been more proactive in my approach with my team and identified clear learning opportunities with them at the start of the year. I could have also paid more attention to their development as the year went on, rather than being prompted by the financial agenda. Furthermore, rather than just sending an email to the team with some suggested courses, I could have met with them individually and understood their training needs in greater detail, so I could have tailored my suggestions for additional training, to best suit their needs.

(What will you do differently in the future?)

Going forward, I will ensure that I meet early on with my team members to discuss their identified learning and developmental goals. I will do this shortly after they have met with their line managers, for their yearly reviews. This will enable me to work with them, throughout the year, to help achieve their goals. I will also have a mid-year meeting with them to see how they are progressing and use that opportunity to support them to identify any opportunities they wish to pursue.

Now what?

You have a structure for reflection that will help you write your reflective account.