SOPs “detail written instructions describing specific steps to follow in all activities under defined conditions”. SOPs are necessary to clearly define the processes and procedures within your pharmacy to ensure that good practice is achieved at all times. They form part of clinical governance, and in particular, show that pharmacists are putting in place strategies for risk management and harm minimisation.

All pharmacies operate differently and your SOPs should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and reflect the day to day running of the specific pharmacy premises. All relevant staff members should be involved in developing and reviewing SOPs to engage staff and provide an opportunity for role clarification. SOPs provide a useful tool for the induction of new staff and help identify training and development needs for current members of the pharmacy team.

Community pharmacies will have SOPs in place for all aspects of dispensing and services provided within the pharmacy and these should be readily available to relevant staff at all times, including locums.

**SOP Content**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** | Identify the purpose of the SOP. |
| **Purpose** | This section should describe what your SOP is trying to achieve. |
| **Scope** | This section should specify exactly what areas of work your SOP will cover and what it won’t. |
| **Procedure** | This section should describe in detail exactly how the tasks are carried out in your pharmacy in a step by step format. |
| **Responsibility** | The SOP needs to specify who is responsible for different steps in the process. The SOP must ensure that staff responsibilities are clear and that staff members involved are competent to do whatever tasks have been designated to them. This should be based on an assessment of each person’s competence and level of qualification. |
| **Known Risks** | This section should contain a description of anything you are aware of that can make the procedure more high risk than usual. These are circumstances that you know can increase the likelihood of mistakes and where you believe extra attention should be paid. |
| **Staff Signatures** | All staff members should read and sign each SOP to confirm they understand and accept the responsibilities assigned to them. |
| **Review Procedure** | SOPs should be reviewed regularly, at least every two years, or sooner due to a legislative change or if an incident occurs which may potentially have led to a compromise of patient safety. Each SOP must specify the responsible pharmacist who created or amended the procedure, the date of preparation and the date it is due for review. Separate versions of the old and new SOPs should be referenced and retained. Any changes in SOPs should be brought to the attention of relevant staff. |
| Date of Preparation: |  |
| Prepared by: |  |
| Date effective from: |  |
| Version: |  |
| Date of review: |  |

[PSNI Standards and Guidance on the Responsible Pharmacist Regulations](https://www.psni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Standards-on-the-responsible-pharmacist-revised1Mar2016.pdf)