

GPhC Inspection Framework 2026

Your 30-Day Prep Checklist

Be inspection-ready in 4 weeks



Saam Ali

How to Use This Checklist

This guide helps you prepare your pharmacy for GPhC inspections. Mark each item as complete as you go.

 **Important:** This checklist is designed as a practical aid to help you prepare for GPhC inspections. It should always be used alongside the official GPhC Inspection Decision Making Framework and Standards for Registered Pharmacies. This is not a replacement for the official guidance—consult the full standards at www.pharmacyregulation.org

- Systematically prepare for inspection over 30 days.
- Address all five principles of pharmacy standards daily.
- Meet GPhC standards every day, not just for inspections.
- Identify and close compliance gaps proactively.
- Implement improvements based on findings.
- Build robust systems to consistently demonstrate compliance.
- Consult the full GPhC standards and guidance at www.pharmacyregulation.org.
- Apply professional judgment and consider your pharmacy's unique context.
- Understand that inspectors consider context, impact, and scale when assessing compliance.
- Prioritise patient safety by addressing all identified deficiencies.

What's New in the Framework:

- **Understand the four outcome categories:** Standards Not Met, Standards Met, Areas for Improvement, and Good Practice.
- **Review requirements for online prescribing,** distance pharmacy, website transparency, and data security.
- **Implement new detailed requirements** for hub and spoke arrangements, including consent, labelling, and accountability.
- **Strengthen safeguarding** for vulnerable adults and children: review training, referral knowledge, and chaperone policies.
- **Apply rigorous standards for high-risk medicines,** especially in online prescribing (e.g., valproate, antimicrobials, weight management).
- **Foster a learning culture:** encourage openness, continuous learning from incidents, and internal/external insight sharing.

Week 1: Governance and Risk Management

Days 1-7: Foundation Systems and Documentation

Focus this week on your foundational governance systems. These are the backbone of compliance and the first things inspectors will examine.

Action Checklist:

- **Audit all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** ensure they cover every service, are dated within the last two years, and have staff signature records.
- Review and update risk assessments for all services, including new or modified services since your last assessment.
- Verify professional indemnity insurance covers all current services with adequate coverage levels.
- Check all legally required records are complete and up-to-date (private prescription register, CD register, emergency supply, unlicensed medicine records).
- **Review incident and near-miss logs:** ensure they contain sufficient detail and demonstrate learning and corrective actions.

Week 1: Governance and Risk Management (continued)

Action Checklist (continued):

- **Business Continuity Planning:** Develop and document business continuity plans to deal with possible disruption to services, including with third-party providers.
- **Test Business Continuity Plans:** Regularly test business continuity plans through exercises or simulation tests, and update to address any areas for improvement.
- **Recruitment Practices:** Ensure recruitment practices and procedures protect the safety of people, including background and ongoing checks (e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service or Disclosure Scotland checks).
- **Local Accountable Officer:** Ensure the pharmacy team knows who the local accountable officer is and how to report concerns about controlled drugs.
- **If operating hub and spoke:** Verify service level agreements (SLAs) are documented with clear roles and responsibilities for each party.
- **If offering online prescribing:** Confirm prescribing policies are available, followed, and include appropriate safeguards for high-risk medicines.
- **Quick Win:** Schedule a 30-minute team meeting to discuss one recent incident or near-miss. Document learning points and any process changes.

Week 2: Staff Competence and Culture

Days 8-14: Team Training, Roles, and Empowerment

This week focuses on ensuring your team is well-trained, understands their roles, and feels empowered to contribute effectively to patient safety and quality care.

Action Checklist:

- Verify all staff GPhC training (accuracy checking, information governance, safeguarding) is complete and current. Ensure trainees have allocated time.
- Confirm staff understand roles, responsibilities, escalation procedures, and actions in the Responsible Pharmacist's absence. Document non-pharmacist activity frameworks.
- Assess staffing levels and skill mix against workload. Review absence contingency plans. Document overtime/incomplete tasks indicating understaffing.
- Confirm staff feel safe raising concerns and exercising professional judgement. Review and ensure awareness of the whistleblowing policy.
- Review incentive schemes to ensure patient outcomes are prioritised, prevent inappropriate pressure, and allow professional discretion. Document alignment with patient best interests.

Week 2: Staff Competence and Culture (Continued)

Action Checklist (Continued):

- Review incentive schemes to ensure patient outcomes are prioritised, prevent inappropriate pressure, and allow professional discretion. Document alignment with patient best interests.
- **Prescriber Auditing:** Ensure prescribers working with the pharmacy regularly have their prescribing audited and monitored by a suitably qualified person to provide assurance they are working safely, effectively, and in line with national/local guidance.
- **Equality Impact Assessments:** Carry out equality impact assessments before making changes to services to ensure no groups are disadvantaged.

📌 **Remember:** A no-blame learning culture where staff feel safe reporting mistakes is a key indicator of standards being met. Your team should be able to give examples of learning from errors and feel empowered to speak up about concerns without fear of reprisal.

Week 3: Premises, Privacy, and Access

Days 15-21: Physical Environment and Accessibility

Use this checklist for a thorough review of your pharmacy's premises, ensuring safety, privacy, and accessibility for all patients. Tick off each item as completed.

Action Checklist:

- ☐ Verify all staff training records are complete and up-to-date.
- ☐ Confirm fire safety equipment is in date and accessible.
- ☐ Check for structural damage, trip hazards, or dangerous electrics.
- ☐ Ensure fire exits are clear and unblocked.
- ☐ Verify adequate lighting in all work areas.
- ☐ Test all security measures (locks, alarms, CCTV) are functional.
- ☐ Review and confirm cleaning schedules are being followed.
- ☐ Ensure sinks in dispensary, staff room, and toilets have hot water, soap, and hand-drying facilities.

Week 3: Premises, Privacy, and Access (continued)

Action Checklist (continued):

- Ensure consultation rooms allow confidential conversations without being overheard.
- Verify consultation rooms are clean, professional, and not used for storage.
- Check door/window placement does not compromise privacy in consultation rooms.
- Confirm appropriate screening from the retail area for consultation rooms.
- Assess accessibility for people with mobility issues (ramps, wide doorways).
- Check provisions for people with hearing or visual impairments.
- Verify website meets accessibility standards.
- Ensure signage is clear regarding services, hours, and how to ask for help.
- Confirm reasonable adjustments have been made for people with protected characteristics.
- Prominently display responsible pharmacist notice.
- Prominently display complaints procedure.
- Prominently display privacy notice.
- Prominently display chaperone policy (if applicable).

Week 3: Premises, Privacy, and Access (continued)

Action Checklist (continued):

- **Anaphylaxis Resources:** If providing vaccination services, ensure appropriate anaphylaxis resources and equipment are available.
- **Pest Control:** Confirm appropriate pest control measures are in place and there is no evidence of vermin or pests.
- **Equipment Calibration:** Verify all measuring equipment is 'government stamped' to verify accuracy and appropriately calibrated.

Week 4: Medicines Management Systems

Days 22-30: Safe Supply, Storage, and Clinical Practice

This week focuses on crucial aspects of medicines management, ensuring safe supply, proper storage, and robust clinical practices within the pharmacy. Your checklist will guide you through auditing key processes and systems to uphold high standards of patient safety and regulatory compliance.

Action Checklist:

- Dispensing workflow reviewed (prescription to counselling).
- Clinical checks performed at correct times.
- Labels show dispenser & checker.
- Team knows concern escalation process.
- Higher-risk medicines (warfarin, methotrexate, valproate, lithium) flagged automatically.
- All stock date-checked.
- Short-dated items highlighted.
- Opened liquid medicines marked with opening dates.
- Fridge temperature monitoring consistent with records.
- Controlled Drug (CD) storage meets safe custody.

Week 4: Medicines Management Systems (continued)

Action Checklist (continued):

- Purchasing arrangements overseen by superintendent pharmacist/key personnel.
- No counterfeit or inappropriately imported medicines in stock.
- Delivery system protects CDs and temperature-sensitive items.
- Audit trails show successful delivery.
- Recipient signatures obtained (where required).
- Procedures for failed deliveries in place.
- Clinical service protocols in place.
- Staff trained & competent for clinical services.
- National guidance followed for clinical services.
- Prescribing consultations documented.
- Prescribers work within competence.
- GP sharing arrangements work properly.
- MHRA drug/patient safety alerts received promptly.
- System for actioning alerts in place.

Week 4: Medicines Management Systems (continued)

Action Checklist (continued):

- CD key control appropriate.
- Medicines sourced only from licensed wholesalers/authorised suppliers.
- Audit trails show actions taken for alerts.
- Recalls completed quickly (including patient contact for patient-level recalls).
- **Refusal Documentation:** For prescribing services, keep records of refusals and reasons for the refusal documented in the patient consultation.
- **Identity Verification:** For distance selling services, effectively check the identity of patients before supplying medicines.
- **Follow-up Arrangements:** For prescribing services, ensure appropriate follow-up arrangements are in place for treatments that require ongoing monitoring.
- **Questionnaire Security:** For online questionnaires, ensure answers cannot be changed mid-completion to maintain data integrity.
- **Patient-Level Recalls:** Ensure system is in place to contact all patients affected in the event of a patient-level recall and provide appropriate advice.

High-Risk Areas: Extra Attention Required

These areas consistently appear in inspection findings when standards are not met. Give them particular attention during your preparation. Each item below represents a critical checklist point.

Action Checklist:

- **Online Prescribing Safeguards:** Verify prescribers are identifiable on your website with names, qualifications, and registration details.
- **Consultation Documentation:** Confirm consultations are documented with clear prescribing rationale.
- **High-Risk Medicines Checks:** Check safeguards are in place for antimicrobials, medicines liable to misuse, medicines requiring physical examination, and medicines with black triangle warnings.
- **Avoid Questionnaire Reliance:** Ensure you don't rely solely on questionnaires for high-risk prescribing decisions.
- **Weight Management Verification:** For weight management, verify you independently check patient height, weight, and BMI.
- **GP Sharing Success:** Confirm GP sharing letters are actually being sent successfully.

High-Risk Areas: Extra Attention Required (continued)

Action Checklist (continued):

- **CD Register Balance Checks:** CD register running balances checked at least monthly with audit trail documented.
- **Patient-Returned CD Handling:** Patient-returned CDs recorded promptly and stored securely until destruction.
- **CD Key Security:** CD keys held securely with clear accountability for possession.
- **CD Delivery Protocols:** Delivery protocols protect CD security with signature requirements.

Digital and Information Governance

Critical Technology and Data Protection Requirements Checklist

Action Checklist:

- Review website for current and accurate information.
- Ensure website is easy to navigate for patients.
- Confirm patients can easily find contact details and complaint procedures on the website.
- Verify GPhC registration number is displayed with a link to check status.
- Check full pharmacy name, owner details, and premises address are displayed.
- Ensure contact details (phone, email, response timescales) are clear.
- Confirm name of responsible pharmacist and superintendent pharmacist (if applicable) is displayed.
- Verify clear privacy policy explaining data use and protection is available.
- For prescribing services: ensure prescriber names, addresses, qualifications, and registration verification links are displayed.
- Confirm secure facilities are in place for collecting personal information and processing payments.
- Ensure data protection systems are robust.
- Verify all staff receive IG training at induction and regular refreshers.

Digital and Information Governance (continued)

Action Checklist (continued):

- Verify computer screens are not visible to the public.
- Confirm PMR access is restricted to authorised staff only.
- Ensure confidential waste is properly separated and destroyed.
- Verify electronic records are backed up regularly and securely.
- Check consultation room documents are kept secure and not visible to waiting patients.
- Confirm conversations about health concerns happen in private areas.
- **For hub and spoke operations:** verify IT arrangements share private data securely and consent is obtained for offsite assembly.

Final Inspection Readiness Check

Day 30: Confidence Assessment and Ongoing Vigilance

You've completed your 30-day preparation. Now, use this checklist to assess your readiness and commit to maintaining standards every day. Ask yourself honestly – can you confidently tick all these boxes?

Action Checklist:

- **All required records are immediately producible:** Private prescription registers, CD registers, emergency supplies, unlicensed medicines, consultation records, and audit trails are complete and accessible.
- **Team members can clearly explain our processes:** Staff understand their roles, can describe safeguarding, know how to raise concerns, and can give examples of learning from incidents.
- **All medicines are stored safely and correctly:** Stock is in date, CDs are secure, fridges are monitored, and patient-returned medicines are segregated and disposed of properly.
- **Privacy and dignity are consistently protected:** Confidential conversations happen in private spaces, computer screens aren't visible to the public, and personal information is handled securely.
- **Evidence of continuous quality improvement can be demonstrated:** There are records of regular audits, reviews of incidents with documented learning, updates to procedures based on new guidance, and a culture that welcomes feedback.

This checklist is based on the GPhC Inspection Decision Making Framework (January 2026). For complete standards, detailed guidance, and regulatory updates, visit www.pharmacyregulation.org

Final Inspection Readiness Check (continued)

Action Checklist (continued):

Beyond Inspection Day - Establish routine checks

Monthly review of incident logs and near misses. Quarterly audit of one key process or service. Annual review of all SOPs and risk assessments. Regular team meetings to discuss quality and safety. Ongoing monitoring of drug alerts and safety communications.

Beyond Inspection Day - Stay current with guidance

Subscribe to GPhC updates, review new guidance promptly, and engage with local pharmacy networks.

Beyond Inspection Day - Seek support when needed

Contact your superintendent pharmacist, seek peer support, or access professional development resources for any identified gaps.

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www.pharmacyregulation.org



Achieve GPhC **Online Compliance**

Meeting GPhC online rules, especially for your digital presence and data handling, is a big challenge. Making sure your online systems follow all official standards is key for inspections and building patient trust.

At Pharmacy Mentor, we help you make sure your digital and online work follows GPhC rules and top security and patient communication practices. Our custom support helps you find and fix any weak spots, giving you complete peace of mind.

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Phone

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