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**NHS COMMUNITY PHARMACIST CONSULTATION SERVICE (CPCS)**

**IT BUYER’S GUIDE**

Version 1.2 (Jan 2022)

The NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS) IT Buyer’s Guide has been developed by the National Commercial and Procurement Hub, commissioned by NHSX. This Buyer’s Guide sets out the important considerations community pharmacists need to bear in mind in order to undertake robust procurement exercises and make well-informed buying decisions about IT systems to deliver the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service.

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# INTRODUCTION AND THE BASICS

## SCOPE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide provides key information relating to purchasing choices for pharmacy IT, in regard to the NHS Community Pharmacist Consultation Service (CPCS).

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND ABOUT CPCS AND THE RELATED PHARMACY FRAMEWORK

The Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework ([CPCF](https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/community-pharmacy-contractual-framework/))[[1]](#footnote-2) 5-year deal outlines a number of clinical services that will be implemented, one of which is the NHS CPCS Advanced Service which commenced in October 2019. CPCS IT solutions require the digital capabilities to receive referrals from other care settings, data collection and sharing, with both general practice and for reimbursement processes.

Since the launch of NHS CPCS, two assured CPCS IT solutions have been centrally procured to support community pharmacy contractors with the delivery of the service.

Software solutions required to deliver CPCS were initially funded by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHS E/I) on the understanding that the funding for this service would be passed on to CPCS Contractors over time. The CPCS ‘provider pays’ model will come into effect on **01 April 2022**, when the responsibility for the cost of CPCS IT solutions will transfer to community pharmacy contractors.

Contractors are strongly advised to choose and purchase an IT solution as soon as possible and no later than 28th February 2022 to ensure a seamless transition to the ‘providers pays’ model and avoid service interruption.

Contractors are required to use an assured CPCS IT provider. Four IT providers are anticipated to meet the requirements of the NHS [CPCS Technical Toolkit](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2021-07/NHS%20CPCS%20Technical%20Toolkit%20v1.9.pdf) developed by NHS England and NHS Improvement or be working towards the requirements. NHSX, NHS Digital, NHS Business Services Authority (BSA), together with IT system suppliers and wider community pharmacy stakeholders.

The NHS CPCS Technical Toolkit will be uplifted over time to reflect new standards and improved functionality. IT providers will work with NHSX and NHS Digital to ensure ongoing alignment with the Toolkit.

All assured IT solutions will provide the required capabilities to a minimum standard, each may provide different elements of functionality. Contractors should consider this when comparing solutions that have been assured and when deciding which system to use.

Some suppliers are anticipated to become validated / assured after 01 April 2022.

# SUPPLIERS AND SYSTEMS

## OVERVIEW AND MARKET READINESS

As of 1st January 2022, the suppliers below are currently assured by NHS Digital as meeting the NHS CPCS Technical Toolkit requirements or are working towards meeting those requirements. You can find out more about these CPCS IT solutions using the website links below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| System and Supplier | Web address | Contact details | Supplier video |
| **Pharmacy Services\***  (Cegedim Healthcare Solutions) | [cegedimrx.co.uk/pharmacy-services](http://www.cegedimrx.co.uk/pharmacy-services) | [cegedimrx.co.uk/contact](http://www.cegedimrx.co.uk/contact) | <http://www.cegedim-healthcare.co.uk/cpcs-recording> |
| **PharmOutcomes\***  (Pinnacle Management Systems) | [Pharmoutcomes.org/pharmoutcomes/](http://pharmoutcomes.org/pharmoutcomes/) | [pharmoutcomes.org/pharmoutcomes/help/home?sendMessage&contactus](http://pharmoutcomes.org/pharmoutcomes/help/home?sendMessage&contactus) |  |
| **HxConsult**  (Positive Solutions) | [positive-solutions.co.uk/hxconsult/](http://www.positive-solutions.co.uk/hxconsult/) | [positive-solutions.co.uk/enquire-now/](http://www.positive-solutions.co.uk/enquire-now/) | [HxConsult Demonstration - Positive Solutions (positive-solutions.co.uk)](https://www.positive-solutions.co.uk/hx-consult-demo/) |
| **Sonar\*** | [sonarhealth.org/london-dmirs.aspx](http://www.sonarhealth.org/london-dmirs.aspx) | Sales: [pritpal.thind@sonarinformatics.com](mailto:pritpal.thind@sonarinformatics.com)  Support: [info@sonarinformatics.com](mailto:info@sonarinformatics.com) |  |

This document will be made available online and may be updated with any changes to suppliers as their solutions are validated by NHS Digital. Community Pharmacists will be kept informed of updates using existing communication channels.

\*Validated at the time of this document being updated

# HOW TO BUY

BUYING STRATEGY

It is recognised NHS pharmacy contractors will seek value-for-money when selecting their IT systems and look to achieve the best mix of quality and effectiveness at the best cost.

The factors to consider when making these decisions include:

1. Your current requirements
   1. Read the [CPCS Technical Toolkit](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2021-07/NHS%20CPCS%20Technical%20Toolkit%20v1.9.pdf) to understand the base requirements and check that this meets your service needs
   2. Consider the procurement for single or multiple pharmacy sites as required
   3. Consider if your chosen solution is compatible with, or has the ability to integrate with, your other pharmacy IT systems
   4. Check that your chosen option/s will support the efficient running of your service i.e., it will prevent the need for multiple “same data” entry into different systems
   5. Consider the user interface
      1. Is it easy for the pharmacist and other team members to use?
      2. Are there many clicks or taps necessary?
      3. Is the process simple and intuitive?
   6. Consider what training might be required, how best that can be provided, if this is included within the supplier package offer, or will there be additional costs?
   7. Can the supplier support the switch from your current plan as part of the mobilisation to their new system. Will the supplier be ready in time for your next deadline? Check indicative timescales and previous experience of the supplier mobilising their system for a different customer.
2. Your potential future requirements
   1. Is your business looking to expand to new sites, if so can the supplier support this?
   2. Does the supplier have a clear roadmap, including timescales, to manage future/potential requirements that will enable additional clinical services to be added over time to their current CPCF IT and other NHS service IT offers?

The consideration checklist above should help make key decisions relating to the arrangements, which include:

* The type of solution you select
* An understanding of whether the contract would be linked with service activity or duration, and if it is the latter, check the agreement / contract length
* Your budget (and the type of pricing that suits you)
* Timescale of when you might look to need to be ready or need to revisit the marketplace
* Ensuring the solution continues to meet your needs (through regular reviews?)

If your pharmacy does not have an assured CPCS IT system in place you will not meet the NHS CPCS service specification. If this is the case, the pharmacy contractor will need to de-register from the service.

BUYING GROUPS

There may be benefits from working together to purchase software in buying groups. If parties involved are in agreement with requirements and have a common understanding of the aims of the purchase, buying in groups could potentially provide the following benefits:

* Competitive pricing through economies of scale
* A wider level of support and checks and balances to ensure that the solution purchased is the best fit
* A stronger voice when negotiating and managing the supplier contract

For example, support with development of buying groups might be provided by your:

* Head Office (if you have one)
* Trade Association, if they seek to work with certain supplier(s) to offer you a subsidised or standard access; or
* Local Pharmaceutical Committees’ (LPCs) provider company if they, and the LPC, have chosen to commission a chosen supplier on behalf of some/all pharmacy contractors within the given LPC area.

Entering into arrangements with buying groups may deliver benefits and the contractual arrangements must be fully understood and agreed to by all parties. This is a key consideration before a purchase as a buying group takes place.

## PRICING MODELS AND CONTRACT LENGTHS

Suppliers will often offer different pricing options e.g.

* Transactional, where you pay a set fee for each referral you receive
* Licence-based, where you pay a subscription for use of the service, e.g., monthly
* A combination of the above, where a flat rate subscription pays for a number of transactions, with referrals received over this figure attracting an additional cost.

Transactional pricing may work well if usage is expected to be lower or unpredictable. A licensed-based model may suit contractors that are confident about their expected service volumes / demand, which will justify the IT cost.

Contractors should also consider how other arrangements could have an impact on their product licencing costs.

#### NHS Goods and Services MOdel Contract

The validated suppliers have been advised about the [NHS Goods and Services model contract (from gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-standard-terms-and-conditions-of-contract-for-the-purchase-of-goods-and-supply-of-services). This model contract outlines some key terms and conditions which pharmacy contractors should consider when entering arrangements with suppliers. The contract is used as a basis for many NHS contracts and provides a solid foundation for arrangements between buying parties and suppliers.

Key benefits of using the NHS Goods and Services model contract as a basis are:

* The contract has been developed based on insight and feedback
* It provides a standard consistency in relation to the Terms and Conditions
* Suppliers will develop a sense of familiarity with the contract, reducing time and resource costs when entering into arrangements for contractors and suppliers
* It covers important elements e.g., dispute resolution and data security

Whilst it is recommended that this contract form is used, it is not mandated. If other types of contracts are used, consider:

* If the contract includes all requirements as outlined in purchasing negotiations
* If the balance of liability is shared equitably between the buying party and the supplier
* If the contract provides reasonable remediation and termination requirements

When entering into all contracts, consider contract length and exit options. The developing nature of the marketplace, including the expected introduction of further clinical services, means that longer term arrangements are best avoided.

# STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO BUYING

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| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| **IMPORTANT:** The [Community Pharmacy Contractors Guide to CPCS IT Provider ‘Switching’](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/2021-09/Pharmacy%20contractor%20guide%20to%20CPCS%20IT%20provider%20switching%20v1.3.pdf) provides clear guidance to support your switching process. |
|  |

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1. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/primary-care/pharmacy/community-pharmacy-contractual-framework/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)