

Pharmacy First is unique in the services we offer in community pharmacy as the first to be planned from the outset to integrate into a patient's medical records. GP Connect, when active in pharmacies, will allow access into, and the ability to add to a GP record for a patient. This has the benefit for pharmacists carrying out consultations to see "real-time" information and to update the patient's record at the time of the consultation.

However, this also brings challenges. community pharmacists, traditionally, may not be used to recording consultations in the same manner and to the same level of detail as GPs and associated healthcare professionals in GP practices. As such, there may be a mismatch in expectations between the community pharmacist and GP when recording details of a consultation.

The Professional Record Standards Body (PRSB) first developed a standard for community pharmacy recording in 2018 / 19. The standard defines the information that should be recorded in the community pharmacy and sent to the person's GP and for all the services covered by the English Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (2019–2024). Full details on the standard can be found [here](#).

This means that regardless of the IT system used, a record of the consultation, including clinical summary, information and advice given and any red flags must be made and sent to the GP.

It is very easy to interpret this as only recording what you did, rather than what you didn't and **why**. Sometimes the best course of action is advice or self-care, as suggested in some of the pathways, but you **must** explain why you took this course of action e.g. there were no red flags, patient had normal temperature, FeverPAIN score low etc.

Alternatively, if you need to refer the patient back to the GP, or escalate to another healthcare professional, clear and concise notes, including clinical observations, will help the clinician decide the best course of treatment for that patient.

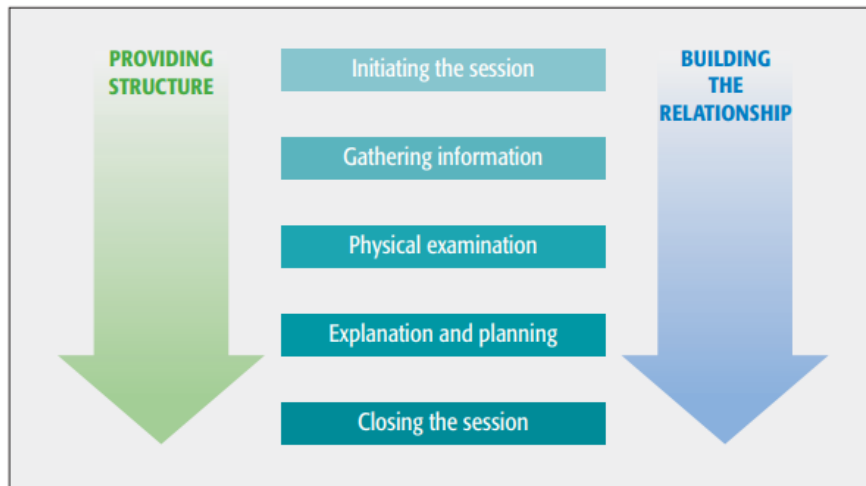
### **Examples of Good Patient Notes**

- Patient presented with sore throat – tonsils inflamed but not purulent, onset within 24 hours but no fever. No cough. No drooling, quinsy or other red flags present. FeverPAIN score of 3. Recommended self-care and pain relief but to return within 3–5 days if no improvement. Recommended to avoid ibuprofen as previous history of reflux. Safety netting advice given.
- Patient presented with ear pain – 5 years old accompanied by mother. Right side ear pain – no signs of mastoiditis and patient appeared lucid. Fever with temperature of 38.2°C. No red flags observed but patient upset and in discomfort. Examined both ears with otoscope and sticky discharge observed in the right ear along with perforation of the tympanic membrane. No other pre-existing comorbidities and no allergy to penicillin. Supplied amoxicillin for 5 days, but advised mum to contact GP if child worsens or is no better after 2–3 days, or seek urgent help if becomes very unwell.

## Examples of Poor Patient Notes

- Patient had sore throat. Fever and tonsils swollen. Gave penicillin.
- Red flag symptoms seen. Needed referring back to you.
- Patient didn't seem too unwell – suggested buying pain relief and ringing you if it got worse.

Using a recognised consultation model can help to ensure you cover all aspects of a patient consultation and as a reminder of what you need to record. One of the most commonly used is the Calgary–Cambridge Guide (see below).



By structuring the consultation, it ensures you can record patient history, details of any physical examinations (including vitals), what course of action was decided and why, and any safety netting included in the closing of the session.

To help you with carrying out and recording your consultations, below are a number of suggested courses / resources for you to use and complete. These are also great examples to include in your CPD.

- CPPE
  - [Documenting in patient clinical records](#)
  - [Clinical history-taking: what a good consultation looks like](#)
  - [NHS Pharmacy First: Clinical assessment – essential skills](#)
  - [NHS Pharmacy First: essential skills](#)
- Cliniskills
  - [Clinical examination skills training for community pharmacists](#)
- [FeverPAIN](#)
- [National Early Warning Score](#)

A useful thought on good consultation notes – **is there sufficient detail recorded for someone else to read later and determine, given the information you had at the time, you followed the correct course of action? A Court of Law will be of the view that if it's not recorded then it didn't happen.**