



OPUS

PHARMACY SERVICES

Experts in medication training

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Opus Newsletter No.8

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Welcome

We hope you like this new look for our newsletter – and our fresh approach to bringing you news about Opus learning and the work we do with social care providers.

Our newsletter plays a big part in keeping our clients up to date with what's going on in the area of care worker training and we'd like it to do more. So please don't hesitate to contact either of us with any content ideas or suggestions for future issues, whether in the form of training issues you'd like to raise, case study examples of the training you've received or any aspect at all of care worker learning.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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NEW ONLINE AVAILABILITY WILL SIMPLIFY COMPETENCY ASSESSMENTS

Competency assessments for medication handling in care home, domiciliary, supported living and day care environments are now available online from the Opus Learning Room.

Designed to replace inconvenient and often impractical on-the-job assessments, our online alternative will test your staff's knowledge and skills in the safe administration of medicines. What's more, it will help your care service meet the current **National Minimum Standards** required by the **Care Quality Commission (CQC)** as well as the essential new compliance standards which are set to replace them in October 2010.



Save time and money

An Opus online assessment makes competency testing practical for any care provider. It can be completed in just 30 minutes, a fraction of the time normally required for a senior member of staff to assess the role in the workplace.

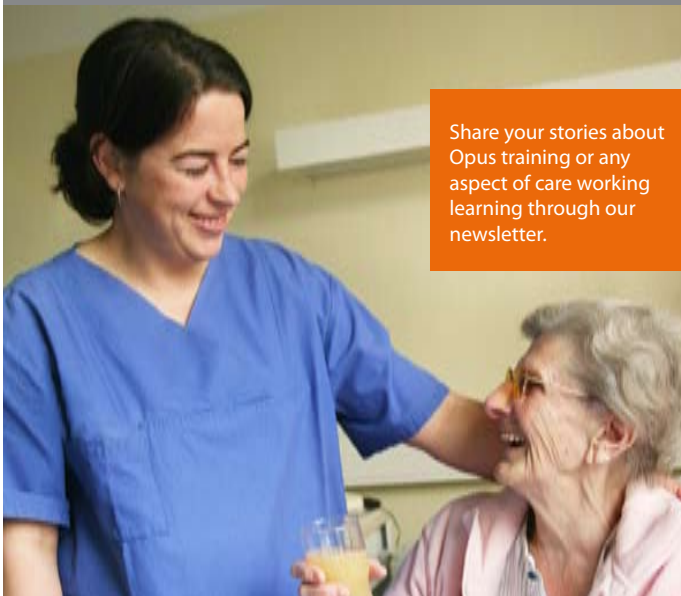
Each assessment is made up of a series of five video sequences simulating a typical care working scenario involving the administration of medicines. A given number of errors must be identified. The assessment also includes a range of multiple choice questions that test current knowledge and experience against real life situations.

"We have always found competency assessment difficult to achieve due mainly to time pressures – this is an excellent tool for assessing competency of all our staff."

Domiciliary Care Manager, Birmingham

A **learning needs report** is then produced detailing the competence level attained and, for managers, a skills analysis identifying any areas that require additional training or supervision.

"Our **competency assessments** provide full evidence for the **CQC** and are designed as annual tests," added Opus's Judith Manners. "If the test is failed, it may be retaken after further training."



Share your stories about Opus training or any aspect of care working learning through our newsletter.

The introduction of the **competency assessments** comes at a time when a high incidence of errors in medications received by older people has been reported in care homes.

A Quality and Safety in Healthcare Journal report published in July 2009 – *Care homes' use of medicines study: prevalence, causes, and potential harm of medication errors in care homes for older people* – confirmed that seven out of 10 patients experienced at least one medication error every day.

"This just goes to show the potential for more serious harm," said Judith, "and where our competency assessments can make a positive difference to the proper administering of medication."

"At last we have clear evidence for CQC that competency has been assessed objectively."

Care Home Manager, Surrey

Opus online competency assessments:

Quick guide

- **Practical solution to competency testing**
- **Completed in just 30 minutes**
- **Fully compliant with CQC requirements**
- **Minimal demand on senior management's time**

E-learning gets industry thumbs up

Online training is the way to go for organisations looking to keep their workforce up to the mark, predicts the **Confederation of British Industry** (CBI).

In its report, *The Shape of Business – The Next 10 Years*, the CBI concludes that the majority of training will be "delivered online or through other virtual learning environments..."

Opus continues to meet this trend with additions to its e-learning portfolio, many of them a direct response to local authorities requiring medication courses in a format that is flexible, cost effective and easy to access. Traditional face-to-face methods, on the other hand, are proving less attractive due to lack of provider availability, potentially higher cost and the attendance commitment required from already over-stretched staff and volunteers.

"This is where e-learning can prove so effective," said Opus director Shelagh Whall. "Not only does it meet the economic constraints that many care providers find themselves in, but it also reflects the learning preferences of an increasingly computer literate workforce."

All Opus e-learning comes with full one year access and constant updates that make it a viable reference for the latest guidance, legislation and best practice. It can also be used by staff who need additional support on an 'as and when' basis.

Last but not least, the valuable *Ask the Pharmacist* feature allows learners to raise any queries about medication handling during, or after, the training.



"All Opus e-learning comes with full one year access and constant updates"

Online training does the business

A forthcoming report from the **2010 Learning Technologies exhibition**, which polled 200 organisations on efficiency and delivering business value, says there is compelling evidence that online training benefits business efficiency, agility and responsiveness.

There are tangible savings, too – an average 11% in costs and 28% in time (or 36% if saved travel time is included).

For more on how Opus online courses can help with care worker training please e-mail us at info@opuspharmserve.com



Practical medicines workshop delivers hands-on experience

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A **practical medicines workshop**, originally commissioned by Bury Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC), is now generally available.

Complementing **Opus's foundation medication courses**, the half-day workshop gives care staff practical hands-on experience in, for example, administering tablets, capsules, liquids, eye/ear drops, inhalers and creams.

The workshop was developed at the request of **Mike Short, Workforce Development Manager Adult Care Services** at Bury MBC.

"I felt it was important to have a 360 degree training process in place for our care staff which would give them experience of actually administering medication to service users," he explained. "This workshop allowed them the opportunity to practise the competencies required both by the **Common Induction Standards** and **the National Minimum Standards** applicable to care homes and domiciliary services.

"The workshop empowered and motivated our staff and we've seen a real reduction in errors which obviously benefits our service users."

Judith Manners of Opus added: "The practical medicines workshop is an example of how we can tailor training to the specific needs of our clients and the ongoing demands of the social care sector.

"Workshops are geared to the practical and give staff essential experience in procedures in which they might otherwise lack confidence."



"The workshop is an example of how we can tailor training to the ongoing demands of the social care sector."

New addition to children's services courses

Opus has added the **Domiciliary Care Foundation Medication Course** to its children's services course portfolio.

The interactive course is directed specifically at care workers who look after children in their own homes by supporting parents, or in providing respite care. It covers all aspects of the administration and handling of medicines for children with complex needs and is fully **Ofsted** compliant.

"There is a particular focus on correct dosage measurement and on what care workers should and shouldn't do, especially with regard to their role while in the child's home," explained Shelagh Whall of Opus.

"For example it can be difficult for care workers to know where they stand when requested to take on certain tasks by parents. This course helps clarify what they should and shouldn't do with reference to the relevant professional, legal and insurance issues."

Domiciliary Care Foundation Medication Course for Children's Services:

Quick guide

- **Fully Ofsted compliant**
- **Interactive tuition on:**
 - Safe medication handling and administering in the home
 - The importance of managing and maintaining medication records
 - Identifying and avoiding potential problems with medicines
- **Comprehensive workbook**
- **Short assessment and completion certificate**

For further information please e-mail us at info@opuspharmserve.com

Opus distance learning launches April 2010

Distance learning packs covering our medication courses for care homes and domiciliary environments, including extra care, supported living and day care, will be launched in April.

Distance learning will provide an alternative to our e-learning programmes or face-to-face training. The course materials are designed for individual study in which the learner progresses by completing a series of self assessments. A final assessment is submitted for external marking.

Full course details will be published in our next newsletter, or you can register at info@opuspharmserve.com to receive advance information as soon as it is available.



Medication training now available for social workers

A new **Supporting Service Users with their Medication** course for social workers who need help in assessing service users' medication needs is now available from the Opus Learning Room. It aims to build awareness and understanding of the levels of support required and their subsequent recording on the care plan.

Opus on the road

Opus will be presenting at both a Skills for Care London workshop and a Mental Capacity Act conference organised by Dorset Primary Care Trust:

Exploring Best Practice When Dealing With Medication in Care Services

Venue: Resource Centre, Holloway Road, London

Date: Thursday 18 March

Medication and the Mental Capacity Act

Venue: Merley House, Wimborne, Dorset

Date: Wednesday 24 March

Opus is exhibiting at:

The 2010 **Surrey & Sussex Showcase for Social Care: Looking to the Future**

Venue: Effingham Park, near Copthorne, West Sussex

Date: Wednesday 24 March

Directors Judith Manners and Shelagh Whall will be judging the Lifetime Achievement Award (sponsored by Opus) for:

The 2010 **Bury Adult Social Care Awards**

Venue: The Village Hotel, Bury, Lancashire

Date: Tuesday 20 April

Get in touch

To find out more about any of the courses mentioned in this issue of Opus Newsletter, call Judith on **07976 898324** (email judith@opuspharmserve.com) or Shelagh on **07818 064992** (email shelagh@opuspharmserve.com), or visit www.opuspharmserve.com