

Practical Dispensary Management

Greg Bull
Dispensing Doctor Experts



**All material copyright Dispensing Doctor Experts Ltd 2026 – NOT
to be circulated without the author's consent**

www.dispensingdoctorexperts.co.uk

Our Services



Training and Consultancy Services

Special offer prices on PCSE Statement Training and Management Accounts setup for July and August 2026 [Also PA Items and VAT Training and Endorsing for Profit Pilot Sites Wanted]

Email me for a FREE 30 Minute consultation – contact

greg@dispensingdoctorexerts.co.uk

Philosophical Considerations



Reflective Learning; what happens in YOUR Dispensary/Practice – use this slide deck to prompt discussion!

Q. What do I mean by “Practical” Dispensary Management?

A. “Making Stuff Happen” at the right time, correctly and following agreed Protocols

My Experience



Dispensary ***BUSINESS*** Management

VS

PRACTICAL Dispensary Management

Two distinct and separate roles...
filled by the same person?

My Experience



Dispensary ***BUSINESS*** Management

VS

PRACTICAL Dispensary Management

Job roles and responsibilities in the
dispensary – are there clear
boundaries and job descriptions?

Introduction

Dispensary ***BUSINESS*** Management

PRACTICAL Dispensary Management

Who checks the Drug Tariff changes
on a regular [monthly] basis?

Who ***actions*** this?



Introduction



Dispensary ***BUSINESS*** Management ***PRACTICAL*** Dispensary Management

Who checks the new Discount
Schemes?

Who ***actions*** this?

My Experience



Profitable Switches. [£2.50 per item to £8.50 per item]

Who makes the decision to implement?

Does this happen in your dispensary?

Who makes this happen?

My Experience



Endorsing/Adjusting the Prescription
[From a £0.50 loss to £2.50 profit per item]

Who makes the decision to implement this process?

Does this happen in your dispensary?

Who makes this happen?

Introduction

Managing people can be very time consuming – ensure you have qualified HR person or third party provider!



Introduction



Dispensary ***BUSINESS*** Management

PRACTICAL Dispensary Management

Succession planning!
[Next week's session]

Who is doing/thinking about this?

My Experience



Personally Administered Items and VAT...

Still a lot of confusion out there and mixed messages.

Don't worry what NHS BSA pay you, worry you are NOT over or under claiming VAT from HMRC!

Your Starting Point



What do you spend your time doing?

When was the last time you really recorded what happens in your dispensary and how long it takes and who does what *on paper*.

When was the last time you looked at your daily, weekly, monthly and annual task list and discussed it with your team?

What goes on in a busy Dispensary?

These are not exhaustive lists!



Daily Tasks:

- **Ordering stock [more difficult now/needs more attention]**
- Receiving stock
- Checking delivery notes/invoices
- **Putting stock onto the shelves**
- Printing of prescriptions
- Picking stock
- **Labelling items + endorsing/altering the main body of the prescription?**
- Checking items and bagging
- Storing bags for collection
- Handing out medication **safely**
- Getting all scripts signed
- Complete all CD register records **[go digital!]**
- Clearing the worktops by the end of the day!

All standard things that a qualified dispenser should be capable of and relied upon to complete without supervision.

The Changes to the Nature of Dispensing



Time

Dispensing more items per
dispensing patient=

More time ordering stock

More time putting away stock

***Consider a time and motion study
[lite version]***

Solutions

How much time do you spend ordering stock?

Do you currently check purchase price vs Drug Tariff minus clawback before ordering?

Is a cascade ordering system right for you?



What goes on in a busy Dispensary?



Weekly Tasks:

- Date checking of specific areas
- Counting of all scripts, items and paid items – could be done daily?
- Reconciliation between paid item count with till records/ card machine – should be done daily?
- Checking and filing invoices for PA items purchased
- Chase any credits/rebates not received
- Follow up on any out-of-stock items – alternative possible prescribing?
- ***Check new Price Concessions/Generic Purchase Prices and amend scripts as per your SOP***
- Check Near Miss records for any increased/ decreased recording and any patterns.

All things that a dispensary manager or supervisor will be thinking about or completing.

What goes on in a busy Dispensary?



Monthly Tasks:

- Complete Controlled Drugs stock check
- Check all script counting and finalise the end of month package to be sent off to NHSBSA.
- Completion of the FP34D Appendix for PA items – vaccinations where an Rx form not required.
- ***Finish the “Month End” with a reconciliation of all paid prescription against money taken***
- SOP Updates – Should be a continuous process through the year (not all at the same time!)
- Check Wholesaler statements and rebates received
- Check new MDS deals and sign ups.
- Assess progress on DRUM’s target
- Assess progress on Audit for DSQS if started
- Update team’s training & CPD records?

All things that a dispensary manager or supervisor will be thinking about or completing.

Practical Dispensary Management

Monthly tasks FP34D
submission

Do you still split prescriptions
by prescriber – no need
according to NHS BSA



Practical Dispensary Management



The nature of dispensing has changed over the years.

Has your dispensary been kept up to speed?

Have you adapted your work processes/workflow?

Practical Dispensary Management



“We don’t have **time** to...”

Why not?

Time [staff wages] is your
largest overhead in a busy
dispensary

Practical Dispensary Management



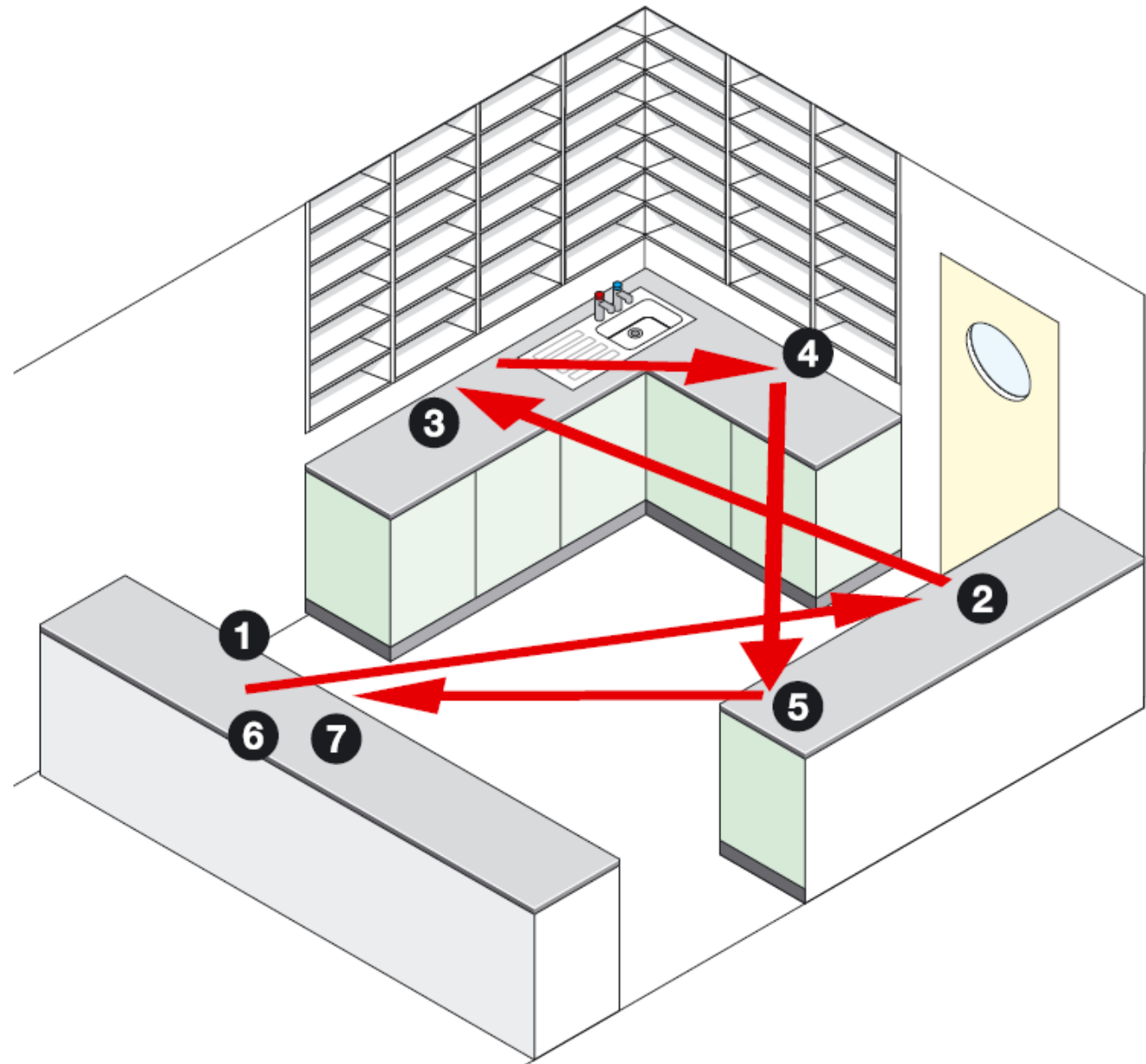
Take some time to just watch what's happening in the dispensary.

Is your Dispensary design and layout good or bad?

When did you last audit your dispensing processes?

What is your number of items dispensed per hour?

Bad Dispensary Layout



Reasons, Problems, Complaints...



How many times have I been told...

“if only we had another terminal and printer...”

“the terminals are in the wrong place...”

“the hatch is too exposed... patients lean in and disturb us whilst we are dispensing...”

“it would be so much better if the phone didn’t keep ringing all morning...”

“we need a terminal by the hatch...”

“I have to keep moving the elephant’s foot so I can reach the higher up stock...”

Reasons,
Problems,
Complaints...



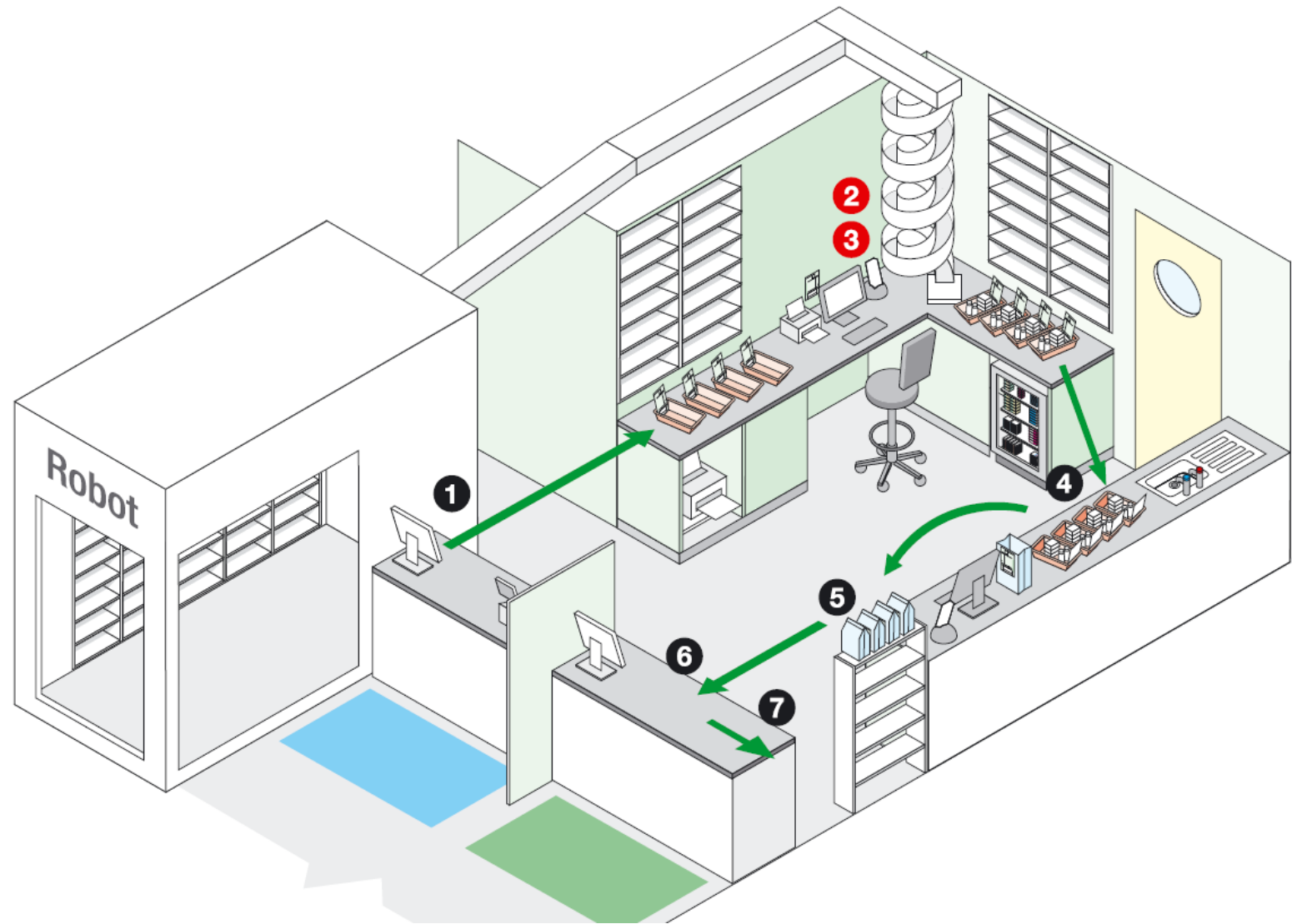
But what is the real problem?

Lack of communication?

Lack of ***investment*** in dispensary?

Lack of involvement by the business partners?

Good Dispensary Layout



Smoother flow of main processes and ability to cope with many [SAFELY] dispensed prescription items at one time / per hour

Solutions

Research into Automation

Has this been seriously considered?

It may be more cost-effective than you imagine.

Don't dismiss out of hand.



If you have any
further training
needs or advice

If all else fails... please get in touch!

contact@dispensingdoctorexerts.co.uk

