

Dispensing Appliance Contractors: Delivering value to the NHS and quality services to patients



Contents

Introduction	1
Background	2
What do DACs do?	3
How do DACs operate and deliver value to the patient and the NHS?	4
Conclusion	6
Essential services	7
Advanced services	8
Part IX Drug Tariff	9

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to set out the advantages of a transparent, centrally negotiated and managed system where essential appliances (at the discretion of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) are listed in Part IX of the Drug Tariff, prescribed on form FP10 (a prescription) and dispensed by appropriately regulated and qualified contractors.

Background

Dispensing Appliance Contractors (DACs), who operate nationally, are contracted to the NHS and are regulated by the NHS Pharmaceutical Regulations 2013 and the BHTA Code of Practice*. They provide products and services to over 375,000 patients with long-term conditions, giving individualised support via highly trained staff and specialist nurses which takes pressure off the patient's GP or other prescriber and work to prevent readmission to hospital therefore reducing the care burden to the NHS. They work collaboratively with NHS stakeholders and ensure that only the appliances the patient actually requires are dispensed therefore delivering value to the NHS.

*www.bhta.com/principles-underpinning-our-code-of-practice/

What do DACs do?

Provide Part IX Appliances

DAC's dispense products and provide services for Part IX** Medical Devices such as Stoma, Contenance, Laryngectomy, Tracheostomy, and other appliances. DACs are easily accessible to patients and clinicians and deliver the patient's prescription supplies directly to their homes. We are regulated by and contracted to the NHS to provide essential and advanced services and governed by industry codes of code. <https://www.bhta.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BHTA-Code-of-Practice-1-January-2018-links-updated-Dec-2021.pdf>

Support people with long-term conditions

The services DAC's provide are aligned fully with the NHS Long term Plan in promoting self-care, preventing re-admission, delivering positive outcomes, providing workforce support, and implementing digital improvements.



Work in partnership with the NHS and other stakeholders to deliver efficiencies and value for money

DACs work closely with Healthcare Professionals (HCP's) and prescribers to provide a seamless patient Pathway across the Health care continuum ensuring the patients have access to the right product at the right time and in the right place with personalised support services.

Deliver expert patient care and support

All DAC staff are highly trained to understand the patient's specific condition and needs and have undergone extensive product training to be fully aware of the appliances prescribed and dispensed. With this expertise they can recognise, through direct interaction with patients, potential overuse or underlying medical issues and be able to sign post the patient to a relevant HCP or prescriber.

How do DACs operate and deliver value to the patient and the NHS?

DACs are part of the Primary care system along with Pharmacies, dentists and opticians. They dispense and provide essential and advanced services* for Part IX Medical Devices such as Stoma, Continence, Laryngectomy, Tracheostomy, and other appliances.

- DAC's operate nationally and supply the appliances directly to patient's homes
- DAC's provide products and services to over 375,000 patients with long term conditions
- 80% of all patients have chosen a DAC to provide their products and services
- In 2021 over 4,632,000 patient telephone and email interactions were undertaken by the DAC care centre teams. This activity ensures ongoing patient support to those who are particularly vulnerable and allows any issues or concerns to be raised with the patient's clinical nurse specialist or prescriber. This collaborative activity, working in conjunction with the patients' Healthcare Professional, ensures long term optimum patient outcomes



- DAC's provide Part IX Appliances and services utilising the Electronic Prescription Service wherever possible which improves the efficiency of the prescribing and dispensing process to both the prescriber and the dispenser
- DAC's provide a discrete and a personalised way for patients to talk about their condition and to obtain their supplies

Quality Standards

- DAC's are always in close contact with prescribers to ensure expert patient care and prescribing, monitoring the patient's usage to support appropriate prescribing.
- DAC's operate within a regulated Clinical Governance protocol and carry out annual patient satisfaction surveys. Annually they update their Data Security and Protection Toolkit to ensure all information is securely stored and are also audited by the NHS annually
- All DAC's always have a responsible person on site to

ensure safety, regulatory and other requirements are adhered to

- The staff employed by the DAC's, both care centre staff and Specialist nurses, have an intimate knowledge of their patients' needs and condition and deliver a bespoke service tailored to each patient. They are highly trained in order to support the patient to lead as normal life as possible
- DAC's contact other support organisations when they highlight an issue with a patient, through the triage process they carry out with each patient, which could cause complications or lead to re-admission.
- Some DAC's employ specialist nurses who provide Stoma, Continence and Head and Neck services to patients in their homes, within community clinics or in the hospital and work collaboratively with NHS staff. This resource is a major asset to the NHS and results in a seamless patient journey from hospital to home and delivers ongoing care and support



- DAC's adhere to the BHTA Code of Practice and the DAC Code of Ethical Business Practice as well as all relevant regulations
- DAC staff attend the BHTA Customer Care course: BHTA Ethics, Principles & Standards of Dispensing Appliances and Patient Support to enhance their knowledge of both the clinical and lifestyle aspects of their patients.

How are DACs funded?

DACs receive fees for the services they provide under the Part IX remuneration framework as outlined in the NHS Drug tariff.

Conclusion

Over 80% of patients with a Stoma, Continence or Head or Neck long term condition use a DAC due to the unique, bespoke, and personalised services DACs provide. DACs are contracted by the NHS to provide essential and advanced services but, due to the in depth knowledge DAC teams, both care centre staff and specialist nurses, have gained through in depth training and development, the patients are supported to a much higher level.



This means that many patients who have underlying issues, related to their long term condition, avoid the need to see their GP or need to be readmitted to hospital or attend an outpatient visit. DACs therefore deliver value for money to the health service via the services they provide and strive to ensure the quality of life for the patients they support is the best it can possibly be.

Essential services

1. Dispensing

An NHS appliance contractor DAC's must provide sufficient appliances to patients presenting prescriptions ordered by health care professionals.

2. Repeat dispensing

When providing appliances to patients in accordance with a prescription form or repeatable prescription the DAC should provide appropriate advice in particular on the importance of only requesting those items which they actually need.

3. Home delivery

All DACs provide a discreet home delivery service and provide a reasonable supply of appropriate supplementary items (disposable wipes and disposal bags)

4. Urgent supply without a prescription

Where in a case of urgency, a prescriber can request a DAC to provide an appliance. Provided that the prescriber undertakes to give the DAC a non-electronic prescription form or non-electronic repeatable prescription or transmit an electronic prescription to the Electronic Prescription Service within 72 hours of the request being made.



5. Product Supply: Signposting

Where, on presentation of a prescription form or repeatable prescription, a DAC is unable to provide an appliance or stoma appliance customisation because the provision of the appliance or customisation is not within normal course of business, the contractor must:

If the patient consents, refer the prescription form or repeatable prescription to another NHS appliance contractor or to an NHS pharmacist; and if the patient does not consent to a referral, provide the patient with contact details of at least 2 people who are NHS pharmacists or NHS appliance contractors

Advanced services

1. Appliance Use Reviews In person and virtually

AURs can be carried out face to face by a specialist nurse in the DAC's premises or at the patient's home. Alternatively, where clinically appropriate and with the agreement of the patient, AURs can be provided by telephone or video consultation.

2. Stoma Customisation

This service involves the customisation (cutting) of a quantity of more than one stoma appliance, based on the patient's measurements or a template



Part IX Drug Tariff

‘The Drug Tariff – National Health Service England and Wales’ [from here on – the Drug Tariff] is a monthly publication issued by NHS Prescription Services of the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health. The Drug Tariff outlines what contractors will be paid for providing NHS services i.e., for reimbursement [costs of drugs, appliances etc] and remuneration [as part of a dispensing contract].



Part IX sections A, B, C and R contain a list of appliances and chemical reagents approved by NHS Prescription Services on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health for prescribing at NHS expense by an appropriate practitioner.

Manufacturers wishing to list appliances and chemical reagents for NHS prescribing must first seek approval from NHS Prescription Services for inclusion of a product in Part IX of the Drug Tariff.



British Healthcare Trades Association

Secretariat for the Part IX Drug Tariff forum and committee
drugtariff@bhta.com

Office 404 · Tower Bridge Business Centre · 46-48 East Smithfield
London · E1W 1AW

Telephone: 020 7702 2141

Email: bhta@bhta.com

Twitter: [@wwwbhta](https://twitter.com/wwwbhta)

www.bhta.com

JANUARY 2023

DAC Position Paper