



21 January 2021

Dear pharmacy colleagues,

Supporting pharmacy professionals throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

We want to thank all the pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, provisionally-registered pharmacists, pharmacy trainees and students and all members of the pharmacy team who continue to work in these extraordinary circumstances.

We know that many of you are working in very difficult situations and under extreme pressures as the pandemic continues during this second wave and the number of cases of COVID-19 remains high. We also know that the pressure will also be exacerbated by staff shortages due to sickness, self-isolation or caring responsibilities.

We recognise the weeks ahead are likely to be among the most challenging of all of our professional lives. Please do take care of yourself and your colleagues during this time and speak to your employer or visit NHS websites in each country to find out about what support is available to help you protect your health and well-being.

Supporting you to make decisions

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) and Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (PSNI) [have issued a joint statement](#) with the other health and social care professional regulators setting out how we will carry out our roles at this time.

The statement highlights that we recognise that in highly challenging circumstances, you may need to depart from established procedures in order to care for patients and people using health and social care services.

We would encourage you to use your professional judgement to assess risk and make sure people receive safe care, informed by the values and principles set out in regulatory standards. These standards are designed to be flexible and to provide a framework for decision-making in a wide range of situations.

We know that pharmacy professionals may feel anxious about how context is taken into account when concerns are raised about their decisions and actions in very challenging

circumstances. The GPhC and PSNI will always consider the specific facts of a case, taking into account the factors relevant to the environment in which a professional is working.

We all also continue to expect employers, including pharmacy owners, educational supervisors, professional bodies, national NHS and health and social care organisations, to support pharmacy professionals who are facing very difficult situations.

Supporting the roll-out of vaccines

We know that many of you will play a vital role in the COVID-19 vaccination programme, while others are working hard to continue providing essential services and care to patients and the public. We greatly appreciate the efforts being made by colleagues across the UK to support this hugely important national effort.

It's important that pharmacy professionals continue to follow the appropriate protocols and guidance that are in place where you work.

We also want to reassure you that frontline pharmacy workers are among the high priority groups identified by the JCVI for receiving a vaccine and the health and care services across the UK are working hard to get this to you as soon as possible.

We are incredibly proud of the significant contribution pharmacy is making to the UK's COVID-19 response. On behalf of the governments, health services and regulators across the UK, thank you for your service; we are very grateful for everything you are doing for patients and the public.



Dr Keith Ridge CBE
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
NHS England and NHS Improvement



Andrew Evans
Chief Pharmaceutical Officer
Welsh Government



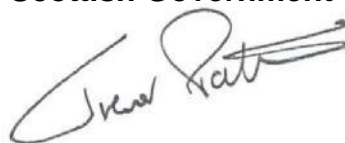
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