



Important update from the GPhC: COVID-19

Dear colleagues

We know that you will be facing significant challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and would like to thank you for all that you are doing to help provide care and support to patients and the public.

Our priority is to support you to give people safe and effective care.

We will take a flexible, supportive and proportionate approach to regulation during this time, while continuing to focus on ensuring patient safety.

Inspections

From today we are stopping routine inspections of pharmacies and will not be producing inspection reports. We will instead be moving to a supportive phase, still carrying out our role but working differently with you.

If one of our inspectors contacts you on the phone or visits your pharmacy, it will be to discuss your plans and arrangements for the pandemic. Our inspectors will be answering queries and providing support to pharmacy owners, pharmacy professionals and teams.

The inspectors will also be identifying examples of how you are meeting some of these challenges so that others can learn quickly from your approaches. We will share that through our online knowledge hub and with representative bodies and other organisations who are there to support you.

We have also established ongoing lines of communications with representative bodies and other organisations to ensure we understand what is happening on the ground and what more we can do as the regulator to support pharmacy owners and professionals during this time. This will include sharing this information with others so we can all consider what actions to take.

We will also continue to act quickly on any information we receive which suggests a risk to patient safety within a particular pharmacy.

Further Information for pharmacy professionals and pharmacy owners

We recognise that in highly challenging circumstances, pharmacy professionals and teams may need to depart from established procedures in order to care for patients and people using health and social care services. Our regulatory standards are designed to be flexible and to provide a framework for decision-making in a wide range of situations.

We would encourage you to [read our joint statement](#) with the other health and social care regulators setting out our approach to regulation during the coronavirus pandemic.

We would also urge you to keep up to date with the latest information and guidance from the government and the NHS in the country in which you work; this [Regulate article includes links to key information](#).

Temporary registration

We have powers to register on a temporary basis fit, proper and suitably experienced people to act as pharmacists and pharmacy technicians **if an emergency is declared by the Secretary of State**.

Our policy sets out that in the first instance, if an emergency was declared, we would register former pharmacy professionals who have voluntarily removed themselves, or were removed for non-renewal, from the GPhC register in the last three years.

We are currently preparing in case we need to use these powers and are **working closely with governments, the NHS and other regulators**.

We will be contacting those who may be added to the temporary register later this week, to let them know what it may mean for them. We will also share information with employers about what they would need to do if they were planning to employ someone on the temporary register and signpost to information from the NHS and other organisations.

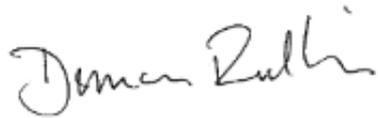
Next steps

We are continuing to actively monitor the situation and to consider if we need to make any other changes to our regulatory approach or requirements during this time, to help support the efforts in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

We will continue to keep you updated on all relevant developments so please look out for emails from us.

Thank you again for your significant contribution and your professionalism during this challenging time.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duncan Rudkin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'D'.

Duncan Rudkin

Chief Executive