

Managing concerns about pharmacy professionals with temporary registration

Overview

1. Healthcare professionals are playing a vital role in helping to treat and contain coronavirus and we recognise that health and care professionals are likely to face an increased burden in helping the UK through the outbreak.
2. We have begun to use our powers to register on a temporary basis fit, proper and suitably experienced people to act as pharmacists and pharmacy technicians, following the declaration of an emergency by the Secretary of State. That means healthcare professionals who have retired or recently left their roles returning to practice to alleviate pressures and contribute to providing essential healthcare services.
3. We support all professionals to deliver better, safer care by setting the standards they need to meet, to act in the best interests of patients and people who use health services at all times. To do this professionals with temporary registration:
 - should only return to practise if you are fit to do so; you should consider your health, skills, knowledge and personal circumstances when making this decision.
 - must follow the standards for pharmacy professionals. You must work within the limits of your knowledge and skills and refer to others when needed.
 - must make sure your work is covered by appropriate indemnity insurance for your practice; your employer should help with this.

Managing concerns about temporary registrants

4. As registered professionals, the first concern of the pharmacy professionals is the care of patients and people who use pharmacy services. To deliver safe care, pharmacy professionals, working in partnership with other healthcare professionals and people using services, should use their professional judgement to assess risk and ensure decision-making is informed by any relevant guidance and the values and principles set out in our **professional standards**.
5. Our standards support professionals by highlighting the key principles which must be followed, including the need to work cooperatively with colleagues to keep people safe, to recognise and work within the limits of their competence, and to have appropriate indemnity arrangements relevant to their practice.
6. Concerns raised about pharmacy professionals are normally managed through established **fitness to practise processes**. However, there are obvious challenges for regulators managing concerns about temporary registrants given their short-term status. An approach that is

proportionate, fair and that, above all, protects the public is needed. We will therefore take a risk-based approach to managing concerns about temporary registrants that swiftly identifies and manages any risk to patients and the public during their period of registration.

How we will do this

7. Where a concern is raised about a pharmacy professional with temporary registration, it will be considered on the specific facts of the case, taking into account the factors relevant to the environment in which the professional is working and the risk to patient and public safety. We will also take account of any relevant information about resource, guidelines or protocols in place at the time.
8. We will quickly assess the nature and extent of the risk to patient safety. This will be done by undertaking a swift and thorough review of the available evidence to understand the seriousness of the concern and if there is a real risk to patients. We will assess whether the professional is able to carry out their role safely and effectively or whether continuing to allow temporary registration would undermine trust and confidence in the professions.
9. Once we have reviewed the evidence, we will administratively remove a professional with temporary registration if the evidence suggests that removal:
 - is necessary to protect the public
 - is otherwise in the public interest
 - is in the interests of the pharmacy professional.
10. Administrative removal means that the Registrar will immediately remove the person from the temporary register and they will no longer be able to practise as a pharmacy professional.
11. If we decide to not administratively remove then the professional will be eligible to remain in practice until the need for temporary professionals passes and they are removed with all others.