



# Community Pharmacy England's response to the GPhC's consultation on draft rules for Responsible Pharmacists and standards for Responsible Pharmacists and Superintendent Pharmacists

March 2026

## About Community Pharmacy England

**We are the voice of community pharmacy in England, representing all 10,000+ community pharmacies across the country.**

We champion community pharmacies across the country – representing our members and giving them the support they need, negotiating the best deal with the Government and NHS, and influencing positive change.

We represent community pharmacy businesses of all sizes in England and are responsible for negotiating the NHS Community Pharmacy Contractual Framework (CPCF), under which all community pharmacies operate, with the Government and the NHS.

We are recognised by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care as the body that represents NHS pharmacy contractors. We work closely with Local Pharmaceutical Committees (LPCs) to support their role as the local NHS representative organisations.

We work closely with everyone in the community pharmacy sector to meet our goals and to promote the value of community pharmacy. Because everyone in society needs community pharmacy to thrive.

Our goal is to develop the NHS community pharmacy service, to enable community pharmacies to offer an increased range of high-quality and fully funded services that meet the needs of their local communities and provide value and good health outcomes for the NHS and the public.



## Our response to the consultation.

### Consultation questions

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#### Standards for Superintendent Pharmacists

##### The role of the Superintendent Pharmacist

*The criteria for the role of the Superintendent Pharmacist are set out in legislation. The criteria must be met in full.*

*A Superintendent Pharmacist must:*

- 1. be a pharmacist who maintains their registration with the GPhC, and*
- 2. be a senior manager of the retail pharmacy business who has the authority to make decisions affecting the running of the retail pharmacy business in connection with the retail sale and supply of medicinal products. This includes having a significant role in:*
  - making decisions about how the whole or a substantial part of the activities of a retail pharmacy business are managed or organised, or*
  - the actual managing or organising of the whole or a substantial part of the activities of a retail pharmacy business, and*
- 3. notify the GPhC in writing confirming their name and that they are the Superintendent Pharmacist for the retail pharmacy business. This notice provided to the GPhC must be signed by the Superintendent Pharmacist and signed on behalf of the retail pharmacy business*

**Question 1: Do you think we should set additional minimum requirements for a pharmacist to become a Superintendent Pharmacist?**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't know**



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*It is important that the GPhC is able to identify, at all times, who is performing the role of the Superintendent Pharmacist for a retail pharmacy business. This includes if the Superintendent Pharmacist leaves the role at short notice or is away from work for an extended period of time, for example on sick leave. We have proposed succession and contingency planning needs to be in place to make sure a replacement Superintendent Pharmacist can be immediately appointed. This will make sure the pharmacy business can continue to assure patient safety and operate lawfully.*

**Question 2: When a Superintendent Pharmacist leaves their role or is unable to perform their legal and professional responsibilities, for example, due to an extended period of absence, do you think it is reasonable for the GPhC to require pharmacy owners to appoint a new permanent or interim Superintendent immediately?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Please explain your responses.**

**Our response:**

Section 71 of the Medicines Act 1968 requires that a body corporate conducting a retail pharmacy business must appoint a superintendent pharmacist. The proposed requirement would be disproportionately onerous on pharmacy businesses, especially smaller businesses that may not be able, financially or practically, first, to have any meaningful contingency plans above the obvious need to reappoint at an appropriate time, or second, to appoint a new superintendent pharmacist immediately. Companies would need to appoint a pharmacist who has the required skillset to be a Superintendent Pharmacist to avoid the risk of inappropriate appointments.

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## Standards for Superintendent Pharmacists

*We have proposed five standards for Superintendent Pharmacists. These are:*

- Provide strategic and professional leadership*
- Develop a workforce with the right skills, knowledge and experience*
- Delegate responsibly and make sure there are clear lines of accountability*

- d. *Maintain and strengthen governance to ensure safe and effective delivery of pharmacy services*
- e. *Make sure the pharmacy environment and premises safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public*

**Question 3: In the interests of patient and staff safety, do you think the standards will:**

**a. strengthen the safe and effective running of a pharmacy business?**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't know**

**b. clarify the role of the Superintendent Pharmacist, making their accountabilities and responsibilities clear?**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't know**

**Please explain your responses**

**Our response:**

The Standards provide a clear framework within which companies and superintendents can operate.

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**Question 4: *The Superintendent Pharmacist has a key leadership role in the pharmacy and is responsible for securing the safe and effective running of the pharmacy business. Are there any other standards you think should be in place for Superintendent Pharmacists if they are to meet the requirements of this role?***

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't know**

***If you have selected 'Yes', what standards do you think should be included?***



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## Any other comments

**Question 5: Is there anything else related to the standards for Superintendent Pharmacists that you would like to raise?**

- **Yes, I have some more comments that I have not already raised**
- **No, I have provided all my feedback in my earlier responses**

**If you have selected 'Yes', please give your additional comments.**

### **Our response:**

#### **Minimum requirements for Superintendent Pharmacists**

Minimum requirements for Superintendent Pharmacists are already set out in section 72AA of the Medicines Act 1968. Adding further minimum requirements could lead to an approach that would be unsuited to all pharmacy businesses, which vary in types and sizes and serve different demographics of the UK population.

In addition, pharmacists' knowledge, experience and ability can vary and may be suitable for one pharmacy business but not another. There is an element of professional judgement applicable to any pharmacy professional applying for a role: they must consider if they have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience, as applicable.

Further, many individual pharmacists own retail pharmacy businesses structured as companies, for financial and liability reasons. Therefore, any additional requirements for superintendent pharmacists should also be considered as indirect additional requirements for sole owners.

#### **Technology**

The consultation paper says GPhC wants to give SPs "the flexibility to use their professional judgement in the interests of patients and the public. Superintendent Pharmacists must decide how to meet these standards and their other legal and professional responsibilities, while taking account of the requirements of the pharmacies they are responsible for." However, the statement about flexibility is not consistent with draft Standard 1 when it says SPs must use technology. This bald statement does not even mention any specific technology. By contrast, in the draft Standards for Responsible Pharmacists, as an example of how RPs might meet those draft Standards, RPs are only encouraged to "embrace technology". The draft Standards for Superintendent Pharmacists should acknowledge that not all technology will enhance patient safety, and the draft Standards should recognise that non-technological or less technological processes may be just as safe and effective as technological ones.



## Authorisations

When dealing with authorisations, the draft Standards for Responsible Pharmacists appear to say that unless the Responsible Pharmacist and the Superintendent Pharmacist are one and the same person, the Superintendent Pharmacist cannot authorise a pharmacy technician to supervise, even if the Superintendent Pharmacist is working at the same premises. It is not easy to see what the rationale is for this. After all, the Responsible Pharmacist may ask another pharmacist who happens to be the Superintendent to help out with dispensing. Similarly, even if the Superintendent Pharmacist is not at the premises, why can the Superintendent not give authority to a pharmacy technician, for example if the Responsible Pharmacist is attending to a patient and cannot be interrupted? The consultation paper offers no reason.

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## Standards for Responsible Pharmacists

### The role of the Responsible Pharmacist

The [Medicines \(Pharmacies\) \(Responsible Pharmacist\) Regulations 2008](#) introduced the role of the Responsible Pharmacist. The owner of a retail pharmacy business must appoint a Responsible Pharmacist, who is a registered pharmacist, to be in charge of the registered pharmacy. The Responsible Pharmacist is responsible for the day-to-day running of the pharmacy. They are also responsible for securing the safe and effective operation of the pharmacy, so far as concerns the retail sale of medicinal products and the supply of medicinal products in circumstances corresponding to retail sale.

Please note, there is [new legislation on pharmacy supervision](#) which will allow pharmacists to authorise registered pharmacy technicians to carry out, or supervise others carrying out, the preparation, assembly, dispensing, sale and supply of medicines. Questions about this legislation are outside the scope of this consultation.

A Responsible Pharmacist can only be responsible for one pharmacy premises at a time

**Question 6: Do you think we should set minimum requirements for a pharmacist to become a Responsible Pharmacist?**

- Yes
- No

- *Don't know*

*Please explain your response.*

*If you have selected 'yes', what requirements should we set in terms of experience, skills, length of service or something else?*

**Our response:**

Minimum requirements are already set out in section 72A of the Medicines Act 1968. Trainee/pre-registered pharmacists undergo extensive education (degree) and training (foundation training), which prepares students to perform the duties of a Responsible Pharmacist.

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*The Superintendent Pharmacist is responsible for organisational oversight of the management and operation of the pharmacy business. This includes keeping and maintaining records in relation to this (if there is not a requirement for a Superintendent Pharmacist to be appointed, this responsibility is the pharmacy owner's). The Responsible Pharmacist is responsible for keeping and maintaining records for the safe and effective day-to-day running of the pharmacy.*

**Question 7: What records do you think are the responsibility of the Responsible Pharmacist?**

**Our response:**

The Responsible Pharmacist should be responsible for records that can only be made at the pharmacy on each day they are the Responsible Pharmacist, such as the Responsible Pharmacist log, patient records, prescription records, and controlled drugs registers.

The Standards should include an aspect that makes it clear that a Responsible Pharmacist can only be responsible for records made or not made when they are the Responsible Pharmacist. They cannot be responsible for records made or not made at a different time by another Responsible Pharmacist.

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## Standards for Responsible Pharmacists

*We have proposed four standards for Responsible Pharmacists. These are:*

- Prioritise patient safety*
- Provide the leadership and management needed to ensure the safe and effective operation of the pharmacy*

- c. *Make sure, if using authorisation, to authorise responsibly and make clear the lines of accountability*
- d. *Maintain and strengthen governance to ensure safe and effective delivery of pharmacy services*

**Question 8: In the interests of patient and staff safety, do you think the standards will:**

**a. strengthen the day-to-day running of the pharmacy?**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't know**

**b. clarify the role of the Responsible Pharmacist, making their accountabilities and responsibilities clear?**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't know**

**Please explain your responses.**

**Our response:**

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**Question 9: The Responsible Pharmacist has a key leadership role in the pharmacy. The Responsible Pharmacist is responsible for the day-to-day running of the pharmacy and for securing the safe and effective operation of the pharmacy, including during periods of absence. Are there any other standards you think should be in place for the Responsible Pharmacist to meet the requirements of this role?**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don't know**

*If you have selected 'Yes', what standards do you think should be included?*

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Any other comments

**Question 10: Is there anything else related to the standards for Responsible Pharmacists that you would like to raise?**

- *Yes, I have additional comments that I have not already raised*
- *No, I have provided all my feedback in my earlier responses*

*If you have selected 'Yes', please provide your additional comments.*

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## Rules for Responsible Pharmacists

Under the law, there must be a Responsible Pharmacist in every registered pharmacy. We are proposing to continue with the present rule where a Responsible Pharmacist:

- can only be responsible for one pharmacy premises at any given time, and
- is not able to perform their role anywhere other than the pharmacy where they are signed in

**Question 11: Do you agree with our proposal to continue with the present 'one pharmacy' rule?**

- *Yes*
- *No*
- *Don't know*

*Please explain your response.*

### Our response:

We agree that a Responsible Pharmacist should only be responsible for a single pharmacy.

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*We propose to continue with the present rule that allows the Responsible Pharmacist to be absent from the pharmacy for up to two hours. If there is more than one Responsible*



*Pharmacist scheduled during the pharmacy's business hours, the two-hour limit applies to the total time when any of them is absent.*

**Question 12: Do you agree with our proposal to continue with the current two-hour absence rule?**

- Yes
- No
- **Don't know**

**Please explain your response.**

**Our response:**

As the 2-hour absence rule is only outlined in the Medicines (Pharmacies) (Responsible Pharmacist) Regulations 2008 and not within the NHS (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2012, it cannot currently be utilised in NHS community pharmacies. Therefore, we have no experience of its use and are unable to comment on this question.

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**Any other comments**

**Question 13: Is there anything else related to the rules for Responsible Pharmacists that you would like to raise?**

- *Yes, I have additional comments that I have not already raised*
- **No, I have provided all my feedback in my earlier responses**

***If you have selected 'Yes', please give your additional comments.***

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**Standards for registered pharmacies**

*When we have agreed and published the standards for Superintendent Pharmacists and the rules and standards for Responsible Pharmacists, we will be carrying out a full review of and consultation on the standards for registered pharmacies.*



When developing the standards for Superintendent Pharmacists we found there are two areas in the standards for registered pharmacies that need updating now, to provide clarity and maintain patient safety. These are:

- a. *The present standards specifically relate to medicines and medical devices. This limits our ability to take enforcement action against poor practice arising from other services, or from unregulated products provided from pharmacies. We therefore propose to include ‘any other product intended for supply or administration’ under Principle 4 of the standards.*
- b. *Although our standards for pharmacy professionals cover consent, the present standards for registered pharmacies do not. As pharmacies are offering clinical services more and more – such as examinations, diagnosis, and hands-on treatment – it is important to include a specific standard around consent.*

**Question 14: Do you agree with the inclusion of ‘any other product intended for supply or administration’ under Principle 4 of the standards? (Point (a) above.)**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don’t know**

**Question 15: Do you agree with the inclusion of a specific standard around consent? (Point (b) above.)**

- **Yes**
- **No**
- **Don’t know**

**Please explain your responses.**

**Our response:**

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**Question 16: Is there anything else you think could put patient safety at risk and should be changed or added to the standards for registered pharmacies before the full review?**

**Our response:**

No

**Question 17: Is there anything you would like to raise now for us to consider when we carry out the full review of the standards for registered pharmacies?**

**Our response:**

No

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## Standards for pharmacy professionals

*When we have agreed and published the standards for Superintendent Pharmacists and the rules and standards for Responsible Pharmacists, we will be carrying out a full review of, and consultation on, the standards for pharmacy professionals.*

*Ahead of the review, and in light of upcoming legislation on supervision and authorisation, we will be producing an annex to the standards for pharmacy professionals. This will be published alongside the standards for Responsible Pharmacists. The annex will set out what is expected of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians if a pharmacy decides to use authorisation. Please note: The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) will also be providing guidance covering authorisation.*

**Question 18: Do you agree with our proposal to publish an annex to the standards for pharmacy professionals to cover authorisation?**

- Yes
- **No**
- Don't know

**Please explain your answer.**

**Our response:**



The Annex to the standards for pharmacy professionals on authorisation appear to be unduly onerous in that:

- While it may be reasonable to encourage authorisations to be in writing if practical, authorisations given orally should be accepted.
- While recording authorisations on the day they are given is reasonable, subject to our first point, to provide these to the RP on the same day and for the RP to provide these to the SP is unreasonable and an unnecessary and disproportionate burden on pharmacy businesses.

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**Question 19: Is there anything else you think could put patient safety at risk and should be changed or added to the standards for pharmacy professionals before the full review?**

**Our response:**

No

**Question 20: Is there anything you would like to raise now for us to consider when we carry out the full review of the standards for pharmacy professionals?**

**Our response:**

No

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## Impact of the proposals

### Impact on people sharing protected characteristics

*We want to understand whether our proposals may have a positive or negative impact on any individuals or groups sharing any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.*

**Question 21:** Do you think our proposals will have a positive or negative impact on individuals or groups who share any of the protected characteristics?

### Table 1: Impact on protected characteristics



Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Negative impact	Positive and negative impact	No impact	Don't know
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					

Please describe the impact you think our proposals will have and the protected characteristic(s) concerned.

**Our response:**

Don't know

**Impact on other groups**

*We also want to know if our proposals will have an impact on other individuals or groups (not related to protected characteristics) – specifically, patients and the public, Responsible Pharmacists, Superintendent Pharmacists, pharmacy owners or employers, pharmacy staff, other healthcare professionals, pharmacy students and pre-registration trainees.*

**Question 22:** Do you think our proposals will have a positive or negative impact on any of these groups?

**Table 2: Impact on groups**



Group	Positive impact	Negative impact	Positive and negative impact	No impact	Don't know
Patients and the public					
Superintendent Pharmacists Responsible Pharmacists					
Pharmacy owners/employers Pharmacy staffs					
Other healthcare professionals Pharmacist and pharmacy technician students and trainees					

Please describe the impact you think our proposals will have and the individuals or groups concerned.

**Our response:**

Don't know