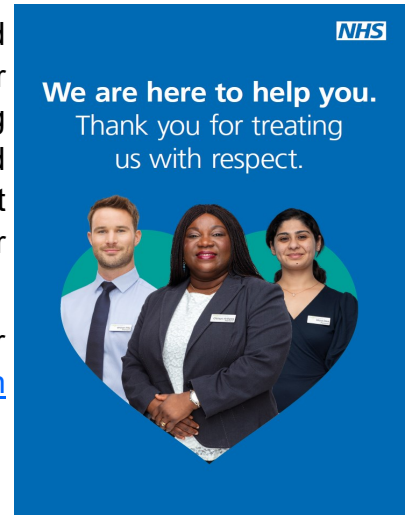


Information pack: Preventing and dealing with aggressive and abusive behaviour in community pharmacy

We are aware of increasing levels of aggression and violence toward pharmacy staff. We are sending this special edition of the newsletter to address the situation and provide resources in the coming months. In this information pack you will find links to materials and resources to help you and your teams to reinforce respectful patient behaviour; to find support for dealing with stress; and training for de-escalation and difficult conversations.

The national NHS Respect campaign now has a suite of materials for community pharmacy to use [NHS Staff Respect | Campaign Resource Centre \(phe.gov.uk\)](https://www.phe.gov.uk/nhs-staff-respect)



We know most people are respectful and appreciative of their local pharmacy and the staff who work there. This was made really clear through a survey we ran as part of collecting feedback to develop a regional strategy for community pharmacy.

Over 800 people completed the survey sharing their thoughts on how Community Pharmacies provide a vital resource to their community “not just serving the community but a part of the community” – particularly through the pandemic as well as areas for improvement.

Here is snapshot of the overwhelmingly positive feedback respondents provided.

Very local, within walking distance. Provide a friendly, personal service

Everything. Expertise, professionalism, kindness, care, friendly and a superb service and range of goods



A word cloud of feedback from all the free text responses in the commissioner to patient survey Spring 2022. Generated by [wordclouds.com](https://www.wordclouds.com)

East Of England Pharmacy Local Professional Networks: Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes

Jane Newman jane.newman@nhs.net

LPN enquiries for East of England england.eastpharmacyLPNs@nhs.net

A message from Kate Lewis, Deputy Director Primary Care (including pharmacy), East of England region:

We value each and every member of Community Pharmacy staff and believe you should be able to come to work free from the fear of facing abuse. It is important that we stand together to support you in delivering the best possible care for patients. Community Pharmacy is a vital NHS service which we all must respect and protect.

Staff are also encouraged to reach out to their [Freedom to Speak Up Guardian](#) if they experience disrespectful or violent behaviour at work.

What can cause unacceptable behaviour?

The stress of living in uncertain times: through a pandemic, a cost of living crisis or pressures like rushing to get to the pharmacy before it closes, national stock shortages etc. can influence how a patient acts toward pharmacy staff.

Communicating with people exhibiting unacceptable behaviour can be very challenging. It is important that pharmacy staff are supported by their employer in managing these situations.

Here are a few suggestions and resources that may be useful:

- ✓ Posters and media to use in your pharmacy (see page 4)
- ✓ Information on supporting legislation and guidance
- ✓ Risk assessment (see link to security advice for pharmacies on page 3)
- ✓ Training in managing difficult situations—free e-learning (see page 4)

If your risk assessment needs a refresh, information on how to update your businesses risk assessment and engage with all staff so they feel supported is available [page 3].

We hope you find this information pack useful, if there is further support you need please contact the [NHS England team](#) or your [Local Pharmaceutical Committee](#).

For employers and pharmacy managers: preparation can help

Pharmacy owners should be specific about their expectations of how challenging behaviour will be managed and ensure:

1. Staff are involved and feel supported by management
2. Training is provided for staff to help them recognise and manage abuse
3. There is a clear policy on what action can be taken:
 - when patients behaviour is unacceptably abusive or aggressive. (e.g. letter, conversation at another time, banning from premises, signposting to alternative services).
 - when immediate action is needed to prevent violence towards staff or if the person commits a criminal offence e.g. shoplifting. This may include what this action should be, who initiates it, what records are kept and how it is followed up.
4. Pharmacy owners should consider conducting a risk assessment of the premises periodically and introduce appropriate measures to reduce the risk of harm to staff.
5. Any staff member who experiences violence or abuse is given post-incident support and the opportunity to discuss their experience and share learning with the team if they feel able to do so.

What is the legal position: employers have a duty to provide a safe working environment, the relevant Health and Safety Legislation includes:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013

(Please note, this is not an exhaustive list)

Links to information

The RPS worked with the police to develop security advice for pharmacies, this gives good practical advice [Police Pharmacy Advice - Long.pdf \(rpharms.com\)](#)

The [NHS Violence Prevention and Reduction Standard](#) – a risk based framework to improve staff safety, targeted at NHS organisations of all sizes.

NHS Guidance for GP practices states that when a patient has acted inappropriately or unacceptably then the provider should take into account the nature and severity of the incident, the impact on staff or other members of the public and the patients own circumstances. There are two template letters that could be adapted for pharmacy use: a warning letter and a good behaviour agreement

[NHS England » Primary Medical Care Policy and Guidance Manual \(PGM\)](#)

Top Tips: Preventing Abuse of Primary Care Staff—a really good article written for GPs but equally applicable to pharmacy. It contains a nice concise section on practical tips on de-escalation to share with your team. [Top Tips: Preventing Abuse of Primary Care Staff \(medscape.co.uk\)](#)

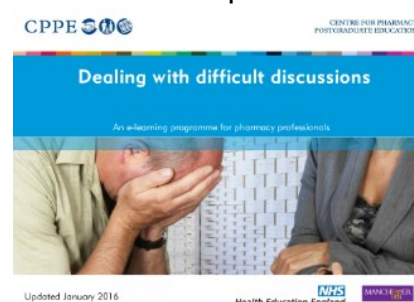
Free Learning Resources

1. The Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) course on Dealing with difficult discussions has “had a significant update to include consultation skills models and videos to support you to undertake discussions when services are unable to meet expectations. The updated e-learning programme builds on CPPE’s basic communication and consultation skills learning programmes to assist you in undertaking difficult discussions in the workplace“

[Dealing with difficult discussions : CPPE](#)

The learning is intended for

- Pharmacists
- Pharmacy technicians
- Trainee pharmacists



2. There is an e-learning module on eLFH designed for staff working in emergency departments about violence and aggression. To find it log in to eLFH, then look in Emergency Medicine (EMD) > mental health look for module 2: Violence and aggression. The module covers awareness of the common causes of challenging behaviour (there are many), how to intervene to prevent, diffuse and manage challenging behaviour and how to keep the patient, yourself and others safe.

Additional sources of information

The RPS produced this handy one page info guide for dealing with angry and abusive patients

[Managing Conflict.pdf \(rpharms.com\)](#)

Support for NHS staff who have experienced stressful situations

Looking after you—coaching for you and your wellbeing—click here for a link to a poster that explains more www.england.nhs.uk/publication/looking-after-you-coaching-support-poster

Can a member of the pharmacy staff ban a person from the premises?

Please consult the pharmacy owner or superintendent about your company policy before you find yourself in a situation where you consider you may need to ban a person from the pharmacy, as opposed to asking them to return later. This will ensure you are supported by your employer through the correct process to the right decision or action.

Can a pharmacy refuse to dispense an NHS prescription?

The pharmacy Terms of Service state that a pharmacist may refuse to provide drugs ordered on a prescription where they or other persons on the premises are threatened with violence by the person presenting the prescription or requesting EPS supply, or by any person accompanying that person.

The same applies if the person commits or threatens to commit a criminal offence.

The National Health Service (Pharmaceutical and Local Pharmaceutical Services) Regulations 2013(as amended) available at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/349/schedule/4/paragraph/9>