



Key Facts of 'Supervision'

Background

The Rebalancing Medicines Legislation and Pharmacy Regulation Programme was set up by the government to review the interface between pharmacy legislation and regulation; what the law currently states and what the professional standards of the pharmacy regulator indicate.

The Rebalancing Medicines Legislation and Pharmacy Regulation Programme Board (RPB) was established to advise the government Ministers on how best to move, where appropriate, pharmacy practice matters currently set out in law to an approach based on professional standards (ie GPhC) in line with other healthcare professionals.

The RPB is tasked with reviewing relevant pharmacy legislation and regulation to ensure it:

- provides safety for users of pharmacy services
- reduces any unnecessary legislation
- allows innovation and development of pharmacy practice

An example of this work so far, is the change that was made that now provides a new defence for pharmacy professionals against a criminal prosecution for inadvertent dispensing errors. <https://www.aptuk.org/the-long-awaited-new-dispensing-errors-legislation-comes-into-force>

As pharmacy practice moves forward, utilising modern technology along the way, and changes to be more receptive to the needs of patients and government healthcare policy, it is important that what could be seen as out dated legislation and regulation does not become a barrier.

We know that there is a drive for the nation to make better use of pharmacy. To be able to deliver on this there is also a need to make better use of the pharmacy workforce and the need for pharmacists to deliver more as a clinical profession is paramount. Therefore, across all pharmacy settings, to realise new ways of working, it is imperative that flexibilities exist and this is especially so for pharmacy technicians as a registered profession in their own right.

Therefore the work of the RPB also includes a requirement:

“to address in parallel medicines and professional regulatory matters (e.g. supervision), which are considered to restrict full use of the skills of registered pharmacists and registered pharmacy technicians, impede the deployment of modern technologies and put disproportionate or unnecessary obstacles in the way of new models of service delivery by and/or involving pharmacy”.

Therefore another aspect of pharmacy legislation that the rebalancing programme is concerned with is the supervision of the preparation, assembly, sale and supply of medicines.

You can find out more about RPB here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/pharmacy-regulation-programme-board>



Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK)

The Professional Leadership Body for Pharmacy Technicians

What is 'Supervision' covering?

The current legal position for the preparation, assembly, sale and supply, including dispensing, of medicines is governed by UK wide medicines legislation. It is set out in the **Human Medicine Regulations 2012 (HMR 2012)** and the remaining sections of the **Medicines Act 1968 (MA 1968)**.

The principal medicines legislation relating to pharmacy supervision are:

a) For the preparation and assembly of medicines:

- i) Section 10 of the MA 1968; and
- ii) Regulation 4 of HMR 2012;

b) For the sale and supply of medicines:

- i) Regulation 220 of the HMR 2012.

What is 'Supervision' in Pharmacy?

Medicines can be prepared or assembled in a registered pharmacy or hospital if this is undertaken by or under the supervision of a pharmacist. Similarly, the sale or supply of prescription only or pharmacy medicines from a registered pharmacy must be carried by or under the supervision of a pharmacist.

Why is there discussion about any changes to this?

As indicated above, health systems in the four countries are developing along with advances in technology and this is enabling new ways of working. We know that there are public health issues around the use of medicines with sub-optimal use of medicines and polypharmacy being examples. As pharmacists' roles continue to evolve and practice in clinical settings such as GP surgeries, community pharmacy, care homes etc., the other registered pharmacy professional within the pharmacy team, the pharmacy technician, can help enable this transition. As pharmacists engage in patient-facing roles (possibly taking them away from the pharmacy), supporting those with long-term conditions, providing advice for those with complex and multiple medicine regimens, or independently prescribing, the pharmacy technician is ideally placed to manage the ongoing supply of medicines, after the pharmacist has clinically checked prescriptions.

This is about the Pharmacy team delivering the services to patients that they want and need more effectively and efficiently in the demanding and changing healthcare landscape. It's about utilising the pharmacy team to its capacity, and for pharmacy technicians that is in the context of their professional registration, skills, knowledge and experience. This is also about upskilling and working in a team that is practicing to the full extent of their education and training, instead of spending time doing something that could effectively and safely be carried out by someone else who is suitably trained and competent.



Association of Pharmacy Technicians UK (APTUK)

The Professional Leadership Body for Pharmacy Technicians

What is the APTUK 'Supervision: Identifying the Pharmacy Technician perspective' survey all about?

APTUK is steadfast and clear in their belief that Pharmacy Technicians are professionals in their own right. APTUK view changes to supervision as an enabler to empower safe and effective person centred pharmacy services, wherever they are delivered. We know that pharmacy technicians can take on a range of roles including final accuracy checking, medicines management and pharmacy management in a controlled way and without increasing risk. As such, APTUK supports greater delegation of tasks to pharmacy technicians as registered professionals within the pharmacy team.

This is our current position. However we need to check that our thinking is representative and therefore we are scoping the views of the pharmacy technician profession.

We are asking for pharmacy technicians' opinions and views to questions in the context of 'supervision' meaning the professional and legal responsibility of overseeing the sale or supply of P or POM medication in a registered pharmacy.

As an example, one question relates to the supply of 32 paracetamol tablets being sold or a repeat prescription for this being handed out in the absence of a pharmacist. At the moment, the legislation requires a pharmacist to be present to supervise these acts. We are asking whether a competent pharmacy technician could confidently make this supply, in the pharmacists' absence, and be willing to take on the responsibility for this.

However, APTUK are clear in that we believe personal and organisational risk management must be in place and rigorously applied.

November 2018