



## Association of Pharmacy Technicians United Kingdom

### **GPhC Consultation on religion, personal values and beliefs: December 2016: Closing Date: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

#### **APTUK response submitted on-line**

APTUK is the professional leadership body for pharmacy technicians in the UK. APTUK, through strong, influential representative leadership, supports patient centred professionalism by encouraging in our membership, the attitudes and behaviours associated with outstanding healthcare professionals. We work on behalf of pharmacy technicians, championing and safeguarding the pharmacy technician profession, enhancing the education and scope of practice, by supporting the delivery of professional excellence and patient centred care for the health and wellbeing of patients and all pharmacy service users. Pharmacy Technicians and our members are diverse, personally, culturally and in the sectors in which they work. They work closely as a complementary profession to pharmacists and as GPhC registrants the revised wording may have an impact on them, particularly as the profession and role continues to evolve.

Do you agree with the proposed changes to the wording of the examples under standard 1 – about religion, personal values and beliefs?

Yes

1a. Please explain your reasons for this.

APTUK believe that the revised wording is clearer and provides clarity as to the professionals' responsibility in ensuring and delivering patient centred care. It gives the patient, assurance that they can expect pharmacy services to be delivered, when needed, consistently from all pharmacies. The previous statement left this open and provided option that would not necessarily benefit the patient, thus reducing confidence in pharmacy services. The revised wording also supports patient centred professionalism and gives clearer indication of what is expected by the individual professional, the pharmacy, the employer, the pharmacy team and the patient.

2. Does the revised guidance adequately cover the broad range of situations that pharmacy professionals may find themselves in?

Yes

3. Is there anything else, not covered in the guidance, that you would find useful? Please give details.

The guidance is comprehensive and sets out clearly expectations for both the individual professional and their employer. It also touches upon quality systems for delivery and staffing, recruitment and induction. It mentions the employer's responsibility for arrangements and existing staff. However, the guidance could go further and look at the whole pharmacy team, both registrants and non-registrants, as often front line staff who have the first contact with patient are non-registrants. It would be beneficial for governance arrangements to include staff training and learning, particularly relating to discussions linked with 3e (Effective communication). Bullet point 'consider the appropriateness of their body language, tone of voice and words' is particularly associated with this.

It would be beneficial to include some examples that would breach the standard to aid discussion and learning within the profession. Another consideration would be how pharmacy professionals advise or treat members of their own family or other close relationships. Often advice is sought from pharmacy professionals that may challenge professional judgement.

4. Will our proposed approach to the standards and guidance have an impact on pharmacy professionals?



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Yes

5. Will that impact be:

**Mostly positive**

Partly positive

Positive and negative

Partly negative

Mostly negative

5a. Please explain and give examples.

APTUK believe the impact will be mostly positive as the revised wording is clearer by setting out individual professional responsibilities. It also provides areas that require reflection and this is aided by the questions to ask one. This provides guidance for the individual and also to their employers.

However, APTUKs membership is diverse and we are cognisant that the revised wording will have an impact on some members. This may be related to their own personal religion, personal values and beliefs or that of their colleagues. As the pharmacy technician profession and role continues to evolve APTUK feel this is an area that needs further learning, discussion and debate in line with person centred professionalism. APTUK expects to support this in line with professional developments.

6. Will our proposed approach to the standards and guidance have an impact on employers?

**Yes** / No

Will that impact be:

Mostly positive

Partly positive

**Positive and negative**

Partly negative

Mostly negative

7a. Please explain and give examples.

APTUK believes that there may be both positive and negative impacts on employers. Positive in that the expectations of those delivering the pharmacy services are clearer and that an assured service can be delivered. It also creates an open and honest environment. However it could be negative in that it may bring challenges for employers who rely on professionals working alone and in isolation, particularly in more rural areas of the country. It may bring challenges where the professional has declared, especially if this is the responsible pharmacist, that their own religious, personal values or beliefs may present difficulties in certain circumstances. Once declared this could bring challenges to employers particularly when the services contracted should be delivered but where there is a shortage of possible staff or locums. This will also mean employers will need to take care that they do not equally discriminate against employees. This will require frank and honest discussions and proactive ways of working being put into place to cover any eventuality. Employers will need to consider how current and future staff may be affected and that additional resource may be required on occasions to ensure that person centred care and services are not compromised. This may be, as the pharmacy technician profession evolves, that there should be an alternative professional available to the patient and public.

8. Will our proposed approach to the standards and guidance have an impact on people using pharmacy services?

Yes



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9. Will that impact be:

Mostly positive

Partly positive

Positive and negative

Partly negative

Mostly negative

9a. Please explain and give examples.

APTUK believes that the revised approach to the standards supports patient centre services in that the patient's health is not compromised or put at risk by delaying treatments and medication that may be urgent or detrimental to a speedy recovery. This will also help to build the public's and patients' confidence in pharmacy being the first point of call for minor ailments or services (such as those stated in the guidance examples) that are delivered safely through a pharmacy. Patients should expect that they can be provided with the same type of services from a particular pharmacy, under NHS contracts, whenever that pharmacy is open. They should expect to be provided with the right care at the right time without fear of prejudice or their care being compromised. By revising the wording in the standard this also supports patient's privacy and dignity being upheld.

10. Do you have any other comments?

As already mentioned, APTUK believe, that awareness of the revised wording must be rolled out to all staff and feel that it is the professionals and employers responsibility to ensure that non-registered staff understand the impact of this.

Completed by

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APTUK President on behalf of the Board of Directors and Professional Committee

7.3.2017