



Pharmacists' Defence Association Patient Safety Surveys

2015/16 to 2018 comparison

Patient Safety Survey Comparisons

Patient safety surveys of pharmacists were conducted using SurveyMonkey, between 2015/16 and 2018. The data below relate to the community pharmacy sector only.

The full details of the responses can be found in separate documents on the PDA website, but the table below summarizes the results and allows comparison of the common themes.

| Theme | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2018 |
|--|--|--|---|
| Sufficient staffing levels to avoid adverse effect on patient safety^A | 7% all the time; 53% around half the time or less | 5% all the time; 61% around half the time or less | 3% all the time; 72% around half the time or less |
| Absence cover to avoid detrimental impact on patient safety^B | 5% all the time; 70% around half the time or less | 4% all the time; 77% around half the time or less | |
| Accuracy check by suitably qualified person NOT involved in labelling / assembly^C | 11% all the time; 56% around half the time or less | 11% all the time; 53% around half the time or less | |
| Imposed self-checking^D | 8% none of the time; 47% around half the time or more | 10% none of the time; 40% around half the time or more | 7% none of the time; 49% around half the time or more |
| Targets / commercial imperatives compromise patient care/safety or professional judgement^E | 21% none of the time; 46% around half the time or more | 17% none of the time; 48% around half the time or more | |
| Financial cutbacks impact patient safety^F | 14% none of the time; 59% around half the time or more | 9% none of the time; 64% around half the time or more | |
| Working environment adverse effect on pharmacist's health^G | | 8% none of the time; 61% around half the time or more | |

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| Whistleblowing without fear? ^H | | Yes 24%; No or unsure 71% | 8% all the time; 72% around half the time or less |
| Physical safety of patients and staff | | | 21% all the time; 40% around half the time or less |
| Working environment satisfactorily regulated to support safe provision of pharmacy services^J | | Yes 23%; No or unsure 73% | |
| Pharmacist available to patients face to face without appointment^K | | | 48% all the time; 16% around half the time or less |
| Pharmacists can take adequate breaks without the pressure to forfeit^L | | | 9% all the time; 69% around half the time or less |
| Empowered to act on professional judgement^M | | 18% all the time; 38% around half the time or less | 10% all the time; 56% around half the time or less |
| Number of respondents | 2,849 | 1,492 | 1,482 |

The precise wording of the questions in the surveys is shown in the table below.

| Reference | Year | Question |
|------------------|-------------|--|
| A | 2015/16 | When you are working for your main employer, how often are there enough suitably qualified and skilled staff, for the safe and effective provision of the pharmacy services provided? |
| A | 2016/17 | When you are working for your main employer, how often are there enough suitably qualified and skilled staff, for the safe and effective provision of the pharmacy services provided? |
| A | 2018 | "Staffing levels are sufficient to allow all legal, contractual and regulatory obligations to be met; to meet the workload involved in following standard operating procedures and to carry out other work in accordance with the organisation's expectations. All staff are suitably trained and competent to carry out the pharmacy work they are involved in." How often has this commitment been met in the last six months? |
| B | 2015/16 | How often does your main employer arrange to provide staff cover when there is a planned or unplanned absence of staff in the pharmacy so that there is no detrimental effect upon the safe and effective provision of pharmacy services? |
| B | 2016/17 | How often does your main employer arrange to provide staff cover when there is a planned or unplanned absence of staff in the pharmacy so that there is no detrimental effect upon the safe and effective provision of pharmacy services? |
| C | 2015/16 | When you are working for your main employer, how often is the accuracy check completed by a suitably qualified person who has NOT been involved in the assembly or labelling process? |
| C | 2016/17 | When you are working for your main employer, how often is the accuracy check completed by a suitably qualified person who has NOT been involved in the assembly or labelling process? |
| D | 2015/16 | How often, when you are working for your main employer, do you "self check" prescriptions that you have dispensed yourself because there is no suitably qualified person available? |
| D | 2016/17 | How often, when you are working for your main employer, do you "self check" prescriptions that you have dispensed yourself because there is no suitably qualified person available? |
| D | 2018 | "Where pharmacists are directly involved in dispensing, or other processes requiring a high degree of accuracy, a suitably trained and competent member of staff is readily available in the pharmacy at all times to provide an independent accuracy check." How often has this commitment been met in the last six months? |
| E | 2015/16 | When you are working for your main employer how often have you found yourself in a position whereby commercial incentives or targets have compromised the health, safety or wellbeing of patients and the public, or the professional judgement of staff? |
| E | 2016/17 | When you are working for your main employer how often have you found yourself in a position whereby commercial incentives or targets have compromised the health, safety or wellbeing of patients and the public, or the professional judgement of staff? |
| F | 2015/16 | How often do you find yourself in a position where you believe financial cutbacks imposed by your main employer have directly impacted upon patient safety? |
| F | 2016/17 | How often do you find yourself in a position where you believe financial cutbacks imposed by your main employer have directly impacted upon patient safety? |
| G | 2016/17 | When working for my main employer, the working environment has an adverse effect on my health |
| H | 2016/17 | When working for your main employer, do you feel able to raise concerns without fear of repercussions? |
| H | 2018 | "Pharmacists are able to raise concerns without reprisal or fear. This is facilitated by a supportive, open and receptive organisational culture. Issues identified are promptly addressed and robust and enduring solutions implemented without delay." How often has this commitment been met in the last six months? |
| I | 2018 | "Pharmacists do not have to work in the pharmacy alone and have access to the necessary support at all times to perform their roles. Risks are assessed and preventive measures put in place so that patients and staff are safe – and can feel safe. A zero-tolerance approach is taken to violence or abuse of pharmacists and other pharmacy staff." How often has this commitment been met in the last six months? |
| J | 2016/17 | Do you have confidence that the working environments in the pharmacy, set by your main employer, are satisfactorily regulated by the GPhC/PSNI in such a way as to support the safe provision of pharmacy services to patients? |
| K | 2018 | "A pharmacist is traditionally one of the few healthcare professionals accessible to patients without an appointment. A pharmacist is available wherever patients expect immediate access to face-to-face expert advice on any medicines-related matters. The pharmacy owner or employer meets this expectation by ensuring a pharmacist is available to patients and present in the pharmacy throughout its hours of operation." How often has this commitment been met in the last six months? |

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| L | 2018 | "Pharmacists are able to take at least their statutory and contractual breaks and rest periods, and additional breaks as required to meet their professional obligations. Pharmacists are enabled to take these without interruption and are not placed under any direct or indirect pressure to forfeit." How often has this commitment been met in the last six months? |
| M | 2016/17 | When working for my main employer, I am empowered to act on my professional judgement |
| M | 2018 | "Pharmacists are enabled and encouraged to exercise professional decision-making in the workplace, so that patient safety and professional standards can be placed above any commercial or other operational considerations. Organisational and other targets do not inhibit professional autonomy." How often has this commitment been met in the last six months? |