

Reviewing risk assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic

Duncan Rudkin, Chief Executive of the GPhC, said:

“We are carefully considering the findings of Public Health England’s report on **Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19** and the recommendations set out in the second part of that report on **Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups**. Data collected by PHE clearly demonstrates that people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, as well as some other groups, are being disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

“The report’s recommendations highlight the importance of using occupational risk assessments within the workplace to help identify and protect staff at increased risk in relation to COVID-19.

“Pharmacy owners have an important responsibility to identify and manage the risks associated with providing pharmacy services. We know that pharmacy owners and teams have already taken significant steps to reduce the risks of transmission of coronavirus to staff and patients during the pandemic.

“We would encourage all pharmacy owners and employers to take this opportunity to review their existing risk assessments and consider what further actions they could take to protect their staff, trainees and their patients. This would include using appropriate risk assessment tools to identify at-risk and vulnerable people within their team, including staff from BAME backgrounds, along with other vulnerable groups, such as those with existing health conditions.

“Our guidance for employers who are employing provisionally-registered pharmacists will advise that individual risk assessments to identify those at increased risk from COVID-19 should be carried out as part of the wider risk assessment before the provisionally-registered pharmacist starts work. Employers will be asked to carefully consider this information when making decisions about how to deploy provisionally-registered pharmacists.

“Information and guidance has been produced by a range of organisations, including NHS England, the Health and Safety Executive, the PSNC, the RPS and the PDA, which pharmacy employers could use to undertake these risk assessments and to identify and mitigate risks to staff and to patients.”

Further information and guidance:

NHS England: [Addressing impact of COVID-19 on BAME staff in the NHS](#)

GOV.UK: [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Health and Safety Executive: [Working safely during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee: [COVID-19 Social Distancing and Infection Control Risk Assessment Template for community pharmacies \(v2\)](#)

Royal Pharmaceutical Society: [Guidance: protecting your team in the pharmacy](#)

The Pharmacists’ Defence Association: [Risk Assessment Tool: Reducing the risk of COVID-19 in the community pharmacy](#)