



Points to consider when non-registered pharmacy staff wish to provide NHS Blood Pressure Check Service.

This page contains information about the Hypertension Case-Finding Service which was commissioned as an Advanced service from 1st October 2021.

In public-facing communications, the service is described as the NHS Blood Pressure Check Service.

Background: From 1st December 2023, the service can be provided by suitably trained and competent pharmacy staff; previously, only pharmacists and pharmacy technicians could provide the service.

Where non-registered pharmacy staff provide the service, until clinical IT systems are updated to allow their names to be entered within the clinical record, the name and GPhC registration number of the responsible pharmacist should be included in the clinical record.

- Has the patient given consent for the NHS Community Pharmacy Hypertension Case-finding Advanced Service and the sharing of their information with their GP and the relevant NHS organisations?
- Has the Blood Pressure (BP) check equipment been cleaned (as per the instructions of the manufacturer) before use to prevent the spread of infections? Healthcare providers must ensure that devices for measuring blood pressure are properly validated, maintained, and regularly recalibrated according to manufacturers' instructions. See the [British and Irish Hypertension Society's website for a list of validated blood pressure monitoring devices.](#)
[2004]

Factors that can affect the accuracy of BP readings.

- Does the patient look rushed or anxious?

Blood pressure UK recommend allowing the patient to rest for 5 minutes before taking BP readings.

- Is the cuff size right for the patient?

NHS Community Pharmacy Hypertension Case-finding Advanced Service Specification states that selecting the appropriate arm cuff correctly fitting the patient will prevent inaccurate BP readings.

To obtain an accurate BP reading, British & Irish Hypertension Society has recommended the following actions:

- Thick clothing should be removed to expose the upper arm, thin clothing can be left on as the BP monitor will be able to take a reading through it.
- Ensure the person is sitting upright with their back on the back of the chair and feet flat on the ground and should avoid crossing their legs.

- Place the cuff approximately 2-3cm above the elbow crease. Fasten the cuff comfortably where two fingers can fit underneath the cuff.
- Ensure the patient's arm is resting on the table, with the palm upward and roughly level with the heart.

Patient should remain quiet and still during the BP measurement.

Which arm should I use for blood pressure check?

- Take a BP reading in both arms because BP reading varies for the two arms. If the difference in readings between arms is more than 15 mmHg, then use the arm with the highest BP reading to measure subsequent blood pressures according to [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline 2019, ng136 \(NICE 2019\)](#).
- Does the customer have an irregular pulse?

If an irregular pulse is detected, refer patient to GP practice for further investigation because automatic BP monitor may not give accurate BP measurement when pulse irregularity is present (see link to NICE 2019 as above)

Points to consider with ABPM Service.

- If the customer declines the ABPM Service, document this on their clinical record. The customer should be referred to see their GP within 3 weeks.
- British & Irish Hypertension Society has produced a checklist for pre-ABPM monitoring. This helps to answer some questions such as which arm to wear the cuff for ABPM? What to do when a customer is on warfarin and other good advice can be found on this [form](#).
- Ensure the life of the battery is sufficient for the 24 hours BP measurement.
- Clean the ABPM equipment in accordance with the manufacturer instructions before each use.

Legal advice received by Community Pharmacy England is that there is no statutory power which would permit pharmacy owners to charge a deposit for the loan of the ABPM equipment and, consequently, such charges would be contrary to section 1 of the NHS Act 2006.

Please refer to your company's SOP and manufacturer's instructions for more details